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VALERIUS ;

A

ROMAN STORY.

They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know what's done i' the Capitol !

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH :

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VALERIUS.

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VALERIUS.

CHAPTER I.

SINCE you are desirous, my friends, that I should relate to you, at length and in order, the things which happened to me during my journey to Rome in the time of Trajan,—notwithstanding the pain which it must cost me to throw myself back once more into many of the feelings of that eventful time,—I cannot refuse to comply with a request, the motive of which, I doubt not, is as laudable as its expression is earnest. I am now an old man, and have lived for

threescore years in a remote province of an empire, happy, for the most part, in the protection of enlightened, just, and benevolent princes; yet I remember, far more accurately than things which occurred only a few months ago, the minutest particulars of what I saw and heard while I sojourned—a young man, and more than half a stranger—among the luxuries and cruelties of the capital of the world, as yet very imperfectly recovered from the effects of the flagitious tyranny of the last of the Flavii. You will not wonder, after you shall have heard my story, that I should be able to speak so distinctly about circumstances so remote; for none of you, even now, my young friends, need to be informed, that out of some of those circumstances the main threads of my earthly destiny were evolved. To that period I refer the commencement of a connection, which long formed the principal felicity of my domestic life; and if, in my conduct through the years either of business or of repose, I have exemplified any principles worthy of

your adoption or imitation, for this also my gratitude is due to the not lightly purchased experience of the same now distant period.

My father, as you all have heard, had come with his legion into this island, and married a lady of British blood, some years before the first arrival of the great Agricola. In the wars of that illustrious commander, during the reigns of Vespasian and Titus, he had the good fortune to find many opportunities of distinguishing himself; but when his general was recalled to the capital by the mean jealousy of Domitian, he retired from public life, and determined to spend the remainder of his days in peace, on the lands which belonged to him (chiefly in right of his wife) here in Britain. He laid the foundations of the house in which I have now the pleasure of receiving you; and here, in the cultivation of his fields, and in the superintendance of my education, he found abundant employment for the energies of a very active, though by no

means an ambitious mind. Early in the reign of Trajan, he died, after being confined to his apartment for a few days by an illness which neither my mother nor myself considered as seriously dangerous, till the very evening of its termination. Our grief knew at first no bounds ; and well might it be so, for never did either Roman or British dwelling lament the departure of a more generous, kind, and affectionate master. My mother, who, in wedding him, had offended the greater part of her own kindred, now that he was gone, had no tie to bind her affections to the earth, excepting myself, her only child, who had scarcely yet entered the threshold of manhood. In my society, therefore, her only hope of human comfort resided ; while I, on my part, loved her with that strong and undivided filial love, of which (however that circumstance may be counterbalanced by other advantages) I have never seen any examples among sons educated at a distance from the unwearied eye of parental affection.

We were not rich—yet we had enough for all our wants ; and the melancholy into which my mother gradually declined was not of a nature so severe as to prevent us from spending many hours of innocent happiness beneath the shade of these then younger and greener elms. I look back, even now, with a sad and sorrowful tenderness to the memory of that first summer and more cheerful winter, which we passed together on this spot after the death of my father. I cannot pretend to regret the accident which immediately afterwards separated me from the most gentle of mothers—Alas ! never to see her more upon the earth. Yet, how deeply was the happiness of my returning hour stained and embittered by that sorrowful privation ! There was a void in my heart, which it was long before even the fulness of conjugal devotion could entirely fill up and satisfy. In losing her, I had lost the last and strongest link that connected my contemplation of the present with my memory of the past. My

early years of infancy and boyhood now existed for nobody but myself; and I could scarcely bear to look back upon them, now that those eyes were closed for ever in whose watchful light all their safety and almost all their happiness had consisted. But I was still young, and had bright hopes before me, that ere long withdrew my attention from the dark places of recollection. It is the common rule of nature, that our parents should precede us to the grave; and it is also her rule, that our grief for them should not be of such power as to prevent us from entering, after they are gone, into a zealous participation both of the business and the pleasures of life. Yet, in all well regulated spirits, the influence of that necessary and irremediable deprivation, however time may sooth and soften it, has a deep and an enduring resting-place. In the midst of the noisiest, busiest hours of after-life, the memory of that buried tenderness rises up ever and anon to remind us of the instability of all human things, and wins rather than warns

us to a deliberate contemplation of futurity. Such is the gentle and abiding effect of that, at first sight, grievous and altogether intolerable affliction. Now, indeed, that every day brings to me some new testimonial of the near approach of my own dissolution, I have begun to regard all these things with another eye, and to find, in the contemplation of my reunion with the dear friends I have lost, a far more than sufficient consolation for the inconvenience occasioned to me by reason of their temporary absence. But it must yet be long ere the course of nature shall bring this last source of happiness near to your eyes, and teach you, as I have of late been taught, how near to each other at times may be found not only the physical effects but the proximate causes of pleasure and of pain.

One evening, towards the end of the winter following the death of my father, I was sitting with my mother in the small room where we breakfasted this morning, when letters were brought to me by a messenger.

from Venta, which immediately engaged the most anxious consideration of us both. They were all from Rome, and written, for the most part, by members of my father's family resident there, none of whom either my mother or myself had ever seen. It was mentioned in all of them, but most fully and distinctly in that of Caius Licinius, the lawyer, (who was near of kin to our house,) that by the death of a certain old Patrician, Cneius Valerius by name, I had become legally entitled to a very considerable fortune, to claim and take possession of which, demanded my immediate presence in the metropolis. My rights, said this jurist, were indeed called in question by another branch of the family, but were I on the spot, his professional exertions, he had no doubt, would be able to gain for me a complete, if not an easy victory. He hinted, at the same time, that whatever private interest he or any of his friends could command should be heartily at my service, for the sake of my father and of my name.

My mother and I endeavoured as well as we could to understand the nature of the case; but the authority of Licinius, of whose character we had always heard great commendation, was sufficient of itself alone to determine us in the end. After ruminating for a long while in silence, my dear mother at last said to me, "Yes, Caius, we must part for a season. You owe it to these kind friends, no less than to your father's memory and your own interest, to make a fair attempt for the recovery of this disputed inheritance. You are young and have seen no cities, except Venta,* which your father used to call a village; but I trust to your good heart, and your love for me, that if you succeed you will immediately come back to enjoy your wealth here within sight of your mother, and at a distance from those sudden changes to which the great city is from time to time subjected. Take care that you abide in Rome no longer than is absolutely

* *i. e.* Venta Belgarum—Winchester.

necessary, for fearful reports have reached us of the increasing wickedness of its inhabitants. Dispatch your business as speedily as the circumstances of the affair may permit, and do not grudge any expence which may enable you more quickly to see the end of it. To-morrow and next day must be spent in preparing you necessaries for so long a journey ; but on the third day I wish you to depart, for there is nothing more pernicious than delay in matters of importance ; and besides, my son, the sooner you go, the sooner may I look for your return. And now, since I know you are to depart, my dear Caius, it would be but a trifling consolation for me to keep you a few days more lingering here. You will take the faithful Boto with you, and all will go well ; for the gods will have pity on a widow, and the son of a widow.”

CHAPTER II.

I WENT to bed with a heart unequally divided between grief and joy. The idea of parting for such a length of time from my dear parent, whose whole happiness I knew was centred in myself, could not but be a painful one ; and this, I think, was uppermost within me while I was undressing, and even for a few minutes after I had laid my head upon my pillow. The natural thirst for novelty, however, for which so large a fund of gratification was now held up to my fancy, did not long suffer these melancholy thoughts to predominate. The love of travel had never before been excited in my bosom ; but now that I knew I was so soon to embark for Italy, the delights which I

might there hope to experience came crowding and kindling upon my imagination.—The dark and pine-clad banks of my native Anton, said I, shall now be exchanged for that golden-waved Tiber, of which so many illustrious poets have sung—whose course is continually bearing the treasures of all nations to the common centre of earth—the imperial city ; or conveying from thence to the remotest and most barbarous regions, the dictates of the most refined and exalted people, whose hands have ever been invested with the dominion of the world. Instead of moving here among the ill-cemented and motley fabric of an insulated colony, and seeing only the sullen submission of barbarians, on the one hand, or the paltry vanity of provincial deputies on the other, I shall tread the same ground with the rulers of the earth, and wear, among native Romans, the gown of my ancestors ;—I shall behold the Forum, which has heard the eloquence of Cicero and Hortensius—I shall ascend to the Capitol, where Cæsar triumphed—I shall

wander in the luxurious gardens of Sallust, or breathe the fresh air in the fields of Cato—I shall gaze upon the antique majesty of temples and palaces, and open my eyes on all that art and nature have been able to heap together through eight long centuries, for the ornament of the chosen seat of wisdom and valour.—It was thus that one splendid vision chased another across my fancy, till I fell asleep in a bewilderment of wonder and admiration—to dream of nothing but pomps I had never witnessed—and pleasures I had never partaken.

I awoke next morning rather earlier than usual, my spirits I suppose having been too much excited to admit of a longer repose. I came down stairs in a strange mood; but I believe my demeanour might be one of almost perfect indifference; for, to say truth, the melancholy idea of leaving home, and parting with my mother on the one side, and the gay inspiriting prospect of visiting Rome on the other, had neutralized each other within me; at least in so far as was

necessary for producing an apparent absence of all keen emotion on my countenance. I could not help starting, however, when, on coming into the old hall in the back part of the house yonder, I found my mother already busily engaged with her maidens in preparing my wardrobe for the purposed journey. She was giving directions to one of them in a distinct voice when I entered ; but she broke off suddenly when she saw me, and I could observe that her eyes looked red and heavy. Shortly after, she made an excuse to go into an inner apartment, and then one of the more ancient females said to me, ceasing from her occupation, “ Oh, yes, Caius ; it is one thing to have the appearance of being occupied among such matters, and another to have one’s heart really in them. To my thinking, if your mother had not slept little, she would not have been so early astir, touching these new garments of yours. But the gods grant you a fair voyage, and may you come soon back, such as you now are, to your mother ; for

without you, her life will be a burden to her ; and if you returned from the great city full of such airs as we see in some of those young centurions and the like, none of us would be able to love you as we now do ; so that you would find a house not filled with friends, (as you will now leave it,) but with utter hirelings.”

While we were yet speaking Boto entered the apartment, having been already warned by my mother concerning the journey on which he had been selected to accompany me. It was not certainly on account of his skill in the tongue of Rome that Boto had been chosen for this duty ; for although he had lived all his days in the vicinity of the Roman colonists at Venta, there was scarcely a single person within the bounds of the British Belgæ that spoke worse Latin than poor Boto. He was, nevertheless, a man of strong natural sagacity, possessing a shrewdness of discernment, concerning whatever things had fallen under his customary observation, such as I have seen excelled in few people

of any station. It is true, that he was one of those who lean more to the evil than the good opinion concerning both the characters of mankind and the transactions of the world. But, although this defect had not escaped the observation of my mother, we may suppose that she thought a turn of that sort might be culpable in a British farm-yard, and yet highly advantageous for a young stranger about to visit, for the first time, the great city—which was, and is, the centre of attraction to all the vices, as well as to all the wealth of the universe.

Howbeit, the man entered with a countenance firm and cheerful, in which no one could discover any symptom either of diffidence respecting his own qualifications for this new office, or of regret at being separated from these maidens (the truth is few of them were either very young or pretty,) in whose company so many years of gentle servitude had already glided equably and comfortably over his sun-burnt countenance and thickly-matted head of yellow bristles.

He held in his left hand a large broad-brimmed petasus of my father's, which he was polishing with his dexter, that it might assume a more respectable appearance on the meditated expedition; over his shoulder hung an old tunic of dark-coloured cloth, a few rents in whose texture he was desirous of having sewed up by the nimble fingers of some of the damsels. His huge boots already flapped about his ancles. In short, it was visible to all present that the mind of the man was altogether engrossed with the great business of his departure from a soil, which, it may be, had, according to his opinion, already too long engrossed the whole of his accomplishments. The carelessness and indifference stamped upon his visage, had in them, at first glance, something repulsive to my feelings; but nothing is more effective, in situations of novelty, than the influence of a merry face; and the high animal spirits depicted on the coarse features of Boto, were not long in exciting again within me a full portion of that juve-

nile buoyancy, which had been somewhat lowered by my observation of my dear mother's sorrowful deportment.

My mother, coming in soon after, partook, I think, in some measure of the general hilarity which had already been diffused over us all by the mirthful demeanour of the zealous Boto. From time to time, indeed, her countenance fell, and the tremours of her voice indicated how great was the internal conflict of her feelings. The work of the maidens, however, went on unweariedly, and the sounds of the wheel and spindle echoed all day long through the apartment. I myself, glad to escape now and then from the sadness of her looks and the din of their preparations, went forth into my fields, pretending that I had certain necessary directions to give touching the management of the farm affairs previous to so long an absence. But Boto continually threw himself in my way, and discoursing loudly and triumphantly, in his own coarse and jocular manner, concerning the

fine sights we were about to see, I found myself constrained not merely to tolerate, but to participate in the liveliness of his mood. The airs of superiority he assumed in talking to such of the husbandmen as we met with, gave them, indeed, visible dissatisfaction, but amused me more than I chose to admit by word or gesture. It was reported to me, that in the evening he invited several of these rusticks to drink with him in one of the out-houses, where his exultation knew no limits. He was going to Rome, he said, for his young master very well knew he could never get on in such a journey without the helping eye and hand of Boto ; and he had a brother in Italy already, (he had gone over with a certain illustrious Roman some ten years before,) and from him (for he had no doubt he would meet with him as soon as our arrival should be known) he would doubtless receive all requisite information concerning the doings of the great city. The usefulness which, he doubted not, I should be constrained to ac-

knowledge in his manifold qualifications, would, without all question, entitle him to some signal reward—perhaps nothing less than manumission on his return. “In that case, my jolly lads,” cried the fervent Boto, “I shall come back with a whiter tunic among you; but believe me, I shall still be the same man I leave you notwithstanding—we shall have a merry cup of mead at our meeting, and I shall tell you all I have seen of the fine things of Rome, and the wickedness of her inhabitants; for, if we may judge from what we see among these new legionaries, one will have need to keep all one’s eyes about one in the midst of the gowned gentry.”

The two days passed more quickly than any I ever remember to have spent amidst this strange mixture of mirth, and sorrow, and noisy preparation. I expected a very melancholy supper with my mother, on the evening of the second; but, luckily for us both, perhaps, a few of our neighbours, who had heard the news of my approaching de-

parture, came in to pay their respects, and offer their good wishes; so that the night being far spent ere they went away, we took to our respective chambers, without having any opportunity of indulging in needless lamentations together. I arose with a sad heart in the morning, and found breakfast already waiting, my mother having been up a full hour before me. She kissed me with silent tears when the meal was concluded, and our horses being already at the gate, Boto and I took leave of them all, and, pushing on, were glad when the winding of the road shut us from the view of the group that remained stationary at the porch of this dwelling. We could not forbear, however, from pausing for a moment when we had reached the height of yonder acclivity. Where that single tall naked pine now stands buffeted by the wind, then grew a thick grove, of which that stately relic alone survives. It was there that I turned round to gaze once more on the quiet verdure of these paternal fields, and our small pastoral stream

glistening here and there beneath the shady covert of its margin. Boto turned himself with me, and, in spite of all the glee he had been manifesting in prospect of our journey, I could perceive, from the clouded eye of the peasant, that he too, when it had come to the point, was leaving, not without a struggle, the scene of all the happy years he had yet spent upon the earth. He said nothing, but I saw that his heart was full, and I interpreted the caresses he lavished from time to time on his mule, as so many symbols of the relenting tenderness with which he now regarded all he had left behind him. I, for my part, pushed my horse into a hard trot, being willing to lose something of my heaviness of spirit in the spring of animal exertion. They that knew us saluted us kindly and cheerily as we passed them on the way; and the bustle of the seaport,* which

* Probably Clausentum, which is supposed to be the same with our Southampton; or perhaps the ancient Port Peris—*i. e.* Portchester.

we reached just as night was setting in, soon swallowed up or discomposed all our attention.

I had at first intended to cross over to Gaul, and traversing that province, enter Italy, either by the route of the Alps, in case we could procure convenient guides and companions, or by some vessel sailing from Marseilles or Forum Julii to Ostium. But the advice of one of my neighbours, who had himself been a great traveller, made me alter this plan, and resolve rather to commit myself to the care of a certain captain, who, as he said, was just about to sail for Italy, by the way of the Pillars of Hercules, in a vessel laden with tin from the mines of Britain. We found this man, with all his passengers, already prepared for the voyage ; and it was intimated to us that we should certainly set sail at an early hour in the morning.

