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The
Temptation of
Saint Anthony

BY
GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

English Version by
G. F. MONKSHOOD

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DO NOT TYPE 1716
Gustave Flaubert
THE TEMPTATION
OF SAINT ANTHONY

I

It was in the Thebaïd, upon a mountain height and a space in the shape of a half-moon, shut in by great rocks.

The cabin of the hermit occupied the centre. It was made of mud and of reeds. It had a flat roof and no door. Inside there could be seen a jug and a black loaf, also, upon a wooden stand, a great book. Upon the floor, here and there, were two or three pieces of matting, a basket and a knife.

Ten paces from the hermit's hut there was a long cross planted in the ground,
and at the other end of the platform an old twisted palm-tree leaned over the abyss, for the mountain was sharply shaped and the Nile seemed like a lake at the bottom of the cliffs.

The view is hemmed in on the right and the left by the circle of the rocks. But upon the desert side were immense parallel undulations, ashen brown in colour, stretching out, one behind the other, and continually mounting; then beyond the sand, farther, the Libyan chain formed a wall the colour of chalk shaded off lightly by violet vapours.

The sun was sinking. The sky in the North was of a pearl-grey tint, whilst at the zenith clouds of a purple shade arranged like the tufts of a gigantic mane spread out upon the blue vault of heaven. The flamelike rays of the sun assumed an embrowned colour and any blue in the
sky became of pearl-like paleness. The bushes, the stones, the earth, all now seemed to have the hard look of bronze. In space there floated a golden dust so fine that it mixed, and became one with the vibrations of the light.

Saint Anthony, who has a long beard, long hair, and a tunic of goatskin, is seated with crossed legs, and is about to make plaits. When the sun went down he gave a great sigh and gazed at the horizon.

"One more day! One more day added to the past!

"In former times, however, I was not so wretched!

"Before the end of the night I commence my prayers, then I descend to obtain water and reascend by the rough pathway with my leather bottle upon my shoulder, and chanting hymns. After-
wards I amuse myself arranging the things that are in my hut. I take up my tools and attend to my basketmaking. My smallest actions seem to me to be duties that have nothing wearying about them. At certain regulated hours I leave my work and, praying with my two arms extended, I feel as though a fountain of mercy was poured out from on high into my heart. That fountain is dried up now; why?" ... He paces to and fro slowly.

"Everyone blamed me when I left the home. My mother sank in a dying condition, my sister begged me to return and the other sobbed, Ammonaria, that child whom I encountered each evening at the edge of the water-well. She ran to stay my steps. The rings upon her feet danced with light amidst the dust, and her tunic was opened and floated in the wind. The aged ascetic who led me
cried out cruel words to her. Our two camels ran ever onwards and I saw no one any more.

"At first I chose for my dwelling-place the tomb of a Pharaoh. But there is an enchantment in those underground palaces where the shadows even seem heavy with the ancient odour of aromatics. From the depths of the sarcophagi I have heard a saddened voice raised, calling me.

"I have even, and all at once, seen live and draw breath the abominable things that were the subjects of the paintings on the walls, and I have fled unto the shore of the Red Sea, fled to a citadel that was in ruins. There I had for my companions scorpions who crawled among the stones and eagles who gyrated continually above my head in the blue sky. At night I was scratched by claws, bitten
by beaks and rubbed by soft wings; and awesome demons shouting in my ears, overturned me upon the earth. Once even the members of a caravan that was making its way towards Alexandria, gave me help and led me with them.

"Then I wished to sit at the feet of the good and aged Didymus. Even though he was blind no one could equal him in his great knowledge of the sacred writings. When our study was finished he took my arm to guide him. I led him to the Paneum from whence people can see the Pharos and the ocean. We returned by way of the Port, touching elbows with men of all nations from the Cimmerians dressed in the skins of bears to the Gymnosophists of the Ganges, their flesh rubbed with malodorous stuff. Ceaselessly there was some battle going on in the streets because the Jews refused to pay a tax or
because of some seditious sect who wished to attack the Romans. Besides the city is packed with heretics, followers of Manes, Valentine, Basilidus and Arius. They all come to you and hold you, hoping to discuss their faith and convince you of its truth. Their discussions often surge up in my memory but one does well not to heed them. It disturbs.

"I took refuge at Colzim and my penitence that I no longer dreaded my God.

"Some there were who assembled around me and desired to become anchorites. I imposed upon them certain rules to be followed, rules devised with a hatred of the extravagant statements of the Gnostics and certain assertions of the Philosophers. People sent me messages from all parts and they came to see me from afar off.

"Nevertheless the people tortured the confessors and the thirst for martyrdom
led me to Alexandria. The persecution had ceased three days past. As I returned a vast crowd of people stopped me before the temple of Serapis. It was, so they told me, a last example that the Governor intended to make. In the midst of the portico, in the full light of the sun, a naked woman was fastened to one of the columns of the temple. Two soldiers were whipping her with thongs; at each of the strokes her whole body writhed. She turned around, with opened lips, and through the crowd and the long hair that covered her I believed that I recognised Ammonaria. However... she seemed to be much bigger and amazingly beautiful!"

He passed his hands over his face.

"No! No! I do not wish to think of it!

"Another time Athanasius called to me
to help sustain him against the Arians. He had suffered invectives and mockery. Then he was calumniated, dispossessed of his See, put to flight. Where is he now? I do not know! People trouble themselves very little about giving me news. All my disciples have left me, Hilarion like all the others.

"He was perhaps fifteen years of age when he came and his intelligence was so keen that he asked me questions at every moment. Then he listened with a pensive air. Anything that I needed he brought to me without murmur and he was so bright and gay he could make patriarchs smile. He was a son to me!"

The sky becomes reddened, the land wholly dark. Under the gusts of the wind the sand is lifted up in great clouds only to fall again. In a moment of light, all at once, birds fly past in a battalion."
Anthony regards them.

"Ah! that I might follow them! How many times, also, have I not contemplated with longing the long vessels, having sails like wings, above all when they bore away from me to afar those whom I had received at my dwelling! What goodly hours we have had, what unfoldings of the heart! No one interested me more than Ammon; he told me of his voyage to Rome, of the Catacombs, the Coliseum, of the devotion of famous women and of a thousand things.

"And I did not wish to part from him! From whence comes my obstinate desire to continue such a life as I live? I should have done better to have remained with the monks of Nitria since they supplicated me to do so. They dwell in little cells and yet they all communicate with each other. On the Sabbath the trumpet calls
them to church and they have martinets who punish the delinquents, the thieves and intruders, for their discipline is severe. They do not lack for certain pleasures none the less. Some of the faithful bring them eggs, fruits, and other things that help and aid. There are vineyards near Pisperi, those of Pabenus have a raft on which to fetch provisions.

"But I should have better served my brothers in being simply a priest, taking aid to the poor, giving the sacrament and exerting one's influence in family life.

"Besides the lay people are not all damned. I could have been a teacher of grammar, a philosopher with tablets always to my hand and the young around me, learning. But there is too much spiritual pride in such triumphs. To have been a soldier might have been better. I was robust and hardy to work the
engines of war, traverse gloomy forests or enter, helmet on head, into the centre of burning towns! Nothing hindered me in those days. I could even, had I so desired, purchased with my money the position of toll-gatherer at some bridge, and the travellers would have told me their stories of wayfaring and shown me among their goods quantities of curious things that they had collected. . . . The merchants of Alexandria sail, upon their festive days, down the Canopus and drink wine that is poured into the flower-cup of the lotus whilst listening to the music of tambourines. Beyond, on the banks of the river, cone-cut trees protect the peaceful farms from the wind. The roof of a high house is seen resting upon slender columns; through them the master of the house reclining upon a long seat sees his domain, the gathering in of his
wheat, the pressing of his grapes, his oxen who tread out the corn, his children playing upon the ground, his wife leaning over him with a caress."

In the whitish obscurity of the night there appears, here and there, some pointed muzzles with upright ears and brilliant eyes. Anthony walks towards them. Some gravel rattles and the beasts run away. It was a troop of jackals. One, however, remains behind in a pose full of defiance.

"How fine he looks! I would pass my hand along his back, softly."

Anthony whistles to him to draw nearer, but the jackal goes away.

"Ah! He has gone to join all the others! What a solitude! What weariness!" laughing bitterly.

"It is a beautiful existence to make baskets, to weave mats and then ex-
change them with the nomads for bread that breaks the teeth! Ah! Miserable that I am! Will all that never have an end? But death would be better! I want no more of it! Enough, enough!"

He stamps his foot and turns towards the midst of the rocks with a rapid step, then, out of breath, bursts into sobs and crouches upon the earth. The night is calm, and the stars are shining. Nothing can be heard but the sounds of insects. The two arms of the long cross make their shadow upon the sand. Anthony, who is still sobbing, perceives this.

"Am I too feeble? My God! Courage, let us rise!"

He entered into his hut, uncovered a buried charcoal, lighted a torch and placed it on the wooden stand in such a manner as to throw a light upon the great book. "If I take the life
of the Apostles. . . . Yes, no matter where!

"He saw heaven opened with a great sheet which descended by the four corners wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth and wild beasts and creeping things and fowls of the air, and a voice said to him, 'Rise, Peter, kill and eat.' Then the Lord would that his Apostle eat of everything, while me . . ." Anthony rested his chin on his breast; the trembling of the leaves, agitated by the wind, made him raise his head, and he read. "The Jews killed all their enemies with the sword, and they made a great carnage, in this manner disposing by will of those that they hated. In consequence of the number of people killed by them (seventy-five thousand) they had suffered much. Besides, their enemies were the enemies of the true
God and they must so act to avenge, in massacring all idolaters! The city without doubt overflowed with dead. They were on the steps of gardens, on the stairs, and of such height on the chambers that one was not able to turn the doors! . . . But, there, why do I plunge into such ideas of murder and of blood?"

He opened the book at another place. "Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face, and worshipped Daniel."

"Ah, that is good. The Most High exalts His prophets above kings; this one, however, lived feasting, intoxicated continually with pride and delight. But God punished him by changing him into a beast walking on four feet." Anthony laughed, and unfolding his arms his hand displaced the leaves of the book, his eyes falling on this phrase, "Hezekiah had great joy of their arrival, he shewed
them his perfumes, his money, his spices, precious ointments, all his vases and that which he had in his treasury.” “I fancy . . . that one sees heaped up as high as the ceiling precious stones, diamonds. A man who possessed so great an accumulation is not like any other; he dreams always of handling them, the result of innumerable efforts. That is a useful precaution for kings. The wisest of all there has not wanted. His fleets bring him ivory and apes. . . . Where is that then?” He turns over the leaves quickly. “Ah! here it is.

‘The Queen of Sheba knowing the glory of Solomon came to tempt him and proposed to him some enigmas.’

“How hoped she to tempt him? The devil as well would tempt Jesus! But Jesus triumphed because He was God, and Solomon thanks, perhaps, to his
science as a magician. It is sublime, that science! For the world—thus a philosopher has explained to me—forms a whole of which all the parts influence one another as the organs of one sole body. It acts from knowing the loves and the natural repulses of things, then of putting them in play? One may be able then to change things that appear to be unchangeable?"

Then the two shadows shown behind him by the arms of the cross project forward. They make two great horns. Anthony cried, "My God, help me!"

The shadow here returned to its place.

"Ah! . . . That was an illusion, nothing else. It is useless that I torment the spirit. I have nothing to do! . . . absolutely nothing to do." He seats himself, crossing his arms. "However, I believe I have felt him approach. But why
comes he? Besides, is it that I don't know his artifices? I have repulsed the monstrous anchorite which offered me, laughing, some little hot loaves, the centaur who strove to take me up behind him, and that dark child appearing in the middle of the sands, who was very beautiful, and who was called the spirit of fornication." Anthony walked from right to left, quickly.

"It is by my orders that one has built that crowd of holy retreats full of monks wearing haircloth under their goatskins numerous and powerful enough to make an army! I have healed from afar some sick. I have hunted some demons. I have passed the river in the midst of crocodiles, the Emperor Constatius has written me three letters. Balacius, who has spitten on me, has been torn by his horses, the people of Alexandria have
beaten me when I reappeared, and Athanasius has reconducted me on the road. But what other works also? Behold more than thirty years in the desert I groan always. I have carried on my loins eighty pounds of bronze as Eusebius. I have exposed my body to the stings of insects, as Macairus. I have remained for fifty-three nights without closing my eyes as Pacomius, and those that have been decapitated or had their flesh torn off with pincers, or burnt, have less virtue perhaps, since my life has been a continual martyrdom." Anthony paused. "Certainly there is no one so profoundly distressed. The charitable hearts diminish. No one gives me anything. My cloak is worn. I have no sandals, not even a cup, for I have distributed to the poor and to my family all my goods without retaining one coin. I shall not have tools in-
dispensable for my work. It is necessary for me to have a little money. Oh! not much! a small sum, I could then manage.

"The fathers of Nicea, in purple robes, seated as wise men on thrones, have been regaled with a banquet and the highest of honours; above all Paphunce, because he is half blind and lame since the persecution of Diocletian! The Emperor has many times kissed him since his eye failed; what folly! Besides, the council had some members so infamous! A bishop of Scythia Theopilus; another of Persia, John; a keeper of cattle, Spiridion! Alexander was too old, Athanasius should have shown much more gentleness to the Arians to obtain some concessions. If they would have done so! They have not wished to understand me! Those who speak against me—a great man with curled beard—with a quiet look threw
out some captious objections, and while I was seeking my words they were regarding me with their wicked faces and barking like hyenas. Ah! that these were not all exiled by the Emperor or beaten, crushed, or made suffer! I myself suffer much!"

He leant, exhausted, against his hut.

"This is from having fasted too much, my strength is going. If I eat . . . once only a morsel of meat."

He half closed his eyes with languor.

"Ah! the red flesh . . . A raisin grape that one bites! . . . the curd milk which trembles on the dish . . . But what have I then . . . what have I then? I feel my heart growing as the sea when she swells before the storm. An infinite softness overcomes me, and the warm air seems to roll round me like the perfume of
a head of hair. Not any woman has come, however . . .?"

He turned himself towards the little path between the rocks.

"It is by there that they arrived, balanced in their litters by the black arms of eunuchs. They descended and joining their hands charged with rings, they knelt. They told their troubles. The want of a pleasure the torture of which was beyond human bearing. They would like to die. They have seen in their dreams some gods which called them—and the end of their robes fell on my feet. I repulsed them. 'Oh! no,' said they, 'not yet!' What must I do! All the penitences seemed good to them. They demanded the roughest; to partake even of mine, to live with me. Behold for a long time I have not seen them! Perhaps they are yet coming. Why not?
If, all at once I hear some mule bells tinkling in the mountains it seems to me . . . ."

Anthony climbs on a rock to the entrance of the path, and he leans forth, darting his eyes into the darkness.

"Yes! down there, at the bottom, a troubled mass, as of people who seek their road. It is there they are deceived. Calling, 'This way, come! come!' The echo replies, 'Come! come!'

He let his arms fall, stupefied.

"What shame! Ah! poor Anthony!"

And immediately he heard whisper, "poor Anthony," someone replied.

The wind which passed in the intervals of the rocks made some modulations, and in their sonorous confusion he distinguished some voices as if the air spoke. They are low and insinuating, hissing:
The First. Will you desire some women?

The Second. Some great vases of money—much money?

The Third. A sword which glitters?

The Others. The people all admire thee. Sleep thou.

At the same time these objects are transformed. At the side of the cliff the old palm-tree with a tuft of yellow leaves becomes the torso of a woman leaning over the abyss.

Anthony turned himself towards his hut; and the stool supporting the great book, with its pages of black letters seemed to him a bush covered with swallows. "That is the torch, without doubt, which makes play with its light. . . . Extinguish it!"

He extinguishes it. The obscurity is profound, and all at once passes in the midst of the air, at first a flask of water,
then followed a prostitute, the corner of a temple, the figure of a soldier, a car with two white horses which pranced.

These images arrived by shocks and detached on the night like scarlet paintings on ebony. Their movement accelerated, defiling in a dizzy fashion; at other times they stopped and paled by degrees as if melting, or they flew away and, immediately, others arrived.

Anthony closed his eyelids—the forms multiplied, surrounding, besieging him. An unspeakable fright invaded him and he felt nothing more than a burning contraction of the body. In spite of the tumult in his head he noticed an enormous silence that separated him from the world. He strove to speak; impossible! It was as if the general band of his being was dissolved; and resisting no further Anthony fell on the mat.
II

Then a great shadow more subtle than a natural shadow, and other shadows, festooning the length of its sides, marked the earth. That is the Devil, leaning against the roof of the hut, and carrying under his two wings—as a gigantic bat carries its young—the Seven Capital Sins, whose heads grimace.

Anthony, his eyes always closed, enjoyed his inaction, spreading out his limbs on the mat which seemed sweet to him, more and more, so much that it seemed stuffed; it rose, it became a bed, the bed a shallalop, the water rippling against its sides. To right and left rose two tongues of black earth, that dominated the cultivated fields, with a sycamore here and there. A noise of small bells,
of tambourines and of singers resounded from afar. These are some people who go to Canopus to sleep on the temple of Seraphis to have some visions—Anthony knew that. And he slid, pushed by the wind between the two banks of the canal, the leaves of the papyrus and the red flowers of the nymphaeus, more tall than a man, leaning on him. He is extended on the bottom of the barque, one oar at the end trailing in the water. The murmurs of the little waves diminish. A drowsiness takes him and he dreams that he is a recluse of Egypt. Then he awakes and starts. "Have I dreamt? . . . It was so clear that I even doubt. My tongue burns! I am thirsty!"

He enters into his hut and feels at random all round. "The earth is humid. Is that then that it has rained? Hold, some morsels, my cruse is broken. . . .
"Empty, completely empty! To descend as far as the river it will take me three hours at least and the night is so dark that I should not see my way. My entrails are twisted. Where is the loaf?"

After having searched a long time he finds a crust smaller than an egg.

"Why, the jackals have taken it? Ah, curse it."

And from fury he throws the bread to the ground, and hardly has he made that gesture than a table is there, covered with all things good to eat. From the cloth of byssus striped, as the bands of the sphinx there produced themselves some luminous undulations. There is above some enormous quarters of red meat, of large fishes, of birds with their feathers, quadrupeds with their hair, some fruits with a colour almost human, some morsels of white ice, and glasses of violet crystal.
Anthony distinguished in the middle of the table a wild boar smoking by all his pores, the feet under the belly, the eyes half closed—and the idea of being able to eat that formidable beast rejoiced him exceedingly. Then there are some things which he has not seen, some black hashes, some jellies the colour of gold, some ragoûts where floated mushrooms as lilies upon a pond of mosses so light that they resembled clouds, and the aroma of all that brought him the salt odour of the ocean, the freshness of fountains, the great perfume of the woods. He dilated his nostrils as much as he could. He desired more than he had done for a year or ten years, or his entire life. Accordingly as he walked on these opened wide eyes, others accumulated, forming a pyramid of which the angles crumbled. The wines flowed, the fish palpitated. The blood boiled in
the dishes, the pulp of fruits advanced like amorous lips, and the table mounted as far as his breast, then as far as his chin—carrying one plate and one loaf only that he found just in front of him. He went to seize the loaf; other loaves were presented. "For me!... all! but..."

Anthony stood back.

In place of one loaf which was there. Behold! That is a miracle then the same as that made by the Lord.

With what aim? Eh! All the rest is not less incomprehensible. "Ah! demon. Go thou, go then."

He gave a kick of his foot to the table. It disappeared. Nothing more. No.

He breathes freely.

"Ah! The temptation was strong. But now I am delivered from it!"

He raised his head and stumbled against a sounding object.
"What is that then?"
Anthony looked down.
"Hold! a cup! Someone in travelling will have lost it. Nothing extraordinary."

He wetted his finger, and rubbed.
"That glitters! of metal! however, I distinguish nothing."

He lit his torch and examined the cup.
"It is of silver, ornamented with ovals on the side, with a medal at the bottom."

He jerked out the medal with his nail.
"It is a piece of money worth . . . from seven to eight drachmas; no more. Never mind I shall be well able with that to procure me a sheepskin."

A reflection of the torch illuminated the cup.
"Not possible! in gold! Yes! all in gold."

Another piece, larger, he found at the
bottom; under this one he found many others.

"But that makes a sum ... large enough for three oxen ... a little field! The cup is now full of pieces of gold.

"Come then! a hundred slaves, some soldiers, a crowd."

The granulation of the border detached itself, forming a collar of pearls.

"With that jewel there, one may gain even the wife of the Emperor."

With a shake Anthony put the collar on his wrist, holding the cup in his left hand, and with his other arm raised the torch to throw a better light on the cup. As water streaming from a vessel it overflowed in a continuous flood in such a manner as to form a hillock on the sand—of diamonds, carbuncles, and sapphires, mixed with large pieces of gold bearing...

"Alexander, Demetrius, the Ptolemies, Caesar! but each of them had not as much. Nothing is now impossible. No more suffering! and these rays which dazzle me!

"Ah! my heart overflows! how good this is. Yes!...yes!...more! ever enough. I should be able to throw into the sea continually, still some would remain. Wherefore lose it? I will keep it all without saying anything to anybody. I will dig a hole in the rock, a chamber that shall be covered with plates of bronze—and I will come there to feel the piles of gold under my heels. I will then plunge my arms as into sacks of grain. I will rub my face in it and sleep above it."

He loosed the torch to embrace the heap and fell to the ground on his breast.
He raised himself. The place is entirely empty.

"What have I done? If I had died during that time, that was hell! hell, irrevocably! I should now be in hell."

He trembled in all his limbs.

"I am then cursed? Ah no! that is my fault. I let myself fall into all these snares! No one is more imbecile or infamous. I would beat myself or rather tear myself from my body. It is too long that I have contained myself, I want to avenge myself striking, killing, it is as if I had the spirit of a troop of ferocious beasts. I would like to give some strokes of an axe in the midst of a crowd.

"Ah! a dagger."

He threw himself on his knife, which he perceived; the knife glided from his hand and Anthony remained leaning against
the wall of his hut, his mouth wide open, immovable—cataleptic.

All the surroundings had disappeared. He believed himself to be in Alexandria, on the Paneum, an artificial mountain which enclosed a winding staircase erected in the centre of the town.

In front of him extended the Mareotis; take to the right the sea, to the left the country, and immediately under his eyes, a confusion of flat roofs crossed from south to north and from east to west by two streets which crossed and formed a file of porticoes with Corinthian capitals. The houses of that double colonnade have windows with coloured glass, some of which have outside enormous wooden cages, whence the air is taken in. Some monuments of different architecture are heaped up near one another: some Egyptian pillars dominating Greek temples,
some obelisks appearing as lances between the battlements of red bricks. In places there are some Hermes, with pointed ears, some Anubis figures with a dog-head. Anthony distinguished some mosaics in the courts and to the small beams of the ceilings some carpets were hooked. With one glance of the eye he embraced the two gates (the Great Gate and the Eunoste), both round as two circles, and which separated a mole joining Alexandria to the steep islet on which was raised the quadrangular Pharos tower of nine floors, and five hundred cubits high, with a mass of black charcoal smoking at its summit. Some small interior gates cut the principal gates. The mole at each end is terminated by a bridge established upon marble columns planted in the sea—the vessels passing under, and the heavy lighters
overflowing with merchandise; some barques encrusted with ivory, some gondolas covered with an awning, some triremes and biremes, all sorts of vessels circulating or stationary against the quays. Around the Great Gate there is an uninterrupted suite of royal constructions, the Palace of the Ptolemies, the Museum, the Posidium, the Cesareum, the Timoneum, the refuge of Mark Antony, the Soma, which contains the tomb of Alexander; whilst at the other extremity of the town, near to Eunoste, one sees in a suburb the factories for glass, perfumes, and paper. Some pedlars, porters, and ass-drivers run about, howling. Here and there a priest of Osiris with a panther’s skin on his shoulders, a Roman soldier with bronze helmet, many negroes. At the threshold of some shops women were standing, some artisans working, and the
grinding of the chariots made some birds fly up who were eating from the ground the offal from some butcheries and remains of fish.

Upon the uniformity of the white houses the outline of the streets throws, as it were, a black network. The market full of herbs making green bouquets, the drying places of dyers, the golden ornaments fronting the temples with luminous points—all that included in the oval belt of grey walls under the blue vault of heaven, near the motionless sea. But the crowd stays and looks towards the western side, from whence advances enormous whirlwinds of dust. These are the monks of the Thebaïd, clad in goatskins, armed with clubs, and howling a religious war-song with this refrain:

"Where are they? Where are they?"

Anthony understood that they were
coming to kill the Arians. All at once the streets were empty, and one saw little but the flying feet.

These recluses are now in the town, their formidable batons furnished with nails, turning as some suns of steel. One hears the noise of things breaking in the houses. There are some intervals of silence. Then some great cries are raised. From one end to the other the streets are filled with a continual turmoil of frightened people. Many of them have pikes. Sometimes two groups meet making one, and that mass glides on to the flagstones; they divide. But always the men with the long hair reappear. Some threads of smoke are escaping from the corners of the houses, then the bursting of gates, the sides of walls crumbling, architraves falling!

Anthony found again all his enemies,
one after the other, he even recognised those that he had forgotten; before killing he outraged them, he disembowelled, cut their throats, beat unmercifully, drew the old men by their beards, crushed the children, beat the wounded, and people were avenged of luxury: those who knew not how to read destroying the books, others breaking, ruining the statues, the pictures, the furniture, the chests, a thousand delicacies of which they ignored the use, and because of that was exasperated with them. From time to time they stopped, all out of breath, then recommenced, the inhabitants taking refuge in the courts, groaning; the women raising their eyes in tears to heaven, and their naked arms. To move the monks they embraced their knees; these they threw backwards and the blood spurted as high as the ceilings, falling in sheets along the
walls, streaming from the trunks of decapitated corpses, filling the aqueducts, making the ground a red swamp. Anthony walked through up to his hocks, he sucked in the drops on his lips and trembled with joy, under his hair tunic, which is drenched.

The night came and the immense clamour was appeased.

The monks have disappeared.

All at once on the outside galleries, bordering the nine floors of the Pharos, Anthony perceived some great black lines as of crows staying. He ran and found himself at the summit. A great copper mirror turned towards the high sea reflected the large vessels. Anthony amused himself by observing these, and accordingly, as he did so, their number appeared augmented. They are set in a gulf having the form of a crescent; behind, on a promontory, spreads a new
town of human architecture with stone cupolas, conical roofs of red and blue marble, and a profusion of brass applied to the scrolls of the capitals, to the ridges of the houses and the angles of the cornices. A cypress wood dominates all. The colour of the sea is very green and the air most cold. On the mountains at the horizon there is snow. Anthony sought his route, when a man at the side of him said, "Come, someone awaits you." He crossed a forum and entered into a court; he stooped under a door and arrived before the façade of the palace. It was decorated by a group in wax, which represented the Emperor Constantine conquering a dragon, a porphyry vase bearing in the middle a golden shell full of pistachios. His guide told him that he might take some. He did. Then he is at last in a succession
of apartments. One sees the whole length of the walls, in mosaic, generals offering to the Emperor on the flat of the hand representations of some conquered towns, and over all are basalt columns, some grilles in silver filigree, some ivory seals and tapestries embroidered with pearls, the light falling on them from the vaulted roof. Anthony continued to walk. Some warm exhalations circulated, he heard sometimes the discreet clap of a sandal. In the ante-chambers were posted some guards, which resembled automatons holding on their shoulders some batons of silver gilt.

At last he found himself at the bottom of a hall terminating in the main by some hyacinth curtains. They were drawn, and discovered the Emperor seated on a throne, in velvet tunic and red buskins with black bands, a diadem of pearls twined round his hair disposed in
symmetrical rolls. He had falling eyelids, a straight nose, and a physiognomy heavy and sullen. At the corners of the dais extended upon his head four golden doves are placed, and at the foot of the throne two enamelled lions are crouching. The doves are made to sing, the lions to roar. The Emperor rolled his eyes. Anthony advanced and at once, without preamble, they recounted to him some events. In the towns of Antioch, of Ephesus and of Alexandria, people have sacked the temples and out of the statues of gods have made pots. The Emperor laughed much. Anthony reproached him for his toleration towards the Novatians. But the Emperor is passionate, hasty. Novatians, Arians, Melecians all weary him, however he admires the episcopate. For the Christians raising up some bishops which are dependent on
five or six persons, he so acts that by gaining these he will have on his side all the others. Also he will not want, these furnishing him with considerable sums. But he detests the fathers of the Council of Nicea. "Come, let us go and see these."

Anthony followed him and they found themselves walking upon a terrace. It dominated a hippodrome full of people and surmounted with porticoes, where the rest of the crowd promenaded. In the centre of a race-course extends a narrow platform, bearing on its length a little temple of Mercury, the statue of Constantine, three bronze serpents entwined, with one end of great wooden eggs and the other seven dolphins with tails in the air. Behind the imperial pavilion the Prefects of the Chambers, the Chiefs of the Domestics and the patricians are echeloned as far as the first floor of a
church all the windows of which are full of women—to the right is the tribune of the Blue faction, to the left that of the Green, below a picket of soldiers, and on the level of the arena a rank of Corinthian arches forming the entrance to the boxes.

The races are about to commence, the horses are aligned, some high plumes planted between their ears, swaying to the wind as if trees and shaking in their fastenings, some chariots in the form of a shell driven by charioteers clothed in a kind of cuirass of many colours with the sleeves tight to the wrist, but full in the arms, the legs bare, all the beard the hair shaven in the style of the Huns. Anthony is at first deafened by the turbulent voices. High and low he perceived nothing but painted faces, motley coloured clothing and jewellery; the
sand of the arena all white, bright as a mirror.

The Emperor entered into conversation. He confided to him some things of importance, secrets, he avowed the assassination of his son Chrispus; he demanded even some counsels for his own health. In the meantime Anthony observed some slaves at the end of the boxes. These are the fathers of the Council of Nicea, in rags, abject: the martyr Paphuntius brushing the mane of a horse, Theophilus washing the legs of another, John colouring the shoes of a third, Alexander gathering up dirt in a basket. Anthony passed to the midst of them. They made a line, praying him to intercede, kissing his hands. The whole crowd hooted them and enjoyed their degradation immeasurably. He then became one of the court confidants of the
Emperor, first minister! Constantine placed himself a diadem on his forehead. And very soon he discovered under the shadows an immense hall lighted by some golden candelabra, some columns half lost in the shadow, being very high and aligned in a row, and without, some tables which prolonged it as far as the horizon—whence appeared in a luminous vapour superpositions of stairs, some suites of arcades, some colossi, some towers and, behind all, a vague border of the palace, beyond some cedars, making some more black obscure masses.

The guests, crowned with violets, were leaning on the elbow against the very low beds, the length of these two rows of pitchers for wine—at the farthest end, alone, with tiara on head and covered with carbuncles, sat and drank the king, Nebuchadenesor. At his right and on
his left priests in pointed caps were waving some censers. On the floor under him crawled the captive kings, without hands or feet, to whom he threw some bones to gnaw. Lower down were his brothers, with bands on their eyes, being all blind. A plaintive whining continued rising from the prisoners, the sounds soft and slow, of a water organ alternating with the vocal chorus, and one felt that there was all round the hall a town beyond measure, an ocean of men of which the waves beat against the walls. The slaves were running, carrying dishes; some women circulating offering drinks, the baskets groaning under the weight of loaves, and a dromedary, loaded with the herb vervain, passed and repassed, letting it fall to refresh the flagstones. Some fighting men brought lions; some dancers, the hair in nets, were turning on the
hands and spitting fire from their nostrils; some negro boatmen were juggling; some naked children were throwing snowballs which crashed and fell against the silver wares. The clamour is so formidable that one may call it a tempest, and a cloud floats over the feast, so much is there of meats and of breaths. Sometimes a spark from the great torches blown by the wind crosses the night like a shooting star. The king wiped with his arm the perfumes from his face, he fed from sacred vases, then broke them. He enumerated inwardly his fleets, his armies, his people. He reckoned on rebuilding the tower of Babel and of dethroning God.

Anthony read from a distance, on his face all his thoughts. They penetrated him—and he became Nebuchadnesor.

Immediately he is full of overflowing
floods and an inclination takes him to roll in baseness. Besides the degradation that which frightens men is an outrage of their spirit, in a manner stupefying them, and as nothing is more vile than a brute beast Anthony put his four feet on the table, and bellowed like a bull.

He felt a pain in the hand. A flint by chance has wounded him, and he found himself before his hut. The circle of rocks is empty, the stars radiate. All is quiet. . . .

"Once more I deceive myself! Why these things? They come from uprisings of the flesh.

"Ah, wretch!" He darts into his hut, takes up a bundle of cords with metallic nails at the end, and stripping to his girdle and raising his head towards heaven,

"Accept my penitence, oh, my God,
disdain not my weakness that was prolonged, excessive! It is time to the work."

He lashes himself vigorously.

"Ay! No. No, no pity."

He recommences.

"Oh! oh! oh! each cut wounds my skin, cuts my limbs. That burns me horribly."

Anthony stops.

"Go then, coward! Go then, on the arms, on the back, on the breast, against the body, everywhere whistle cords. Bite me! tear me! I would that the drops of my blood spurted as far as the stars, cracking my bones, uncovering my nerves, some pincers, some racks or melted lead. Other martyrs have suffered more. Is it not so, Ammonaria?"

The shadow of the devil's horns re-appears.
“Oh, Ammonaria, I should have been tied to the column near to thine, face to face under thy eyes, replying to thy cries by my sighs, and our pains should have been mingled, our souls mingled.”

He whipped himself with fury.

“Hold, hold! for thou! more! But there what a tingling runs through me. What torments! what delights! they are as kisses, my marrow melts, I die!”

And he saw in front of him three horse-men mounted on some asses, clothed in green robes, holding some lilies in their hands, and resembling each other in features.

Anthony turned himself round and saw three others on like asses in the same attitude. He backed. Then the asses all at once made a step and rubbed their muzzles against him and tried to bite his clothing.
Some voices cry, "This way. This way, it is there!" and some standards appeared between the clefts of the mountains with some camels' heads, some mules loaded with baggage, and women covered with yellow veils mounted astride on piebald horses. The panting beasts lay down, the slaves falling quickly on the bales; one unrolled some figured carpets and spread some shining things on the ground. A white elephant caparisoned with a golden net came up shaking the bunch of ostrich feathers attached to his forehead; upon his back among some cushions of blue wool, with crossed legs and eyes half closed, and balancing her head, there was a woman so splendidly clothed that she threw a radiance around her. The crowd prostrated themselves, the elephant bent its knees, and the Queen of Sheba letting herself slide down the length of the
elephant’s shoulder descended on the carpet and advanced towards St Anthony, her robe of gold brocade regularly divided by rows of pearls and of sapphires, her figure closed in a narrow corset heightened by coloured figures which represented the twelve signs of the zodiac. She has some very high pattens, of which one is black sewn with silver stars; the other which is white is covered with golden beads with a sun in the centre. Her large sleeves trimmed with emeralds and birds’ feathers permits one to see her little bare round arm ornamented at the wrist with an ebony bracelet and her hands loaded with rings terminating with nails so pointed that the ends of her fingers almost resembled needles. A flat chain of gold passed under the chin mounts the cheeks, rolls as a spiral headdress about her head, powdered blue, then falling lightly on
the shoulders and holding to the bosom a diamond scorpion which lengthened its tongue between her breasts. Two great light-coloured pearls were held in her ears. Her eyelids were painted black. She had on the left cheek a natural brown spot, and she breathed in opening the mouth as though her corsage restrained her.

She said: "Ah, beautiful hermit, my heart fails! By dint of striking the ground impatiently I have hardened my heels and broken one of my nails! I sent some shepherds who remained on the mountains their hands extended before their eyes, and some hunters who cried thy name in the woods, and some spies who ran through all the roads saying to each one passing, 'Have you seen him?' At night I wept, my face turned towards the wall. My tears at length have made two little
holes in the mosaic, as a plash of sea-water in the rocks, for I love thee! Oh yes, very much!"

She took him by the beard.

"Laugh then, beautiful hermit, laugh then. I am very gay. I play the lyre. I dance like a bee, and I know a mass of stories which I can tell most divertingly one to the other. Thou canst not imagine the long road we have come. There are my asses with the green couriers which are dying from fatigue. They are extended on the ground without motion.

"Since three full moons they have run at an equal pace with a pebble between the teeth for cutting the wind, the tail always straight, the hocks always bent, and always galloping. One has never found any like them. They came to me from my maternal grandfather . . . the Emperor Saharil, son of Iakschab, son of
Iaarab, son of Kastan. Ah, if they live yet we will harness them to a litter for returning quickly. But . . . why? Of what do you dream?"

She examines him.

"Ah, when thou wilt be my husband I will clothe thee, perfume thee and dress thy hair."

Anthony remained motionless, more rigid than a stake, pale as one dead.

"Thou hast a sorrowful look; is it through leaving thy hut? I have left all for you, even King Solomon, who has, however, much wisdom, twenty thousand war chariots and a beautiful beard! I have brought thee my wedding gifts. Choose them."

She walked between the ranks of slaves and merchandise.

"Here is the balm of Genezareth, incense of Cape Gardefan of Ladamon, of
cinnamon and of silphium good to put in the sauces. There is within some embroideries of Assur, some ivories of the Ganges, some purple of Elisa; and that box of snow contains chalibon, wine reserved for the kings of Assyria, and which is drunk pure in the horn of a unicorn. There are some collars, some clasps, some nets, some parasols, some powdered gold of Baasa, some cassiteros of Tartessus, blue wood of Pandis, white furs of Issedonia, carbuncles from the Isle of Palæsmonde and some toothpicks made with the hairs of the tachas, an extinct animal found under the earth. These cushions are from Emath and these mantle fringes from Palmyra. Upon that carpet of Babylon there are . . . but come then! Come then!"

She took St Anthony by the sleeve.

He resisted. She continued:
"This thin cloth of gold which cracks under the fingers with a sparkling noise is the famous yellow cloth brought by the Bactrian merchants; they have forty-three interpreters during their journey. I shall make thee some robes to wear in the mansion. Press the hooks of the sycamore case and give me the little ivory chest which is on my elephant."

Someone took out of a box something round covered with a veil and brought a little chest covered with chased work.

"Wilt thou have the buckler of D-gian-ben-Dgian, the one who built the pyramids? It is composed of seven dragon skins placed one on the other, joined by some diamond screws, the skins have been tanned in the bile of a parricide. It represents on one side all the wars that have taken place since the invention of arms, and on the other all the wars which shall have place
until the end of the world. The thunderbolt rebounds from it as a ball of cork. I am going to put it on thy arm and thou wilt bear it in the pursuit. But if thou knew that which I have in my little box! Turn that. Strive to open it. No one has been able to. Embrace me; I will tell thee."

She took St Anthony by the two cheeks.

He repulsed her with arms extended.

"That was one night that King Solomon lost his head, he rose and going softly ... ."

She imitated a dancing step.

"Ah! ah! beautiful hermit. You shall not know."

She shook her parasol, which made all its little bells jingle.

"And I have many other things yet there. I have some treasures shut up in galleries where one may lose oneself as in a wood. I have a summer palace trel-
lised with roses, and a winter palace in black marble. In the midst of great lakes like seas I have many islands as round as pieces of money all covered with pearl, and the shores are musical from the beating of the waves which roll on the sand. My kitchen slaves take the birds from my aviaries and the fish from my fish ponds. I have some stone carvers continually at work graving my portrait on hard stones, some image makers who cast my statues, some perfumers who mix the juices of plants and of vinegars and beat some pastes. I have dressmakers who cut my stuffs, goldsmiths who make my jewels, hairdressers to invent my head-dress, and attentive painters who sumptuously decorate my mansion with resins which they cool again with fans. I have enough followers to make a harem, enough eunuchs to form an army. I have
armies. I have peoples. I have in my vestibule a guard of dwarfs bearing on their backs trumpets of ivory."

Anthony sighed.

"I have some teams of gazelles, some quartettes of elephants, couples of camels by hundreds, and some mares with manes so long that their feet get within when they gallop, and some beasts with horns so large that they beat down the woods before them when they pasture. I have some giraffes which promenade in my gardens which raise their heads to the side of my roof when I take the air after dinner. Seated in a shell and drawn by dolphins I promenade in the grottoes hearing the water falling from the stalactites. I go to the country of diamonds and my friends the wise men let me choose the most beautiful, then I reascend to earth and return to my home."
She gave a sharp whistle and a great bird descended from heaven and fell down on the summit of her headdress which made the blue powder fall.

His plumage of orange colour seemed composed of metallic scales, his little head ornamented with a tuft of silver represented a human face; he had four wings, the feet of a vulture and an immense peacock's tail which he spread out behind him. He seized the Queen's parasol in his beak, tottered a little before gaining his equilibrium, then bristling all his feathers remained motionless.

"Thanks, beautiful Simorg-anka thou who hast learnt me the hiding-place of the lover. Thanks, thanks, messenger of my heart. He flies as he desires, he makes a tour of the world in a day. He returns at night, he places his feet on my couch; he tells me what he has seen, the seas which
have passed under him, the fish and the vessels. The great empty deserts that he has contemplated from the high heavens, all the harvests which bend under him in the country, and the plants that shoot forth from the walls of abandoned cities."

She wrung her arms languidly.

"Oh! if thou would! if thou would!

"I have a pavilion on a promontory in the middle of an isthmus between two oceans, it is ceiled and wainscotted with glass plates, floored with tortoise shell and open to the four winds of heaven. From the top I see my fleets return and the people that mount the hill with their burdens on the shoulder. We will sleep on down more soft than clouds. We will drink cold drinks in the rind of fruits and observe the sun as through emeralds. Come! . . ."

Anthony stood back.
She approached him and said in an irritated tone: "What? neither riches, nor coquetry, nor love. That is not all you want, eh? But one lascivious, fat, with a harsh voice, with hair the colour of fire and plump, chubby flesh. Preferest thou a cold body with the skin of a serpent, or else great black eyes more dark than mystic caverns? Look at these; my eyes!"

Anthony in spite of himself regarded her.

"All those that thou hast met since the girl of the crossways singing under her lantern, up to the lady shedding roses from the top of her litter, all the imaginations of thy desire demand them. I am not a woman. I am a world. My clothing has only to fall and thou canst discover on my person a succession of mysteries! . . . ."

Anthony snapped his teeth.

"If thou placest thy finger on my
shoulder *that* shall be as a train of fire in thy veins. The possession of the least part of my body will fill thee with a joy more vehement than the conquest of an empire. Advance thy lips! my kisses have the taste of a fruit that shall melt in thy mouth. Ah! if thou was to lose thyself under my hair, near my breasts, thou wouldst be astonished at my limbs and burn by the light of my eyes, between my arms, in a whirlpool of ecstasy. . . .”

Anthony made the sign of the cross.

“Thou disdains! adieu.”

She departed weeping, then returned.

“Are you sure? . . . A woman so beautiful!”

She laughed, and the ape that held the end of her robe upraised it.

“Thou repents, beautiful hermit, and groans! thou wearies but I mock at it. Oh! oh!”
She went with a dancing step, holding her form with her hands.

The slaves defiled before Saint Anthony, the horses, the dromedaries, the elephant, the followers, the mules with their burdens, the little negroes, the ape, the green couriers holding in their hands their broken lilies; and the Queen of Sheba departed, heaving a sort of sigh which resembled a sobbing or foolish laughter.
When she had disappeared, Anthony perceived a child on the threshold of his hut.

"That is one of the servants of the Queen," he thought.

The child is little like a dwarf, short, thickset in body with a miserable aspect, some white hair covered his prodigiously great head, and he shivered under a paltry tunic, guarding in his hand a roll of papyrus.

The light of the moon crossing a cloud fell upon him.

Anthony (observing him from a distance with fear). Who art thou?

The Child replied: Thy old disciple, Hilarion!
Anthony. Thou liest! Hilarion has dwelt since many years in Palestine.

Hilarion. I am returned. It is truly me.

Anthony (approaching and considering him). Nevertheless his features were bright, fresh as the morning, candid, joyous, these are gloomy, old.

Hilarion. Long works have fatigued me.

Anthony. The voice also is different. Has a tone that freezes one.

Hilarion. That is through being nourished with bitter things!

Anthony. And the white hairs.

Hilarion. I have had much trouble!

Anthony (aside). Shall that be possible . . . ?

Hilarion. I was not so far away as thou supposes. The Hermit Paul has made thee a visit each year, during the
month of Schebar. It is just twenty days that the nomads have brought thee bread; thou hast told the day before yesterday a sailor to bring thee three bodkins.

Anthony. He knows all.

Hilarion. Learn also that I have never left thee. But thou passest long periods without perceiving me.

Anthony. How is that? It is true that I have my head so troubled. At night particularly.

Hilarion. All the Capital Sins are come, but their paltry snares break themselves against such a saint as thou.