CHAPTER III.

THE cries of the mariners arranging the tackle of their ship, and the blowing of the pilot's trumpet at the extremity of the pier, were the first sounds that met our ears in the morning. In a few minutes, we, and all our baggage, were safe on board. The anchor was uplifted, and the sail hoisted, with the usual libations and other ceremonies. In a word, such was the hurry in which every thing was done, that I scarcely persuaded myself I was thoroughly awake, till, rubbing my eyes, I perceived the white cliffs already lessening behind us. The first throbs of nausea soon afterwards began to agitate my stomach, and I was ere long in too lamentable a condition to enjoy even

the grotesque and rueful grimaces by which the visage of Boto signified his unwilling submission to the same inexorable enemy.

It were useless for me to detail to you at length the objects which met our eyes, during a voyage which is every day performed by so many of your acquaintance, and the particulars of which therefore (I doubt not) have been already abundantly explained to you all. For the first three or four days, indeed, I was so heavily afflicted with this malady, occasioned by the motion of the vessel, that I could bestow but little attention on any external object ; my eyes were so confused and dazzled, that I saw nothing beyond the corner of the deck, on which, for the sake of open air, I had caused my carpets to be laid ; and a few ejaculations to Castor and Pollux were all the articulate sounds that I uttered. By degrees, however, the weight of my depression began to be somewhat alleviated ; and at intervals, more particularly during the night watches, if I was not altogether

in possession of myself, I was at least well enough to enjoy a sort of giddy and half-drunken delight, in watching the dark billows as they rose and retreated from the beak of the ship; the continual dash and roar with which they heaved and writhed, like some innumerable route of tormented and infuriated monsters; the angry groan with which they received the plunging keel, and the sullen mutterings of disappointed wrath, with which their broken strength was afterwards heard growling behind the high poop on which I reclined. There were moments, also, in which the comical behaviour of Boto, under this new species of calamity, could furnish me, as it had already done the more hardy and experienced of my fellow-voyagers, with great store of mirth. From time to time, indeed, his stomach, naturally of a brazen construction, recovered for a few minutes possession of its usual energies, which were then sufficiently displayed in the enormous messes of salt provisions and biscuit which the

hungry valetudinarian devoured in our presence. At these moments, also, the simplicity and quaintness of his remarks failed not to diffuse laughter among all that stood within reach of his voice. For example. Hearing some passenger remark, that there was much pleasure in ploughing the deep, he forthwith signified his desire to know in what respects a ship resembled a plough. Whereupon the stranger, laughing, conducted the trembling rustic to the foaming prow, and bade him look down and observe how it cut and disparted the waters like a plough-share. But Boto then asked, where were the oxen? and he was answered, that the winds were the oxen, and that the ropes and tackling were in place of the reins and traces; an explanation which not a little amazed him. He said, however, after a brief pause, that the sea appeared to him to be already so much furrowed with waves, that, had he been the Greek Jason, he would never have thought of bestowing any additional labour upon it. For which last ob-

servation the tawny Boto was commended, as not without ingenuity.

Shortly afterwards, being taken with another fit of the nausea, (whose unwelcome return had probably been accelerated by the copiousness of his luncheon) poor Boto lay down again at all his length upon the deck, listless and inanimate, rolling his large eyes about heavily and slowly, like some dying fish ; and by his lugubrious wailings and contortions exciting the derision of the bystanders, whom he had before more cheaply amused by the simple manner in which he expressed his wonder concerning maritime objects. Near him, upon the deck, sat a certain Captain of the Prætorian Bands, one of our fellow-passengers, who, more than any other of those that were in the ship with us, displayed a florid complexion and cheerful eye, unalterable by the fluctuation of the waters. This man had served in all the wars of Agricola, and accompanied that great general, even in his perilous circumnavigation of the islands which lie scat-

tered in the stormy ocean, to the north of Britain. He had also gone back to Rome with his commander, not, like him, to extenuate imperial jealousy by the affectation of indolence, but to seek for new occupation on some other disturbed frontier of the Empire. In Syria and Cappadocia he had spent some years ; after which, he had attended the Emperor himself through the territories of Mæsia and Illyricum, and all those countries he traversed, and retraversed, during that shameful contest in which so many Roman eagles were made the prey of barbarous enemies, and which terminated at last in that cowardly treaty, by which Domitian granted a kingly diadem to Decebalus, and condescended to place the Roman Senate among the tributaries of a Dacian savage. Our friend had also strutted his part in that gorgeous triumph, or rather succession of triumphs, by which the defeated and disgraced Prince, on his return from Dacia, mocked the eyes and ears of the incredulous and indignant Romans. In a word, he had partaken in all kinds of for-

tune, good and evil, and preserved his rubicundity and equanimity unaltered in them all. Having attained to a situation of comparative ease in the Prætorian Bands, he had now been visiting Britain on a special message from the new Emperor, and was returning in the hope, that no future accident of fortune, or princely caprice, would ever again make it necessary for him to quit the sports and shows, and festivities of the capital.

Being ignorant who Boto was, this good-natured man sat down beside the suffering and complaining peasant, endeavouring to withdraw his attention from the pangs of his sea-sickness, by pointing out the different boats which came in view as we held on from the Gobæan rocks,* keeping close to the shore as we went, in order to shun, as well as we could, the dashing and rolling fury of the Aquitanic Ocean.† “Behold these fishing-vessels,” he would cry, “which have undoubtedly been upon the coast of Rutu-

* Brest.

† Bay of Biscay.

pia* for oysters, or it may be about the mouth
 of yonder Ligoris† for turbot, and are now
 stretching all their canvas to get home with
 their booty to Imperial Italy. Smooth be
 your winds and fair your passage, oh rare
 fish !” To which the downcast Boto would
 reply, “ Lavish not, oh master, your good
 wishes upon the mute fish, which have been
 accustomed to be tossed about during the
 whole of their lives, but reserve them rather
 for me (unhappy) who am thus tormented
 in an unnatural and intolerable manner ;” or
 perhaps, “ Speak not, I beseech you, of oys-
 ters, or of turbot, or of any other eatable,
 for I believe I shall never again feel hungry,
 so grievously are all my internal parts dis-
 composed and tormented. Oh, that I had
 never left my native fields, and bartered the
 repose of my whole body for the vain hope
 of gratification to my inquisitive eyes !”

By degrees, however, custom reconciled
 all of us to the motion of the bark, and the

* Richborough, in Kent.

† The Loire.

weather being calm during the greater part of the voyage, I enjoyed, at my leisure, the beauties, both of the sea, and of the shores alongst which we glided. From time to time, we put in for water and other necessaries, to various sea-ports of the Spanish Peninsula; but our stay was never so long at any place as to admit of us losing sight of our vessel. Our chief delight, indeed, consisted in the softness and amenity of the moonlight nights we spent in sailing along the coasts of Mauritania,—now the dark mountains of the family of Atlas throwing their shadows far into the sea—and anon, its margin glittering with the white towers of Siga, or Gilba, or Cartenna, or some other of the rich cities of that old Carthaginian region. On such nights it was the custom of all the passengers to be congregated together upon the deck, where the silent pleasures of contemplation were, from time to time, interrupted by some merry song chaunted in chorus by the mariners, or perhaps, some wild barbarian ditty, consecra-

ted by the zeal of Boto to the honour of some ancient indigenous hero of the North. Nor did our jovial Prætorian disdain to contribute his share to the general amusement of the assembly ; it is true, he had only one stave, but, to make amends for this, he was never weary of singing it. It was a boisterous war-song, composed, I doubt not, by some light-hearted young spearman, which our centurion had probably learned by heart, without any regular exertion, from hearing it sung around many a British and Dacian watch-fire. He assumed, in singing it, the very air and aspect of a common legionary, and, indeed, without doing so, he would not perhaps have chosen to give utterance to words, in which so large a share of the ordinary soldierlike licence was embodied. It was whispered to us, that Domitian himself had more than once heard him sing it with satisfaction, although, assuredly, it contained many expressions by which the imperial vanity could scarcely have been flattered. But there is no reason to doubt that Do-

mitian, like other tyrants, had his hours of good-natured relaxation. The cord even of self-love will not always endure to be held upon the stretch.

With stories of warlike achievements and marine peril, with songs and music of the lute, and, above all, with copious draughts of generous wine, (whereof, by the centurion's providence, the vessel contained good store,) we contrived to pass the time in a very cheerful manner, till we reached the Lilybæan promontory. We tarried there two days to refit some part of our rigging, and then stretched boldly across the lower sea, towards the mouth of the Tiber. We were becalmed, however, for a whole day and night, after we had come within sight of the Pharos of Ostium, where, but for the small boats that came out to us with fresh fish and fruit, we should have had some difficulty in preserving our patience; for, by this time, our stock of wine was run to the last cup, and nothing remained to be eat but some hard and mouldy biscuit, which, I believe, had survived two voyages be-

tween Italy and Britain. During this unwelcome period of delay, the kind Prætorian endeavoured to give me as much information as he could about the steps necessary to be pursued by me on my arrival in the city. But, to say truth, his experience had lain chiefly among martial expeditions and jovial recreations, so that I could easily perceive he was no great master of the rules of civil life. From him, however, I was glad to find, that the reputation of Licinius was really as great at Rome as it had been represented to us in our province; and I could observe, kind as he had been during the whole voyage, that he treated me with a yet greater measure of attention after he was informed of my relationship to that celebrated jurist.

The vessel lay quite steady and unmoved upon the breast of the sea; but, notwithstanding, there were few on board that retired to rest during the last night of our voyage, so great was the excitement of our minds in the prospect of so soon touching

the soil of Italy. In me, above all, who had never before even gazed upon those illustrious shores, imagination and curiosity worked so powerfully, that, had I retired to my sleeping-place, I am sure I could not once have closed mine eye-lids. We sat, therefore, all together towards the prow of the ship, watching the red lustre shed from the Pharos, which mingled on the glassy waves with the softer and more tremulous radiance of the stars. Early in the morning, a light breeze sprung up from the west, and with joyful acclamations the sails were once again uplifted. The number of mariners on board was insufficient for impelling the heavily laden vessel altogether by the force of oars, but now they did not refuse to assist the favouring breeze with strenuous and lively exertion. The Prætorian Captain, Sabinus, cheered and incited them by his merry voice, and even the passengers were not loath to assist them in this labour. My slave, among the rest, joined in the toil; but his awkwardness soon re-

lieved him from his seat on the bench,—a disgrace which, without question, he would have shared with his master, had I been equally officious.

In a word, the green waves were shorn rapidly asunder by our keel ; and ere long, we could trace, with exactness, the form and shape of those enormous structures, by which the munificence of Augustus had guarded and adorned that great avenue of nations to the imperial city. Those huge mountains of solid marble projected on either side into the open deep, between which the heavy billows of Tiber could be seen forcing their way into the bosom of ocean—but still preserving, for a space, their own distinctness of colour—surpassed every notion I had ever been able to form of the extent to which human art may carry its rivalry of nature. Their square and immoveable masses were garnished here and there with towers and battlements, on which the Prætorian pointed out to me the frame-work of those terrible Catapults, and other enormous

engines of Roman warfare, of which no specimens have ever been seen by us in Britain. As we drew nearer, we could distinguish the faces of the innumerable crowds collected on the mole to receive us, and the other vessels, whose approach had been deferred overnight by the supervening calm. At length we crossed the bar, and our hawsers were affixed in safety to the rings of the pier.

CHAPTER IV.

No sooner had we stept upon the shore, than we were surrounded by a great throng of hard-favoured persons, who pulled us by the cloak, with innumerable interrogations and offers of service. Among these, the varieties of form, complexion, and accent, were such, that we could not regard them without especial wonder; for it appeared as if every tribe and language under heaven had sent some representative to this, the great seaport of Rome. The fair hair and blue eye of the Gaul or German, might here be seen, close by the tawny skin of the Numidian or Getulian slave, or the shining blackness of the Ethiopian visage. The Greek merchant was ready, with his Thracian

bondsman carrying his glittering wares upon his back—the usurer was there, with his arms folded closely in his mantle—nor was the Chaldean or Assyrian soothsayer awaiting, with his air of abstraction and his flowing beard.

Boto, as if alarmed with the prevailing bustle, and fearful lest some untoward accident should separate him from me, kept close behind me, grasping my gown, I rather think, with his brawny hand. But our good friend Sabinus did not long leave us in this perplexity; for, having hastily engaged the master of a small barge, whom he found there, to carry him to Rome, he insisted that I and my attendant should partake of this easy method of conveyance along with him. Having entrusted this man, therefore, with the care of all our baggage, and appointed the time at which we should be ready to depart with him, we followed the guidance of the Prætorian into a neighbouring tavern; for he asserted it would be absurd to leave Ostium without

having first regaled ourselves with a good breakfast, after the long abstinence (so it pleased him to speak) of our voyage. Nor in truth did we require much persuasion ; for the smell of some new loaves, which a certain lad was carrying on his head in a basket, had already affected us with a strong desire to banish from our palates the flavour of the mouldy ship-biscuit. With bread, then, hot out of the oven—with bunches of golden grapes, on which the morning dew had not yet had time to dry—and milk, warm and foaming from the cow, we feasted in a primæval indeed, but nevertheless, in a luxurious manner. One flask of rich Falernian we exhausted on the spot ; but reserved several others to be consumed during our ascent of the Tiber. The very firmness of the ground beneath the foot is, after a long sea-voyage, sufficient to give hilarity to the traveller ; and there is exquisite delight in simply walking up and down, and stretching forth legs and arms with the security of land motion. In this

gratification, Boto, above all others, abundantly indulged himself; insomuch, that the centurion and I, while we were under the hands of the barber, could not help laughing at the uncouthness and extravagance of his rustic agility, displayed in the inn-court, of which the window of our apartment commanded a prospect. The barber was willing to clip our hair, as well as to shave our beards, but Sabinus prevented me from yielding to this exertion of his skill by a derisive gesture; and told me afterwards, that had I submitted to such an operation at Ostium, I should probably have been unfit to appear in public at Rome for a fortnight; for, said he, the leaders of the fashion change the style of their hair-dressing continually, and it would be thought extremely barbarous to enter the theatre or the baths, or to be seen at any spectacle, without having taken care to follow their example in all such particulars.