Anthony. Oh! No!... No. At each minute I fail. I am not one of those in which the spirit is always intrepid, always firm, as the great Athanasius, for example.

Hilarion. He has been illegally ordained by seven bishops!
Anthony. What matters! If he has virtue.

Hilarion. Come then! A proud man, cruel, always intriguing, and finally exiled as a forestaller.

Anthony. Calumny.

Hilarion. Thou denies not that he wished to corrupt Eustates, the treasurer of gifts?

Anthony. It suits some to say that.

Hilarion. He has burnt, in vengeance, the house of Arsene!

Anthony. Alas.

Hilarion. At the Council of Nice he has said, in speaking of Jesus: "The man of the Lord."

Anthony. Ah! that is a blasphemy.

Hilarion. To such an extent has he gone besides as to avow that he understands nothing of the nature of the Word.
Anthony (smiling pleasantly). In fact he has not very high intelligence.

Hilarion. If they had put thee in his place, that would have been a great happiness for the brothers as for thyself. This life aside from all others is bad.

Anthony. On the contrary! The man having a spirit must retire himself from mortal things, action degrades him. I would not cling to the earth—more than by the sole of my feet!

Hilarion. Hypocrite who buries himself in solitude for better delivering himself of his overflowing vices! Thou deprivest thyself of meats, wines, baths, slaves, and of honours, but thou leavest thy imagination to offer thee some banquets, perfumes, some women and applauding crowds! Is not thy chastity a more subtle corruption, and this scorn of the world shows the impotence of thy hate
against it. That is what makes thy life lugubrious and lives like thine. The possession of the truth gives joy. Is it that Jesus was sad? He went among his friends, reposed under the shadow of the olive tree, entered the house of the publican, multiplied the cups, pardoned the sinning woman, healed all the sick. Thee! Thou hast no pity but for thy misery. It is a remorse which agitates thee and a ferocious madness that goes as far as to repulse the caress of a dog or the smile of a child.

Anthony (bursting into sobs). Enough. Enough. Thou troublest my heart too much!

Hilarion. Shake the vermin from thy rags, relieve thyself of thy dirt. Thy God is not a Moloch who demands sacrifice of the flesh.

Anthony. However my suffering is
blest. The cherubim bend down to receive the blood of confessors.

Hilarion. Admire the Montanists then. They surpass all the others.

Anthony. But it is the truth of the doctrine that makes the martyr.

Hilarion. How may it prove the excellence since it witnesses equally for the error?

Anthony. Hold thou thy tongue, viper.

Hilarion. That is perhaps not so difficult. The exhortations of friends, the pleasure of insulting the people, the oaths that one has taken, a thousand circumstances helps this.

Anthony departs from Hilarion. Hilarion follows him.

Hilarion. Besides this manner of dying brings some great disorders. Dionysius, Cyprian and Gregory, remember, and
Peter of Alexandria has blamed it and the Council of Elvira.

**Anthony** (stopping his ears). I hear no more.

**Hilarion** (raising his voice). There it is that thou fallest into thy habitual sin, idleness. Ignorance is the froth of pride. The mob has said: "My conviction is settled, why discuss it?" And people scorn the doctors, the philosophers, tradition and even the text of the law that one ignores. Holdeth thou wisdom in thy hand?

**Anthony.** I always hear it and its burning words fill my head.

**Hilarion.** The efforts for understanding God are superior to thy mortifications. We have no merit but in our thirst for the truth. Religion alone explains not all. Then one must for one's salvation communicate to one's brethren—or better
the Church, the assembly of the faithful, and hear all the reasons disdaining nothing or no one. The sorcerer Balaam, the poet Eschylus and the sybil of Cumæ having announced the Saviour, Denys the Alexandrine received from heaven the order to read all the books. St Clement ordered the culture of Greek letters. Hermes has been converted by the vision of a woman that he had loved.

Anthony. What an air of authority. It seems to me that thou growest . . .

In fact the figure of Hilarion is progressively raised; and Anthony no longer seeing him shuts his eyes.

Hilarion. Recover thyself, good hermit! And let us sit down on that great stone—as at other times when at the first light of day I saluted and called thee "bright star of the morning," and thou commenced to follow my instructions. They
are not finished. The moon lights us sufficiently. I listen to thee.

He has taken a pen from his girdle and on the ground with legs crossed, with his roll of papyrus in his hand, he raised his head towards St Anthony, who was seated near him resting, leaning his forehead. After a moment of silence Hilarion continued:

"The Word of God, is it not confirmed to us by the miracles. Nevertheless, the sorcerers of Pharaoh made miracles; some other impostors can. What is then a miracle? An event which seems to us to be beyond nature."

ANTHONY. It matters little. I must believe the Scriptures.

HILARION. St Paul, Origen and many others have not literally understood them, but if one explains them by allegories they become the share of a small number, and
the evidence of the truth disappears. What is to be done?

Anthony. Leave it to the Church.

Hilarion. Then the Scripture is useless?

Anthony. No! although the Old Testament, I avow, has . . . some obscurities. . . . But the New is resplendent with a pure light.

Hilarion. However, the announcing angel in Matthew appeared to Joseph, whereas in Luke it is to Mary. The anointing of Jesus by a woman takes place, according to the first evangel, in the commencement of His public life, and, according to the three others, a few days before His death! The drink that was offered Him on the cross is, in Matthew, vinegar with some gall, in Mark of wine and myrrh. Following Luke and Matthew, the Apostles must take neither money nor bag, not even sandals and staves;
in Mark, to the contrary, Jesus forbids nothing being carried, and if that is not sandals and staves then I am lost.

Anthony (with astonishment). So indeed!

Hilarion. In contact with the woman with an issue of blood Jesus turned and said, "Who has touched me?" He did not know, then, who touched Him? That contradicts the omniscience of Jesus. If the tomb was watched by guards the women would not have had to inquire for help to upraise the stone from the tomb. At Emmaus he ate with His disciples and made them feel His wounds. That is a human body, a material object, which however went through walls. Is that possible?

Anthony. It would take up too much time to reply to you.

Hilarion. Why received He the Holy
Spirit if He was the Son? What want had He of baptism if He was the Word? How would the Devil be able to tempt Him, God? Do these thoughts never come to thee?

Anthony. Yes . . . often. Benumbed, or furiously, they dwell in my conscience. I crush them; they revive again, choking me, and I sometimes believe that I am cursed.

Hilarion. Then thou hast but the need of serving God?

Anthony. I have always need of adoring Him!

Hilarion (continuing). But outside of dogma, all liberty of research is permitted us. Desirest thou to know the hierarchy of Angels, the virtue of Numbers, the reason of germs and of transformations?

Anthony. Yes! Yes! My thought tries to leave its prison. It seems to me
that on gathering my powers I succeed. Sometimes even during the duration of a flash, I find myself as suspended; then, I fall again!

HILARION. The secret that thou wouldst hold is guarded by the wise. They live in a far-distant country, seated under gigantic trees, clothed in white, and calm as the gods. A warm air nourishes them, leopards all around them walking on the grass, the murmuring of brooks with the neighing of unicorns mixing itself with their voices. You will hear them as the face of the unknown unrolls itself.

ANTHONY (sighing). The road is long, and I am old.

HILARION. Oh! Oh! The wise men are not scarce, there are some near thee; here! Enter in.
IV

And Anthony saw before him an immense basilica. The light projected itself from the farthest end as would a multi-coloured sun. It lit the heads of an innumerable crowd which filled the nave and flowed between the columns towards the lower sides—where one distinguished in compartments of wood some altars, beds, some small chains of little blue stones and some constellations painted on the walls. In the midst of the crowd, some groups here and there stationary, some men standing up on stools, haranguing, the finger raised; some others praying, the arms crossed, are sitting on the ground singing hymns or drinking wine; around a table some of the faithful are
making a love feast, martyrs are unswathing their limbs, showing their wounds, old men leaning on their staves are telling of their travels. There are some Germans, some from Thrace and from Gaul, from Scythia and from the Indies—with the snow on the beard, some feathers on their headdress, some thorns on the fringes of their vestments, their sandals black with dust, their skins burnt by the sun; all their costumes are mingled, the purple mantles and the robes of flax, the embroidered dalmatics, the shirts of hair, some caps of sailors, and some mitres of bishops.

Hilarion advanced into the midst of them. All saluted him. Anthony pressing himself against his shoulder observed these. He saw many women, several dressed as men with the hair shaved. He has fear.

HILARION. These are Christians who
have converted their husbands. Besides, the women are always for Jesus, even the idolaters. Witness Procula the spouse of Pilate, and Poppea the concubine of Nero. Trouble no further! advance!

And others arrived continually.

They multiplied, doubled, light as shadows, all making a great clamour or howlings of rage, mixing cries of love, songs and objurgations.

Anthony (in a low voice). What do they wish?

Hilarion. The Lord has said, "I shall again speak to you of many things." They would know these things.

And he pressed towards a throne of gold with five steps, where, surrounded with eighty-five disciples; all rubbed with oil, thin, and very pale was seated the prophet Manes, beautiful as an archangel, motionless as a statue bearing an Indian robe,
some carbuncles in his matted hair, in his left hand a book of painted images, and under his right a globe. The images represented the creatures which slumbered in chaos. Anthony leant himself to see these.

Then Manes turned his globe and regulating his words on a lyre from whence escaped some crystalline sounds, "The heavenly world is superior, the mortal world inferior.

"It is sustained by two angels, the Splenditene and the Omophore, with six faces. At the summit of heaven is the Most High Divinity, and beneath, face to face, are the Son of God and the Prince of Darkness, the darkness being advanced as far as his kingdom. God took from His essence a virtue which produced the first man, and He surrounded him with five elements. But the demons of dark-
ness deprived him of one part and that part is the soul.

"There is but one soul only—universally spread, it is as the water of a river divided into many arms. It is that which sighs in the wind, grinds in the marble that one saws, howls in the voice of the sea, and weeps tears of milk when one tears the leaves of the fig-tree.

"The souls leaving this world travel towards the stars which are animated beings."

Anthony is forced to laugh. "Ah! Ah! What absurd imagination."

A MAN (without beard and of austere appearance). In what?

Anthony is going to reply. But Hilarion told him, speaking low, that the man was the great Origen and

MANES continued: At first they stop in the moon, where they are purified, afterwards they mount to the sun.
Anthony (slowly). I know not anything . . . which hinders us . . . of that belief.

Manes. The aim of all creation is the deliverance of the celestial ray enclosed in matter. It escapes more easily by perfumes, spices, the aroma of the vine, light things which resemble thoughts. But the acts of life retain it there. The murderer reappears in the body of a Celèphe. The one that kills an animal becomes that animal. If thou plantest a vine thou shalt be bound in its branches. Then, deprive yourself! fasting!

Hilarion. They are temperate, as thou seest.

Manes. They are in meats, less in the herbs. The animals, by generating imprison the spirit in the flesh. Then, fly from the women.

Hilarion. Admire their continence.
Manes. Or rather, see that they be not fruitful—much better that the spirit fall to the earth than languish in carnal fetters.

Anthony. Ah! the abomination.

Hilarion. What signifies the hierarchy of shame. The Church has made of marriage a sacrament!

Saturnin (in Syrian costume). He propagates an order of fatal things! The Father, to punish the revolting angels, ordered them the creating of the world. The Christ is come in order that the God of the Jews, who was one of these angels.

Anthony. An angel? Him, the creator!

Cerdo. Has he not wanted to kill Moses, deceive his prophets, seduce the peoples, spread lies and idolatry.

Marcion. Certainly. The creator is not the true God.
St Clement of Alexandria. Matter is eternal!

Bardesanes (of the Babylonian Magi). It has been formed by the seven planetary spirits.

The Hernians. The angels have made the souls!

The Priscillianians. It is the devil who has made the world!

Anthony (throwing himself back). Horror!

Hilarion (supporting him). Thou despairest too quick, thou ill understandest their doctrine! There is one here who has received his doctrine from Theodas, the friend of St Paul. Hear him!

And on a sign from Hilarion,

Valentinus (in a tunic of silver cloth, a hissing voice and the head pointed). The world is the work of a god in delirium!
Anthony (lowering the head). The work of a god in delirium . . . (After a long silence.) How can that be?

Valentinus. The most perfect of beings, Eons, the Abyss, reposed in the bosom of the Depth with Thought. Of their union came forth Intelligence, which had for company the Truth. Intelligence and Truth engendered the Word and the Life, which in their turn engendered Man and the Church, and that made eight Eons. (He counted on his fingers.) The Word and the Truth produced ten other Eons, that is to say five couples, Man and the Church having produced twelve others, among which the Paraclete, Faith, Hope, Charity, the Perfect and Wisdom. The whole of these thirty Eons constitute the Pleroma or Universality of God. Thus, as the echoes of a voice which is far away, as waves
of perfume which evaporate, as the fire of the sun when it sets, the powers emanating from or leaving the Principal always weaken it. But Sophia, that is Wisdom, desirous of knowing the Father, sprang forth out of the Pleroma; and the Word made then another twain, Christ and the Holy Spirit, which have bound between them all the Eons; and altogether they formed Jesus, the flower of the Pleroma. In the meantime the effort of Sophia to flee had left in the void an image of her evil substance, Acharamoth. The Saviour had pity, delivered her of passions; and from the smile of Acharamoth delivered, the light was born; her tears making the waters, her sadness engendering the black matter. From Acharamoth came the Demiurge, maker of worlds, of heavens and of the devil. He dwelt much lower than the
Pleroma, without perceiving the same, to such an extent that he believed himself the true God, and repeated by the mouths of his prophets: “There is no other God but me.” Then he made the man, and he threw into the soul the spiritual seed which was the Church, reflection of the other Church placed in the Pleroma. Acharamoth one day, arriving at the most high region, joined himself to the Saviour. The fire hidden in the world annihilated all matter, devouring itself, and men, becoming pure spirits, espoused angels!

Origen. Then the Demon shall be conquered and the reign of God commenced!

Anthony withheld a cry and immediately Basilides (taking him by the elbow). The Supreme Being with the infinite emanations is called Abraxas, and the Saviour with all His virtues Kaulakan,
otherwise line upon line, rectitude on rectitude. One obtains the strength of Kaulakan by the aid of certain words inscribed on that chalcedony for facilitating the memory. (And he showed at his neck a little stone on which some strange lines were graven.) Then thou wilt be transported into the invisible, and superior to the law, scorn everything, even virtue! We others, the Pure, we must fly from pain, after the example of Kaulakan.

Anthony. How! and the cross?

The Elkhesaïtes (in hyacinth robe, replying to him). The sadness, the baseness, the condemnation and the oppression of our fathers are effaced, thanks to the mission which has come! One may deny the inferior Christ, the man Jesus, but must adore the other Christ enclosed in His person under the
wing of the Dove. Honour marriage. The Holy Spirit is feminine!

Hilarion has disappeared and Anthony, pushed by the crowd, arrives in front of

The Carpocratians (extended with some women on scarlet cushions). Before returning into the Unique thou passest through a series of conditions and actions. The husband says to the wife, "Render charity to thy brother," and she kisses thee.

The Nicolaitans (assembled around some meats which smoke). That is the meat offered to idols, take some. Apostasy is permitted when the heart is pure; gorge thy flesh with that which it demands, strive to exterminate it with thy debauches! Prounikos the mother of Heaven wallows herself in ignominies.

The Marcosians (with golden rings
and streaming with balm). Enter with us, unite with the Spirit. Enter with us to drink immortality. (And one of them showed him, behind some tapestry, the body of a man terminated by the head of an ass that represents Sabaoth, father of the devil. In mark of hatred he spits. Another one uncovered a very low bed strewed with flowers, saying that the spiritual weddings are about to be accomplished. A third held a glass cup, making an invocation; some blood appeared there.) Ah! there! there the blood of Christ!

Anthony stepped aside, but he is splashed by the water which leapt from a vat.

The Helvidians (holding the head low and muttering). Man regenerated by baptism is impeccable!

Then he passed near a great fire where
warmed themselves the Adamites, completely nude, imitating the purity of Paradise, and so came to the Messalians (wallowing on the flagstones, half asleep, stupid). Oh! Crush us if thou wilt. We budge not. Work is a sin, all occupation bad.

Behind them there the abject Paternians (men, women and children on a heap of filth, lifting up their hideous faces besmeared with wine). The inferior parts of the body made by the devil belong to him. Drink, eat, caress.

But all at once

A Man (clothed in a Carthaginian mantle, bounding into the midst of them with a packet of thongs in his hand; and striking at random right and left, violently). Ah! imposters, brigands, heretics and demons! the vermin of schools. This one, Marcion, is a sailor of Sinope
excommunicated for incest. One has banned Carpocrates as a magician. Ætius has stolen his concubine. Nicolas prostituted his wife, and Manes, who called himself the Buddha—who named himself Cubricus—was skinned alive with the point of a reed so well that his tanned skin swings on the gates of Ctesiphon.

Anthony has recognised Tertullian and darts to rejoin him. Master to me! to me!

Tertullian (continuing). Break the images. Veil the virgins, pray, fast, weep, mortify you. No philosophy! no books! After Jesus, Science is useless!...

All have fled and Anthony saw in the place of Tertullian a woman seated on a bench of stone. She sobbed, her head leaning against a column, the hair hanging, the body weighed down in a long brown
robe. Then they found themselves near each other far from the crowd, and a silence, an extraordinary calmness, is felt, as in the woods when the wind abates and the leaves are still. That woman is very beautiful, faded, however, and pale as a corpse. They regard each other and their eyes send, as it were, a wave of thoughts, thousands of ancient things confused and profound.

Priscilla, at last, begins to speak: I was in the last chamber of the baths and I slept to the buzzing noise of the streets. All at once I heard some clamours. One cried: "That is a magician! That is the devil," and the crowd stopped before our house, in front of the Temple of Esculapius. I lifted myself by the wrists up to the height of the window sill. On the peristyle of the temple there was a man who had a pillory of iron to his neck.
He took some charcoal in a chafing dish, and making on his breast some large marks, and calling, "Jesus, Jesus," the people said, "That is not permitted, stone him." Him, he continued. Some flowers large as the sun were turning before my eyes and I heard in the spaces a harp of gold vibrating. The day fell. My arms loosed from the bars, my body falling, and when he had taken me to his house . . .

Anthony. Of whom then speakest thou now?

Priscilla. But; of Montanus!

Anthony. He is dead, Montanus.

Priscilla. That is not true!

A Voice. No. Montanus is not dead.

Anthony turned and near him, on the other side, on the bench, a second woman was seated—fair this one, and still more pale, with swellings under the eyelids
as if she had wept much. Without him interrogating her,

MAXIMILLA. We returned from Tarsis by the mountains, when in a turning of the road we saw a man under a fig-tree. He cried from afar: "Stay you," and he rushed towards us and abused us, the slaves, meanwhile, running. He burst out laughing, the horses rearing. He was standing upright, the sweat running upon his face, the wind making his mantle flap, and calling us by our names, he reproached us with the vanity of our works, the infamy of our bodies; and he raised his fist to the side of the dromedaries, who carried small silver bells under their jaws. His fury struck terror into me. It was, however, as a pleasure that intoxicated me. The slaves approached him. "Master," they said, "our beasts are fatigued." Then the children began to
weep, "We are hungry." Then there were the women. "We have fear, and the slaves are going." And as no one had replied to the women they disappeared. Him, he spoke. I felt someone near me. That was my husband; I heard the other. Crawling among the stones he cried, "Thou abandonest me?" and I replied, "Yes! Go thou away, begone," in order that I might accompany Montanus.

**Anthony.** A eunuch!

**Priscilla.** Ah! That astonishes thee, coarser heart! However, Magdalen, Joan, Martha and Susannah entered not the couch of the Saviour. Souls, better than the body, are able to clasp and with joy. In order to preserve Eustolie, Leonce, the bishop, mutilated himself—loving better his love than his virility. Besides that is not my fault; a spirit
constrains me: Sotas has not been able to heal me. It is cruel, however! What matters! I am the last of the prophetesses; and after me, comes the end of the world.

Maximilla. He has crowned me with his gifts. Not anyone else does he love as much.

Priscilla. Thou liest! It is me!

Maximilla. No. It is me.

They fight.

Between their shoulders appears the head of a negro covered with a black mantle.

Montanus. Appease you, my doves. Incapable of earthly happiness, we are by this union in spiritual fulness. After the age of the Father, the age of the Son; and I inaugurate the third, that of Paraclete. His light came to me during the forty nights that the heavenly Jeru-
salem has shone in the firmament, above my house, in Pepuza. Ah! how you cried of anguish when the thongs whipped you. How your pained limbs presented themselves to my ardour. How you languished on my breast, from an unrealisable love! It is so strong that it has discovered to you worlds, and you are now able to perceive souls with your eyes.

Anthony made a gesture of astonishment.

Tertullian (returning near to Montanus). Without doubt, since the soul has a body—that which has not a body does not exist.

Montanus. For rendering it more subtile I have instituted some numerous mortifications, three Lents per annum, and for each night prayers, where one closes the mouth—for fear that the breath in escaping may tarnish the thought. One should
abstain from second weddings, or rather from all marriage. The angels have sinned with women.

The Arcontiques (in hair shirts). The Saviour has said, “I am come to destroy the work of the woman.”

The Tatianians (in rush shirts). The tree of evil, that is woman, clothes of skin are our bodies. (And, advancing always on the same side, Anthony met the Valesians extended on the ground with some red patches at the bottom of the belly under their tunics. They presented him with a knife.) Do as Origen and as we! Is it the pain that thou fearest, coward? Is it the love of thy flesh that withholds thee, hypocrite?

And while he is observing these, extended on their backs in pools of their blood

The Caïnites pass near him, shouting in his ear: Glory to Cain! Glory to Sodom!
Glory to Judas! Cain made the race of the strong. Sodom frightened the earth with its chastisement, and it is by Judas that God saved the world. Yes, Judas! without him, no death, no redemption.

They disappeared under the horde of Circoncillians (clothed in wolfskins, crowned with thorns, and carrying clubs of iron). Crush the fruit, drown the child, pillage the rich who finds himself happy, who eats much, beats the poor, who envies the cloth of the ass, the food of the dog, the nest of the bird, and who vexes himself because the others are not as wretched as he. We, the saints, to hasten the end of the world, we poison, burn, massacre! Salvation is in martyrdom. We give ourselves up as martyrs. We tear off with pincers the skin of our heads, we tear our limbs under the ploughs, we throw ourselves into the mouths of bears!
honoured be baptism! Dishonoured be the eucharist! Dishonoured be marriage! Universal damnation!