Shaved, therefore, but not clipped, we removed, as soon as our business at Ostium

was ended, to that part of the river where our boat waited for us ; Boto following at our heels, in company with a freedman belonging to Sabinus, and bearing in a small basket our store of Falernian for this lesser voyage. We found the vessel small but convenient, furnished with a beautiful awning, under which cushions and carpets were already stretched out for our repose. The oars were soon in motion, and we began to emerge from among the forest of masts with a rapidity which astonished me ; for the multitude of vessels of all sizes, continually crossing and re-crossing us, was so great, that at first I expected every moment some dangerous accident might occur. The skill, however, of the steersman, and the alacrity with which the boatmen shipped their oars on either side when the signal was given from the helm, were such, that we soon perceived there was no peril in our circumstances ; insomuch, that ere long I found myself stretched out at full length, in an attitude of perfect unconcern, occupied with nothing but the view on the

shores of the river ; for from these, even the remarks of my merry companion had no power to draw me away. By degrees, indeed, even these failed altogether to keep alive my attention—the sleeplessness of the preceding night, and the abundance of our recent repast, conspiring to lull me into a gentle doze, which continued for I know not what space. I awoke, greatly refreshed, and found we had already made considerable progress ; for the continual succession of stately edifices, each surpassing the other in splendour, on the banks of the stream, failed not to indicate the greater vicinity of the metropolis. The dark green of the venerable groves, amidst which the buildings were for the most part embosomed, and the livelier beauties of the parterres which here and there intervened between these and the river, afforded a soft and refreshing delight to my eyes, which had so long been fatigued with the uniform flash and dazzle of the Mediterranean waves, and the roughness of the sea-beaten precipices. The minute and elaborate cultivation every where

visible—the smoothness of the shorn turf on the margin—the graceful drooping foliage of the ancient planes and alders—but, above all, the sublimity of the porticos and arcades, and the universal air of established and inviolable elegance which pervaded the whole region, kept my mind in one continual elevation of pleasurable wonder. Here and there, a gentle winding of the stream conducted us through some deep and massy shade of oaks, and elms, and sycamores; whose branches, stretching far out from either side, diffused a sombre and melancholy blackness almost entirely over the face of Tiber. Loitering carelessly, or couched supinely, beneath some of these hoary branches, we could see, from time to time, the figure of some stately Roman, or white-robed lady, with her favourite scroll of parchment in her hand. The cool and glassy rippling of the water produced a humming music of stillness in the air, which nothing disturbed, save only the regular dash of the oars, and, now and then, the deep and strenuous voice of our cautious

helmsman. Anon would ensue some glimpse of the open champaign, descending with all its wealth of golden sheaves to the very brink of the river—or, perhaps, the lively courts of a farm-yard stretching along the margin of some tributary streamlet—or some long expanse of level meadow, with herds of snow-white heifers. I could not gaze upon the rich and splendid scene without reverting, with a strange mixture of emotions, to the image of this my native land; its wild forests, shaggy with brushwood and unprofitable coppice, through which of old the enormous wild deer stalked undisturbed, except by the adder of the grass, or the obscene fly of the thicket; its little patches of corn and meadow, laboriously rescued from the domain of the wild beast, and rudely fortified against his continual incursions;—the scattered hamlets of this our Brigian valley,* and my own hum-

* The village of Broughton, on the road from Winchester to Salisbury, is supposed to mark the site of the Roman *Brigæ*. It stands not far from the river Test, anciently called the Anton, or Entum.

ble villa—then far humbler than it is now. At one moment—How strange, said I to myself, that I—born of a Roman father, and allied to some of the greatest names of Rome, should be only now, for the first time, surveying the near effects of Roman magnificence and refinement ! It is time, indeed, that my eyes should be taught to look on other objects than those to which they have hitherto been accustomed. At others, I could not check altogether some rising reflections of a more melancholy nature. Alas ! said I to myself, with a distrustful shaking the head—these gorgeous prospects are indeed the results and the symbols of ancient cultivation—and these beautiful mansions are inhabited by refined and noble dwellers. But who shall say what measure of true happiness is enjoyed by those that I see here, sauntering though they be, even as the poets have feigned the careless demeanour of their Elysium ? Who shall say, but a few months ago, how many of these I behold,

would gladly have escaped from the near arm of imperial tyranny, and the mutual suspicions of oppressed and injured men, into some wild ravine of Britain, to lay down their head every night in safety, and awaken to contend with no cunning but that of the fox—no ferocity but that of the boar ?

When the heat of the sun was greatest, we pushed our bark into a little creek, where the boatmen rested themselves for a space from their labours ; and we, along with the master, made an end of the provisions we had brought along with us. Having halted as long as we deemed expedient, we resumed our seats on the vessel ; but the fervour of the atmosphere being much diminished, our canopy was no longer upheld. By degrees the shades of evening began to spread themselves over the east ; but we did not see the sun for a long time previous to his setting, by reason of the hugeness of the trees, and their impervious foliage. Trees, and temples, and gardens, and meadows,

and towns and villages, were, ere long, lost in one uniform sobriety of twilight ; and it was already quite dark, when the centurion, pointing to the left bank, said, “ Behold these gigantic willows, which dip their long boughs down into the water—these are the Gardens of Cæsar—beyond, is the Portian Gate, and the street of the Rural Lares. In a few moments we shall see the lights of the Sublician Bridge, and be in the city.”

At these words I started up, and gazing forward, could already penetrate through the mists of evening into the busy glare of a thousand streets and lanes, opening upon the river. The old city wall, on the left side, was visible; where, after having swept round the region towards the Vatican and Janicular Hills, it brings the last of its turrets close down to the Tiber, over against the great dock-yards by the Field of Brutus.

Its shadow lay in frowning darkness, far out upon the stream, and we glided for some minutes in silence beneath the influence of the venerable rampart. Through

a forest of triremes, galleys, and all sorts of craft, we then shot on to the bridge—beneath the centre arch of which, our steersman conducted us. Beyond, such was the hum of people on the quays, and such the starlike profusion of lights reflected in the water, that we doubted not we had already reached the chief seat of the bustle of Rome. On, however, we still held our course, till the huge bulk of the theatre of Marcellus rose like a mountain on our right. It was there that we ran our bark into the shore, not far from the little bridge—the third as you ascend the river—which conducts to the Island and the Temple of Æsculapius. While our friend was settling matters with the master, and the boatmen were bringing out our baggage, I stood for a little space by myself, in silence, on the elevated quay. Below me lay the bark, in which Boto and the centurion were still engaged. Here am I alone, I might almost say to myself, in the greatest city of the world—not one of whose inhabitants I have ever, so far as I

know, conversed with. Up and down, wherever my eye fell, it rested on some bright spot in the river, answering to some light in bark, or edifice, kindled by hands, and for purposes, to which I was equally a stranger. Here a long tier of reflected radiance bespoke, it may be, the vicinity of some splendid portico—of palace, or temple, or bath, or theatre; there a broad and steady blaze of burning red, indicated the abode of artizans, resolved, as it seemed, on carrying their toil into the bosom of the night. Between—some small single speck of tinier lustre, betrayed, perhaps, the lamp of the solitary student, or the sober social hour of some peaceful family, assembled around the hearth of their own modest lares. Behold me then, said I, in the capital of the globe. Alas! were I to be swallowed up this moment in the waves of Tiber, not one of all these lights would be dimmed by reason of my calamity.

After my companions had joined me, the dwelling of Licinius was the first thing I

enquired after ; and being informed that it was at no great distance, the friendly Sabinus insisted upon escorting me thither in safety, before he repaired to his own abode. We walked, therefore, along two or three proud streets, which brought us near to the Pantheon of Agrippa, and there the house of my kinsman was easily pointed out to us by some of the passers-by. Its porch was decorated with recent palm-branches, which, as the centurion asserted, must have been placed there by the joyful hands of some fortunate client, whose cause had that day been pleaded and won by the orator. Here having taken leave of this kind person, and having promised to visit him ere many days should elapse, I, and my faithful Boto, at length arrested our steps. The gate was thrown open as soon as we knocked ; and, having left my attendant among the crowd of slaves in the vestibule, I was speedily conducted into the presence of my kinsman, who received me in a polite, and, at the same time, affectionate manner.

I found him in a small upper chamber, lighted by a single silver lamp, suspended from the roof, enjoying, as it appeared, repose and relaxation after the exertions which he had been making during the anterior part of the day. He was reclining at table when I entered; and although supper was long over, some fruits and other trifling things still remained on the board. At table with him there was no one present, excepting a certain rhetorician or philosopher, whom he introduced to me as the superintendant of his son's education, and the young Sextus himself, a modest and ingenuous youth, who sat at the lower extremity of his father's couch. He was indeed a very mild and amiable young man, and I had more pleasure, after a space, in surveying his aspect, than the more marked lineaments of the other two. At first, however, nothing rivetted my attention so much as the fiery and energetic physiognomy of the pleader himself. The fore-part

of his head was already quite bald, although the darkness of the short curls behind testified that age was not the cause of this deformity. His eyes were black and rapid, and his eye-brows vibrated upwards and downwards in a remarkable manner, not only when he spoke, but even when he was silent; indicating, as it appeared by their transitions, every new train of thought and imagination within his mind. His style of conversation was quick and fervid, and his gestures vehement as he spake; it being apparent, that, from restlessness and vanity of disposition, he was continually exercising a needless measure of mental activity and anxiety. Not satisfied with his own more than sufficient richness of ideas, no thought could be expressed by any other person which he did not immediately seize for his own, and explain, even to him by whom it had been first suggested, with much fluency and earnestness of illustration. On the other hand, the hired philo-

sopher, who wore a long beard reaching down even unto his girdle, preserved in all things an uncommon demureness of manner, restraining every salient movement of his own mind, and watching, with the gravity of a Numa, the glancing eyes and sharp features of his patron. A roll of yellow parchment graced the left hand of this dealer in wisdom, while the other was employed in selecting from the table such articles as were most agreeable to his palate. Licinius, although meagre in person, and at that time parched with long declamation, seemed to live in such a state of intellectual excitement, that he thought little either of eating or drinking; therefore, the venerable stoic, resigning for the most part his share of the conversation, amused himself, in exchange, with the more trivial gratifications abandoned to him by the pleader. Nor, if one might draw any conclusion from the rosiness of his complexion, and the portliness of his whole figure, was this the first

occasion on which he had exercised that species of humility. Partly fatigued by my travel, partly confounded by the novelties I had seen and heard, and was now seeing and hearing, I myself did not disdain from time to time to taste of the fine old Chian of Licinius ; a huge flagon of which that stood on the board, already rose light in my hand, by reason of the eager, though not very frequent familiarities of the disciple of Zeno.

When Licinius had inquired of me concerning my native place, and those kinsmen which he had in that distant region, and when he had also spoken at some length of the affairs which had brought me to the city, his conversation was naturally directed to subjects which were more new, if not more interesting, to me. “ You would no doubt observe,” said he, “ the palm branches at my door. They were won to-day, by a five hours harangue before the Centumviri, wherein, if I did not satisfy myself, it appears that my friends, nay, even my custo-

mary opponents, have discovered no ground of complaint. It is only in contests such as these that able men have now any opportunity to exercise themselves, and preserve some remembrance of those ancient worthies, and great public characters, that once adorned the state. To these things, therefore, O Valerius, I entirely devote myself; nor aim, like other citizens of my rank, at passing the day in slothful diversion, and ending it with far-fetched luxuries. At supper my table is furnished only with moderate fare, while, in other houses, I know not how many roasted boars and pompous sturgeons have been regaling with the rich perfume of their sauces and stuffing, the nostrils of guests who love the meat more than the man who gives it. This worthy person, whom I retain in my dwelling to instruct my only surviving son, knows how laborious is my course of life, and what an impatient crowd awaits my appearance every morning that I rise. The young man himself will, I hope, ultimately tread in the

same steps, and afford to a future generation the image of the former Licinius." With these, and the like discourses, he occupied our ears till it was time to retire to sleep; and then he intimated to me, that he had allotted to me an apartment in his house, which he expected I would continually occupy during my residence in the city. But being informed that I had a British slave along with me, he insisted on having this man sent for into the supper-chamber, that he might see him, as he expressed it, before the genuine unsophisticated barbarian had been corrupted by keeping company with the lying Greeks, and other cunning menials of the metropolis. Whereupon, it was commanded that Boto should come up, and he was forthwith ushered in by a certain leering varlet, with rings in his ears, whose face resembled some comic mask in the habitual archness of its malicious and inquisitive look.

Not few were the bows and scrapes with which my Briton entered the penetralia of

this great Roman's mansion ; neither was the astonishment inconsiderable with which the keen eyes of the orator rested upon the coarse and tawny outlines of Boto's visage. "So, friend," said Licinius,—“and you have ventured to come to Rome, without so much as shaving your beard ?” But the merry and good-natured tone in which these words were uttered having somewhat reassured the bashful rustic, he gave a sly side-look towards the stoic, (who, it must be observed, had never once looked at him, but sat back in his couch all the time, preserving unmoved the sage severity of his demeanour,) and replied to Licinius, “Pardon me, O master, for coming thus into your presence ; but I knew not, till Dromo here told me, that beards were worn in Rome only by goats and the wisest of mankind.” The words of the barbarian amused the orator—but, turning round to his own slave, “Ah ! Dromo,” said he, “do I already recognize the effects of your teaching ?—beware the whip—and corrupt not this honest Briton,

at your peril." He then asked of Boto various questions concerning his recent voyage; to all of which he made answers in a sufficiently sagacious manner, after his own fashion. Great contempt, however, was depicted on the face of the silent stoic during this conversation; which he, no doubt, looked upon as a very unworthy condescension on the part of Licinius; till at last, having, in a leisurely manner, poured out and drank the last of the flagon, the indignant Xerophrastes (for that was his name) arose from his couch and departed. As he withdrew, he unfortunately struck his knee on the corner of the table, which elicited from his stubborn features a sudden contortion, expressive of anguish. This, however, he immediately smoothed off; and, twisting his involuntary stoop into an obeisance to Licinius, the sage walked away in a sufficiently grave and decorous manner. The young lad, whose name, if I have not already mentioned it, was Sextus, did not witness these circumstances without

turning away his face to hide a smile; but I, fearing to diminish his respect for his master, refrained from joining him in any outward expression of mirth.

CHAPTER V.

LICINIUS then shewed me the way to my sleeping-room, to which I was glad to retire, being in fact quite worn out by the number of objects which had that day tasked my sight. My sleep was sound and sweet ; nevertheless, when the morning began to dawn, I was awakened by the first glimmerings of light, and found that my thoughts became at once too busy to admit of a return to slumber. I, therefore, arose, and went to walk in an open gallery, with which my chamber was connected. This gallery commanded a prospect of a great part of the city, which at that hour appeared no less tranquil than stately, nothing being in motion except a few small boats

gliding here and there upon the river. Neither as yet had any smoke begun to darken the atmosphere ; so that all things were seen in a serene and steady light, the shadows falling broadly westward over streets and squares—but pillars, and porticoes, and obelisks, and arches, rising up every where with unsullied and undisturbed magnificence, into the bright air of the morning. The numerous poplars and alders, and other lofty trees of the gardens, also, seemed to be rejoicing in the hour of dew and silence ; so fresh and cheerful was the intermixture of their green branches among the surrounding piles of white and yellow marble. Near at hand, over the groves of the Philoclean Mansion, I could see the kingly dome of the Pantheon, all burnished with living gold—and the proud colonnades of the Flaminian Circus, loaded with armies of brazen statues. Between these and the river, the theatres of Pompey and Marcellus, and I know not how many beautiful temples were visible, each surpassing the other in chaste and solemn splendour. Across a more

crowded region, to the westward, my eye ascended to the Capitol, there to be lost among the central magnificence of the Mistress of the World ; while, still further removed from me, (although less elevated in natural situation), the gorgeous mansion of the Emperor was seen, lifted up, like some new and separate city, upon its enormous fabric of arcades, high over all the remains of that forest of elms and sycamores, by which Nero had once dared to replace the unhoused tenants of the Palatine. Behind me, the Flavian Amphitheatre,* the newest and the most majestic of all Roman edifices, detained the eye for a space from all that lay beyond it—the whole splendid mass, namely, of the Esquiline—and those innumerable aqueducts which lie stretched out, arch after arch, and pillar after pillar, quite over the peopled champaign to the very ridge of the mountains. But why should I vainly essay to give to you, by cold words of description, any idea of the

* The Coliseum.

peerless prospect that every where surrounded me ! Lost amidst the pomp of this unimagined human greatness, I was glad to rest my sight, ever and anon, upon the cool waters of old Tiber, in whose face nothing of all this was truly depicted, except the serene and cloudless beauty of that Italian sky ; temple and tower, and every monument of art, being mellowed down into a softer and more tolerable grandeur.

As I stood upon a projecting balcony, looking abroad upon the Imperial City, I heard some person stepping softly along the floor, and, being screened by some pillars, looked back into the gallery without subjecting myself to observation in return. The noise, I found, was occasioned by one of the slaves of Licinius, (the same I had remarked over night), who had an air of much vigilance about him on this occasion, looking about from side to side with a very anxious expression of countenance, as if afraid of being detected in some impropriety. I heard him tap gently at the door

of one of the apartments adjoining to my own, and thought I could distinguish from his whisper that it was Sextus on whom he called. It was even so ; for very shortly after that modest young man, opening the door, courteously asked, “ Well, Dromo, good Dromo, what news ?—Have you seen or heard any thing of her ?—Speak low, I beseech you, and remember that my preceptor sleeps in the next room.”

“ Which preceptor ?” replied Dromo ; “ count me your best preceptor, and I will teach you how to manage all the rest.”

“ Xerophrastes, I mean. Speak low, Dromo,” said the young man in an earnest whisper ; “ he is close at hand ; and if he be thus early astir, as is not improbable, with these eternal parchments, he may hear every word you say—be quiet, I pray you.”

“ Poh, poh,” returned the slave ; “ never mind the black-bearded Athenian, for I have found out some curious facts about him lately, which will serve to bridle his tongue at any time. I will ride upon him,

and rein him, in the most beautiful manner, so that you will admire to see the motions I can draw out of him."

"Oh Dromo, Dromo," said Sextus, shaking his head, "remember that a rhetorician is far above the sphere of a rascally slave like you; and if I find you attempting to ride your betters any farther than is absolutely necessary in this affair, I will pluck you from your seat, Dromo, and lay you sprawling on the sand at once."