Then in all the Basilica there is redoubled fury, the Audians shooting arrows against the Devil; the Collyridians throwing to the ceiling some blue veils; the Ascites prostrating themselves; the Marcionites baptising one dead with oil. Near to Appelles, a woman, for explaining better her idea, made one see a round loaf in a bottle; another in the middle of some Sampsians distributed, as a holy wafer, the dust from her sandals. On the bed of the Marcosians strewed with roses, two lovers were embracing; the Circoncillians cutting themselves; the Valesians relenting; Bardesanes singing; Carpocrates dancing; Maximilla and Priscilla uttering some sonorous groanings, and the false prophetess of Cappadocia, quite nude, leaning
on a lion and shaking three torches, howling a terrible invocation. The column swayed as the trunks of trees, the amulets on the necks of the Heresiarchs, criss-crossing with lines of fire, and the walls, backed under the going and coming of the crowd of which each head was a wave which jumped and roared. However, at the depth of the clamour a song arose with some bursts of laughter in which the name of Jesus came in.

These are some plebeian people striking their hands together to mark the cadence. In the midst of them is

Arius (in the costume of a deacon). The fools who declaimed against me pretended to explain the absurd. I have composed some little poems, very droll. People know these by heart in the mills, in the taverns, and the gates. . . . A
thousand times No! the Son is not eternal with the Father, neither of the same substance. Otherwise He would not have said, "Father take from me this cup." "Why do you call me good? God alone is good. I go to my God, to your God." And other words attest his quality of creature. It is demonstrated to us, still further, by all his names: Lamb, Pastor, Fountain, Wisdom, Son of Man, prophetic, the Good Way, Corner-stone!

SABELLIUS. Me, I uphold that both are identical.

ARIUS. The Council of Antioch has decided to the contrary.

ANTHONY. What is then the Word? Who was Jesus?

THE VALENTINIANS. He was the husband of Acharamoth, repentant!

THE SETHIANIANS. He was Shem, son of Noah!
THE TEMPTATION OF ST ANTHONY

The Theodotians. He was Melchisedec.

The Merinthians. He was nothing but a man!

The Apollinarrians. He has simulated the Passion.

Marcellus. He is a development of the Father!

The Pope Calixtus. Father and Son are the two forms of one sole God.

Methodius. He was first in Adam then in man.

Cerinthe. And He rose from the dead.

Valentin. Impossible—His body being heavenly!

Paul of Samosata. He is not God but since His baptism!

Hermogenes. He inhabits the sun.

And all the Heresiarchs make a circle round Anthony, who weeps, his head in his hands.
A Jew (with red beard and the spotted skin of the leper, advancing near to him, laughing horribly). His soul was the soul of Esau! he suffered from disease, and his mother the perfumer she gave herself to Pantherus, a Roman soldier, one night in the harvest-time.

Anthony, quickly raising his head, regards all these without speaking; then walking right up to them: Doctors, magicians, bishops and deacons, men and phantoms, back, back. You are all liars.

The Heresiarchs. We have some martyrs who are more martyrs than thine, prayers more difficult, some bursts of higher love, some ecstasies as long.

Anthony. But not of revelation, not of proofs!

Then all, brandishing in the air rolls of
papyrus, tablets of wood, some morsels of leather, some bands of stuff, and pushing one against the other:

The Cerinthians. Behold the Gospel of the Hebrews!


The Marcosians. The Gospel of Eve!

The Engratites. The Gospel of Thomas!


Manes. The prophecy of Barcouf!

Anthony perceives in a corner full of shadow

The Old Ebionites (dry as mummies, with dull look and white eyebrows. They, saying with a trembling voice): We have known, we others, we have known the carpenter's son! We were of his time, we inhabited the same street. He amused himself with model-
ling little birds in clay without fear of cutting his fingers, helped his father in his work, or gathered for his mother balls of coloured wool. Then he made a voyage into Egypt, from whence he brought back some great secrets. We were in Jericho. When he came to find the eater of locusts they conversed in a low voice without anyone being able to understand them. But it is from that moment that he made the noise in Galilee. (They repeated, trembling): We him have known, we others, we have known.

Anthony. Ah! more, speak! speak! How was his face?

Tertullian. Of an aspect ferocious and repulsive; for he charged himself with all the crimes, all the pains, and all the deformities of the world.

Anthony. Oh no! No! I think, to
the contrary, that all his person had a beauty more than human.

EUSEBIUS of CÉSARÉA. There is indeed in Paneades, against an old ruin in a trench of grass, a statue of stone raised, so people say, by the woman with the issue of blood, but the weather has fretted the face and the rains have spoiled the inscription.

A woman left the group of Carpocratians.

MARCELLINA. Formerly I was deaconess in Rome in a little church, where I showed to the faithful the images in silver of St Paul, of Homer, of Pythagoras and of Jesus Christ. I have kept but His. (She half opened her mantle.) There it is, if thou wishest.

A Voice. He will reappear Himself when we call Him! It is time! Come!

And Anthony felt fall on his arm a
brutal hand, which he followed. He mounted a staircase completely obscure; and after many steps he arrived before a door. Then the one that brought him (is that Hilarion? he knew not) said in the ear of another, "The Lord is coming"—and they are introduced into a chamber with a low ceiling and without furniture.

That which struck him at first, in front of him, was a long chrysolite the colour of blood, with the head of a man, from which escaped some rays, and the word "knoúphi" written in Greek around it; on the other partitions of the chamber, some medallions in polished iron, representing the heads of animals, that of an ox, a lion, an eagle, a dog, and the head of an ass. The lamps of potters' clay, suspended at the foot of some images, made a vacillating light. Anthony by a hole in
the wall perceived the moon, which shone in the distance on the waves, and at the same time distinguished their little regular splashings with the dull sound of a vessel beating against the sides of a quay. Some men crouching their faces under their mantles gave at intervals a stifled barking; some women slumbering, their faces on their two arms that their knees supported, to such an extent lost in their veils that they looked like a heap of clothes along the wall; close to them some children, half naked, covered with vermin, watching with an idiotic air the burning lamps, doing nothing; as if waiting for something. They speak in a low voice of their families or communicate some remedies for their ailments. Many are about to embark at break of day, the persecution becoming too strong. These heathens, however, are not difficult
They believe, the fools, that we adore Knouphis.”

But one of the brothers, all at once inspired, placed himself before the column, where someone had put a loaf, which rose above a basket filled with fennel. The others have taken their places, forming, standing up, three parallel lines.

The Inspired unrolled a bill covered with cylinders intermixed, then commenced: Upon the darkness, the ray of the Word descended and a violent cry escaped, which seemed the voice of the light.

All (replying and swaying their bodies). Kyrie Eleïson!

The Inspired. Man, afterwards, was created by the infamous God of Israel, with the help of those (pointing to the medallions) Astophaios, Oraïos, Sabaoth, Adonai, Eloi Iaô! and he lay
on the mud hideous, weak, unformed, without thought.

**All** (in a plaintive tone). Kyrie Eleïson.

**The Inspired.** But Sophia, compassionate, vivified him with a part of her spirit. Then seeing the man so beautiful God was angered. He imprisoned him in his kingdom, and forbade him the tree of knowledge. The other once more helped him! She sent the serpent who made him disobey that law of hatred. And the man, when he had tasted knowledge, understood heavenly things.

**All** (with strength). Kyrie Eleïson!

**The Inspired.** But Jabdalaoth, to avenge himself, precipitated man into matter, and the serpent with him!

**All** (very low). Kyrie Eleïson!

They then, closing the mouth, kept silent. The draught from the door mixing with
the warm air and the smoke of the lamps causing the wicks to splutter, they are almost extinguished. Some long mosquitoes turn about. Anthony felt agonised, as if feeling a monstrosity floating around him, the fright of a crime nearing accomplishment. But

The Inspired, striking the heels, clapping the fingers, shaking the head, sang with a furious rhythm a psalm to the sound of cymbals, and a shrill piercing flute: Come! Come! Come! forth from thy cave who runs swift without feet, who takes captive without hands, sinuous as the waves, round as the sun, black with spots of gold as the firmament is sown with stars, like the twinings of the vine, like the convolutions of the bowels! Eater of earth! always young! penetrating! honoured at Epidamus, good for men! who has healed King Ptolemy, the soldiers of
Moses, and Glaucus, son of Minos. Come! Come! Come! forth from thy cavern!

All (repeating). Come! Come! Come! forth from thy cavern. (However nothing shows itself.) Why, where is he?

And they talk together and propose means. An old man offers a clump of turf, then an upheaving is made in the basket, the verdure is agitated, the flowers falling—and the head of a python appeared. It passed slowly on the side of the loaf as a circle turning round a disk, motionless, then developing its length it is enormous and of considerable weight. For preventing it touching the ground the men held it against their chests, the women on their heads, the children at the ends of their arms—and its tail, leaving by the hole in the wall, going infinitely as far in the main to the sea, its rings doubling
and filling the chamber. They enclosed Anthony.

The Faithful (putting their mouths against its skin and tearing the loaf which it had bitten). It is thou! It is thou! Raised at first by Moses, broken by Hezekiah, re-established by the Messiah. He had drunk in the waters of baptism, but thou hast left Him in the Garden of Olives, and He then feels all His weakness. Twisted on the arm of the cross, and higher than His head and shining on the crown of thorns, thou regardest Him die. For thou art not Jesus, thou, thou art the Word! Thou art the Christ.

Anthony fainted from horror, and he fell before his hut on some splinters of wood where burnt softly the torch that had slipped from his hand. That commotion made him half open his eyes, and he per-
ceived the Nile rippling and bright under
the light of the moon as a great serpent in
the midst of sands—so much that the
hallucination returns to him. He has not
left the Ophites; they surround him,
calling, carrying some baggage, descend-
ing towards the port. He embarks with
them.

An inappreciable time now passes. . . .
Then the vault of a prison surrounded
him, some bars before him, making
black lines on a blue ground—and at
the sides, in the shadow, some people
weeping and praying, around them some
others who exhorted and consoled; and
without one heard the buzzing of a crowd
and the splendour of a summer's day,
some shrill voices crying water melons,
water, iced drinks, some grass cushions
for sitting on. From time to time some
applause bursting. He felt like walking
on his head. All at once there came a long bellowing, strong and cavernous, like the noise of water in an aqueduct, and he perceived in front, behind the bars of another cell, a lion which walked to and fro—then a line of sandals, of nude legs and fringes of purple, and beyond some crowds of people, staged symmetrically and increasing, enlarging from the lowest which enclosed the arena up to the highest, where masts were placed for supporting a cloth of hyacinth stretched in the air by some cords, some stairs which radiated towards the centre cutting at equal intervals these great circles of stone, their steps disappearing under the seated people, cavaliers, senators, soldiers, plebeians, vestals and courtesans—in hoods of wool, maniples of silk, in tawny tunics, with aigrettes of gems, plumes of feathers, some faces of
lictors: and all that growling, crying, tumultuous, furious, deafening him as an immense boiling vat. In the midst of the arena on an altar a vase of incense was smoking.

Thus the people which surrounded him are Christians condemned to the beasts. The men bearing the red mantle of the priests of Saturn, the women the bandages of Ceres. Their friends dividing bribes of their clothing and rings. To be introduced into prison it is necessary to give much money. What matters, they remain up to the end among the consolers. Anthony observed a man, bald, in a black tunic; he is keeping these in conversation on the nothingness of the world and the felicity of the elected. Anthony is transported with love, he wished an occasion for giving his life for the Saviour, not
knowing if he himself is one of these martyrs. But save a Phrygian with long hair, who keeps the arms raised, all have a sad look. An old man sobs on a bench, a young man dreams, standing, his head lowered.

The Old Man had no wish to pay in the angle of a crossway, before a statue of Minerva, and he considered his companions with a significant regard. He asked: Is it not Peter of Alexandria who has ruled that which one must do when one is in torments? (Then to himself): Ah! that is very hard at my age, my infirmities render me so feeble! However, I should have been able to live as far as another winter yet!

The remembrance of his little garden made him tender-hearted and he looked at the side of the altar.
The Young Man murmurs: I thought of fleeing into the mountains! "The soldiers would have taken thee," said one of the brothers. Oh, I should have done as Cyprian. I should have returned and the second time I should have had more strength, that is sure!

Afterwards he thought of the innumerable days that he might live with all the joys that he had not known, and he looked at the side of the altar. But

The Man in the Black Tunic ran upon him: What scandal! Why, thou a victim? All these women that regard thee dream then! And God sometimes works a miracle. Pionius benumbed the hand of his executioner, the blood of Polycarp extinguished the flame of his wood pile. (He turned towards the old man.) Father, father, thou must edify us by thy death; in retarding it thou committest without doubt
some bad action. Besides the power of God is infinite, perhaps thy example may go to convert the whole of the people!

And in the cell in front the lions passed and repassed, without stopping, in a continuous rapid movement. The largest all at once observed Anthony, started to roar and a vapour went from his mouth. The women are heaped up against the men.

The Consoler goes from one to another: What say you? What sayest thou, if they burn thee with plates of iron, if horses tear thee in quarters, if thy body, coated with honey, was devoured by flies? Thou wouldst have but the death of a hunter surprised in a wood.

Anthony better loved all that than the horrible, ferocious beasts. He believed he was feeling their teeth, their claws; he
heard his bones crack in their jaws. A fighter entered the cell, the martyrs trembled. One alone is unmoved, the Phrygian. He has burnt three temples; and he advanced, his arms raised, the mouth open, the head raised to heaven without seeing anything, as a somnambulist might.

The Consoler cried to him: Stop! stop! The spirit of Montanus takes hold of you.

All (retreating and shouting). Damnation to the Montanist.

They revile him, spitting upon him, and would beat him. The lions rear up, shaking their manes. The people howl, "To the beasts; to the beasts." The martyrs bursting into sobs, embrace. A cup of narcotic wine is offered them. They pass it from hand to hand quickly. Against the gate of the cell another fighter awaits the signal.
It is opened, a lion goes out. He crosses the arena in great oblique steps; behind him in file appear the other lions, then a bear, three panthers, some leopards. They disperse themselves like a flock in a field. The cracking of a whip resounds, the Christians waver, and to finish it their brothers push them.

Anthony closes his eyes. They open, but darkness envelops him. Quickly they are enlightened and he distinguishes a plain arid and stony, as one sees in the neighbourhood of abandoned quarries. Here and there a bunch of shrubs rise up from among the stones to the level of the earth; and some white forms, more indecisive than clouds, are bending over them; others arrive, lightly. Bright eyes shine in the slits of some long veils. By the careless way they walked, and the perfumes which they exhaled, Anthony re-
cognised some ladies. There were also some men, but of an inferior class, for their faces were at the same time artless and grosser.

One of Them (breathing deeply). Ah! this is good, the cool night air in the midst of sepulchres. I am so fatigued with the softness of beds, of the turmoil of the days and the heaviness of the sun.

The servant took from a cloth bag a torch, which she lighted. The faithful then lit some other torches and are about to place them on the tombs.

A Woman (panting). Ah! at last I am here; but what weariness to have espoused an idolater!

Another. These visits to the prisons, the conversations with our brothers, all is suspected by our husbands!—and at the same time we must hide when we make the
sign of the cross; they take it for a magical incantation.

Another. With mine there was every day some quarrels. I would not submit myself to the abuse which he exacted from my body; and at last to avenge himself he has persecuted me as a Christian.

Another. You recall Lucius, that young man so handsome that they drew by the heels behind a chariot, as Hector, from the Esquilian gate as far as the Tibur mountains; and from both sides of the road the blood spotted the bushes. I have gathered these drops, here they are! (She took from her breast a sponge all black, she covered it with kisses, then threw herself on the flagstones, crying): Ah! my friend! my friend!

A Man. It is just three years to-day that Domitilla died. She was stoned in the depth of the Proserpine wood. I have
gathered her bones, which glittered bright in the grass. The earth now covers them. (He threw himself on a tomb.) O my affianced! my affianced!

All the Others (plaintive). O my sister! O my brother! O my daughter! O my mother. (They are kneeling, the face in the hands, or the body all flat, the arms extended; and the sobs withheld upraised their breasts throbhingly; they looked up to heaven, saying): Have pity on my soul, O my God; it languishes in the abode of shadows. Deign to admit it into the Resurrection, that it may enjoy thy light. (Or with the eyes fixed on the stones, they murmured): Appease thou, suffer no more. I have brought thee wine and meats!

A Widow. Here are some cakes made by myself according to taste, with many eggs and double measure of flour! We
will eat together, as at other times. Is it not so?

She carried a little to her lips; and all at once began to laugh in a frenzied, extravagant fashion.

The others, as her, nibbled some morsels, drinking a gulp. They told the histories of their martyr. They doubled their libations. Their eyes drowned in tears, fixed on one another, they stammered from drink and desolation, little by little their hands touching, their lips uniting, the veils half open, and they mixed themselves on the tombs, between the cups and the torches. The heaven commenced to whiten, the mist softening their clothing; and without appearing to know it they departed one from another by different roads into the country.

The sun shone; the grass has grown, the plain is transformed and Anthony
sees clearly beyond some bamboos a forest of bluish-grey columns. These are some trunks of trees provided by one trunk only; from each of its branches descended other branches, which buried themselves in the earth, and the appearance of all these lines, horizontal and perpendicular, multiplied indefinitely, resembling a monstrous timber work, if they had not in places a little fig, with a dark foliage like that of a sycamore.

He distinguished in their forkings some bunches of yellow flowers, some violet flowers, and some ferns like the feathers of a bird. Under the lowest branches he saw here and there the horns of a bubale or the shining eyes of an antelope; some parroquets are roosting, some butterflies flying, some lizards crawling, some flies buzzing; and one heard in the midst of the silence, as it were, the palpitation of a
deep life. At the entrance of the wood on a kind of wood pile is a strange thing—a man—covered with filth, completely nude, more dried than a mummy, his articulations forming some knots at the extremities of his bones, which seemed like sticks. He has strings of shells to his ears, the face very long, the nose like the beak of a vulture. His left arm remained right in the air, no movement in the joint stiff as a stake—and he held himself there for so long a time that some birds had made a nest in his hair.

At the four corners of his pile burnt four fires. The sun is just in front, he contemplates it with eyes wide open; and without observing Anthony.

Brachmanes (from the shores of the Nile). What sayest thou?

Some flames go out from all the
sides by the intervals in some beams; and

The Gymnosophist resumes: Like the rhinoceros I am buried in solitude. I live in the tree behind me. (In fact the great fig-tree presented in its hollowing a natural excavation of the figure of a man.) And I nourish myself from fruits and flowers with such an observance of precepts that not even a dog has seen me eat. As the existence comes of the corruption, the corruption of the desire, the desire of the sensation, the sensation of the contact, I have shunned all action, all contact; and—without budg- ing more than the stone of a tomb, ex-haling my breath by my two nostrils, fixing my regards on my nose and considering the ether in my spirit, the world in my limbs, the moon in my heart—I dream of the essence of the great soul from
whence continually are escaping, as sparks of fire, the principles of life. I receive science directly from heaven as the bird Tchataka, who only quenches his thirst in the rays of the shower. For me now there is no hope, no anguish, no happiness, no virtue, no day, no night, no thou nor me; absolutely nothing. My frightful austerities have made me superior to powers. One effort of my thought may kill a hundred sons of kings, dethrone the gods, upset the world! He said all that in a monotone voice. The leaves around him shrivelling up, some rats on the ground ran away. He slowly lowered his eyes towards the flames which mounted, then added: I have become disgusted with Form; with the Perception—disgusted with knowledge itself; for the thought survives not; and the spirit is but an illusion—as
the rest. All that which is engendered perishes, all that which is dead must revive. Beings actually disappear, dwelling in some wombs not yet formed, and will return on the earth to serve with pain other creatures. But as I have rolled in an infinite multitude of existences under some form of gods, men and animals, I renounce that travel. I will have no more of that fatigue! I abandon the dirty inn of my body, bundle of flesh reddened of blood covered with a hideous skin full of filth; and for my recompense I go at last to a sleep the most profound, the most absolute, into Annihilation. . . .

The flames rose as far as his breast, then they enveloped him.

His head passed through as if by a hole in a wall, his eyes, wide open, always observing.

Anthony raised himself. The torch
on the ground had set light to some splinters of wood and the flames have burnt his beard. Crying out, Anthony stamped on the fire—when it remained no more than a mass of cinders.

Anthony. Where then is Hilarion? he was there. I have seen him! Oh! no, that is impossible. I deceive myself. Why?... My hut, these stones, the sand have not perhaps more reality. I become mad. Be calm! Where was I? Who had I there? Ah! the gymnosophist! That death is common among the Indian sages. Kalanos burnt himself before Alexandria. Another has done the same in the time of Augustus. What hatred of life he must have had. What matters. It is a martyr's intrepidity!... As to that I now believe all that has been told me on the debauches which they occasioned. And before. Yes I remember! the crowd of
heresiarchs. What cries! what eyes! But why such overflowing of the flesh and wanderings of the spirit? It is towards God that they pretend to direct themselves by all these ways! What right have I to curse these, I who stumble? When they have disappeared I shall perhaps learn more. It has all happened so quick. I have not had time to reply. At present it is as if I had in my intelligence more space and more light. I am tranquil. I feel capable. . . . What is that then? I believed I had extinguished the fire. (A flame leapt between the rocks; and immediately a jerky voice made itself heard in the distance in the mountain.) Is that the barking of a hyena, or the sobs of some lost traveller?

Anthony listened. The flame approached him.

And he saw come a woman, who wept,
leaning on the shoulder of a man with a white beard.

She was covered with a purple robe in rags. He was bareheaded as she, with a tunic of the same colour, and carried a vase of bronze from whence rose up a little blue flame. Anthony has fear, and would like to know who is the woman.

The Stranger (Simon). That is a young girl, a poor child that I lead everywhere with me.

He raised the brazen vase.

Anthony considered her by the light of the flame which wavered.

She had on her face the marks of bites, on her arms traces of strokes, her straggling hair hooking in the gaps of her rags. Her eyes appeared insensible to the light.

Simon. Sometimes she remains thus, during a very long time, without speaking,
without eating. Then she revives—and tells marvellous things.

Anthony. Truly.

Simon. Ennoia! Ennoia! Tell that thou hast to.

She turned her eyes as if passing out of a dream, passing her fingers slowly over her eyebrows.

Helen (in a mournful voice). I have remembrance of a region far away of the colour of emerald. One tree alone occupied it. (Anthony started.) Each degree of its large branches held in the air a couple of spirits, the branches around them crossing as the veins of a body; and they observed the life eternal circulate from the roots plunged in the shadow to the top, which passed the sun. Myself on the second branch, I lighten with my face the summer nights.
Anthony (touching his forehead). Ah! Ah! I understand! Her head!