"Well, well; do not speak so loud," replied Dromo; "but I think it is natural for all slaves to have an antipathy against these grammarians, who often despoil them of their just influence in a family; and, in fact, make mere slaves of them."

"A great hardship to be sure, Dromo; and what would you have?"

"I would have a reasonable share of influence, Master Sextus, and neither more nor less than my due."

"Your due, Master Dromo," replied the youth, "is to be seen in the thong of sleek

leather which hangs at the foot of the staircase ; and many is the time and oft, that I have saved you from it ; for which you may perhaps have to thank the beauty of her who has rendered you necessary to me, as much as my own good nature. But no more idle words at present—what have you got to tell me ?”

“ I have just been down,” answered he, to the herb-market, by the river-side yonder—for that early sort of drudgery is sure to be laid on my back ; but I do not complain of my hardships for this once. Well—I had made my bargain, and was coming away, when I saw one of old Capito’s men, who had just come in from the villa, driving an ass laden with choice articles from the country, which he told me were meant as presents for different persons. Whereupon it forthwith occurred to me, that I might perhaps be able to suck something out of him concerning the young lady. So I asked the man if there was any present for his master’s brother, Lucius, the senator.

To which he replied, that he had brought nothing for Lucius but a letter ; adding, that he believed its purport was to invite the two young ladies, to come out and enjoy the beauty of the season. ‘ And when,’ said I, in a careless manner, ‘ do you suppose they may be coming ?’—‘ Oh this very day, I suppose,’ quoth he ; ‘ for I heard orders given about their apartments.’ Now my dear Master Sextus, I no sooner got this information from him, than I ran hither as swiftly as my legs would carry me. You can easily go out, as if by chance, to pay your respects to the old gentleman. You will there have an opportunity of seeing her for a long while together ; and perhaps be able to put in a word for yourself ; for they say there’s nothing helps on a courtship so much as a shady walk among the fields.”

“ Ah, Sempronia !” cried Sextus, “ then I shall approach you, and speak to you at last.—What will she think when she sees me there?—and how will she speak to me ?”

While he was uttering these words, Dromo suddenly started, and came peeping, on tiptoe, towards the place where I stood. Whereupon I stepped from behind my pillar, and said to the astonished youth, "Fear not, Sextus, that I shall intermeddle with your secrets, or make any use of what I have accidentally overheard. But I wish you would satisfy my curiosity, and inform me who is this lady, and what may be the meaning of all this concealment?"

Here Dromo perceiving that his young master was a good deal confused, came forward and said, "From observing your looks last night, when I was making a handle of you barbarian to torture our friend of the porch, I think you are a good-natured person, who would not willingly bring any of us into trouble. The truth is, that Licinius wishes my young master here to marry a certain lady, who has already had wet eyes over the ashes of a first husband; but who is of noble birth, and very rich. Now Sextus, being only eighteen, does not like this

great lady so well as she likes him—and has, in fact, lost his heart elsewhere.”

“Dromo,” answered I, taking young Sextus by the hand as I spoke, “this is a pretty common sort of story; but I shall take no side till I have seen both of the ladies; and the sooner your ingenuity can bring that about, the more shall I be beholden to you.”

“We shall try,” replied the slave, observing that I had overcome the reluctance of the lover; “but in the meantime I observe that the clients are beginning to assemble in the porch, to await the forthcoming of Licinius. Go, therefore, and get some breakfast for yourselves, for, by and and bye, you will both of you be expected to accompany the orator to the Forum, to hear him plead; which, between ourselves, will be, I guess, a good six hours job for you, unless you manage matters dextrously.”

This last hint produced a visible effect on the countenance of Sextus; but, nevertheless, we went down together immedi-

ately to an apartment, where some bread and grapes were prepared for us ; and there, with much juvenile ingenuousness, he opened his heart to me, concerning those things with which I had fortuitously been made acquainted. But what surprised me most of all, was to hear, that although he had been enamoured of Sempronia for several months, and was well acquainted with several of her relations, he had never yet seen her, except at certain places of public resort, nor enjoyed any opportunity of making known his passion. While I was expressing my astonishment at this circumstance, we were interrupted by Xerophrastes, who came to inform us, that Licinius, having already descended into the hall, was about to issue forth, and desirous of our company, if no other occupation detained us. We accordingly followed the philosopher, and found his patron where he had indicated, pacing to and fro, in the highest state of excitation, like a generous steed about to scour the field of battle. The waxen effi-

gies of his ancestors stood at one end of the hall, some of them defaced with great age ; and upon these he frequently fixed his ardent eyes. Seeing me enter, he immediately cried out, “ Come hither, my friend and kinsman, and I shall presently conduct you to a scene worthy, above all others, of the curiosity of a stranger.”

With this, arranging his gown, and putting himself into a dignified attitude, he ordered the porter, who stood chained by the door, to throw wide its massy valves ; which being done, the litigants and consulters, who were without, received the orator with acclamations, and surrounded him on all sides. Some of the poorer ones, I observed kissing the hem of his garment, and dodging wistfully at his elbows, without ever attracting a word or look from him ; while those of a higher class came forward more familiarly, seeking to impress particular circumstances upon his memory, and paying him compliments on the appearance he had made the day before in the Centumviral

Court. Encircled by this motley groupe, he walked along towards the great Forum, which is also called the Roman—followed at a little distance by Sextus, the preceptor, myself, and some freedmen of his household. In moving on, we passed, by accident, the door of another great pleader, by name Bruttianus, who stood there attended in a similar manner. When he perceived Licinius, this man took from his door-post a green palm-branch, and waved it towards us in a vaunting manner ; but our friend, saluting him courteously, cried out, with his sharp and cutting voice, “ We shall try it again.” Whereon, Xerophrastes, immediately stepping up to his patron, began thus, “ How this vain-glorious person exposes himself!—he is certainly a weak man ; and his tones, by Hermes, are more detestable than those of an African fowl.”—At which words, Sextus tipped me the wink ; but I did not observe that Licinius was at all displeased with them. Yet, soon after, Bruttianus having overtaken us, the pro-

cessions were joined, and the two great pleaders walked the rest of the way together in a loving manner, exchanging complimentary speeches; to which Xerophrates listened with a very edifying gravity of visage.

At length we entered that venerable space, every yard of whose surface is consecrated to the peculiar memory of some great incident in the history of Rome. Young Sextus allowed me to contemplate for some time, with silent wonder, the memorable objects which conspired to the decoration of this remarkable place; but after the first gaze of astonishment was satisfied, proceeded to point out, in order, the names and uses of the principal structures which rose on every side over its porticos—above all, of its sublime temples—into whose cool and shady recesses the eye could here and there penetrate through the open valves. Nor did the ancient rostrum from which Tully had declaimed, escape our observation—nor within

its guarding rail of silver, the rising shoots of the old mysterious fig-tree of Romulus—nor the rich tessellated pavement which covered the spot that had once yawned an abyss before the steady eye of Curtius—nor the resplendent Milliare pillar which marked the centre of the place. In a word, had the gathering crowds permitted, I could have willingly spent I know not how many suns in listening to the explanation of such magnificent objects ; but these, and the elevated voice of Licinius, who was just beginning his harangue, soon compelled me to attend to things of another description.

Within one of the proud ranges of arcade, on the side nearest to the Capitoline cliff and stairs, a certain majestic Patrician had already taken his seat on an elevated tribunal—his assessors being arranged on a lower bench by his side, and the orators and clients congregated beneath him. The first who addressed him was, as I have said, Licinius ; and, truly, although his speech was

not of very great length, it was sufficient to impress me with an admiration of his genius, such as I had never before been constrained to feel for any display of talent exhibited in my presence. I know not, indeed, if, in the whole wide range of human accomplishments, there be any one, the first contemplation of which inspires so much wonder into the breasts of those unaccustomed to its exercise, as this of oratory. It is the first and great natural weapon by which intellect asserts its superiority over corporeal strength; and therefore, to acknowledge its power in him that witnesses its energies, is, in effect, a vindication of the dignity of his own nobler part. The most refined and expert in the ways of men, can never entirely defend themselves against this celestial weapon, any more than they can open their eyes, and yet refuse to bear witness that there is light in heaven; or walk abroad at noon-day, and not feel the fervour of the sun. But if they cannot fail to acknowledge this godlike power, those, that

like myself, come strangers to the scene of oratorical triumph, cannot fail to bow down and submit themselves, in awful homage, beneath its sway. When I heard the clear and harmonious periods of my kinsman following each other in their undoubted sweep of energy—when I observed with what apparent skill he laid his foundations in a few simple facts and propositions; and then with what admirable art he upreared from these, a superstructure of conclusions, equally easy as unexpected—equally beautiful as ingenious; when, above all, he had conducted us to the end of his argument, and closed the whole magnificent strain with one burst of passionate eloquence, in which he seemed to leave even himself behind him, I could not but feel within myself as if I had been till now a stranger, not only to the most splendid, but to the most awful of enchantments—as if I had now, for the first time, contemplated the practised strength of reason, and the embodied might of the soul. Such were my raptures on hearing

the first oration of Licinius ; and truly, the applauses painted in the faces of those that surrounded me, were a sufficient pledge to me that they did not spring from my own inexperience. Yet I have lived to discover that the talent which so greatly excited my wonder is often possessed from nature, or acquired through practice, (though not, it is true, to any thing like the same splendid extent or perfection, yet in a measure which, at that time, would have afforded me scarcely inferior delight,) by men whose understandings are of no extraordinary rank. It was not till after many visits to the Roman Forum, that I found myself enabled to discriminate between the real merits of a speaker of genius like my kinsman, and that trick of wordiness, by which some of the most common-place and prosaic of his rivals at first affected me, with almost as much admiration as I could bestow on himself.

The keen and lively gestures of the fervid Licinius, whose soul seemed to speak out

of every finger he moved, and who appeared to be altogether immersed in the cause he pleaded, were succeeded by the solemn and somewhat pompous stateliness of Brutianus, who made a brief pause between every two sentences, as if he were apprehensive that the mind of the judge could not keep pace with the stream of his illustrations, and looked round ever and anon upon the spectators with a placid and assured smile, rather, as it seemed to me, to signify his approbation of their taste in applauding him, than his own pleasure in their applauses. Nevertheless, he also was a splendid speaker, and his affectation displeased the more, because it was evidently unworthy of his understanding. While he was speaking, I observed that the Stoic preceptor was frequently shifting his place among the crowd, and muttering every where expressions of high contempt. But this did not disgust me so much as the gross adulation of that fixed attitude of ecstasy in which he listen-

ed to the discourse of his own patron, and the pretended involuntary exclamations of his delight. "Oh, admirable cadence!" he would say, "I feel as if I were draining a honey-comb. Oh, harmonious man, where have I, or any other person here, sucked in such sweetness!" These absurd phrases, however, were caught up forthwith, and repeated by the numerous young men who hung upon the skirts of the orator, and seemed, indeed, to be drinking in nectar from the speech, if one might judge from their countenances. From their taking notes in their tablets from time to time, and from the knowing looks they assumed at the commencement of every new chain of argument, I guessed that these might be embryo jurisconsults, preparing themselves by their attendance for future exertions of the same species; and, indeed, when I listened to their conversation at the close of every speech, I thought I could perceive in their tones and accents studied mimicry of the

natural peculiarities of Licinius, Bruttianus, and the other orators. Altogether, the scene was to me as full of amusement as of novelty, and I could willingly have remained to the end of the discussion. But looking round, my eyes chanced to fall upon young Sextus, and I could not but see that his mind was occupied in matters quite remote from the business of the Forum, and the merits of the pleaders. He stood with his arms folded in his gown, and his eyes fixed upon the ground, only lifting them up from time to time with an impatient air towards a side entrance of the Forum, or to observe by the shadows on the opposite porticos what progress the sun was making towards the south.

Perceiving, at length, that Xerophrastes had his back turned towards us, and that his father was entirely engaged with his tablets during the speech of another orator, he plucked me by the sleeve. I understood his meaning from his looks, and followed

him quickly through the crowd; nor did we look back till we had left the noise of the Forensic assembly entirely behind us. "I am depriving you," he then said, "of no great gratification, for that old creature is, indeed, possessed of much natural shrewdness, but the asperity of his temper is such, that I am sure you could not have listened to him for many minutes without great disgust. In fact, he is excessively bitter, from observing that his reputation is rather eclipsed by some other younger people, and looks for all the world like some old worn-out and discarded cat, grinning from the top of the wall at the amorous dalliance in which his faithless mistress is indulging some sleeker rival of the whisker. You are too good-natured to be able to find any delight in the angry sneerings of such an envious person; and his age would prevent you, at the same time, from willingly giving way to any contemptuous emotions. Let us depart from the city, and I will be your guide to the

villa of Capito. But if any questions be asked on our return, you can say I was anxious to shew you something of the other regions of the city.”

CHAPTER VI.

ALTHOUGH anxiety to shew me the city was to be the pretence for the sudden departure of Sextus from the Forum, nothing could be less in his intentions than to waste any farther portion of the morning in what he naturally enough imagined might be just as well deferred to some other day, during which he should have no prospect of meeting with the fair Sempronia. He hurried me forward, on the contrary, in a manner which all my sympathy with his emotions could hardly prevail upon me to pardon, through twenty noble streets, and past innumerable glorious edifices, before each of which I would gladly have paused—such was the yet unsated ardour of my curiosity.

Nevertheless, seeing him entirely wrapped up in his own anxious thoughts, I did not oppose myself to his inclinations. Ere long, having passed the Hill of Gardens, I found that we had gained the eastern limit of the city. His steps increased in rapidity when he perceived that we were treading the free surface of the Salarian Way ; insomuch, that I could scarcely cast even a passing glance on the lofty pillars and other funereal monuments, which confer such an air of solemn magnificence on that wide avenue of the capital.

A sharp walk of about an hour and a half brought us within sight of the Suburban of Capito. A lofty wall protected the fields of this retirement from the intrusive eyes of passengers on the public road, over whose summit nothing could be discovered but the tall green boughs of planes and sycamores waving to and fro in the gentle agitation of the western breeze. We entered by a small side-door, and immediately found ourselves, as if by some magical delusion,

transported from the glare of a Roman highway, and the hum of men, into the depth and silence of some primeval forest. No nicely trimmed path conducted our feet through the mazes of this venerable place. Every thing had at least the appearance of being left as nature had formed it. The tall fern rustled beneath us as we moved ; the untaught ivy was seen spreading its careless tresses from tree to tree overhead ; the fawn bounded from the thicket, and the scared owl screamed on the pine top. By degrees, however, the gloom lessened around us as we approached the mansion itself, till at length, over an open space of lawn, we perceived the simple but elegant porch of entrance, and the line of colonnade that extended all along that front of the building. We passed under the porch, and across a paved court, in which a fountain was playing, into the great hall, the windows of which commanded all the other side of the place—a most noble prospect of elaborate

gardens gradually rising into shady hills, and lost in a distance of impenetrable wood. Here a freedman attended us, who informed us that Capito had retired from the house into a sequestered part of the grounds with some friends from the city ; but that if we chose we could easily join him there. We assented, and, following his guidance, ere long traversed no narrow space of luxuriant cultivation. From one perfumed terrace we descended to another ; till, having at last reached a certain green and mossy walk, darkened all its length by a natural arching of vines and mulberries, the freedman pointed to a statue at the further end of it, and told us it stood over against the entrance of his master's summer-house. When we reached the statue, however, we could not at first perceive any traces of a summer-house. The shaded avenue terminated in face of a precipitous rock, from which there fell a small stream that was received beneath in a massive basin, where its waters foamed

into spray without transgressing the margin. A thousand delicious plants and farsought flowers clustered around the base of the rock and the brink of the fountain, and the humming of innumerable bees mingled with the whispers of the stream. We stood for a moment uncertain whether we should move on or retire, when we heard some one calling to us from the centre of the rock ; and presently, passing to the other side of the basin, descried, between the rock and the falling water, a low entrance into what seemed to be a natural cave or grotto. We stooped, and passing its threshold found ourselves within one of the most luxurious retirements that was ever haunted by the foot of Dryad. A sparry roof hung like a canopy of gems and crystals over a groupe of sculptured Nymphs and Fawns, which were placed on a rustic pedestal within a circular bath, shaped out of the living stone. Around the edge of the waveless waters that slumbered in this green recess, were spread carpets rich with the dyes of Tyrian art, whereon Ca-

pito was reposing with his friends. He received Sextus with the warmest kindness, and me with distinguished politeness, introducing us both to his companions, who were three in number—all of them, like himself, advanced in years, and two of them wearing long beards, though their demeanour was destitute of any thing like the affected stateliness of our friend Xerophrastes. These two, as our host informed us, were Greeks and Rhetoricians—the third, a Patrician of the house of Pontii, devoted, like himself, to the pursuits of philosophy and the pleasures of a literary retirement. They were engaged, when we joined them, in a conversation which had sprung from the perusal of some new metaphysical writer, on which they were delivering very different opinions. One of the Greeks, the more serene looking of the pair, was defending its doctrines, which I guessed to be those of the Garden, with earnestness of manner, although in a low and measured cadence of voice—the other espoused the opposite side,

of the Porch, with much quickness of utterance and severe animation of look, while the two lordly Romans seemed to be contenting themselves, for the most part, with listening, although it was not difficult to perceive, from the expressions of their countenances, that the one sided in opinion with the Stoic, and the other, (which was Capito himself,) with the Epicurean disputant.

They all arose presently, and proceeded to walk together, without interrupting the conversation, along the same shaded avenue which Sextus and myself had already traversed. He and I moved along with them, but walked a little in their rear—my companion being still too much abstracted to bestow his attention on what they were saying; while I myself, being but little an adept in such mysteries, amused myself rather with the exterior and manners of the men themselves, than with the merits of the opinions they were severally defending. The two Greeks were attired in the graceful cos-

tume of their own country, which was worn, however, far more gracefully by the Epicurean than his brother,—the materials of his robe being infinitely more delicate, and its folds arranged with studied elegance, whereas the coarse garment of the Stoic had apparently engaged less attention. Nevertheless, there was a much more marked difference between the attire of Capito and that of Pontius Mamurra ; for the former was arrayed in a tunic of the whitest cloth, beneath which appeared fine linen rollers, swathing his thighs and legs, to protect them, as I supposed, from the heat and the insects, and a pair of slippers, of dark violet-coloured cloth, embroidered with silver flowers ; while the other held his arms folded in the drapery of an old but genuine toga, which left his yet strong and sinewy nether-limbs exposed to the weather, all except what was covered by his tall black sandals and their senatorian crescents.

As we passed on, our host from time to

time directed the attention of his visitors, more particularly of the two Greeks, to the statues of bronze and marble, which were placed at convenient intervals along the terraces of his gardens. The symmetry of these figures and the graceful simplicity of their attitudes inspired me with I know not what of calm and soothing pleasure such as I had never before tasted, so that I thought I could have lingered forever amidst these haunts of philosophic luxury. The images were, for the most part, portraits of illustrious men—Greeks, Romans—sages and heroes;—but beautiful female forms were not wanting, nor majestic representations of gods and demi-gods, and all the ætherial imaginations of the Grecian poets. Seeing the name of Jupiter inscribed upon one of the pedestals, I paused for a moment to contemplate the glorious personification of might and wisdom, depositing, at the same time, a garland of roses at the feet of the statue—upon which I could observe that

my behaviour furnished much cause of mirth to the Epicurean Demochares ; while, on the contrary, Euphranor, the disciple of the Porch, approved of what I did, and rebuked his companion for saying any thing that might even by possibility disturb the natural piety of an innocent youth. But the Roman Stoic stood by with a smile of stately scorn ; and utter indifference was painted on the countenance of Capito. At another time, Sextus having staid behind to examine the beauties of a certain statue of Diana, which represented the goddess stretched out in careless slumber on the turf, with a slender greyhound at her feet, the Epicurean began to rally me on having a taste inferior to that of my friend, whose devotion, he said, could not be blamed, being paid to an exquisite imitation of what the great Nature of things had decreed should ever be the most agreeable of all objects in the eyes of a person of his age.—“ Whereas you,” continued he, “ appear to be more occupied with

deep-hung eye-brows, ambrosial beards and fantastic thunderbolts, and the other exuberances of Homeric imagination.”

To this reproach I made no reply, but Capito immediately began to recite some noble verses of a Hymn of Calimachus, in which both the Greeks joined him; nor could any thing be more delightful than the deep rolling grandeur of those harmonious numbers. A sudden exclamation of Sextus, however, ere long, interrupted their recitation, and Capito, looking up a long straight pathway, leading from the villa, said, “Come, Valerius, we shall soon see whether you or Sextus is the more gallant to living beauties, for here come my two nieces, Athanasia and Sempronia; and, I assure you, I don’t know of which of them I am the more proud. But Sempronia has indeed more of the Diana about her, so it is probable she may find a ready slave in our friend Sextus.”

We advanced to meet the young ladies, who were walking slowly down the avenue, and their uncle, having tenderly saluted

them, soon presented us to their notice. Sextus blushed deeply when he found himself introduced to Sempronia, while, in her smile, although she looked at him, as if to say she had never seen him before, I thought I could detect a certain half-suppressed expression of half-disdainful archness—the colour in her cheeks at the same time being not entirely unmoved. She was, indeed, a very lovely girl, and in looking on her light dancing play of beautiful features, I could easily sympathize with the young raptures of my friend. Her dress was such as to set off her charms to the utmost advantage, for the bright green of her Byssine robe, although it would have been a severe trial to any ordinary complexion, served only to heighten the delicious brilliancy of hers. A veil, of the same substance and colour, was richly embroidered all over with flowers of silver tissue, and fell in flowing drapery well nigh down to her knees. Her hair was almost entirely concealed by this part of her dress, but a single braid of the brightest nut-brown

was visible low down on her polished forehead. Her eyes were black as jet, and full, as I have already hinted, of a nymph-like or Arcadian vivacity—altogether, indeed, she was such a creature as the Tempe of the poets need not have been ashamed to shelter beneath the most luxurious of its bowers.

The other young lady—it is Athanasia of whom I speak—she was not a dazzling beauty like Sempronia, but beautiful in such a manner as I shall never be able to describe. Taller than her cousin, and darker haired than she, but with eyes rather light than otherwise, of a clear, soft, somewhat melancholy grey—and with a complexion for the most part paler than is usual in Italy, and with a demeanour hovering between cheerfulness and innocent gravity, and attired with a vestal simplicity in the old Roman tunic, and cloak of white cloth—it is possible that most men might have regarded her less than the other; but for my part, I found her aspect the more engaging the longer I surveyed it. A single broad star of diamonds,

planted high up among her black hair, was the only ornament of jewelry she wore, and it shone there in solitary brightness, like the planet of evening. Alas! I smile at myself that I should take notice of such trifles, in describing the first time I ever gazed on Athanasia.

At the request of the younger lady, we all returned to the grotto, in the neighbourhood of which, as I have already mentioned, our tasteful host had placed the rarest of his exotic plants, some of which Sempromia was now desirous of inspecting. As we paced again slowly over those smooth shaven alleys of turf, and between those rows of yews and box, clipped into regular shapes, which abounded in this more artificial region of the place, the conversation, which the appearance of the two beauties had disturbed, was resumed; although, as out of regard to their presence, the voices of the disputants pursued a lower and milder tone than before,—a natural mark of respect (by the way) to the gentleness of female spirits,

which we must all have remarked on many occasions. I must confess, however, that mild as was the manner of the discourse, I could not help being somewhat astonished, and even displeased, with finding that a virtuous and polite Roman could permit such topics to be discussed in the hearing of females; above all, that he did not interpose to prevent Demochares from throwing out so many sarcastic reflections concerning the deities whose statues were placed in the garden. A beautiful Mercury, in particular, which we all paused to admire, elicited many sarcaistical observations, that I could easily see were far from being agreeable to the fair cousins. But greatest of all was my wonder at the behaviour of Capito himself, who, after we had again entered that delightful grotto, turned himself to me as if peculiarly, and began a deliberate and ingenious piece of declamation concerning the tenets of his favourite philosophy,—such as the fortuitous concourse of atoms, the transitory and fluctuating nature of all things,

and the necessity of snatching present enjoyments, as nothing permanent can be discovered whereon to repose the mind. With great elegance, indeed, of language and illustration, did he enlarge on these golden theories of the Sages of the Garden ; nor did he fail to intersperse his discourse with many exquisite verses from Lucretius and other poetical followers of his sect. Such, however, was the earnestness of his declamation, that I could not help believing him to be quite sincere to what he said, and asked him, not without anxiety, whether he had all his life been an Epicurean, or whether it was only of late that he had espoused that discipline. Nor have I at this distance of time any difficulty in recalling the tenor of his answer. “ Young man,” said he, “ the question you have now put to me is not the first instance I have had of your sagacity ; which, indeed, considering at once, your age and provincial education, is such as may truly command the respect of all of us. To be born wise, Fate or Heaven has

denied to the children of human race. It is their privilege to win wisdom for themselves; the fault is their own, if they do not die wise.

“ When a young man first enters upon the theatre of the world, bright hopes are around him, and he moves onward in the buoyancy of conscious power. The pride of young existence is the main and animating centre of all his thoughts, or rather it is the essence and extract of all his innumerable sensations. Rejoicing in the feeling of the real might that is, it is his delight to think—to dream—of might existing and exerted as for ever. New to the material, but still more new to the moral world, he believes in the stability of all things, whose transitory nature has not been exhibited before him. New to the tricks of mankind, he believes that to be said truly, which, why it should be said falsely, he is unable to conjecture. For him, superstition has equal potency to darken the past, and illuminate the future.

“ At that early period, when ignorance is of itself sufficient to produce a certain sort of happiness, the ambition of the human mind is too high to admit the reception of such doctrines as I, an old man, and an experienced traveller in the mazes of the world, have no shame in avowing. But time moves on, young man, and every hour some tender plant of *hope* or of *promise* is crushed into the dust beneath his unmerciful tread. The spirit clings long and closely to its favourite delusions. The promise that is destroyed to-day springs into life to-morrow in some new shape ; and Hope, like some warring deity of your poets, bleeds and sickens only to revive again. Nevertheless, disappointment at length gathers to itself the vigour of an enduring form. The horizon becomes colder and darker around our sphere of vision—the soul waxes faint and more faint within our bosoms. It is then that man at last begins to recognize the true state, not of his own nature alone, but of all things that surround him—that having

tasted much of evil, he is taught to feel the value of good—and weaning himself from vain-glorious dreams, learns the great lesson of practical wisdom, to enjoy the moments as they pass—to snatch some solid pleasure at least amidst a world of vision and imagination ; so, in a word, as the poet has expressed it, he may not have reason to complain in the hour of death that he has never lived.

“ In me,” he continued, “ you behold one that has gone through the experience necessary to produce an entire acquiescence in these doctrines. I am one of those, O Valerius ! who have resolved to concentrate, after this fashion, the whole of my dreams upon the hour that is. There are not wanting, indeed, here and elsewhere, persons who profess the same theories, only in the view of finding excuse and shelter for the practice of vice. But till it be proved that the practice of vice is the best means of enjoyment, in vain shall it be asserted by our opponents, that our doctrine is essentially ad-

verse to virtue. The mistakes or the misdeeds of individuals must be estimated for nothing; for where is the doctrine that may not be shewn to have been defended by impure livers? The founder of our sect is acknowledged, by the most virulent enemies of his theories, to have been the most blameless of men, and they, I must take leave to believe, can never be sincere friends of virtue who doubt that he who is a true worshipper of pleasure, may also be the worshipper of virtue."

There was a certain something, as I thought, more like suppressed melancholy than genuine hilarity, in the expression of the old man's face, as well as in the tone of his voice, while he gave utterance to these sentiments; nor did any of those present appear desirous of protracting the argument; although I did not imagine from their looks that any of them had altered their opinion. What, however, I could not help remarking in a particular manner, was the gentle regret painted in the beautiful countenance

of Athanasia, while her uncle was speaking. The maiden sate over against him all the while, with her cheek supported on her left hand, pale and silent, with an expression of deep affection and tender pity. From time to time, indeed, she cast her eye upward with a calm smile, but immediately resumed her attitude of pensive abstraction. Her uncle took her hand in his when he had done speaking, and kissed it tenderly, as if to apologize for having said any thing disagreeable to her. She smiled again upon the sceptic, and then rising gracefully, walked by herself (for I could not help following her with my eye,) down into a dark walk of pines that branched off at the right hand from the entrance of the grotto. There I saw her stoop and pluck a beautiful pale flower, streaked all over as with spots of blood. This she placed in her bosom, and then rejoined us with a more cheerful aspect; after which, we all walked towards the villa. Nor did it escape my notice, that, although Sempronia ap-

peared willing to avoid Sextus as we went, it always happened, by some accident or other, that he was nearer to her than any other person of the company.

They were both at a little distance behind the rest of the party, when Euphranor addressed himself to me, saying, "Is not this young man, your companion, the same that is under the guidance of a certain Rhetorician, by name Xerophrastes?"

"The same," said I, "and a wary, sage-looking person indeed is his tutor. I believe he also is of the Porch."

"Yes, no doubt he is of the Porch," interrupted Demochares; "any body may see that with half an eye, my good friend Euphranor; for he has a beard that Zeno himself might have been proud of, and walks withal in as dignified a manner as if he conceived himself to be the chief pillar of the Porch, if not the very Porch itself."

"Yes, yes, who shall prevent Demochares from having his jest?" replied the

Stoic Euphranor with great gravity, “but Valerius must not be permitted to go away in the belief that this hero of the beard is really what he pretends to be.”

“Why, what does the man pretend to be?” cried our host,—“he wears a long beard and writes himself Athenian and Rhetorician—I see no pretence in the matter.”

“Oh no, Capito,” says Euphranor, “you cannot be in earnest in what you say, the man is a mere quack; and, for that matter, if you only heard him utter ten words, you would be abundantly satisfied that he is no Athenian. The man is by a birth a Thesalian, and his gutturals still remind one strongly of his native hills.”

I felt considerably interested in this discourse, and would gladly have heard more of it, but it was interrupted by the nearer approach of the rest of the party, and, ere long, we all entered the house together.

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE the hour of taking the bath, we exercised ourselves for some time in the tennis-court, where I could not help wondering very much at the vigour and agility displayed by old Capito and his companions. I was then conducted into the baths, where, after being washed and perfumed in the most luxurious manner, I was arrayed in an elegant supper-garment by one of the slaves of our host. At table we were joined again by the ladies, who both reclined on the same couch with their uncle. Three comely youths alone attended us, in short tunics, and girt with napkins of fine linen; but, during the repast, an ancient female slave stood in silence behind the couch of

the young ladies. A small fountain of alabaster played between two tall candalabra of the same material, at the further end of the apartment ; and a young damsel stood beside them, swinging slowly from time to time a silver censer, from which clouds of delicate odour rolled up to the mirrored roof.

In all things the feast was splendid ; yet there was no appearance of useless or vain ostentation. Every thing was conducted in a style of great calmness and order, without the least formality. The repast interrupted not the conversation, which went on in a manner to me equally instructive as entertaining ; although I must confess, the presence of Athanasia sometimes rendered me inattentive to what was spoken. I could not divest myself of the idea, that some unknown circumstance was pressing on the mind of the fair creature,—that some secret feeling had obtained the chief possession of her thoughts,—and that when she smiled upon those that addressed her, it was

oftentimes only to conceal her ignorance of that which had been said.

Being asked by Capito, I endeavoured, among other things, to inform him and his friends, as far as I could, concerning the then condition of this island, which, more particularly after the exploits of Agricola, had naturally come to be a subject of much interest in the imperial city. In return, the chief topics of public concern, which then occupied the capital, were discussed by them, as I perceived, in a great measure, on my account; and I listened with delight to the praises, which they all agreed in bestowing on the heroic and beneficial sway of the new Emperor. Many anecdotes were narrated, which tended to strengthen the feelings of reverence and admiration, with which I had already been accustomed to contemplate the character of Trajan. But others were told, as the conversation went on, which I could not so easily reconcile with the idea I had previously formed of him.

In particular, I was not a little disturbed with what they told me concerning his treatment of the Christians, who, as we understood in Britain, had been suffered to live in tranquillity ever since Nerva acceded to the empire. But now, from the circumstances related to me, it appeared that the mild and humane Trajan had taken up, in regard to this unfortunate sect, the whole aversion of Domitian himself; insomuch, that every day some cruel catastrophe was made known of some person who had adopted their tenets. Being ignorant of the nature of these tenets, and having heard only in general terms that they were of Jewish origin, and in their nature extremely dark and mystical, I was at a loss to conceive any rational method of accounting for the extreme hatred of the prince, or rather for his condescending to give himself so much trouble concerning a matter of so much obscurity, and apparent indifference.