Simon (the finger on his mouth). Hush!

Helen. The sail remained swollen, the oars cleft the foam. He said to me, "What matters if I trouble my country, if I love my kingdom! Thou belongeth to me, in my house!" It was sweet, the high chamber of his palace! He laid himself on an ivory bed and caressing my hair sang lovingly. At the end of the day I perceived the two camps and the watch lights which illumined them, Ulysses at the side of his tent, Achilles, all armed, driving a chariot along the seashore.

Anthony. But, she is entirely mad! Why? . . .

Simon. Hush! Hush!

Helen. They have greased me with ointments and have sold me to people
for their amusement. One night, standing, the lyre in my hand, I was playing dances for Greek sailors. The rain, like a cataract, fell on the tavern, and the cups of hot wine smoked. A man entered without opening the door.

Simon. That was me. I have recovered thee! There, behold her, Anthony, her that people call Sigeh, Ennoia, Barbelo, Prounikos! The spirits that govern the world were jealous of her, and they fastened her in the body of a woman. She has been Helen of Troy, which the poet Stesichorus has cursed the memory. She has been Lucrece, the noble lady venerated by kings. She has been Delilah, who cut the hair of Samson. She has been that daughter of Israel who abandoned herself utterly. She has loved adultery, idolatry, lying, and foolishness. She has prostituted herself to all people.
She has sung in all the crossways, she has kissed all faces. At Tyre, the Syrienne, she was the mistress of thieves, she drank with them during the nights and she hid assassins in her warm bed.

Anthony. Ah! How does that concern me? . . .

Simon (with a furious look). I have rebought her, I tell thee, and re-established her in her splendour to such an extent that Caius Cæsar Caligula has become amorous, since he would sleep with the moon!

Anthony. Ah! well?

Simon. But she is the moon! Has not Pope Clement written that she was imprisoned in a tower? Three hundred persons encircled in the tower, and each of these murderers saw the moon at the same time—well, there is not in the world many moons, nor many Ennoias!
Anthony. Yes. . . . I believe I remember.

And he fell into a reverie.

Simon. Innocent as the Christ who died for men, she is devoted to women. I have preached the renewal in Ephraim, and in Issachar, the length of the torrent of Bizor, behind the lake of Houleleh in the valley of Megiddo, farther than the mountains in Bostra, and at Damascus! There came to me those that were covered with wine, covered with filth, those that were covered with blood, and I have effaced their stains with the Holy Spirit, called Minerva by the Greeks! She is Minerva! She is the Holy Spirit! I am Jupiter, Apollo, the Christ, the Paraclete, the great power of God incarnate in the person of Simon!

Anthony. Ah! Is it thou? . . . It is then thou? But I know thy crimes.
Thou wast born in Gittoi, near to Samaria. Dositheus, thy first master, discharged thee! Thou execrated St Paul for having converted one of thy women; and conquered by St Peter—from rage and terror thou hast thrown into the waves the bag which contained thy artifices.

SIMON. Do you desire them?

Anthony observed him and an inner voice in his breast murmured, "Why not?"

SIMON resumed: He who knows the forces of nature and the substance of spirits must work some miracles. That is the dream of all the sages—and the desire which frets thee, avow it! In the midst of the Romans I have flown in the circus to such a height that no one could see me. Nero ordered me to be decapitated; but it was the head
of a sheep that fell to the ground in place of mine. At last they buried me alive, but I arose the third day. The proof is that I am here! (He gave him his hands to smell. They smelt like a corpse. Anthony moved backwards.) I can make move by themselves, bronze serpents, marble statues to laugh, dogs to speak. I can show thee an immense quantity of gold. I establish kings. Thou seest the people adore me. I can walk on the clouds, on the waves, pass beyond the mountains, appear as a young man, as an old man, as a tiger, as an ant, take thy face, give thee mine, direct the thunder. Thou hearest it? (The thunder roars, lightning follows it.) That is the voice of the Most High! for the Eternal, thy God, is a fire, and all creation operates by the spoutings from that hearth. Thou wert received in baptism— that
second baptism announced by Jesus, and which fell on the Apostles one stormy day that the window was open! (And waving the flame with his hand slowly, as if sprinkling Anthony.) Mother of mercies, thou who uncoverest the secrets to the end that we arrive at our repose in the eighth house!

Anthony cried: Ah! if I had some holy water!

The flame was extinguished, producing much smoke. Ennoia and Simon have disappeared. A mist, extremely cold, thick and foetid, filled the atmosphere.

Anthony (extending his arms as if blind). Where am I? I fear falling into the abyss, and the cross, truly, is too far from me. Ah! what a night! What a night!

Under a gust of wind the fog half opened
— and he perceived two men covered with long white tunics. The first is tall, with a sweet face and grave deportment, his blond hair, parted like that of Christ, falling evenly on his shoulders. He dropped a stick which he carried in his hand; his companion recovered it, making a reverence in the Oriental manner. The last is short, stout, flat-nosed, with a thick-set look, short hair, and a simple face. They are both barefooted and bareheaded, and dusty as men who travel.

**Anthony** (rising up). What do you want? Speak! Or go away!

**Damis** (that is the little man). There, there, good hermit. What do I want? I know of nothing. Here is the master.

He seats himself, the other remains standing.

**Anthony** (resuming). You came from?

**Damis.** Oh! from far—from very far.
Anthony. And you go?

Damis (pointing to the other). Where he will!

Anthony. Who is he then?

Damis. Observe him!

Anthony (aside). He has the look of a saint. If I dare...

The smoke has gone, the weather is very clear, the moon shines.

Damis. What do you dream then, that you speak no more?

Anthony. I dream... oh, nothing.

Damis (advancing towards Apollonius, and making many turns round him, his figure bent, without raising his head). Master, this is a Galilean hermit who demands to know the origin of wisdom.

Apollonius. Let him approach.

Anthony hesitates.

Damis. Approach!

Apollonius (in a thundering voice)
Thou wouldst know who I am, that which I do, and that which I think? Is it not so, child?

Anthony. If these things at all times will be able to contribute to my salvation.

Apollonius. Rejoice thou. I am going to tell thee!

Damis (low, to Anthony). Is it possible? You have, at the first glance of the eye, recognised some extraordinary inclinations for philosophy! I must also profit myself.

Apollonius. I will tell thee at first the long road that I have gone through to obtain the doctrine, and if thou findest in all my life a bad action thou stoppest me, for he must scandalise by his words, who has done ill by his works.

Damis (to Anthony). What a just man!

Anthony. Decidedly. I believe he is sincere.
Apollonius. The night of my birth my mother believed; she saw herself gathering flowers on the shore of a lake, a flash appeared and she brought me into the world to the voice of swans which sang in her dream. Up to fifteen years they had plunged me three times a day in the Asbadee fountain, which water repairs dropsical perjuries, and rubbed my body with the leaves of cnyza for making me chaste. A Palmyrian princess came one night to find me, offering me some treasures which she knew of being in the tombs. A priest of the Temple of Diana killed her with the sacrificial knife, and the governor of Cilicia cried before my family that he would cause my death, but it was he who died three days after, assassinated by the Romans.

Damis (to Anthony, touching him on
the elbow). Eh! What did I tell you? What a man!

Apollonius. I have, during the four years that followed, kept the complete silence of Pythagoreans. Pain the most unforeseen drew not from me a sigh, and at the theatre, when I entered, people stepped aside as from a phantom.

Damis. Would you do that? You?

Apollonius. The time of my proof terminated. I undertook the instruction of the priests who had lost the tradition.

Anthony. What tradition?

Damis. Let him continue! You be quiet.

Apollonius. I have conversed with the Samaneens of the Ganges, with the Astrologers of Chaldea, with the Magi of Babylon, with the Druids of Gaul, with the priests of the negroes; I have sounded the
Scythian lakes, I have measured the greatness of the desert!

Damis. That is true, however, all that! I was there myself!

Apollonius. I have been as far as the sea of Hycranium, I have made the tour of it; and by the country of the Baraomates, where is buried Bucephalus. Coming towards Nineveh at the gates of the city a man approached me.

Damis. Me! Me! My good master, I loved you all at once, you were more sweet than a girl, and more handsome than a god.

Apollonius (without hearing him). He wished to accompany me, serving me as interpreter.

Damis. But you replied that you understood all languages and that you divined all thoughts. Then I kissed the hem of your mantle and I set myself to walk behind you.
Apollonius. After Ctesiphon, we arrived on the lands of Babylon.

Damis. And the governor uttered a cry on seeing a man so pale.

Anthony (aside). What signifies . . .

Apollonius. The King received me standing near a throne of silver in a round hall constellated with stars; and from the cupola, from threads not perceived, were four large golden birds, the wings extended.

Anthony (rising). Is there upon earth such like things as these?

Damis. That is a city, that Babylon! Everyone there is rich. The houses, painted blue, have doors of bronze, with a staircase that descends towards the river (designing on the ground with a stick) as that you see? And then there are such temples, such palaces, such baths, such aqueducts! The palaces are covered with
red copper, and the interior. Ah! if you did but know!

**Apollonius.** On the wall of the septentriion is raised a tower which supports a second, a third, a fourth, a fifth—and there are three others yet! The eighth is a chapel with a bed. No person enters there but the woman chosen by the priests for the god Belus. The King of Babylon made me lodge there.

**Damis.** And hardly anyone regarded me. As I remained alone to promenade the streets I informed myself of their customs. I visited the workshops. I examined the great machines which carried the water into the gardens. But it wearied me; being separated from the master.

**Apollonius.** At last we left Babylon, and by the light of the moon we saw all at once a phantom.

**Damis.** Indeed! It jumped on its iron
shoe, it neighed as an ass, it galloped into the rocks, it cried out at us, it disappeared.

Anthony (aside). What are they coming to I wonder?

Apollonius. At Taxilla, captain of five thousand fortresses, Phraortes, King of the Ganges, showed us his guard of black men five cubits high, and in the gardens of his palace, under a pavilion of green brocade, an enormous elephant that the queens amuse themselves with perfuming, that was the Elephant of Porus which was in full flight after the death of Alexander.

Damis. And which was found in a forest.

Anthony. They speak very much like men who are intoxicated.

Apollonius. Phraortes made us sit at his table.

Damis. What a droll country, the
nobility drinking and amusing themselves by throwing arrows under the feet of a child who dances. But I did not approve.

Apollonius. When I was ready to go away the king gave me a parasol, and said to me, "I have on the Indus a herd of white camels. When you only breathe in their ears they turn about." We descend the length of the river, marching at night by the light of the fireflies which shine in the bamboos, the slave whistling an air to scare the serpents, and our camels bending their loins in passing under the trees as under low doors. One day a black child who held a wand of gold in his hand conducted us to the college of sages. Iacchus, their chief, spoke to me of my ancestors, of my thoughts, of my actions, of my existence. He had been to the river Indus and he
recalled that I had conducted some barques on the Nile in the time of King Sesostris.

DAMIS. No one said anything to me. I know not who I have been.

ANTHONY. They have a vague look as of shadows.

APOLLONIUS. We have encountered, on the sea-shore, the Cynocephales, who were returning from their expedition into the Taprobane island. The warm waves threw before us some blond pearls, the amber cracked under our steps, some skeletons of whales whitened in the crevices of the cliffs, the earth at the end was narrower than a sandal—and after having thrown towards the sun some drops of the ocean we turned to the right for retracing our route. We finally return by the region of the Aromates, by the country of the Gangarides, the promontory
of Comaria, the country of the Sachalites, Adramites and Homarites—then across the Mount Cassaniancas, the Red Sea and the Topazos island, we have penetrated into Ethiopia by the kingdom of the Pygmies.

Anthony (aside). How great the earth is!

Damis. And when we finally returned home, all those that we had formerly known were dead.

Anthony lowered his head. Silence.

Apollonius (resuming). Then they commence to talk of me in the world. The plague ravaged Ephesus; I stoned an old beggar.

Damis. And the plague has gone!

Anthony. How! he chases away the maladies?

Apollonius. At Cnidus I have cured the lovers of Venus.
Damis. Yes, a fool who had promised to marry her. To love a woman passes... But a statue, what folly! Well...

The Master placed his hand on his heart and the love was extinguished.

Anthony. What! He delivers some demons?

Apollonius. At Tarento, they carried to the wood pile a young girl, dead.

Damis. The master, he touched her lips, and she rose up and called her mother.

Anthony. What! He raises the dead?

Apollonius. I have predicted the power of Vespasian.

Anthony. What! He foretells the future?

Damis. He did, there in Corinth.

Apollonius. Being at table with him, at the waters of Baia...

Anthony. Excuse me, strangers, it is late.
Damis. A young man that they called Menippus...

Anthony. No! No! Get you gone.

Apollonius. A dog entered, carrying in his mouth a hand cut off.

Damis. One night in a suburb, he met a woman.

Anthony. You do not understand me? You retire!

Apollonius. He wandered vaguely around.

Anthony. Enough!

Apollonius. They would chase him.

Damis. Menippus then yielded himself to her; they loved.

Apollonius. And beating the mosaic with his tail he deposited that hand on the knees of Flavius.

Damis. But the morning at the school lessons, Menippus was pale.
Anthony (bounding). Ah! Still! They continue . . .

Damis. The master, he said, "O handsome young man, thou fondlest a serpent, a serpent thou caressest." We will all go to the wedding.

Anthony. I am wrong to hear that!

Damis. In the lobby some servants were stirring, the doors opened; no one heard, however, the noise of steps nor the noise of doors. The master placed himself near to Menippus. Immediately the bride was taken with anger against the philosophers. But the golden vessel, the singers, the cooks, the pantlers disappeared, the roof flew off, the walls crumbled; and Apollonius remained alone, standing, having at his feet that woman all in tears. That was a vampire which satisfied handsome young men, in order to eat their flesh—because nothing is
better for these phantoms than the blood of the amorous.

Apolлониус. If thou wilt know the art . . .

Anthony. I wish to know nothing!

Apolлониус. The night of our arrival at the gates of Rome . . .

Anthony. Oh! yes. Speak to me of the city of the popes.

Apolлониус. A drunken man accosted us, who sang in a sweet voice. That was an epithalamium of Nero; and he had the power to kill whoever listened negligently; he carried at his back, in a box, a broken string of the zither of the Emperor. I raised my shoulders and he threw mud in our faces. Then I undid my girdle and placed it in my hand.

Дамис. You were very wrong.

Apolлониус. The Emperor, during the night, made me call at his house. He
played knuckle-bones with Sporus, leaning the left arm on an agate table. He turned himself and frowning his blond eyebrows, "Why fearest thou not me?" he demanded. "Because the God that has made thee terrible has made me fearless," I replied.

Anthony (aside). Something unaccountable frightens me.

Silence.

Damis (resuming, in a shrill voice). All Asia besides could tell you . . .

Anthony (rising). I am ill! Leave me!

Damis. Hear then, he has seen from Ephesus Domitian killed, who was in Rome.

Anthony (forcing himself to laugh). Is that possible?

Damis. Yes, at the theatre, in open day, the fourteenth of the October calendar, all at once he cried, "They kill Caesar,"
and he added from time to time, "He rolls on the ground. He raises himself, he attempts to flee." The doors are closed. "Ah! that is ended! he dies there!" And that day, there, in fact, Titus Flavius Domitianus was assassinated, as you know.

ANTHONY. Without the help of the devil . . . certainly . . .

APOLLONIUS. He had wished me dead, that Domitian! Damis had run away by my order, and I remained alone in my prison.

DAMIS. That was terrible boldness, I must avow!

APOLLONIUS. Towards the fifth hour the soldiers brought me to the tribunal. I had my harangue all ready which I held under my mantle.

DAMIS. We were on the shore of Pouzzoles, we others. We believed you dead; we wept. When all at once, towards
the sixth hour, you appeared, and you said to us, "I am here!"

Anthony (aside). How, him!

Damis (very high). Absolutely!


Apollonius. He is descended from heaven. I, I rise there—thanks to my virtue, which has raised me to the heights.

Damis. Thyane, his native town, has instituted in his honour a temple with some priests.

Apollonius approaches near Anthony and cries in his ears: It is that I know all the gods, all the rites, all the prayers, all the oracles! I have penetrated into the cave of Trophonius, son of Apollo! I have kneaded for the Syracusians the cakes that they carry on the mountains; I have suffered the eighty proofs of
Mithra! I have clasped against my heart the serpent of Sabasius. I have received the scarf of the Cabiri! I have washed Cybele in the waves of campanian gulfs and I have passed three moons in the caverns of Samothrace!

Damis (laughing stupidly). Ah! ah! ah! At the mysteries of the Good Goddess!

Apollonius. And now we recommence the pilgrimage. We go to the North, the coast of the swans and the snows, on the white plain.

Damis. Come! It is the morning, the cock has sung, the horse has neighed, the sail is ready.

Anthony. The cock has not crowed. I heard the cricket in the sand and I see the moon remains in its place.

Apollonius. We got to the South behind the mountains and the great waves, seek-
ing in perfumes the reason of love. Thou inhalest the odour of the myrrhodion which makes the feeble die. Thou bathest thy body in the lake of oil of roses of the Junonia isle, thou seest sleeping on the primroses the lizard, which awakes through all the ages when comes to its maturity, the carbuncle on his forehead. The stars twinkling as bright eyes; the cascades singing as lyres. Some intoxications are exhaled from closed flowers, thy spirit widens among the airs, and in thine heart as on thy face.

**Damis.** Master! it is time; the wind rises, the swallows awake, the myrtle leaf has flown away.

**Apollonius.** Yes! depart.

**Anthony.** No! I remain.

**Apollonius.** Wilt thou that I inform thee where sprouts the plant Balis, which raises the dead?
Damis. Ask him rather of the androdamas which attracts the silver, the iron, the brass.

Anthony. Oh! what I suffer! what I suffer!

Damis. Thou understandest the voices of all the beings, the roarings, the cooings!

Apollonius. I will mount thee on the unicorns, the dragons, on the hippocentaurs and the dolphins.

Anthony (weeps). Oh! oh! oh!

Apollonius. Thou shalt know the demons that inhabit the caverns—those which speak in the woods, those which trouble the waves, those which cause the clouds.

Damis. Fasten thy girdle. Knot thy sandals!

Apollonius. I will explain the reason of some divine forms: why Apollo is standing, Jupiter seated, Venus black in Corinth, square in Athens, conical in Paphos.
Anthony (joining the hands). Oh! That they would go! That they would go!

Apollonius. I will bring before thee the armour of the Gods. We will force the sanctuaries.

Anthony. Help, Lord!

He throws himself at the foot of the cross.

Apollonius. What is thy desire? thy dream? The time then solely for dreaming . . .

Anthony. Jesus, Jesus to my aid!

Apollonius. Wilt thou that I make Jesus appear?

Anthony. What? How?

Apollonius. It shall be Him! None other. He will throw off His crown and we will converse face to face.

Anthony is at the foot of the cross murmuring some prayers, Damis turning round him with wheedling gestures.

Damis. See, good hermit, dear St Anthony! pure man, illustrious man, that one could not praise enough, frighten not yourself; it is a fashion of speech, exaggerated, taken from the Orientals.

Apollonius. Leave him, Damis! (He believes, as a brute, in the reality of things.) The terror which he has of the gods hinders him of understanding and it debases his own god to the level of a jealous king. Thou, my son, leave me not! (He approaches backwards the side of the cliff, passing it, and remains suspended.) Above all the forms, far from the earth and beyond the heavens, resides the world of ideas all full of the Word! With one bound we surmount the space beyond and then thou knowest in its
infinity the Eternal, the Absolute, the Being! Come, give me thy hand.

Both side by side rise in the air softly.

Anthony embracing the cross regards them rising.

They disappear.
ANTHONY (walking slowly). Nebuchad-enesor had not much dazzled me. The Queen of Sheba had not profoundly charmed me. His manner in speaking of Gods inspired the inclination to know them. I remember having seen some hundreds at once in the Isle of Elephantus of the time of Diocletian. The Emperor had ceded to the Nomads a great country on condition that they guarded the frontiers; and the treaty was concluded in the name of invisible powers, for the gods of each people were ignored by other people. The Barbarians having brought theirs, they occupied the sand-hills which bordered the river. One perceived these holding their idols between their arms as
if they were great paralysed children; or better, navigating the middle of a cataract on the trunk of a palm-tree, they showed from a distance the amulets on their necks, and the tattooings on their breasts — and that is not more criminal than the religion of the Greeks, the Asiatics and the Romans! When I inhabited the temple of Heliopolis I have often considered all that there was on the walls: vultures carrying sceptres, crocodiles playing lyres, figures of men with the bodies of serpents, women with the head of a cow prostrated before ithyphallic gods; and their unnatural forms led me towards other worlds. However, as matter has so much power, it must contain a spirit. The spirit of God is attached to His images. Those which have the appearance of beauty may seduce. But the others . . . which are
abject or terrible, why believe in them?

And he saw pass, close to the earth, leaves, stones, and shells, branches of trees, and some vague representations of animals, then some species of dropsical dwarfs; these are some sort of gods. He burst out laughing. Another laugh is heard behind him and Hilarion presented himself—dressed like a hermit, much taller than before, colossal!

Anthony is not surprised at seeing him and at once said: “It must be stupid to adore that!”

Hilarion. Oh! yes, extremely stupid!

Then defiled before them the idols of all nations and all ages, in wood, in metal, in granite, in feathers, in sewed skins, the oldest anterior to the deluge disappearing under some sea-weed which dangled as hairs, some too long for
their base cracking in their joints, and breaking their loins in walking; some others letting sand run through the holes in their bellies. Anthony and Hilarion amused themselves enormously, holding their sides through the force of laughter. Afterwards passed some idols with the profile of a sheep, stumbling on their bandy legs, their eyes half open and stammering as sheep. "Ba! ba! ba!"

Accordingly as these approached the human type they irritated Anthony more. He struck these with blows of the fist, with kicks of the foot, being highly excited. They become frightful with high plumes, eyes like balls, arms terminated by claws, the jaws of a shark. And before such gods they slaughtered men on stone altars; others were pounded in tubs, crushed under chariots, nailed on trees. There was one in red, and
with the horns of a bull which devoured children.

Anthony. Horror!

Hilarion. But the gods always claim some torments. Thine, the same. . . .

Anthony (weeping). Oh! be quiet!

The circle of rocks changes into a valley, a herd of beasts pasture there on the short grass. The hind who conducts them observes a cloud—and throws into the air, in a shrill voice, commanding words.

Hilarion. As he has need of rain he strives by chants to supplicate the King of Heaven to open the fruitful clouds.

Anthony (laughing). There is a foolish pride!

Hilarion. Why then makest thou exorcisms?

The valley becomes a sea of milk, motion-
less and without bounds. In the midst floats a long cradle composed by the coilings of a serpent, of which, all the heads inclining at the same place, shaded a god sleeping on its body. He is young, beardless, more beautiful than a girl, and covered with diaphanous veils. The pearls of his tiara shine softly as a moon; a chaplet of stars makes many turns on his breast—and one hand under the head, the other arm extended, he reposed with a dreamy, intoxicated look.

A woman crouched at his feet, waiting his awakening.

Hilarion. That is the original duality of the Brakhmanes. On the navel of the god the stem of a lotus has shot forth and in its cup appears another god with three faces.

Anthony. Hold! What an invention!

Hilarion. Father, Son and Holy
Spirit make they not the same—one sole person!

The three heads remove and three great gods appear. The first, which is red, bit the end of his toe; the second, which is blue, agitated four arms; the third, which is green, wore a collar of human skulls. In front of them immediately sprang up three goddesses, one enveloped in network, the other offering a cup, the last brandishing a bow. And these gods, these goddesses, increased and multiplied. On their shoulders sprouted some arms, at the end of their arms some hands, holding standards, some axes; some bucklers, swords, parasols, and drums; some fountains spurted from their heads; some herbs descended from their nostrils; on horses, on birds, cradled in palanquins, throned on seats of gold, standing in some niches, they dreamt,
travelled, commanded, drank of wine, breathed of flowers. Some dancers are turning, some giants pursuing monsters; at the entrance of grottoes, solitaries meditate. One distinguished but stars, clouds of streamers, peacocks drinking at some streamlets of powdered gold. The embroidery of pavilions mixed itself with spots of leopards, with coloured rays crossing on the blue air with arrows which flew, and some censers that one waved. And all that developed itself as a high frieze, leaning its base on the rocks and mounting far into the heaven.

**Anthony** (dazzled). What a quantity! What wish they?

**Hilarion.** He who scratched his abdomen with his elephant's trunk, that is the Sun God, the inspirer of wisdom. That other with the six heads bearing the towers and the fourteen arms with javelins, that
is the prince of arms, the Fire Devourer. The old man astride a crocodile goes to wash on the shore the souls of the dead. They are tormented by that black woman with the rotten teeth, dominatress of hell. The chariot drawn by those red mares, driven by a driver that has no legs, promenades in the open sky, the master of the Sun. The Moon God accompanies him in a litter harnessed to three gazelles. Kneeling on the back of a parroquet the Goddess of Beauty presents to Love, her son, her round bosom. Here is, farther off, one who leaps for joy in the fields. Look! look! wearing a dazzling mitre! She runs on the corn, on the waves, mounts into the air, spreads herself everywhere. Between these gods are seated the genii of winds, of planets, months, days and a hundred thousand others! And their aspects are multiplied, their changes rapid,
and there is one that was fish become tortoise; it takes the head of a wild boar, the figure of a dwarf.

Anthony. What to do?

Hilarion. For re-establishing the balance, for combating evil. But life exhausts itself. The forms wear out and their progress must be made in transformations.

All at once appears a man nude, seated in the midst of the sand, his legs crossed. A large halo, vibrating, hangs behind the little curls of his black hair, outlining symmetrically a protuberance at the top of his skull, his very long arms descending straight against his flanks, his two hands, with the palms opened, reposing flat on his thighs, the soles of his feet showing the image of two suns; and he remained completely motionless—in front of Anthony and Hilarion—
with all the gods echeloned on the rocks around him, as if on the gradients of a circus. His lips were half open, and in a deep voice he said: "To deliver the world I have wished to grow up among men. The gods wept when I departed. I have at first sought a woman of a military race, wife of a king, very good, extremely beautiful, her body firm as a diamond, and at the time of the full moon, without the help of any male element, I went with her.

Buddha. At the bottom of the Himalayas a religious centenarian hastened to see me.

Hilarion. A man called Simon, who would not die before having seen Christ!

Buddha. I am one who was led to the schools. I knew even more than the doctors.

Hilarion. . . . "In the midst of the
doctors; and all those that heard him were astonished at his wisdom.”

Anthony made a sign to Hilarion to be quiet.

Buddha. Continually I was meditating in the garden, the shadows of the trees turning, but the shadow of that which sheltered me turned not. Not anyone was able to equal me in knowledge of the Scriptures, the enumeration of atoms, the management of elephants, working in wax, astronomy, poetry, fighting, all the exercises and all the arts. Conforming to usage I have taken a wife; and I passed the days in my palace as king, clothed in pearls under a shower of perfumes, fanned by the fly-fans of thirty-three thousand women, observing my people from the top of my terraces ornamented with resounding bells. But the sight of the miseries of the world has turned me from pleasures.
I have fled. I have begged on the roads, covered with rags, gathered in the tombs, and if there had been a very learned hermit I would have wished to become his slave, to guard his door, and wash his feet. All sensation was annihilated, all joy of languor. Then concentrating my thoughts on greater meditations, I learnt the essence of things, the illusion of forms. I have promptly seen the science of the Brahmins, they are devoured of covetousness under their apparent austerities, rubbing themselves with filth, sleeping on thorns, believing to arrive at happiness by the way of death.

HILARION. Pharisees, hypocrites, whited sepulchres, race of vipers.

BUDDHA. Myself also, I have done some astonishing things, eating by day but a sole grain of rice, and the grains of rice in that time were not larger than at
present; my hair fell off, my body became black, my eyes, sunk in their orbits, seemed like stars perceived at the bottom of a well. During six years I have kept myself motionless, exposed to the flies, to the lions and to serpents; and the great suns, the great showers, the snow, the thunder, the hail and the tempest. I received all that without sheltering myself with the hand. The travellers which passed believed me dead, throwing on me, from a distance, clods of earth! The temptation of the Devil failed me. I have called him. His sons are come—hideous, covered with scales, nauseous as a charnel-house, howling, whistling, bellowing, half choking with arms and bones of the dead, some of them spitting flames by the nostrils, some making darkness with their wings, some carrying chaplets of fingers cut off, some drinking the
venom of serpents in the hollow of their hands; they have the heads of pigs, of rhinoceros, or of drunkards, all sorts of figures inspiring disgust and terror.

Anthony (aside). I have at other times endured that!

Buddha. "Then he sent me his daughters—beautiful, well painted, with girdles of gold, with teeth white as the jasmine, thighs round as the trunk of an elephant. Some extended their arms and stretched to show the dimples in their elbows, some winking their eyes, some making musical laughter, some half opening their vestments. There were some rosy virgins, some matrons full of pride, some queens with a great following of slaves and baggage."

Anthony (aside). Ah! him also? He has known that too!

Buddha. "Having conquered the demon, I have passed twelve years nourishing
myself exclusively on perfumes; and as I have acquired the five virtues, the five faculties, the ten forces, the eighteen substances, and penetrated into the four spheres of the invisible world, intelligence was with me. I became the Buddha, all the gods inclining themselves, those which had many heads lowering theirs at the same time. (He rose, his hand high in the air, and resumed): In view of the deliverance of beings I have made some hundreds of thousands of sacrifices. I have given to the poor robes of silk, some chariots, houses, some heaps of gold and of diamonds. I have given my hands to the maimed, my legs to the lame, my eyes to the blind; I have cut my head for the beheaded. At the time that I was king I have distributed some provinces; at the time when I was Brahmin I scorned no one; when I was a solitary one I have
spoken tender words to the thief who wounded me; when I was a tiger I let myself die of hunger. And in this last existence having preached the law I have nothing more to do. The great period is accomplished. The men, the animals, the gods, the bamboos, the oceans, the mountains, the grains of sand of the Ganges, with the myriads of myriads of stars, all dies; and until some new beginning a flame will dance on the ruins of destroyed worlds.”

Then a giddiness took the gods, they tottered, falling into convulsions, and vomited their existences. Their crowns bursting, their standards flying away. They tore off their qualities, their sexes, throwing over their shoulders the cups from whence they drank their immortality, strangling themselves with serpents vanishing in smoke; and when all had disappeared . . .
Hilarion (slowly). You will see the belief of many hundreds of millions of men. Anthony is on the ground holding his face in his hands. Standing near him and turning his back to the cross, Hilarion observes him.

A long time passes.

Afterwards a singular being appears, having the head of a man upon the body of a fish. He advances straight into the air, and beating the sand with his tail—and this figure of a patriarch with little arms made Anthony laugh.

Oannes (in a plaintive voice). Respect me. I am the contemporary of the origins. I have inhabited the unformed world where slumbered hermaphrodite beasts, under the weight of an opaque atmosphere, in the depths of dark waters, when the fingers, the fins, and the wings were confused, and that some eyes without head floated as
molluscs among some oxen with human face and some serpents with the feet of a dog. Upon the whole of these beings Omorôca, bent as a circle, extended her body of a woman. But Belus cut her clean in two parts, making the earth with one, the heaven with the other, and these two worlds contemplated reciprocally. Myself, the first conscience of chaos, I have sprung up from the abyss for hardening matter, for ruling forms, and I have learnt humanity, fishing, sowing the seeds, writing and the history of the gods. Since then I lived in the pools which remained from the Deluge. But the desert has grown up around them, the wind throwing the sand there. The sun devours them; and I die on my bed of slime observing the stars through the water. I return there. He jumped and disappeared in the Nile.
Hilarion. That is an ancient god of the Chaldeans.

Anthony (ironically). What then were those of Babylon?

Hilarion. Thou mayest see them!

And they found themselves on the platform of a quadrangular tower dominating six other towers, which, narrowing in measure as they rose up, formed a monster pyramid. One distinguished at the bottom a great black mass: the city, without doubt, spreading into the plains. The air is cold, the heaven of a dark blue, the stars in great quantity twinkling. In the middle of the platform stood a column of white stone; some priests in linen robes passing and repassing all around, describing by their manner and evolutions a circular movement, the head raised, they contemplated the stars.

Hilarion (in pointing out many to St
Anthony). There are thirty principals: fifteen above the earth, fifteen below. At some regular intervals one of them darts from the superior regions towards those at the bottom, whilst another abandons the inferior for mounting towards the sublime. Of seven planets, two are beneficent, two bad, three are ambiguous. All in the world depends upon these eternal fires. From their position and their movement one may draw some presages—Pythagoras and Zoroaster have met there. These twelve thousand years men have observed the heavens for better knowledge of the gods.

Anthony. The stars are not gods!

Hilarion. Yes! they say; for the things pass around us. The heaven, as eternity, remains unchangeable.

Anthony. It has a master, however.

Hilarion (showing the column). There
is Belus, the first ray. The Sun, the Male! The Other, which is fructified, is under him!

Anthony perceived a garden lighted by some lamps. He is in the middle of the crowd in an avenue of cypress. To the right and left are some little roads leading towards some huts, settled in a wood of pomegranates with some trellises of reeds. The men for the most part have pointed caps with coloured robes like the plumage of a peacock. There are some people of the north clothed in bear-skins, some nomads in cloaks of brown wool, some pale Gangarides with long curls round the ears, and the ranks appeared as mixed as the nations, for some sailors and stonemasons elbowed princes wearing tiaras of carbuncles and with engraved canes, all walking and spreading their nostrils, gathering with the same desire.
From time to time they arranged themselves to give passage to a long covered chariot, drawn by some oxen, or, there is an ass, shaking on his back a woman packed up in veils, and which disappeared towards the huts. Anthony had fear; he would retire behind, but an unexplainable curiosity led him on. At the foot of a cypress some women were crouched in line on some deerskins, all having for diadem a tress of cords. Some of them, magnificently clothed, called in a high voice to those passing; some, more timid, hiding their faces under their arms; whilst behind them a matron, their mother, no doubt, exhorted them. Some others, the head enveloped in a black shawl and the body entirely nude, seemed from afar statues of flesh. When a man there has thrown some money on their knees, they lifted themselves, and one
heard some kisses under the foliage, sometimes a great shrill cry.

Hilarion. These are the virgins of Babylon which prostitute themselves to the goddess.

Anthony. To what goddess?

Hilarion. That goddess there. Behold!

And he saw at the bottom of the avenue, on the threshold of an illuminated grotto, a block of stone representing a secret part of a woman.

Anthony. Ignominy! What abomination, giving a sex to God!

Hilarion. You imagine Him as a living person!

Anthony retires into the darkness, he perceived in the air a luminous circle placed on some horizontal wings.

A species of ring surrounded, as a girdle too loose, the waist of a little man wearing a mitre, carrying a crown in his hand.
and the lower part of his body disappeared under some great feathers spread as a petticoat. That is

Ormuz, the god of the Persians. He vaults and cries: I have fear: I have a glimpse of his mouth. I have vanquished thee, Ahriman, but thou recommencest. At first thou revoltest against me; thou hast made perish the oldest of creatures, Kaiomortz, the Man Bull. Then thou hast seduced the first human couple, Meschia and Meschiane, and thou hast spread darkness in the hearts, thou hast pressed towards the heavens thy battalions. I had mine, the people of the stars, and I contemplated from below my throne all the stars eche-loned. Mithra, my son, inhabits an inaccessible place. He there receives the souls, sending them forth and rising each morning for scattering his riches.
The splendour of the firmament was reflected by the earth. The fire shines on the mountains—image of the other fire from which I have created all beings. To guard against soiling we burn not the dead; the bird's beak carries them towards heaven. I have ruled the pastures, the labours, the woods of sacrifice, the form of cups, the words that must be said during sleeplessness; and my priests were continually in prayer in order that their homage had the eternity of God. They purify with water; offer some bread on the altars; one confesses in a high voice his crimes. Homa himself gives drink to men for communicating to them his strength. During that the spirits of heaven combated the demons, the children of Iran pursued the serpents. The king whom a numerous court served on the knees, represented my person, carrying
my headdress. His gardens had the magnificence of a celestial earth and his tomb represented the slaughter of a monster—emblem of the Good which exterminates the Evil. For I must one day, thanks to time without bounds, definitely conquer Ahriman. But the interval between us two disappears; the night rises! To me, the Amschaspauds, the Izeds, the Ferouers! To help Mithra! take thy sword Caosyac, who must return for the universal deliverance, defends me! What? . . . No one! Ah! I die! Ahriman, thou art the master!

Hilarion, behind Anthony, restrained a cry of joy—and Ormuz plunges into the darkness. Then appeared

The Great Diana of the Ephesians (black with eyes of enamel, the elbows to the flanks, the forearms by the side, the hands open. Some lions rampant on her
shoulders; some fruits, some flowers, and some stars crossing on her breast; much lower she developed three rows of breasts; one perceives the white light of a silver disk, round like a full moon, at the back of her head).

Where is my temple? Where are my amazons? What have I then . . . me the incorruptible, an exhaustion takes hold of me!

Her flowers fade; her fruits, too ripe, fall away. The lions, the bulls, bend their necks; the stags slaver exhaustingly; the bees, buzzing, die on the ground. She pressed, one after another, her breasts. All are empty. She then returned into obscurity, and in the distance some voices murmured, grumbling, roaring, braying, and bellowing. The thickness of the night is augmented by some breaths, the drops of a warm shower falling.
Anthony. Ah! that is good, the perfume of palms, the tremblings of green leaves, the transparency of the brooks! I would rest myself flat on the earth for joy of feeling it against my heart; and my life absorbing its eternal youth!

He heard a noise of castanets and cymbals; and in the middle of a rustic crowd some men, clothed in white tunics with red bands, brought an ass, richly harnessed, the tail ornamented with ribbons the shoes painted; a box covered with a housing of yellow cloth shaking on its back between two baskets. One received offerings, eggs, grapes, pears and cheeses, fowls, little monies; and the second is full of roses, that the leaders of the ass strewed before him in marching. They have pendants in their ears, great cloaks, the hair plaited, the cheeks painted, a crown of olive fixed firm in
their foreheads by a medallion with figures. Some daggers are passed through their girdles, and they shake whips with ebony handles, having three thongs trimmed with small bones. Then behind the cortege, placed on the ground straight as a candelabrum, a great pine which burnt by the summit, and the lower branches of which shaded a small sheep. The ass is stopped. They remove the housing; there is underneath a second covering of black felt. Then one of the men in white tunics begins to dance, playing some crotals; another kneeling before the box beats a tambourine and

The Oldest of the Troupe commences: Here is the good goddess, the deity of the mountains, the grandmother of Syria! Approach, brave people. She procures joy, heals the sick, sends inheritance, and satisfies the amorous. It is we who
promenade her in the country in fine or bad weather. Often we sleep in the open air and not every day have we our table well served. The thieves inhabit the woods, the beasts dart out of their caverns, the roads bordering the precipices are slippery. See there! see there! (They raise the covering and one sees a box encrusted with small stones.) Higher than the cedars she hovers in the blue ether, more vast than the wind she surrounds the world, her breathings are exhaled by the nostrils of tigers, her voice grumbles under the volcanoes. Her anger is the tempest, the pallor of her features has whitened the moon. She ripens the harvests, she swells the rinds, she makes sprout the beard. Give her something, for she detests the avaricious.

The box is half open; and one dis-
tistinguishes, under a pavilion of blue silk, a little image of Cybele—sparkling with spangles, crowned with towers, and seated in a car of red stone drawn by two lions. The crowd press to view it.

The Arch Priest (continuing). She loves the resoundings of drums, the stamping of feet, the howling of wolves, the sonorous mountains and the deep gorges, the flower of the almond, the pomegranate, and the green figs, the dance which whirls, the flutes, the sweet sap, the salt tear—the blood. To thee! to thee! mother of mountains! (They whipped themselves with their whips, and the strokes resounded on their breasts; the skins of the tambourines vibrated and burst. They took their knives and cut and slashed their arms.) She is sad. Let us be sad. It is for her pleasure that I must suffer. By that your sins shall be remitted. The
blood washes all. Throw in the drops as if flowers. She demands that of another—or one pure!

The Arch Priest raises his knife on the sheep.

**Anthony** (held with horror). Slaughter not the lamb!

A wave of purple spurted.

The priest sprinkled the crowd, and all there—including Anthony and Hilarion—ranged around the tree which burnt, observing in silence the last pulsations of the victim. From the midst of the priests went forth A Woman—exactly like the image enclosed in the little box. She stopped on perceiving a young man wearing a Phrygian cap. His thighs are clothed in narrow pantaloons open here and there by some regular lozenges closing some knots of colour. He leant his elbow against one of the branches of
the tree, holding a flute in his hand, in a languorous position.

Cybele (placing her two arms around his waist). To rejoin thee I have gone through all the regions—and the famine ravaged the country. Thou hast deceived me! No matter. I love thee! Warm again my body! We will unite!

Atys. The spring returns no more. O mother eternal! In spite of my love, it is not possible for me to penetrate thy essence. I would cover me with a robe painted as thine. I envy thy bosoms swelling with milk, the length of thy hair, thy vast flanks. Go thou away! My virility brings me horror!

Men and women change their vestments, embracing; and that whirlwind of blood-stained flesh departs, whilst the voices, lasting always, become more clamorous and strident, such as one hears at funerals.
A great catafalque hung with purple, bearing at its summit a bed of ebony and surrounded with torches and baskets in filigree of silver, and verdant with lettuce, mallows and fennel; upon the steps, high and low, some women are seated, clothed all in black, the girdle unfastened, the feet bare, and holding, with a melancholy air, some great bouquets of flowers; by the ground, at the corners of the raised floor, some alabaster urns full of myrrh, smoking slowly.

One distinguishes on the bed the corpse of a man. The blood runs from his thigh, his arms hang—and a dog which howls licks his nails. The line of torches, pressed too close, hinders the view of his features; and Anthony is seized by anguish. He has fear of recognising someone. The sobs of the women are stayed, and after an interval of silence:
All (in time, singing). Beautiful! beautiful! he is beautiful. Enough of sleep. Raise the head! Stand! Breathe our bouquets! they are narcissus and anemones, gathered in thy gardens for thy pleasure. Revive, thou makest us fear! Speak! What desirest thou? Wilt thou drink of wine? Wilt thou sleep in our beds? Wilt thou eat of loaves of honey formed like little birds? Press his lips, kiss his breast! Hold! hold! Feelest thou then our fingers, loaded with rings, which run on thy body; and our lips which seek thy mouth; and our hair which sweeps thy thighs; god who swoons, deaf to our prayers. (They start some loud cries, tearing the face with the nails, then keeping silent, and one hears always the howling of the dog.) Alas! alas! the black blood runs on thy snowy flesh. There are his knees so twisted. His sides
sunken, the flowers of his face have softened the purple. He is dead! Weep! we are desolate!

They come along in file, waving between the torches their long hair, looking from a distance like black and blond serpents—and the catafalque is lowered softly to the level of a grotto, a dark sepulchre which opens from behind.

Then—

A Woman came leaning over the corpse. Her hair, which she has not cut, envelops her from her head to her heels. She pours forth many tears so that her pain must be not as that of the others, but more than human, infinite. Anthony dreams of the mother of Jesus.

She said: Thou that escapes from the East and takest me in thy arms all trembling with dew, O sun! The doves fly on the azure of thy mantle, our kisses make
breezes in the leaves and I abandon myself to thy love and enjoy the pleasure of my weakness. Alas! alas! Why goeth thou, to run on the mountains? In the autumn equinox a wild boar has wounded thee. Thou art dead, and the fountains weep, the trees droop, the winter wind whistles in the naked brushwood. My eyes will close from the darkness of thy covering. Now thou inhabitest the other side of the world near to my most powerful rival. O Persephone; all that is beautiful descends towards thee and returns no more.

During the time that she was speaking her companions have taken the dead to descend to the sepulchre. He remains in their hands. It was but a corpse of wax.

Anthony experienced relief.

All is vanished—and the hut, the rocks, the cross have reappeared. However he
saw from the other side of the Nile a woman standing in the middle of the desert. She kept in her hand the bottom of a long black veil, which hid all her figure, carrying in her left arm a little child, which she nursed. At her side a great ape is crouched on the sand. She raised her head towards heaven; and in spite of the distance one heard her voice.