Capito, however, assured me, that although I might have good occasion to won-

der at the steps taken by the Emperor, it would no longer be said by any one, that the progress of the Christian sect deserved to be considered as a matter either of obscurity, or of indifference. “On the contrary,” said he, “from what you have just heard of the numbers and quality of those that have lately suffered various punishments, on account of their adherence to this strange superstition, you cannot hesitate to admit that the head of the empire has been justified in considering it as a subject well worthy his attention. As to the merits or demerits of the superstition itself, or of those that have embraced it, these are very different matters.”

“The only question,” said Mamurra, “with which Trajan had any business, was, whether this Jewish superstition be, or be not, inconsistent with the established religion of our ancestors and the state. Rome has grown and flourished under the protection of the gods our fathers worshipped; and the laws and institutions of the empire are

all built upon the foundation of reverence for these guardian deities. If this Asiatic worship can exist along with that of the gods of the Capitol, what should we or any have to say against it? We have adopted the gods of many nations; nor do I see why, because the Jews have been unfortunate in a contest with Rome, we should take it for granted, that their deities are unworthy of respect. Destiny has willed that Rome should be the Mistress of the World; but it seems neither necessary nor fitting, that she should carry her controul into the secret parts of men's minds, and interfere with their notions of religious obligation. If, however, it be so, as we have all heard asserted, and as I doubt not Trajan believes, that he who embraces the creed of the Christians becomes from that hour an infidel in regard to the deities of Rome, and, therefore, a scorner of those principles on which the security of the Roman government and law is established,—then, I say, the prince does well in extirpating such an intolerant and intolerable superstition. And if the

thing be in itself deserving of such severity, I do not see that we should attach any blame to Trajan, for behaving as he has done. Domitian was a tyrant, and a monster of humanity ; and Nerva was wise and good ; and yet it may be, that, in regard to these Christians, the principle of Domitian's conduct was right in the main, and that of Nerva's wrong in the main. As to the unnecessary brutalities of *the fly-killer*,* we have no occasion to take them into the account. But you, my friend Capito, regard both sides of the question, I have no doubt, with pretty much the same measure of indifference."

"Nay," replied Capito, "in this matter you do me very much injustice. I never can regard with indifference any question, in which the interest of the empire, and the honour of Trajan, are concerned. And

* Domitian was so called, in consequence of the reports circulated concerning the nature of his solitary pastimes. Hence the famous answer recorded in Suetonius:—"Is there any one with Cæsar?" "No—not even a fly"—*Ne musca quidem*.

moreover, it would be great hypocrisy in me to pretend, that I can regard, without concern, any question which involves, as I think the present assuredly does, one of the greatest interests of the whole human race, —I mean the right of adopting, each man for himself, whatever opinion may appear to be the most rational concerning all matters of religious belief. But if you mean only to say, that I am indifferent about the nature of this Christian superstition, you are, I must confess, so far in the right. I have no knowledge of its dogmas, and I have no great desire to have any knowledge of them. I presume they have their full share of that old eastern barbarity, in the shady places of which the elder Greeks used to think they could discover the outlines of something really grand and majestic. But as for me, I have ceased, as you well know, to be a student of any such mysterious and difficult matters.”

“There is no occasion,” resumed Mammurra, “why you should give yourself any trouble about them. I do not pretend, any

more than you, to enter into the merits of the Christian superstition ; I only say, that if the superstition be found incapable of subsisting among the subjects of the Roman state without danger to the public interest, the prince does well in repressing its progress. That is the *only question* of which I spake."

" There is, indeed, no other," said Capito, " and I thought of none."

" And how do you answer it, dear uncle?" cried Athanasia, (lifting herself up, for the first time, to take part in the conversation.)

" Nay, Athanasia, my love," said the old man, " to answer that is the business of the prince, and of the senate—not mine. I meddle not with it at all ; I only regret, that blood should be shed, and citizens exiled ; above all, in the reign of a just and merciful prince.—Sempronia," continued he, " what is that strange story your father was telling about one of the daughters of Serennius ?"

" Of Serennia Tertulla, do you mean ?" said Sempronia.

" Yes, Sempronia, it was the same."

“ Oh, uncle !” replied Sempronia, “ her story was nothing extraordinary, as times go. It was only, that she had a flirtation with a handsome young Greek, and the handsome young Greek happened to be a Christian,—and she was converted by the handsome young Greek,—and she was found out in going with him to some secret assembly of these people, in a vault somewhere by the Vatican Hill,—and her papa has been glad to send her to Corsica, or some other desolate island, partly to escape the notice of the lawyers, and partly, I suppose, in hopes that the quietness of the island, and the absence of all the handsome young Christians, may perhaps, in time, restore poor Tertulla to her right mind—This is all. Do you think that a strange story, uncle ?”

“ Not, if it be exactly as you have told it, Sempronia ; but I am afraid you have been wicked enough to give it a colouring of your own.—What says Athanasia ?”

Athanasia started on being addressed so

by her uncle, but made no reply, except that she was sorry for Tertulla, and had never heard anything of the handsome young Greek before. I could not, however, help suspecting, from the expression of her face, that she knew more of the affair than she was willing to acknowledge; for she was the only one of the company who did not laugh at the account given of it by her cousin. On the contrary, her looks were graver than before, and I would fain have asked her whether she had been a friend of this Tertulla at any time, but was afraid that I might appear impertinently inquisitive, and therefore kept silence.

By this time the evening was somewhat spent, and the increasing darkness of the chamber warned us that we ought to be thinking of our return to the city. I looked towards Sextus as if to signify what I thought, but he refused to meet my eye, although I perceived he was not unconscious of my purpose. At the moment, however, when I was on the point of speaking, the

room, which, as I have said, was cloudy, was getting rapidly darker, became all of a sudden filled with so deep a shade, that none of us could help remarking it; and Sempronia, leaping from her couch, exclaimed, that she was sure there was thunder in the skies, for that she felt as if there were something stifling in the air, and the stillness all around was like that of midnight.

No sooner had she said so, than we found she had judged aright; for the deep voice of the thunder was heard as if rending the woods around, and flash after flash of lightning gleamed along the horizon; and anon, after a brief pause, the wind howled as if set free from some captivity, and the rain began to fall in big heavy drops. Every one sat silent, as if awe-struck; but Sempronia was the only one that seemed to be in terror from the tempest. Nevertheless, my eyes rested more on Athanasia, who looked paler than she had done, although her countenance still preserved all its serenity, and

her eyes were turned calmly towards the open doors of the portico, in the region where the lightnings had been visible.

The rain poured down heavily for a space, and the wind was loud along the grass, and in the air, till the thunder began to mutter again from amongst the distant trees, and then all other sounds ceased, as if rebuked and chastened before its voice. I looked, and saw the fire dart across the eastern sky, and heard the terrible growling from the low clouds. "How awful," said I, "is the voice of Jupiter!" Athanasia folded her arms upon her bosom, and lifting her eyes to heaven, made answer in a whisper,— "How awful is the voice of God!" She then dropt her left hand on the end of her couch, and half unconsciously taking hold of it in mine, I asked her if she was afraid. "No," said she, "I am not afraid, but the heaviness of the air makes me a little faint, and I never can listen to the thunder without feeling something extraordinary within me." In saying so, she did not withdraw

her hand from mine, and I thought I felt it tremble; but perhaps this might have been no more than the suggestion of my imagination.

By degrees, the sounds of the thunder were heard more and more distant; but, the rain and the wind continuing all around us, Capito said, he could not think of our going into the city that evening, and that we must all make up our minds to remain in the villa. The countenance of Sextus brightened up when he heard him say so, and he looked to me as if to ask my assent. To say the truth, I was as willing to stay as he could be; so we easily permitted ourselves to be persuaded, and our host dispatched a messenger to Rome, to inform Licinius of the cause of our absence. The old man then led us into another apartment, which was richly furnished with books and paintings. Here he read for some time out of one of the poets, to a party, none of whom, I am afraid, were very attentive in listening to him, till, the hour of rest being come, the

attendants entered, and we were conducted to our several apartments, Sextus and myself, indeed, being lodged in the same chamber.

CHAPTER VIII.

We were no sooner left alone than I began to rally my friend on the beauty of his mistress, and the earnest court he had been paying her during the whole of the day. The youth listened with blushes of delight to the praises of Sempronia, but seemed not to have the least idea that he had been so fortunate as to make any favourable impression on her mind. On the contrary, he scarcely appeared to be aware of having done anything to attract particular attention from her, and expressed much astonishment when I assured him, that his behaviour had been such as could not possibly admit of more than one explanation in the eyes of a person

so quick and vivacious as the lovely Sempronia.

After we had both retired to our beds, and the lights were extinguished, we still continued for some time to talk over the incidents of our visit, and the future prospects of Sextus and his love ; until at length sleep overpowered us in easy bonds, and agreeable dreams followed, I doubt not, in the hearts of us both, the thoughts and sights of a delightful day. Mine surely were delightful, for they were all of Athanasia. Yet, even in these visions of the night, I could never see her face without some strange impression of mystery. I saw her placid smile — I heard the sweet low cadence of her voice — but I felt, and I could not feel it without a certain indescribable anxiety, that her deep thoughts were far away busied about something of which I knew nothing.

I awoke early, and lay for a long while ruminating in silence. The most natural explanation of all things appeared to be, that she was occupied with some secret, perhaps

unhappy passion. But I know not how it was, that I could not bring myself to rest satisfied with this conclusion.

I arose, and drew near to the bed of Sextus ; but seeing that he was fast asleep, and that a quiet smile was on his lips, I could not think of awaking him. But the sun shone bright into the apartment, and I resolved to walk forth and breathe the balmy air of the morning.

My steps were directed, almost unconsciously, to the same part of the gardens where I had first seen Athanasia on the preceding day. The moisture was still lying heavy there on the green paths, and the birds were singing among the glittering leaves ; the godlike statues stood there in their silent beauty ;—the lightnings had not scathed them—the wind had not shaken them—and the rain-drops had fallen on them only to refresh their pale loveliness. I walked to and fro, enjoying, without an effort, the enchantment of the scene ;—a new feeling of the beauty of all things seemed to have been

breathed into my soul ; and the pensive grace of Athanasia hovered over my imagination, like some presiding genius of the groves.

At length I found myself near the favourite grotto of Capito, and I stood over against its entrance for some space, contemplating the augmented stream as it fell from the superincumbent rock, and regretting the ravage which the nightly tempest had made among the slender shafts and delicate blossoms of the flowers that were planted around its basin. Twice I thought I heard the murmurs of a human voice near me, and twice I persuaded myself that it was only the rippling of the waters ; but I listened more attentively, and the third time I was satisfied that some person must be in the grotto. I passed between the water and the rock, and looking in, beheld the fair creature that had been occupying so many of my thoughts kneeling far in the grotto, with her back to the place where I stood.

Her long black tresses hung all down her shoulders ; her hands seemed to be clasped before her ; and although she was silent for the moment, I was satisfied that the sounds I had heard had been those of supplication. To disturb her by advancing farther, would have been impious ; to retire, without the risk of disturbing her, almost impossible ; but I remained there fixed to the spot, without perhaps considering all these things, as I should have done. The virgin-modesty of her attitude was holy in my eyes, and the thought never occurred to me, that I might be doing wrong in permitting myself to witness the simple devotions of Athanasia. “ Great God, listen to my prayers,” was all I understood of what she said ; but she whispered for some moments in a lowly and fervent tone, and I saw that she kissed something with her lips ere she arose from her knees. She then plunged her hands into the well, by whose brink she had knelt, and turned round to

the light. "Athanasia, forgive me," was already on my lips; but on seeing me, she uttered a faint cry, and fell prostrate upon the marble. I rushed forward in an agony, and found that she had swooned away. I lifted up her head, and laid it in my bosom, and laved water on it from the fountain, till I saw her lips tremble. At last she opened her eyes, and after gazing on me wildly for a moment, she gathered her strength, and stood quite upright, supporting herself against the wall of the grotto. "Great heavens!" cried I, "in what have I offended, that I should be rendered the cause of affliction to Athanasia? Speak, lady, and say that you forgive me."

"I thought," said she, with a proud calmness, "that Valerius was of Roman—of Patrician blood. What brings him to be a spy upon the secret moments of a Patrician maiden?"—Then bursting into a tone of unutterable fervour, "Speak," said she, "young man, what have you heard? How long have you stood here? Am I betray-

ed? Am I ruined for ever? Tell me the worst, and let me begone to my kindred."

"Witness, heaven and earth!" cried I, kneeling to the ground before her, "and witness every god, that I have heard nothing, except to know that you were praying. What you asked I know not—to whom you prayed I know not—I have only seen you kneeling, and been guilty of gazing on your beauty."

"You heard not the words of my prayer?" said she.

"No, not its words, Athanasia, nor any thing of its purpose."

"Do you swear this to me, young man?"

"Yes, I swear by Jupiter and by Rome—as I am a man and a Roman, I know not, neither do I desire to know, any thing of what you said. Forgive me for the fault of my indiscretion—you have no other to forgive."

Athanasia paused for a moment, and then resuming more of her usual tone of voice,

(although its accents were still somewhat disturbed and faltering,) said to me, "Valerius, since the thing is so, I have nothing to forgive—I blame you for nothing—I have nobody to find fault with but myself. It is you that must pardon me for my suspicion and my fervour. I have injured you, and I repent of it."

"Distress me not, Athanasia," said I, "by speaking such words as these. You wound me more than ever, if you proceed."

"From this hour, then," said she, "what has passed here is forgotten by us both. We blot it from our memories;"—and with that, as if in token of the paction, she extended to me her hand. I kissed it as I knelt, and swore that all things were safe with me; but added, as I arose, "that I was afraid I should be promising more than I should be able to perform,—did I say I should be able to forget any hour, or any place, where I had seen Athanasia."

"Nay," said she, "no compliment, or I shall begin to suspect you of insincerity."

I was then about to withdraw from the grotto ; but seeing a scroll of parchment lying at the feet of Athanasia, I stooped, and presented it to her, saying, “ I was afraid she might forget it.”

She took it eagerly, and saying, “ Of that there was no danger,” placed it in her bosom, within the folds of her tunic. She was then gathering up her black tresses, and fastening them hastily on the back part of her head, when we heard the sound of footsteps not far off, and beckoning to me to remain where I was, she darted from me, and in a moment vanished among the trees. I waited for a few minutes, and then stepping forth, beheld her walking at a distance, beside her sister, in the direction of the villa. They were soon lost among the paths, and I returned alone into the grotto.

I sat down beside the dark well, wherein she had dipt her hands, and mused in a most disturbed mood on all the particulars of this strange and unexpected inter-

view. Every motion of her features—every modulation of her voice, was present with me; I had gathered them all into my heart, and I felt that I must cherish them there for ever. From the first moment I saw her, my eyes had been constrained to gaze upon her with an interest quite novel to me; but now I knew that she could not smile, without making my heart faint within me, and that the least whisper of her voice was able to bring tears into mine eyes. Now I thought of my own unworthiness, and could not help saying to myself, “Why should a poor ignorant provincial, such as I am, be torturing himself with the thoughts of such a creature as this!” Then again some benign glance of hers would return before me, and I could not help having some faint hopes, that her innocent heart might be won to me by faithful unwearied love. But what always threw me back into despair, was the recollection of the mystery that I knew hung over her mind, although what

it was I could not know. That she had been saying something in her prayers, which could not be overheard without *betraying*,—nay, as she said, *ruining* her,—she had herself confessed to me. What could be this strange secret, so cherished in dread, and in darkness, by this lovely maiden?—A crime?—No—no crime could sully the clear bosom of her innocence. No consciousness of guilt could be concealed beneath the radiant beauty of that heavenly visage. But perhaps, although guiltless herself, she had been made the confidante of some erring,—some unhappy friend. Perhaps, in her prayer, she had made mention of another's name, and implored the pardon of another's guilt * * * *. Last of all, why might it not be so, that the maiden loved, and was beloved again in secret; that, from circumstances to me unknown and impenetrable, she might have reason to regard any casual betrayal of her love as a calamity; and that, having uttered the name of her lover in her secret supplications, her

terrors might all have been occasioned by her apprehensions of my having overheard it? And yet there was something in the demeanour of Athanasia, that I could not bring myself to reconcile entirely with any one of these suppositions. Had she feared that I had overheard any confession of guilt,—even of the guilt of another,—surely some semblance of shame would have been mingled with her looks of terror. Had she apprehended only the discovery of an innocent love, surely her blushes would have been deeper, and her boldness less. Yet the last solution of the difficulty was that which haunted me the most powerfully.

When I came forth into the open air, I was astonished to perceive that the sun was already high in heaven, and I proceeded in haste towards the villa, not doubting that Sextus and Capito would be greatly astonished by the length of my absence. I found them and the ladies walking under the northern colonnade, having returned, as they

told me, from a fruitless search after me through almost the whole of the garden. I looked to Athanasia, as if to signify that she well knew where I might have been found ; but, although I saw that she perfectly understood my meaning, she said nothing in explanation. Sextus drew me aside shortly after, and told me, that his father had sent to inform him, that our presence was necessary in the city before supper-time, to attend a great entertainment which was to be given that evening by the lady whose cause he had successfully pleaded in the Forum on the preceding day ; which lady, I now for the first time learned, was no other than the same Marcia Rubellia, to whom his father was very anxious the youth should be married. The success of this pleading had increased very much the wealth of the lady, and, of course, as Sextus very well knew, the anxiety of Licinius for the proposed union ; and to remain at the villa any longer, was, he said, entirely impossible, since he already suspected his

father had not been quite pleased with him for leaving the Forum the day before, without staying to hear out a cause in which his duty, if not his inclination, ought to have made him feel so greatly interested.

We bade adieu, therefore, to our kind host and the young ladies, not without more reluctance than either of us durst express, and ready promises to return soon again to the villa. We found Dromo and Boto waiting for us at the gate, the former of whom looked a thousand unutterable things at his young master and me when we joined them, while the latter appeared to be as joyful in seeing me again, as if we had been parted for a twelvemonth. The two slaves were mounted on asses, but they led horses for our conveyance; so we mounted with all speed, and were soon beyond the beautiful enclosures of the villa of Capito. As soon as we were fairly out of sight of the house, Dromo began to ply Sextus with innumerable questions about the result of the visit, all of them in bad Greek; that, as he

said, there might be no chance of what passed being understood by *the Druid*; for by that venerable designation, he informed us, the primitive Boto had already come to be best known in the vestibule of Licinius. "Ah!" quoth he, "there is no need for many words; I am sure my young master has not been behind hand with himself. If he has, it is no fault of mine, however. I put Opportunity into his hands, and she, you know, as the poets say, has only one lock of hair, and that is in front."

Sextus being very shy of entering into particulars, I found myself obliged to take upon me the satisfying of the curiosity of this inquisitive varlet, which I did in a manner that much astonished Sextus, who by no means suspected, that in the midst of my own attention to the other cousin, I had been able to take so much notice of what passed between him and Sempronia. However, the good youth took a little raillery all in good part, and we laughed loudly in unison at the triumphant capers which the

whip of Dromo made his poor ass exhibit, in testimony of his satisfaction with the progress which all things appeared to be making. We reached the mansion of Licinius about three hours after noon, and were told by the slaves in attendance, that Xerophrastes had gone out some time before, and that Licinius himself was already busy in arraying himself for the feast of Rubellia.

CHAPTER IX.

HER mansion was situated about the middle of the Suburra, in a neighbourhood no-wise splendid, and itself distinguished, on the side fronting to the street, by no uncommon marks of elegance or opulence. A plain brick wall covered almost the whole of the building from the eye of the passenger; and what was seen deserved the praise of neatness, rather than that of magnificence. Nevertheless, the moment one had passed the gate, and entered the court, one could not help perceiving, that taste and wealth had been alike expended abundantly on the residence of Rubellia; for the broad terrace and gallery behind were lavishly adorned, the one with sculpture and the other with

paintings ; and the gardens, which these overlooked, appeared to be both extensive and elaborate.

We were conducted through several pillared halls, and then up a wide staircase, of somewhat sombre magnificence, into the chamber, where the company were already in part assembled, and busy in offering their congratulations to the mistress of the feast. She was so much engaged with their flatteries that she did not at first perceive our entrance ; but as soon as she knew who had come, the chief part of her attention was devoted, I shall not say in what proportions, between her victorious advocate and his blushing son. Nevertheless, the kinsman of Licinius and the companion of young Sextus had no occasion to accuse the fair lady of negligence, although he was not quite so vain as to imagine that he owed all her civilities to the favourable impression of his own figure and address.

To me, the whole scene was of course perfectly novel—To you, could you behold it

at this moment, it would, I am sure, be almost equally so ; for rapidly as we have been advancing in our imitation of the manners of the capital, our island, most unquestionably, has never yet displayed any thing that could sustain the smallest comparison with what then met my eyes in the stately saloon of this luxurious widow. The group around her was gay and various, and she herself was exquisitely worthy of forming its centre ; for she was young and handsome, and dressed in a style of the utmost splendour, and her deportment was equally elegant and vivacious.

Her complexion was of that clear rich brown which lends to the eye a greater brilliancy than the most exquisite contrast of red and white ; and over which the blood, when it does come into the face, diffuses at once the warmest and the deepest of blushes. Her hair appeared to be perfectly black, unless where the light streaming from behind her gave an edging of glossy brown to the thick masses of her curls. Her robe of crim-

son silk was fastened by a girdle, which seemed to consist of nothing but rubies and emeralds, strung upon threads of gold. She wore a tiara that rose high above her tresses, and was all over resplendent with flowers woven in jewellery ; and around her delicate wrists and ancles were twined broad chains of virgin gold, interspersed with alternate wreaths of sapphire. Her form was the perfection of luxury ; and although I have said that her deportment was in general lively and brilliant, yet there was a soft seriousness that every now and then settled in her eyes, which gave her, for a moment, a look of melancholy that seemed to me more likely to be in harmony with the secret nature of her disposition. I watched her in particular when she spoke to Sextus ; her full rich-toned voice was then merry, and her large eyes sparkled ; but when she was engaged with any other person she could not help gazing on the beautiful youth in silence ; and then it was that her coun-

tenance wore its deepest expression of calmness—I had almost said, of sadness.

Had I not spent the preceding day at the villa of Capito, I dare say I should have wondered at the coldness with which Sextus appeared to receive all the marks of her favour; and, as it was, I could not help contemplating this fair creature with a mixture of admiration and pity,—emotions, one of which was, I doubt not, partaken by all present—the other was probably confined to myself. I had been gazing on her in this manner I know not how long, from another part of the room, when I heard a hearty chuckle from behind me, and thought I could not be unacquainted with the voice. Looking round, I saw, not without delight, the stately figure of my Prætorian Captain, Sabinus, whose cheerful eye soon distinguished me, and who forthwith came up to salute me in the most friendly manner. I introduced him to Licinius and Sextus, the former of whom expressed himself as being

much gratified with the attention the centurion had shewn to me during our voyage ; so that I felt myself, as it were, no longer a stranger in the place ; and the lutes and trumpets at that moment announcing that supper was ready to be served up, I took care to keep close to Sabinus, and to place myself near him on the couch.

The room in which the feast was prepared, communicated by a pair of brazen folding doors, richly sculptured, with that in which the company had assembled ; but from it, although the sun had not yet gone down, all light was excluded, excepting what streamed from golden candelabra, and broad lamps of bronze suspended overhead from the high and painted ceiling. The party might consist of about twenty, who reclined along one demi-circular couch, the covers of which were of the softest down, and the frame-work inlaid with ivory,—the part of the room enclosed by its outline, which resembled that of a horse-shoe, being occupied with the table, and an open

space, to which the attendants had free access. We had no sooner taken our seats than a crowd of slaves entered, carrying large boards upon their heads, which being forthwith arranged on the table, were seen to be loaded with dishes of gold and silver, and all manner of drinking-vessels, also with vases of rare flowers, and urns of perfume. But how did the countenance of Sabinus brighten, when the trumpet sounded a second time as if from below, and the floor of the chamber was suddenly, as it were, pierced in twain, and the pealing music ushered up a huge roasted boar, all wreathed with stately garnishings, and standing erect on his golden platform as on a chariot of triumph!

“ Ah! my dear boy,” cries he, “ here comes the true king of beasts, and only legitimate monarch of the woods. What should we not have given for a slice of him when we were pent up, half-starved and fainting, in that abominable ship of ours?— All hail, most potent conqueror! but whe-

ther Germanic or Asiatic be thy proper title, I shall soon know, when that expert Ethiopean has daintily carved and divided thee."

But why should I attempt to describe to you the particulars of the feast? Let it suffice, that whatever idea I had formed of Roman luxury, was far surpassed, and that the splendour of the entertainment engaged the attention of all except Rubellia herself, who, reclining immediately above Sextus, kept her eyes fixed almost all the time it lasted, upon his luxuriant curls of dark hair, unless when she caused the young damsel, her cup-bearer, to pour out to her wine in a goblet of onyx, which she touched with her lips, and then handed to the indifferent boy. When the supper was half over, the folding-doors were again thrown open, and there entered a groupe of maidens and beautiful youths, who danced before us to the music of the lute, and scattered crowns of roses at the feet of Rubellia and her guests. She herself placed one of them

on the head of Sextus, and another on that of his father, who lay on the other side of her, and then caused a large cup of wine to be carried all around, whereof each of us tasted, and drank to the health of the orator, in whose honour the entertainment was made. The ladies that were present imitated the example of the hostess, and crowned such as were by them; but Sabinus and I, not being near enough to any of them, received that courtesy from some of the dancing maidens. Libations were poured out abundantly on the marble floor, and all the gods were invoked to shower down their blessings on Rubellia, and those that had been so fortunate as to serve her. Sweet strains of music resounded through the tall pillars of the banquetting-room, and the lamps burned heavily in an atmosphere overloaded with perfumes.

It appeared to me, from the beginning, that my friend Sabinus witnessed, not without some feelings of displeasure, the excessive attentions which Rubellia lavished

on young Sextus ; and I gathered, from the way in which he every now and then looked towards them during the supper, that, had the place permitted, he would not have allowed such things to go on without some comment. But when we had left the banquetting room, and removed to another apartment, where, amidst various entertainments of dancing, music, and recitation, Rubellia still retained close to herself the heir of Licinius, the centurion made to himself abundant amends for the previous restraint to which his temper had been subjected.

“ Confess now,” said he, “ that she is a lovely creature, and that your British beauties are tame and insipid, when compared with such a specimen of Roman fascination ; and confess, withal, that this curled boy is either the most ignorant, or the most insusceptible of his sex. Good Heavens ! in what a different style was she treated by that old magistrate, whose very bust there, in the corner, looks quite blank and discon-

solate with its great white eyes, while she, that sate for so many months pale and weeping by his bed-side, is thinking of nothing but to bestow all the wealth he left her on a beardless stripling, who appears to regard the bust and the beauty with almost equal indifference.—Alas ! poor old withered Leberinus, little did you imagine that so small a phial would suffice to hold all her tears. My only wonder is, that she still permits your marble image to occupy even a corner of her mansion ; but, no doubt, you will soon be sent on your travels. I dare say, some cold pedestal in the garden will, ere long, be the best birth you need look for.—Well, well, you see what fools we may all be made by the cunning of these pretty crocodiles. 'Thank the stars, I have, as yet at least, escaped that worst of all calamities. I hope my dotage, when it does come, will not shew itself in the same shape with that of my good old friend. Had she wished to marry some respectable man, who might be a protection to her and her mo-

ney, one might have thought less of the matter; but this is really too much. I hope the ghost of the worthy Prætor will not frown unseen by her bed-side the night she takes this Adonis to her arms. If I were in his place, I should give her curtains a pretty shake. By Hermes! it would not be a pretty monument and a flowery epitaph that would make me lie still."

"How long is it," said I, "since this venerable magistrate died? Surely she has allowed him the decency of a twelvemonth's grief, before she began to give fine suppers, and perceive the beauty of Sextus?"

"Whether it be a twelvemonth ago or not," replied the Centurion, "is more than I can take upon me to decide; all I know is, that it appears to me as if it were but yesterday that I supped here—(it was just before I set off for Britain)—and saw the young lady reclining, even at table, with those long black curls of her's, in the bosom of the emaciated Leberinus. By Jupiter! the old man would not taste a drop of wine

unless she kissed the cup—she coaxed every morsel he swallowed down his throat, and clasped the garland round his bald pate with her own fingers ; ay, twice before that sleek physician—that solemn-faced Greek, whom you see at this moment talking with your kinsman, advised her to have him carried to his bed. For all the gravity of his looks, I would lay a trifle, that worthy Bœotian has his own thoughts about what is passing, as well as I. But the worst-pleased face in the whole room is, I think, that of old Rubellius himself yonder, who has just come in, without, I suppose, being aware that any such feast as this was going forward. Without question, the crafty old usurer is of opinion he might have been invited. I promise you, I can interpret the glances of that grey-headed extortioner to a nicety—(well I may, for it is not the first time I have had an opportunity of studying them)—Well, well,” quoth he to himself, “ she may do as she will with the

bonds of Leberinus ; but she might have remembered, that a codicil can be easily tacked to the end of a living man's testament."

" But, after all," said I, " one must admit, that if she married old Leberinus to please her father, the widow has some right to choose her second husband according to the pattern of her own fancy."

" Oh ! by all means," answered he ; " let her please herself ; let her make a fool of herself now, if she will. She may perhaps learn, some time or other, that it is as possible to have too young a husband, as to have too old a one."

" Come now," said I, " Sabinus—(for the bitterness with which he spoke convinced me what was at the bottom of his mind)—confess that if she had selected some well-made, middle-aged man—some respectable man—some man of note and distinction, you would have judged less harshly of poor Rubellia ; some good-looking captain of Prætorians, we shall say."

“ Ah ! you cunning dog,” said he ; “ who would have thought that you had brought so much wickedness from that new world of yours ? But do you really think she will wed Sextus ? The boy appears strangely cold. I should not wonder, when all is done, if the match were more of the orator’s seeking than his own.”

“ I can only tell you,” said I, “ that I have never heard Licinius mention any thing about it ; and, I dare say, Sextus would be very sorry to think of losing his liberty for the sake of the wealth of Leberinus—ay, or for that of old Rubellius to boot.”

“ Ah ! my young friend,” quoth he, “ you are not quite acquainted with the way in which these matters are managed at Rome. If we had you six weeks at the other side of the Viminal, we should teach you better.”

I know not how long this sort of talk might have lasted ; but Licinius put an end to it by joining us, and soon engaged the worthy Centurion, and several more of us,

with some lively, but unintelligible discussion on the merits of some new edict, of which none of us had ever heard, or were likely ever to hear any thing again. We were glad to escape from the lawyer into another room, where some Greek slaves were performing a sort of comic pantomime, that appeared to give more delight to old Rubellius than any other of the spectators. As for Sextus, I saw plainly that he was quite weary of the entertainment, and anxious to get away; but we were obliged to remain till after Licinius was gone, for it was evident that he wished his son to see out the last. But no sooner had we heard his chariot drive off, than the young man and I took leave of the lady, and withdrew. Sabinus lingered a moment behind us, and then joined us in the vestibule, from which, his course lying so far in the same direction as ours, we all proceeded homewards on foot; and it was very fortunate, as you shall hear, that we had, on this occasion, the company of the Cen-

turion, for not a few things occurred that night which I should have been sorry not to have observed, and of which, but for him, it would nevertheless have been impossible for me to have been witness.

We had proceeded along the street of the Suburra for a considerable space, and were already beneath the shade of the great Temple of Isis and Serapis, (which stands on the northern side of the Esquiline Hill, nigh over against the Amphitheatre of Vespasian,) when, from the opposite side of the way, we were hailed by a small party of soldiers, who, as it turned out, had been sent from the Prætorian camp in search of Sabinus, and one of whom had now recognized his gait and stature, notwithstanding the obscurity of the hour, and the distance at which we were walking. The Centurion went aside with the leader of these men for some moments, and then informed us that it was very fortunate they had so easily recognized him, as the business on which they had been sent was such as did not ad-

mit of being negligently dealt with. "To-morrow," said he, pointing to the Amphitheatre before us, "that glorious edifice is to be the scene of one of the grandest shows exhibited by Trajan since his accession to the empire. It is the anniversary of the day on which he was adopted by Nerva, and the splendour of the spectacle will be in proportion to the gratitude and veneration with which he at all times regards the memory of that excellent benefactor. But there are some parts of the exhibition that I am afraid old Nerva, could he be present to behold them, would not regard with the same feelings as his successor."

"Surely," said I, "the beneficent Trajan will not stain the expression of his gratitude by any thing unworthy of himself, or that could give displeasure to Nerva?"