Isis: O Neith, commencement of things, Ammon, lord of eternity, Ptpa, demiurge, Thoth his intelligence, Gods of Amenti, particular triads of nomes, sparrow-hawks in the azure, sphinx at the side of the temples, ibis standing between the horns of oxen, planets, constellations, shores, murmurs of the wind, reflections of the light, teach me where to find Osiris! I have sought by all the canals and all the lakes, much farther still, as far as Byblos, the Phœnician. Anubis with straight
ears bounded around me, barking and searching with his muzzle the tufts of the tamarinds. Thanks, good Cynocephale, thanks. (She gave to the ape two or three friendly pats on the head.) The hideous Typhon with red hair had killed him and cut in pieces. We have recovered almost all his limbs. She uttered some shrill lamentations.

Anthony is furious and throws some pebbles, injuring her. Immodest! go away, begone, go away!

Hilarion. Respect her. That was the religion of thy ancestors, thou has carried its amulets in thy cradle.

Isis. Formerly when the summer returned the inundation chased towards the desert the impure beasts. The dykes opening, the barques half choked, the earth panting drinking the river with intoxication. God with the horns of a bull
thou spreadst on my breast and one hears the bellowing of the eternal cow. The seed-time, the harvests, the threshing of corn and the vintages regularly succeed after their alternate seasons. In the nights, always pure, large stars radiated, the days were bathed in unvariable splendour. One saw as a royal couple, the sun and the moon on each side of the horizon. We enthroned them both in a more sublime world, twin monarchs, espoused since the breast of the eternity—him holding a sceptre with head of cornucopia, I a sceptre with flower of the lotus, standing one with the other, the hands joined, and the crumblings of empire changed not our attitude. Egypt spread itself under us, monumental and serious, long as the corridor of a temple with obelisks: to the right some pyramids; to the left my labyrinth; in the middle and everywhere
avenues of monsters, some forests of columns of heavy pylons flanking some gates which have on their summit the globe of the earth between two wings. The animals of his zodiac find themselves in his pastures, filling by their forms and colours his mysterious writings. Divided into twelve regions as the year is in twelve months—each month, each day, having its god, it reproduced the unchangeable order of heaven, and man in expiring lost not his form, but, saturated with perfumes, became indestructible, going to sleep during three thousand years in an Egyptian silence. One of these descended by some stairs leading to halls where were reproduced the joys of the good, the tortures of the wicked, all that has place in the third invisible world. Ranged the length of the walls the dead in the painted coffins awaiting their turn,
and the soul exempt from migrations continues its drowsiness until the awakening to another life. Osiris, however, returns to see me sometimes, his shadow has made me mother of Harpocrates. (She contemplated the child.) That is him! These are his eyes. This is his hair with ramshorn tresses. Thou recommencest his works, we shall reflower as does the lotus. I am always the great Isis, not yet has anyone raised my veil. My fruit is the sun! Sun of springtime, some clouds obscure thy face. The breath of the typhoon devours the pyramids. I have first now seen the sphinx in flight, it galloped like a jackal. I seek my priests—my priests in linen mantles with great harps, which carry a mystic vessel ornamented with pegs of silver. More fêtes on the lakes, more illuminations on my delta! more cups of
milk at Philæ! Apis, since long ago has not restored. Egypt! Egypt! thy great gods, motionless, have their shoulders whitened by the ordure of birds, and the wind which passes over the desert rolls the ashes of thy dead! Anubis, guardian of the shadows, leave me not. (The Cynocephale has vanished. She shakes her child.) But . . . what hast thou, thy hands are cold, thy head droops!

Harpocrates is dying.

Then she uttered into the air a cry so shrill, dismal and heartrending that Anthony responded by another cry and opened his arms to support her.

She is no longer there. He is now crushed with shame.

All that which he had been seeing confounded his spirit. It was as the heaviness of a voyage, the uneasiness of intoxication. He wanted to hate; however a vague
pity softened his heart. He fell to weeping abundantly.

Hilarion. Who then makes thee sad?

Anthony (after having sought in himself). Sometimes I think of all the souls lost by these false gods!

Hilarion. Do you not find that they are . . . that sometimes . . . they have a resemblance to the true?

Anthony. That is a ruse of the devil for the better seducing of the faithful, he attacks the strong by the means of the spirit, the others with the flesh.

Hilarion. Frantic love hastens the destruction of the body—and proclaims by its weakness the extent of the impossible.

Anthony. What does that matter to me! My heart is filled with disgust before these celestial gods always occupied with carnage and incests!

Hilarion. Recall thou in the Scriptures
all the things that scandalise thee, because thou knowest not their meaning. These gods under their criminal forms may contain the truth. It remains to be seen. Turn thou aside!

Anthony. No! no! that is a peril!

Hilarion. Thou wishedest just now to know these. Is it that thy faith wavers under lies? What fears have thou?

The rocks in front of Anthony have become a mountain. A line of clouds cuts them in half, and above appears another enormous mountain all green, that inequally hollows into valleys, and bearing at the summit in a laurel wood a bronze palace with tiles of gold, with capitals of ivory. In the middle of the peristyle, on a throne, was Jupiter, colossal, with torso nude, holding victory in one hand and thunder in the other; and his eagle between his legs raised its head. Juno, near him, rolled
her great eyes, surmounted by a diadem from whence escaped, as a vapour, a veil floating in the wind. Behind was Minerva, standing on a pedestal, leaning herself against her lance. The skin of the Gorgon covered her breast and a robe of linen descended in regular folds as far as the nails of her toes; her eyes, of a sea-green colour, shone under her visor, regarding afar, attentively. To the right of the palace the old Neptune astride a dolphin, beating with his fins a grand azure, which is the heaven or the sea, for the perspective of the ocean continues the blue ether, the two elements mixing themselves; on the other side, Pluto, ferocious in a mantle the colour of night, with a tiara of diamonds and a sceptre of ebony, is in the midst of an island surrounded by the circumvolutions of the Styx; and that river of shadows goes into the darkness, which makes under
the cliff a great black hole, an abyss without form; Mars clothed in brass brandishing with a furious air his large buckler and sword; Hercules, lower down, contemplating, leaning on his club; Apollo, his face radiant, driving, his right arm stretched over four white horses who are galloping; Ceres in a chariot drawn by oxen. She advances towards him, a sickle in her hand. Bacchus comes behind her on a very low car softly drawn by some lynx; beardless, with some vine leaves on his forehead, he passes, holding a vessel overflowing with wine; Silenus at his side trotting upon an ass; Pan, with pointed ears, blowing into his syrinx; the Mimallonides striking some tambours; the Menades throwing flowers; the Bacchantes turning their heads backwards, the hair flowing; Diana, in short turned up tunic, going from the wood with her nymphs. At the end of a cave Vulcan
beat the iron between the Cabiri; here and there these old rivers, leaning on some green stones, were overflowing their urns; the muses standing singing in the valleys. The Hours, of equal size, holding each by the hand, and Mercury is placed obliquely on a rainbow with his wand, winged heels and hat. But above the stairway of the gods, among the clouds as of feathers which scroll in turning, letting fall some roses, Venus Anadyomene regards herself in a mirror, her eyes sliding languorously under her eyelids, that are a little heavy. She has grand blond hair, which falls on her shoulders, small breasts, slim figure, the hips wide, like the sides of a lyre, the thighs round, some dimples around the knees, and delicate feet. Not far from her mouth a butterfly is flying. The splendour of her body makes all around her a halo of brilliant pearl, and all the rest of
Olympia is bathed in a rosy dawn which insensibly gains the heights of the blue heaven.

Anthony. Ah! my breast swells. A joy that I know not descends upon me as far as the depths of the soul. How beautiful that is! That is beautiful!

Hilarion. They the Gods stoop from the heights of the clouds to lead the swords; one meets them at the roadside, one possesses them in the house; and that familiarity deifies life, they have no aim but that of being free and good. The large vestments facilitate the nobleness of attitude. The voice of the orator, exercised by the sea, beats in sonorous waves the marble porticoes. The Ephebe, rubbed with oil, wrestles all nude in the open sun. The most religious action was the exposing of pure forms. And these men respected their wives, the aged, the needy. Behind
the temple of Hercules there was an altar to Pity. They immolate some victims with flowers around the fingers; the remembrance of the same finds exemption from the rotting of the dead; nothing remains but a few ashes. The soul, mixed with the ether without bounds, was sent towards the gods.

(He leant towards Anthony's ear.) And they lived alway! The Emperor Constantine adored Apollo. Thou refindest the Trinity in the mysteries of Samothrace, the baptism with Isis, the redemption with Mithra, the martyr of a god to the fêtes of Bacchus. Proserpine is the virgin, Aristéus Jesus.

Anthony remains with the eyes lowered. All at once he repeats the symbol of Jerusalem—as he remembers it, and heaving with each phrase a long sigh:

"I believe in one only God, the Father
—and in one Lord only, Jesus Christ—first-born son of God—who was incarnate and made man, who has been crucified—and buried—who is risen to heaven—who comes to judge the living and the dead—whose kingdom shall have no end—and in one Holy Spirit—and one sole baptism of repentance—and one sole Holy Catholic Church — and in the resurrection of the flesh—and in the life eternal!"

Immediately the cross grew in height, and, piercing the clouds, it projected a shadow on the heaven of the gods.

All growing pale Olympus has moved. Anthony distinguishes against its base and half lost in the caverns where upholding the stones on their shoulders some vast bodies chained. These are the Titans, the Giants, the Hecatonchyres, the Cyclops.
A Voice is raised, indistinct and formidable—as the rumour of waves, as the noise of a wood under the tempest and the bellowing of the wind in the precipices. We know that, we others. The Gods must finish. Uranus was mutilated by Saturn, Saturn by Jupiter. He shall be himself annihilated, each in his turn. That is destiny!

And little by little they become sunk in the mountain, disappearing.

However, the tiles of the golden palace fly off.

Jupiter descended from his throne, the thunder at his feet smoking as a firebrand nearly extinguished, and the eagle stretching its neck gathers with its beak some feathers which fell.

I am then no longer master of things, very good, very great god of Phratries, and of Greek peoples, ancestor of all the
kings, Agamemnon of heaven. Eagle of apotheoses, which wind that blows from Erebus, blows you to me, or flying on the field of Mars thou bringest me the soul of the last of the emperors? I will have no more of these men. Let them keep to earth and act to the level of its baseness, they have now the hearts of slaves, forgetting the injuries, the ancestors, the oath; and everywhere triumphs the foolishness of crowds, the mediocrity of the individual, the horde of races. (His breathing swelled his sides till they near burst and he twisted his fists.) Hebe, in tears, presented him a cup. He seized it. No! No! While he has, for however long, a head enclosing the thought which hates disorder and conceives the law—the spirit of Jupiter lives! (But the cup is empty. He leans a long time on his finger nails.)
One drop more! When ambrosia fails the immortals must go.

It slips from his hands, and he leans against a column feeling himself dying.

Juno. It is not necessary to have so many amours! Eagle, bull, swan, shower of gold, cloud and flame, thou hast taken all these forms, thy light wandering in all the elements, losing thy great strength. Divorce is irrevocable this time, and our domination, our existence is dissolved.

She departs in the air.

Minerva has no longer her lance, and some crows which nestle in the sculpture of the frieze, turning around her, bite her helmet: Let me see if my vessels cutting the brilliant sea have returned into my three ports, why the countries are found deserted and what do now the girls of Athens. In the month of Hecatombeon
my entire people came towards me led by some magistrates and some priests then advanced with white robes and chitons of gold, the long files of virgins holding cups, baskets and parasols; then the three hundred oxen for the sacrifice, some old men waving green boughs, some soldiers half choked with armour, some ephebes chanting their hymns, also flute players, and lyre players, some rhapsodists, and dancers; at last to the mast of a trireme rolling on wheels my great sail embroidered by virgins that one had nourished during a year in a particular manner; and when it was shown in all the streets, all the places, and before all the temples, in the midst of the cortege, singing always, it mounted step by step the hill of the Acropolis, touching the Propylæa and entering into the Parthenon. But a trouble seized me, me the industrious.
Why, I have not an idea. I trembled more than a woman.

She perceived a ruin behind her, uttered a cry, and striking her forehead fell to the ground backwards.

Hercules has thrown off his lion skin, leaning on his feet and arching his back, biting his lips, he makes efforts unmeasured for supporting Olympus, which crumbles: I have conquered the Cecrops, the Amazons and the Centaurs. I have killed many kings, I have broken the horn of Acheloüs, a great river god. I have cut some mountains. I have reunited oceans, the slaves' countries I have delivered. The empty countries I have peopled. I have run through Gaul, I have crossed the desert where one has thirst, I have defended the gods and I have separated myself from Omphale. But Olympus is too heavy. My arms fail me, I die.
He is crushed under the rubbish.

Pluto. That is thy fault, Amphytrionade. Why hast thou descended into my empire? The vulture that ate the entrails of Tetyos raised its head. Tantalus had the lips moistened, the wheel of Ixion was stopped. However the Keres extended their nails for retaining the spirits. The Furies in despair twisted the serpents of their hair, and Cerberus attached by thee with a chain, rattled, and slavered with his three mouths. Thou hast left the gate half open, some others are come, the day of man has penetrated Tartarus. . . . He founders in the darkness.

Neptune. My trident no longer raises tempests, the monsters which caused fear are rotting in the depths of the waters. Amphitrite, whose white feet ran upon the foam, the green Nereides that one distinguished on the horizon, the scaly
Sirens that stopped the vessels to tell stories, and the old Tritons that blew their conch shells, all are dead, the gaiety of the sea has disappeared. I survive them not; let the vast ocean cover me.

He vanishes into the azure sea.

Diana, clothed in black and in the midst of her dogs become wolves. The independence of great woods has intoxicated me with the smell of beasts and the exhalations of the marshes. The women, which I most protect, bring into the world dead children. The moon trembles under the incantations of sorcerers. I have desires of violence and immensity. I will drink poisons, lose myself in vapours, in dreams.

And a passing cloud bears her away.

Mars (bareheaded, bloody). At first I fought alone, provoking by some abuse an army indifferent to countries and for
the pleasure of carnage. Then I have had some companions, they marching to the sound of flutes, in good order, with equal step, breathing above their bucklers, the aigrette high, the lance oblique. They threw themselves into battle with the great cry of the eagle, the war was as joyous as a festival. Three hundred men opposed themselves to all Asia. But they returned these barbarians and by myriads, by millions. Since the number, the machines and the ruses are more strong, much better finish as a brave one.

He kills himself.

Vulcan (wiping the sweat from his limbs with a sponge). The world is cooling itself. I must warm the brooks. The volcanoes and rivers will roll the metals under the earth! Beat more hard! With both arms, with all your strength.

The Cabiri wound themselves with
their harnesses, blind themselves with sparks, and groping their way wander into the shade.

**Ceres** (standing in her car, which is carried by wheels having wings to their middle). Stop! stop! People had much right to exclude these strangers the Atheists, the Epicureans, and the Christians. The mystery of the basket is unveiled, the sanctuary profaned, all is lost. She descends on a rapid slope, despairing, crying and tearing the hair. Ah! Lie! Daïra is not given to me. The bell calls me towards the dead. That is another Tartarus. One returns not. Horror!

The abyss engulfs her.

**Bacchus** (laughing frantically). What matters! the woman of the Archonte is my wife. The law even falls in drunkenness. To me the new song and many forms! The fire which devoured my
mother runs in my veins. Let it burn more strong though I should perish! Male and female, good for all, I deliver myself to you Bacchantes! I deliver myself to you Bacchantes! and the vine is enrolled to the trunks of trees. Howl, dance, twist you, unloose the tiger and the slave; with ferocious teeth bite the flesh!

And Pan, Silenus, the Satyrs, the Bacchantes, the Mimallonides, and the Menades with their serpents, their torches, their black masks, throwing their flowers, uncovering an idol, kissing it, shaking their tympanums, striking their tyrses, pelting with shells, crunching some raisins, strangling a goat and tearing Bacchus.

Apollo (whipping his coursers, whose white hairs fly off). I have left behind me Delos the stony pure to such an extent that all there now seem dead, and I strive
to join Delphos before its inspiring vapour be completely lost. The mules browse on its laurels. The python strays and returns not. By a most powerful concentration I shall have some sublime poems, some everlasting monuments, and all matter will be penetrated with the vibrations of my zither. (He plucks the strings, they burst, cutting his finger. He throws it away, beating his team with fury):

No! enough of forms! much farther yet! To the summit! into the pure idea! But the horses—backing, rearing, breaking the chariot, and impeded by the parts of the pole, the breaking of the harness, he falls towards the abyss head downwards. The heaven is obscured.

Venus (blue with the cold, shivering). I make with my girdle the horizon of the Hellene. Its fields glow with the roses of my cheeks, its shores were cut after the
form of my lips, and its mountains are whiter than my doves thrilling under the hand of statuaries. One refinds my spirit in the ordering of fêtes, the arrangement of head-dresses, the dialogues of philosophers, the constitution of republics; but I have cherished the men too much. It is love that has dishonoured me. (She falls, weeping.) The world is abominable. O Mercury, inventor of the lyre and conductor of spirits, carry me off.

She put a finger on her mouth and describing an immense parabola fell into the abyss. One saw no more. The darkness was complete.

Anthony. Many times already during that thou wert speaking thou seemedst to be growing. Why? explain to me. Thy appearance frightens me. (Some steps approach them.) Who is that then? (Hilarion extends his arms.) Look!
Anthony by a pale ray of the moon distinguishes an interminable caravan which defiles on the crest of some rocks, and each traveller, one after another, falls from the cliff into the gulf. These are at first the three great gods of Samothrace, Axieros, Axiokusa, Axrokeros, in purple masks, raising their hands.

Esculapius advances with a melancholy air, without seeing Samos and Telesphore, whom he questions with anguish. Sosepolis, in the form of a python, rolls his wings towards the abyss, Doespœne in giddiness throws himself there, Britomartis howling with fear, holding fast to the meshes of his net; the Centaurs arriving at a great gallop bowling pell mell into the black hole. Behind these, walking lame, the lamentable troop of nymphs. Those of the field are covered with dust; those of the woods, trembling
and bleeding, wounded by the axes of the wood-cutters; the Gelludes, the Stryges, the Empuses, all these infernal goddesses in confusion, their crooks, their torches, their vipers, forming a pyramid—and at the summit, on a vulture skin, Eurynome, bluish grey as the flies on the meat, devoured her arms. Then in a whirlwind disappeared at the same time Orthia, the sanguinary Hymnie of Orchomenie, the Laphria of Patreens, Aphia of Egina, Bendis of Thrace, Stymphalia with thigh of a bird. Triopas in place of three eyeballs has no more than three orbits, Erichthonius with soft legs creeping like a cripple on his wrists.

HILARION. What happiness, is it not, to see all these in abjection and agony! Mount with me upon that stone and thou shalt be like Xerxes passing in review.
his army; down there, far away in the midst of fogs, perceivest thou that giant with blond beard who lets fall a sword red with blood? That is the Scythian Zalmoxis, between two planets; Artim-pasa—Venus, and Orsiloche—the Moon. Farther off, emerging from pale clouds, are the gods they adore with the Cimmerians, and beyond, even Thule! Their great halls were warm and with the light of naked swords tapestried the roof; they drank of hydromel in ivory horns, they ate the liver of whales in dishes of copper beaten by demons; or better they heard the captive sorcerers making use of their hands on harps of stone. They are tired, they are cold, the snow weighs down their bearskins and their feet show themselves by the rents in their sandals. They wept for the fields, or the hillocks of turf where they took breath in
the battle, the long vessels, of which the prow cut the mounts of ice and the skates that they had for following the globe to the poles.

A squall of rime enveloped them.

Anthony lowered his look to the other side and he perceived—detaching in black on a red ground—some strange personages, with chincloths and gauntlets, who sent up some balls, throwing one above the other, making grimaces and dancing frantically.

HILARION. These are the gods of Etruria, the innumerable Æsars. Here is Tages, the inventor of auguries, he essays with one hand to augment the divisions of heaven, and with the other he leans on the earth. Nortia, considering the wall where she sank some nails to mark the number of years, the surface is covered and the last period
accomplished. As two travellers, storm-beaten, Castor and Pollux are sheltering, trembling under one cloak.

Anthony (closing his eyes). Enough! enough!

But passing in the air with a great noise of wings the victories of the capital—hiding their faces in their hands and losing the trophies hanging on their arms, Janus, master of twilights, flying on a black ram,—and of his two faces one is already putrefied, the other sleepy from fatigue. Summanus—god of obscure heaven and who has no longer a head—presses against his heart an old cake in the form of a wheel. Vesta, under a ruined cupola, striving to rekindle her extinguished lamp. Bellona, cutting her cheeks, without making spurt the blood which purifies her devotees.

Anthony. They fatigue me!

Hilarion. Formerly, they amused you!
(And he showed him in a bunch of lotuses a woman nude—with four feet, as a beast protected by a black man holding in each hand a torch.) That is the goddess of Aricia, with the demon Virbius. Her priest, the king of the woods, must be an assassin—and the slaves in flight, despoilers of the dead; the brigands of the Salaria way, the slopes of pont Sublicius, all the vermin of the garrets of Suburra have not devotion more dear. The noble ladies of the time of Mark Antony preferred Libitina.

And he showed him undersome cypresses and some roses another woman—clothed in gauze. She smiled, having around her some pick-axes, and litters, some black hangings, all the utensils of funerals. Her diamonds shining from afar, under some cobwebs. The Larves as skeletons showing their bones between the branches, and
the Lemures, which are phantoms, extending their bats' wings. On the side of a field the god Term, uprooted, leaned, covered with filth. The rustic gods departed, weeping: Sartor, Sarrator, Vervactor, Collina, Vallona, Hostilinus, all covered with little capuchin mantles, each carrying either a mattock, a fork, a hurdle, or a boar spear.

Hilarion. It was their spirit that made the town prosper, with their dove houses, their parks of dormice and snails, their poultry yards protected by nets, their warm stables lined with cedar. They protected all the poor people who toiled with irons on their legs on the stones of the Sabine. Those which called the pigs at the sound of the trumpet, those which gathered the grapes at the top of the elms, those who drove by the little roads the asses loaded with litter, the
labourer panting on the handle of his plough; these prayed to strengthen his arms, and the cowmen under the shade of the limes, near their calabashes of milk, alternated their eulogies upon flutes of rosewood.

Anthony sighed. And in the midst of a chamber upon a platform he discovered a bed of ivory surrounded by some people who held torches of fir.

These are the gods of marriage, they wait upon the bride. Domiduca must bring her to the home. Virgo unfastens the girdle, Subigo extends her upon the bed, and Praema opens her arms and speaks some sweet words in her ear. But she comes not! and they dismiss the others. Nona and Decima, sick watchers, the three Nixii accoucheurs, the two nurses, Educa and Potina—and Carna, cradle-maid, with bunch of hawthorn to keep the child from
bad dreams. Later Ossipago would make firm the knees. Barbatus gives the beard, Stimula, the first desires, Volupia, the first enjoyment. Fabulinus learns it to talk, Numera to count, Camœna to sing, Consus to reflect. . . . The chamber is empty and there remains no one by the side of the bed but Nœnia—centenarian—mumbling by herself the complaint that she howled at the death of old men. But very soon her voice is dominated by some shrill cries. These are

The Domestic Lares (crouching at the end of the hearth, clothed in dogskin, with some flowers around the body, holding their hands closed against their cheeks, and weeping as much as they are able). Where is that portion of food that they give us at each repast, the good cares of the servant, the smile of the mother and the gaiety of the little children play-
ing with the bones on the mosaics of the court? Then becoming tall they hang to our breast, their ball of gold or of copper. What happiness when, the night of a triumph, the master, on returning, turns towards us his timid eyes! He tells of his combats, and the narrow house was more proud than a palace, more sacred than a temple. But they were sweet, the family repasts above all, the day following the Feralia! In the tenderness for the dead all discords were appeased; and they embraced and drank to the glories of the past and to the hopes of the future. But the ancestors of painted wax behind us were covering slowly with mouldiness. The new races, punish us for their deceptions. They have broken the jaw; under the teeth of rats our wooden bodies have crumbled. And these innumerable gods. Seeing to the doors, the kitchen,
the cellar, the baths disperse on all sides—under the appearance of enormous ants which trotted, or great butterflies which flew.

Crepitus makes himself heard: Me also they honoured; formerly they made me some libations. I was a god! The Athenian saluted me as a presage of fortune, whereas the Roman cursed me with raised fists, and the Pontiff of Egypt, abstaining from beans, trembled at my voice and paled at my odour. When the military vinegar ran on beards not shaven, when one regaled himself with acorns, peas and raw onions, and morsels of goat cooked in the rancid butter of shepherds, without harming his neighbour, no one was uncomfortable, the solid food making the digestions resounding. In the country sunlight men relieve themselves with slowness. Thus I pass with-
out scandal as the other wants of life, as Mena torments the virgins and the soft Rumina, who protects the bosom of the nurse swelling with blue-grey veins. I was joyous, I made laughter, and expanding himself with ease on account of me, the guest exhaled all his gaiety. I have had my proud days. Aristophanes promenaded me on the theatre, and the Emperor Claudius Drusus made me sit at his table. Amongst the nobility I have circulated majestically; but at present I am confined to the populace—and they cry again my name.

And Crepus departs, uttering a groan.

Then a clap of thunder.

A Voice. I was the God of Armies, the Lord, the Lord God! I have unfolded on the hills the tents of Jacob, and fed in the sands my people, which fled. It is I who burnt Sodom; it is I who engulfed
the earth under the Deluge. It is I who drowned Pharaoh with the princes, sons of kings, the chariots of war and the drivers. Jealous God I execrate the other gods. I have ground the impure, I have beat down the superb; and my desolation ran from right to left as a dromedary that is loose in a field of maize. For delivering Israel I chose the simplest, some angels with wings of flame speaking in the bushes. Perfumed with nard, cinnamon and myrrh, with transparent robes, and shoes with high heels, some women with fearless hearts went to slaughter the captains. I have graven my law on some tables of stone. It enclosed my people as in a citadel. That was my people. I was God, the earth was mine, the men were mine, with their thoughts, their works, their tools and their posterity. My ark
reposed in a triple sanctuary behind some purple curtains and lighted candelabras. I had to serve me a whole tribe which waved sweet censers, and the high priest, in a hyacinth robe, bearing on his breast some precious stones disposed in symmetrical order. Misfortune! Misfortune! The holy of holies is open, the veil is rent, the perfumes of the sacrifice are lost to all the winds, the jackal howls in the sepulchres, my temple is destroyed, my people are dispersed, they have strangled the priests with the cords of their habits, the women are captives, the vases are all melted. (The voice, departing): I was the God of Armies, the Lord, the Lord God!

Then there was a great silence, a deep night.

Anthony. All have passed.

There remaineth me.

Someone said: And Hilarion is before
him, but transformed, beautiful as an archangel, luminous as a sun, and tall to such an extent that to see him . . .

Anthony threw back his head: Who then art thou?

Hilarion. My kingdom is of the dimension of the universe and my desire has no bounds. I am going about always to free the spirit and weigh the worlds, without hatred, without fear, without pity and without God. They call me Science.

Anthony (throwing himself backward). Thou must be much more . . . the devil!

Hilarion (fixing on him his eyes). Wilt thou see him?

Anthony, not taking himself further from that look, is seized by the curiosity of the devil. His terror augments, his inclination is unmeasured: If I see him however. If I see him? . . . (Then in a
spasm of anger.) The horror that I have within me is rid of for ever—yes!

A forked foot shows itself. Anthony has regret. But the devil has thrown him on his horns and carried him off.
VI

He flew under him, extended as a swimmer, his two wings fully opened and hiding him entirely, seeming like a cloud.

Anthony. Where am I going? Just now I have seen the form of the Cursed. No, a cloud carries me, perhaps I am dead and I mount towards God? . . . Ah! I breathe well! The immaculate air swells the spirit. No more of heaviness! No more of suffering, and below, under me the thunder bursts, the horizon is enlarged, rivers crossing it. That blond spot is the desert, that flake of water the ocean, and other oceans appear, some immense regions that I know not. Here are black countries that smoke like
braziers, the zone of snows always obscured by some fogs. I strive to discover the mountains where the sun each night goes to rest.

The Devil. The sun never rests!

Anthony is not surprised at that voice. It seemed to him an echo of his thoughts—a response of his memory. However, the earth took the form of a ball and he perceived it in midst of the azure, it turned on its poles in turning around the sun.

The Devil. Is it not then the centre of the world? Pride of the man humble thyself!

Anthony. And now I hardly distinguish it. It is so confused with the other fires. The firmament is but a tissue of stars. They mount still. Not any noise, not even the croakings of eagles. Nothing, and I try to hear the harmony of the planets.

The Devil. Thou hearst not these! Thou seest not, no more the antichton of
Plato, the hearth of Philolaus, the spheres of Aristotle, nor the seven heavens of the Jews with the great waters above the vault of crystal.

ANTHONY. Below, it appears solid as a wall. I penetrate it; on the contrary I sink there!

And he arrives before the moon, which resembles a morsel of glass round, full of light, motionless.

THE DEVIL. That was, in other times, the abode of spirits; the good Pythagoras garnished the same with birds and magnificent flowers.

ANTHONY. I see naught there but desolate plains, with extinct craters under a heaven all black. Let us go towards the stars of radiance more soft in order to contemplate the angels, who hold these stars at the end of their arms as if torches.

(The Devil carries him to the midst of
These attract and at the same
time they repulse. The action of each
results from others,—without the means
of an auxiliary, by the force of a law, the
only virtue of order.

Anthony. Yes. Yes, my intelligence
embraces that. That is a joy superior to
the pleasures of tenderness. I pant, stupe-
fied, before the enormity of God.

The Devil. As the firmament, which
rises as we mount, it grows under the
ascension of thy thoughts, and thou feelest
thy joy augmented, after that discovery of
the world, in the enlargement of the in-
finte.

Anthony. Ah! higher! higher! still!
The stars were multiplied, sparkling.
The milky way, at the zenith, developed
itself as an immense girdle having some
holes at intervals: in some cracks of its
clearness are lengthening spaces of dark-
ness. There are some showers of stars, some trains of golden dust, some luminous vapours which float and dissolve. Sometimes a comet passes all at once, then the tranquillity of innumerable lights recommences. Anthony with open arms leant on the two horns of the devil thus occupying all the outward side. He recalled with disdain the ignorance of ancient days, the mediocrity of his dreams. These then were near him, these luminous globes which he contemplated from below! He distinguished the crossings of their lines, the complexity of their direction; he saw these come from a distance—and suspended as some stones in a sling describing their orbits, and their hyperboles. He perceived with one look only the Southern Cross, and the Great Bear, the Lynx and the Centaur, the cloudiness of the Dorade, the six suns in the con-
stellation of Orion, Jupiter with his four satellites and the triple ring of the monstrous Saturn, all the planets, all the stars that men discovered. Later he filled his eyes from their lights, he surcharged his thoughts, calculating their distances. What is the aim of all that?

The Devil. There is no aim! Why should God have an aim? What experience has power to instruct him, what reflection determines him? Before the commencement he would not act and now it would be useless.

Anthony. He has created the world, however, once by His Word.

The Devil. But the beings which people the earth came there successively. Even in heaven new stars shoot forth; different effects from various causes.

Anthony. The variety of causes is the will of God.
The Devil. But admitting in God many acts of will, that is admitting many causes and destroys His unity. His will is not separable from His essence, He cannot have another will nor power to have another essence—and since He exists eternally, He acts eternally. Contemplate the sun. From its sides escape high flames throwing off sparks, which, dispersing themselves, become other worlds; and farther than the last, and beyond these depths where thou perceivest nothing but the night, some other suns are whirling; behind these there some others, and still others indefinitely.

Anthony. Enough! enough! I have fear I am going to fall into the abyss.

The Devil, stopping himself and swinging softly. The Nothing is not, the Void is not; everywhere there are bodies that move themselves on the unchangeable foundation of the Extent—and, if it was
bounded by something, it could not be unbounded, but a body; it has no limits!

Anthony (gaping). No limits!

The Devil. Mount into the heaven ever and ever, thou’lt never attain the summit! Descend below the earth during thousands of thousands of ages, thou wilt never arrive at the bottom, since there is no bottom, no summit, no high, no low; any Termination and Extent are found comprised in God, who is not a portion of space of such or such greatness but immensity!

Anthony (slowly). Matter... then... is a part of God.

The Devil. Why not? Thou canst not know where it ends?

Anthony. On the contrary, I prostrate myself. I crush myself before His power.

The Devil. And yet you speak to Him, you give Him even such virtues as Good-
ness, Justice, Clemency, instead of admitting that He possesses all the perfections. To conceive something beyond is conceiving that a God beyond God! (He is, then, the Sole Being, the Sole Substance.) If that Substance divided it would lose its nature, God would no longer exist. It is then as indivisible as infinite. If it had a body it would be composed of parts, it would not be one, it would not be infinite. Therefore it is not a person?

Anthony. But what do you tell me? My prayers, my sobs, the sufferings of my flesh, the transports of my holy ardour . . . has all that been spent on space, on a lie, uselessly, like the cry of a bird in the air or the stirring of dead leaves? (He weeps.) Ah! no! There is above and beyond all Someone, a great soul, a Lord, a father whom my heart adores and who must love me!
The Devil. You desire God not to be God; for if He felt love, anger or pity He would pass from His perfection to a perfection that would be greater or less. He cannot descend to a sentiment.

Anthony. One day, nevertheless, I shall see Him.

The Devil. With the Blessed, is that not so? When the Finite and the Infinite play together!

Anthony. There must be a paradise for the good as there is a hell for the evil!

The Devil. Does the exigence of your reasoning make the Law of Things? Without doubt Evil is indifferent to God since the earth is covered with it. Well; is it through impotence that He endures this or through cruelty that He preserves it? Do you think that He is continually readjusting the world as if it were an
imperfect thing, and that He watches the movements of all from the flight of the butterfly to the thought of a man? If He has really created the universe His providence is superfluous. If His providence exists the creation is defective. But good and evil only concern you, as the day and the night, pleasure and pain, death and birth. The Infinite alone is permanent!

The devil’s wings now extend over space.

Anthony sees no more. He swoons: A horrible coldness penetrates to my very soul. It is like a death deeper than death and I am in the immensity of the shadows. They enter into me!

The Devil. But things only happen to thee through the intermediary of thy spirit, and like a concave mirror it deforms things, and all means of verifying their exactness are lacking to thee. Never wilt thou know
the universe of its full extent; in consequence thou canst not have an idea of its cause, or have a true idea of God, or even be able to say that the universe is infinite, for it is necessary first to know the Infinite!

Form is perhaps an error of thy senses, substance an imagination of thy thought. But are you sure you see at all? Are you even sure you live? Perhaps there is nothing! The devil takes Anthony and looks at him, ready to devour him. Adore me then! And curse the phantom that you name God!

Anthony lifts his eyes in a last movement of hope. The devil then abandons him.
VII

Anthony discovers himself lying upon his back. The sky becomes light: Is that dawn or moonlight? (He rises, only to fall.) I feel as though all my bones were broken. Why? Ah, the devil! I remember. He repeated all that I learned of the old Didymus, Xenophanes, Heracleitus, Nelissus, and Anaxagoras upon the Infinite Creation, and the impossibility of knowing! And I believed that I should be able to unite myself to God! (He laughs bitterly.) Ah, madness, madness! Is it my fault? Prayer seems intolerable! My heart is drier than a rock! Formerly it overflowed with love! . . . The sand in the morning smoked towards the horizon like a thurifer. At sunset flowers of fire grew around the cross—and in the midst of the
night it often seemed to me that all beings and all things gathered together in the one great silence and adored the Lord with me. Oh, charm of prayers, O happy ecstasy; gifts from the sky, where are you now? I recall a voyage I made with Ammon to find a solitude for monasteries. It was the last night of the journey and we pressed on together, side by side, singing hymns but not talking. As the sun sank lower and yet lower, the two shadows of our bodies became lengthened like two obelisks growing greater before us. With the pieces of our sticks, here and there we planted a cross to mark the place of a cell. Night came slowly and its black waves spread over the earth, whilst an immense rose colour still remained in the sky. Even when I was a child I amused myself with stones constructing a hermitage. My
mother wondered at me, distressed. Her body is now at rest. . . . (He sobs.)

And where is now Ammonaria? Perhaps disrobing, her hair falling around her hips like a black fleece. . . . I am in a state of revolt. In the midst of chagrin passion tortures me. Two tortures at once. It is too much. I cannot endure it. (He gazes at the precipice.) The man who fell would be killed. Nothing could be more easy to do. One sole movement is necessary.

Then there appeared

An Old Woman. (Anthony leaped up, thinking it was his dead mother. But this woman was older, thinner.) Come forward (she said), what holds you back?

Anthony. I fear to commit a sin!

The Woman. But the King Saul is killed! Razias is killed, Saint Pelagia of Antioch is killed, Domine of Aleppo and
two daughters, three other saints all are killed and all self-destroyed! Then remember all the confessors who rushed impatiently to death, in order to enjoy death quicker. The virgins of Milet strangled themselves. The philosopher Hegesias at Syracuse preached the gospel of death so well that people left the lupanars to hang themselves in the woods.

Anthony. Yes. It is a strong passion. Many anchorites succumb to it.

The Woman. Do a thing then that will make you equal to God! He made you, destroy His work by your courage. Do it freely. The joy of Erastratus would not be greater. Your body has been racked by your soul; be revenged. You will not suffer. It will soon end. What do you fear; a large black hole?

Anthony listens in silence, then there appears
Another Woman (beautiful and young. Wonderful. At first he thinks it is Ammonaria. But she is bigger, honey-blond, with red lips and heavy-lidded eyes. She murmurs): Live then. Enjoy. Solomon taught the joy of life. Go where your heart leads and follow the desire of the eyes.

Anthony. What joy to find! My heart is outworn. My eyes are wearied, troubled.

She. Go to Racotis, the main street, and press a door painted blue. In the hall-way a woman will meet you, dressed in white and gold, with flowing hair. With her you shall know all joy.

The Old Woman. There is no need to first possess joys in order to realise their bitterness! Merely to see them from afar disgusts. One becomes wearied by the same actions repeated, the length of the days, the ugly world, the stupid sun!

The Young Woman. Hermit, you
will find gems among the pebbles, fountains in the sand, a pleasure in the things you despise. There are places so lovely in the world that one could caress them. And you believe in the resurrection of the body, joy in eternity!

While she speaks a bat circles around the head of the elder woman. The young woman becomes rounder, her eyes roll voluptuously.

The Old Woman (with open arms). Come. I am Consolation, repose, forgetfulness, Eternal Serenity!

The Young Woman (offering herself). I am Joy, Life, Happiness for ever.

Anthony turns to flee.

Both hold him.

Then the elder woman turns into the skeleton of Death, the younger into the personification of Lust.

Anthony stands between them.
Death speaks: Now or later, it matters not, you are mine, as all things are. I have vanquished even the Son of God!

Lust. Do not resist. I am all-potent. The forests hold my sighs, the waves are swayed by me. Virtue, Courage, Piety melt before my breath. I go with man every step of his way, and at the threshold of death he turns to me!

Death. I will reveal to you that which you strive to seize, on the face of the dead, beyond the pyramids, in deserts composed of human remains.

Lust. My gulf is deeper! Marble even has inspired amours. From whence, pray, comes the sorcery of courtesans, the extravagance of dreams, the immensity of my sadness?

Death. My irony surpasses all! It has convulsions of pleasure at the obsequies of
kings, at the extermination of a people. And men make war with music, flags and harness of gold, and other ceremony in order to render me more homage.

**Lust.** The splendour of my anger can equal thine. I shriek, I bite deep. I have my sweats of agony, my death-like aspect also.

**Death.** It is I who can make thee serious; let us clasp each other.

Death laughs and Lust is abashed. They take hold of each other and cry out together:

"I hasten the dissolution of matter!"

"I facilitate the sprouting of all seeds!"

"Thou destroyest that I may renew!"

Their voices echo to the horizon. Stunned, "Thou breedest that I may destroy!" Anthony falls. A shock causes him to again open his eyes and he perceives in the midst of the shadows some
kind of monster before him. It has the head of a corpse, with a crown of roses, set upon the torso of a woman of pearly whiteness. The body undulates like a gigantic worm.

This vision becomes shadowy and then vanishes.

Anthony (raising himself). Again it was the devil and in a double aspect: Spirit of Fornication and Spirit of Destruction. Neither do I now fear. I repulsed happiness and I feel myself to be eternal. Death is but an illusion, a veil masking the continuity of Life. But the substance being unique, why are the forms varied? There must have been, primordially, beings whose bodies were but images. If one might see them one would then know the bond uniting Matter and Thought, of which Being consists! Such figures were painted at Babylon upon the wall of the
Temple of Belus, and they covered a mosaic at Carthage. I myself, I have often seen in the sky the forms of spirits. Those who travel through the desert encounter animals passing all conception.

And now, opposite, from the other side of the Nile behold there appears the Sphinx. It stretches out its paws, shakes its locks and crouches upon its belly.

Leaping, flying, spitting out fire from its nostrils and with its dragon's tail striking its wings, the Chimera with green eyes, wheels round and bays out.

The rings of its hair, on the head, thrown back on one side mix with the long hair of its skin that falls from the loins, and on its other side they hang down to the sand and sway to the balancing of all its body.

The Sphinx (remaining motionless and
gazing at the Chimera). Come, Chimera, stay!

**The Chimera.** No, never.

**The Sphinx.** Run not so fast, fly not so high, bellow not so loud.

**The Chimera.** Call me no more, call me no more, since thou art always mute!

**The Sphinx.** Cease to throw flames in my face and bellow at me.

**The Chimera.** Thou dost not seize me, terrible Sphinx.

**The Sphinx.** Thou art too mad to live with me.

**The Chimera.** To follow me thou art too heavy!

**The Sphinx.** Where goest thou then, running so quickly?

**The Chimera.** I gallop in the corridors of the labyrinth, I soar to the mountain tops, I skim the waves and yelp at the
foot of precipices, I cling to clouds. With trailing tail I sweep the shores. The hills have taken their curve from the form of my shoulders. But thou, I find thee perpetually immobile or else with thy claw drawing alphabets in the sand.

The Sphinx. I guard my secret, I dream, I make calculations.

The Chimera. I, I am light and joyous. I discover to man resplendent perspectives, paradise in the skies, future felicities. Into his soul I pour the eternal follies, projects of happiness, plans for the future, dreams of glory and the vows of love and the resolutions of virtue. I incite to perilous journeys and to great undertakings. It is I that hung bells on the tomb of Porsenna and surrounded with a wall of oricalch the quays of the Atlantides. I seek new perfumes, larger flowers, and pleasures yet unenjoyed. If I perceive anywhere a man
whose mind rests in wisdom I strangle him.

The Sphinx. All those that the desire for God torments, I devour.

Anthony trembles. He is now in the desert, between the monsters.

The Sphinx. O Phantasy, carry me on thy wings. I am aweary!

The Chimera. O Unknown, I love thy eyes. Lift thy feet, mount on my back.

The Sphinx. My feet cannot be lifted.

The Chimera. Thou liest, false Sphinx. Why callest thou me but to repulse me?

The Sphinx disappears in the sand. The Chimera takes flight and its breath causes a fog to arise. Through this fog Anthony sees a rolling of clouds and of uncertain forms. Finally he distinguishes the coming of forms that, at first, seem to be human beings.

And first there advances
A Group of Astomians. (They are like balls of air that float across the sky.) Breathe not too fiercely. Even drops of water kill us and the shadows blind us. Composed of a breeze and a perfume, we roll and float a little more than a dream, less than a being.

The Nisnas. (They have one eye, one cheek, one hand and leg, half a body, half a heart. They say loudly): 'We live at ease in our half houses, with half wives, half children.

The Blemmyes. Absolutely without heads. Our shoulders are larger; there is no ox, rhinoceros, or elephant capable of bearing burdens we bear. We travel straight forward upon our way, traversing all gulfs, every abyss: and we are the most laborious of beings, also the most happy and virtuous.

The Pygmies. We are little men who
grovel on the earth as vermin on the hump of a dromedary. They burn, drown and crush us, yet we always reappear, more vivacious than ever and more numerous—terrible by our numbers only!

Then there appeared the Sciapodes, their heads weighed down beneath their great mass of hair; 'the Cynocephales or men with the heads of dogs, then a great stag with the head of a bull, and next the Martichorás, a gigantic red lion with a human figure and three rows of teeth.

The Catoblepas, the Basilisk, the Griffin and all sorts of frightful beasts surge before the hermit, beasts of the land and of the sea.

Anthony (speaking deliriously). O happiness! happiness! I have seen born life itself, I have seen its first movement.
The blood within my veins throbs so powerfully it can hardly be contained. I feel a desire to fly, swim, and utter the noise made by every animal. I would have wings, a shell, be as the plants, the odours, water, sound, light. I would take every form, penetrate each atom, descend to the foundation of all matter—be matter itself!...

The day at last appears, and like the curtains of a tabernacle that are lifted, discovers the sky. In the midst of this sky and in the disk of the sun there shines forth the face of Jesus Christ.

Anthony makes the sign of the cross and then kneels to pray.