"Nay," replied the Centurion, "it is not for me to talk about any thing that Trajan chooses to do being unworthy of Trajan; but you well know that Nerva would never suffer any of the Christians to be molested

during his reign, and now here are some of these unhappy fanatics, that are to be compelled either to renounce their faith in the face of the assembly to-morrow, or to die on the arena. It is to inspect the condition of these unfortunates, who, I know not for what reason, are confined in a dungeon below the ramparts in the vicinity of our camp, and to announce to them the final determination of their fate, that I, as centurion of the night, have now been summoned. If you are curious to see the men, you are at liberty to go along with me, and I shall be greatly obliged to you for your company, to boot."

My curiosity having been considerably excited in regard to the new faith and its adherents, in consequence of certain circumstances, some of which I have already narrated, I was very desirous to accept of this offer. Nor did Sextus any sooner perceive that such was my inclination, than he advised me to gratify it, undertaking, at

the same time, himself to go straight home-wards, and satisfy his father, in case of any inquiry, that I was in a place of safety, and under the protection of Sabinus. With him, therefore, and with his Prætorians, I proceeded along various streets which led us by the skirts of the Esquiline and Viminal Hills, on to the region of the Mounds of Tarquin, over against which, as you have heard, the great camp of those bands is situated,—if indeed that ought of right to be called by the name of a camp, which is itself a city of no slender dimensions, and built with great splendour of architecture, spread out beyond the limits of Rome, for the accommodation of that proud soldiery. There my friend took me into his own chamber, and furnished me with a cloak and helmet, that I might excite no suspicion by accompanying him on his errand. The watch-word of the night also was given unto me, which, as I call to mind, was *silent faith*; and shortly issuing forth a se-

cond time, we came to the gate of the prison-house wherein the Christians were lying.

Now, when we had entered into the guard-room, we found it crowded with spearmen of Sabinus's band, some of whom were playing at dice, others carousing jovially, and many wrapt up in their mantles, and asleep upon the floor; while a few only were sitting beneath the porch, with their spears in their hands, and leaning upon their bucklers. From one of the elder of these, the Centurion, after having drawn him aside out of the company, made inquiry straightway concerning the names and condition of the prisoners, and whether as yet they had received any intelligence of that which was to come to pass on the morrow. The soldier, who was a grave man, and well stricken in years, made answer, "that of a surety the men were free-born and of decent estate, and that he had not heard of any thing else being laid to their charge, excepting that which concerned

their religion. Since they have been here," he continued, "I have been several times set on watch over them, and twice have I lain with one of them in his dungeon; yet have I heard no complaints from any of them, for in all things they are patient. One of them only is to suffer to-morrow—but for him I am especially concerned, for he was known to me of old, having served often with me when I was a horseman in the army of Titus, all through the war of Palestine, and at the siege of Jerusalem."

"And of what country is he?" said Sabinus. "Is he also a Roman?"

"No, sir," answered the spearman, "he is no Roman; but he was of a troop of the allies that was joined oftentimes to our legion, and I have seen him bear himself on the day of battle as well as any Roman of us all. He is by birth a Greek of the sea-coast; but his mother was of the nation of the Jews, and he was brought up from his youth according to their law."

"And yet, although the son of a Jewess,

he was with us, say you, at the siege of Jerusalem?"

"Even so," replied the man; "and not he only, but many others; for the Jews, you know, were divided against themselves; and of all them that were Christians, it was said, that not one abode in the city, or gave help to defend it. For, as this man himself hath sworn to me, the oracles of the Christians, and their prophets, had of old given warning that the city must fall into the hands of Cæsar, by reason of the wickedness of that people. Wherefore, when we set our camp over against Jerusalem, these men all passed out from the city, with their wives and their children, and dwelt safely in the mountainous country, until all things were fulfilled. But some of these young men fought in our camp, and did good service, because the place was known to them, and they had acquaintance with all the secrets of the Rock. Of these, this man was one. He and all his household had depart-

ed from the ancient religion of the Jews, and were believers in the doctrines of the Christians, for which cause he is to suffer on the morrow ; and of that, although I have not spoken to him this evening, I think he has already received some intelligence, for certain of his friends passed in to him, and they covered their faces as they went in, as if weeping."

" Are these friends still with him ?" said Sabinus.

" Yes," answered he, " for I must have seen them had they come forth again. Without doubt, the two women are still with him in his dungeon."

" Women ?" quoth Sabinus ; " and of what condition think you they may be ?"

" That I know not," replied the soldier ; " for, as I have said, they walked in muffled in their mantles. But one of them, at least, is a Roman, for I heard her speak to him that is by the door of the dungeon."

“ How long is it,” said the Centurion, “ since they went into this prison ?”

“ More than an hour,” replied the soldier, looking at the water-clock that stood beneath the porch ; “ and if they be Christians, they are not yet about to depart, for they never separate without singing together, which is their favourite manner of worship.”

He had scarcely uttered these words, when the soldiers that were carousing within the guard-room became silent, and we heard the voices of those that were in the dungeon singing together in a sweet and lowly manner.

“ Ah, sir!” said the old soldier, “ I thought it would be even so—there is not a spearman in the band that would not willingly watch here a whole night, could he be sure of hearing that melody. Well do I know that soft voice—Hear now, how she sings by herself—and there again, that deepstrong note—that is the voice of the prisoner.”

“ Hush !” quoth the Centurion, “ heard

you ever any thing half so divine? Are these words Greek or Syrian?

“What the words are I know not,” said the soldier; “but I know the tune well—I have heard it played many a night with hautboy, and clarion, and dulcimer, on the high walls of Jerusalem, while the old city was beleaguered.”

“It is some old Jewish tune then,” said Sabinus; “I knew not those barbarians had had half so much art.”

“Why, as for that, sir,” replied the man, “I have been all over Greece and Egypt—to say nothing of Italy—and I never heard any music like that music of the Jews. Why, when they came down to join the battle, their trumpets sounded so gloriously, that we wondered how it was possible for them ever to be driven back; and then, when their gates were closed, and they sent out to beg their dead, they would play such solemn awful notes of lamentation, that the plunderers stood still to listen, and their

warriors were delivered to them with all their mail as they had fallen."

"And the Christians also," said Sabinus, "had the same tunes?"

"Oh yes, sir—why, for that matter, these very tunes may have been among them, for aught we know, since the beginning of their nation. I have stood sentinel with this very man, and seen the tears run down his cheeks by the star-light, when he heard the music from the city, as the Jewish captains were going their rounds upon the battlements."

"But this, surely," said the Centurion, "is no warlike melody."

"I know not," quoth the old soldier, "whether it be or not—but I am sure it sounds not like any music of sorrow,—and yet what plaintive tones are in the part of that female voice!"

"The bass sounds triumphantly, in good sooth."

"Ay, sir, but that is the old man's own voice—I am sure he will keep a good heart

to the end, even though they should be singing their farewell to him. Well, the Emperor loses a good soldier, the hour old Thraso dies. I wish to Jupiter he had not been a Christian, or had kept his religion to himself. But as for changing now—you might as well think of persuading the Prince himself to be a Jew, as talk to Thraso about that.”

“ That last high strain, however,” quoth Sabinus, “ has ended their singing. Let us speak to the women as they come out ; and if it be so that the man is already aware of what is to be done to-morrow, I see not why we should trouble him with entering his cell. He has but a few hours to live, and I would not willingly disturb him.”

“ I hear them coming,” said the soldier.

“ Then do you meet them,” said Sabinus, “ and tell them that the Centurion wishes to speak to them ere they go away—we will retire some space, and talk to them out of hearing of the guard.”

With that he and I withdrew to the other side of the way, over against the door of the prison ; and we stood there waiting for the women under a certain old fig-tree, that grew close by the city wall. In a few minutes two persons, arrayed even as the soldier had described, drew near to us ; and one of them, without uncovering her countenance, said,—“ Master, we trust we have done no evil in visiting the prisoners ; had it been so, surely we should not have been permitted to enter without question or difficulty proposed.”

These words were spoken in a voice tremulous and agitated, as if with grief rather than with terror ; but I could not help starting when I heard them, for there were one or two tones in the voice, that I thought I could not be mistaken in believing I had heard before ; however, I commanded myself, and heard in silence what Sabinus replied to the women.

“ Be not alarmed,” said he ; “ there is no

offence committed, for no orders have been issued to prevent these men from seeing their friends. I sent for you, not to find fault with what you have done, but only to ask whether this prisoner has already been told that the Emperor has announced his resolution concerning him, and that he must die to-morrow, in the Amphitheatre of Vespasian, unless he renounce his superstition."

"He knows all," answered the same voice; "and is prepared for all things but dishonour."

"By heavens ! Valerius," whispered Sabinus ; " it is no mean person that speaks so—this is the voice and the gesture of a Roman lady." Then raising his voice, " In that case there is no need for my going into the dungeon ; and yet, could I hope to say any thing that might tend to make him change his purpose, I would most gladly do so. The Emperor is as humane as he is just, and unless when rebellious ob-

stinacy shuts the gates of mercy, he is the last that would consent to the shedding of any blood.—For this man, of whose history I have just been hearing something, I am in a particular manner interested, and to save him, I wish only I had power equal to my inclination. It is Thraso of whom I speak—Is there no chance of convincing him ?”

“ He is already convinced,” replied the voice, “ and no one can move him. Thraso will die in honour, as he has lived in honour.”

“ Could his friends do nothing to bend him ?”

“ His friends have been with him already,” said the voice, again becoming every moment more clear and stedfast ;—“ but they were poor friends that would seek to save the body of Thraso, at the expense of the soul of Thraso.”

This last sentence was spoken so distinctly, that I knew I could no longer be

mistaken ; and I was on the brink of speaking out, without thinking of the consequences that might possibly occur, when she that had spoken, after appearing to regard me steadily through her veil, uttered a faint cry, and dropping on her knees before Sabinus, said,—“ Oh, sir ! to us also be merciful, and let us go hence ere any one behold us !”

“ Go in peace, lady,” answered the Centurion, “ and henceforth be prudent as well as kind ;” and they went away from us, and were soon lost to our sight in the windings of the street. We stood there for some moments in silence, looking towards the place where they disappeared. “ Strange superstition,” said Sabinus ; “ what heroism dwells with this madness !—you see how little these men regard their lives ;—nay, even women, and Roman women too—you see how their nature is changed by it.”

“ It is, indeed, a most strange spectacle,” said I ; “ but what is to be the end of it, if

this spirit become diffused widely among the people?"

"In truth I know not," answered the Centurion; "but many have already died from this cause, and yet we have heard of none who had once embraced this faith, renouncing it out of fear for their lives."

"And in the days of Nero and Domitian," said I, "were not many hundreds of them punished even here in the capital?"

"You are far, very far within the mark, Valerius," said he, "when you speak of hundreds; and not a few of those that were sent into exile in those days, because of their Christianity, were, as you may have heard, of no ordinary condition. Among these there were Flavius Clemens, the Consular, and his wife Domitilla; both of whom I have often seen in my youth—both relations to the family of Vespasian—whom, notwithstanding, all the splendour of the imperial blood could not save from

the common fate of their sect. But Nerva suffered all of them to live in peace, and recalled such as were in exile, excepting only Domitilla, whose fate has been regretted by all men ; but I suppose it was not at first judged safe to recall her, lest any tumult should have been excited in her name, by those that regretted (and I am sorry to say these were not a few,) the wicked licence of which they had been deprived by the death of her tyrannical kinsman, and the transition of the imperial dignity into another line. She also with whom we have been speaking, is, I am sure, a Roman lady of condition ; and you may judge of her zeal, when you see that it brings her hither at midnight, to mingle tears and prayers with those of an old legionary, such as this Thraso. Did you observe, that the other female both walked and stood behind her. You may depend upon it that was her slave, or freed woman."

“ I observed all this,” answered I. But little did Sabinus suspect that I had observed so much more than himself had done. Little did he know with what emotions I had listened to all that had been said. He had never seen Athanasia, nor could he read my secret thoughts, to understand with what feelings I had learned that Athanasia was a Christian. Before parting from him, I said I should still be gratified with being permitted to see Thraso ; and although he declined entering himself, he accordingly gave command that the door of his dungeon should be opened for me, requesting me, at the same time, to refrain from saying any thing more to the man than was necessary for explaining the apparent purpose of my visit—the communication, namely, of the fate that was reserved for him and his companions on the morrow.

So saying, the Centurion withdrew to the camp ; and the same old spearman with

whom we had conversed at the Porch, carried a torch in his hand, and shewed me the way into the dungeon of the prisoner.

CHAPTER X.

BETWEEN the first door, whereof the soldier relaxed the heavy bolts, and the second, which appeared to be almost entirely formed of iron, there intervened a short space, which was occupied by a few broad steps of old and very massive mason-work; and upon the lowest of these steps, I stood waiting till he should open the second door. It was some time before he accomplished this, for several keys were applied before he discovered the right one; but at last the lock turned, and the heavy door swung away from before him so speedily, that the air, rushing out of the vault, extinguished in a moment the flame of the torch; insomuch,

that we had no light excepting that which streamed from an aperture high up in the wall of the dungeon itself; a feeble ray of star-light alone—for the moon had, long ere this time, been gone down—which, nevertheless, sufficed to shew us to the prisoner, although we at first could see nothing of him.

“Soldiers,” said the old man, in a voice of perfect calmness, “for what reason are you come?”

“We come,” said my companion, “by command of the Centurion, to inform you of things which we would willingly not have to tell—to-morrow Trajan opens the Amphitheatre of Vespasian.”

“My old comrade,” said the prisoner, interrupting him, “is it your voice I hear? I know all this already; and you know of old that I fear not the face of death.”

“Alas! Thraso, I know well you fear not death; yet why, when there is no need, should you cast away life? Think well, I

beseech you, and reserve yourself for a better day.”

“ The dawn of that better day, Romans, already begins to open upon my eyes. I see the east red with the promise of its brightness. Would you have me tarry in darkness, when I am invited to walk forth into the light ?”

“ Thraso, your words rejoice me,” answered the spearman ; “ and I am sure all will rejoice in hearing that you have at length come to think thus—Trajan himself will rejoice. You have but to say the word, and you are free.”

“ You mean kindly,” said the old man, rising from his pallet, and walking towards us as far as his fetters permitted ; “ you mean kindly, therefore I blame you not. But you are much mistaken—I have but to keep silence, and I am free.”

“ Alas ! Thraso, what mean you ? Do you know what you say ? You must worship the gods in the morning, else you die.”

“ Evening and morning, and for ever, I

must worship the God that made heaven and earth. If I bow down to the idols of Trajan, I buy the life of a day at the price of death everlasting. Tempt me not in your kindness : I fell once. Great God, preserve me from falling ! I have bid farewell to my friends already. Leave me to spend these few hours by myself.—Leave me to prepare the flesh for that from which the spirit shrinks not.” So saying, he extended his hand to the spearman, and the two old men embraced each other tenderly before me.

“ Prisoner,” said I, “ if there be any thing in which we can serve you, command our aid : We have already done our duty to the Centurion ; if, without transgressing that, we can do any thing that may give ease to your mind now, or, after you are gone, comfort to your kindred, you have but to speak.”

“ Sir,” replied he, “ I see by the eagle wings on your helmet, that you are one in authority, and I hear by your voice that you

are young. There is a certain thing, concerning which I had some purpose to speak to this my old brother-in-arms; but if I may rely on that which you have said, without question, your power is greater to execute that which I desire."

"Speak with confidence," said I; "although I am a Roman, and bear all loyalty to the prince, yet this Prætorian helmet is not mine, and I have but assumed it for the sake of having access to your prison. I am no soldier of Trajan: Whatever I can do for you without harm to others, speak, and I will do it. I will swear to you——"

"Nay, sir," said he, "swear not—mock not the God of heaven, by invoking idol or demon—I believe your word—but there is no need why any other should be witness to my request."

"I will retire," said the spearman, "and keep watch at the door; surely there is no need for me to say that whatever I might hear should be safe within me.—But I am no more than a poor spearman, and this

young patrician can do much more than I. Let him alone hear, and execute your commands."

"Be it so," said the prisoner, a second time embracing him; "I would not willingly expose you to any needless danger; and yet I see not what danger there is in all that I have to ask."

With this the old spearman withdrew; and being left alone with Thraso, I took his hand, and sitting down beside him on his pallet, shortly explained to him the circumstances under which I had come thither.

"Young sir," said he, "I know not what is about the sound of your voice, and the frankness of your demeanour, that makes me feel confidence enough to entrust you with a certain thing, which concerns not myself, nor any hope of mine, for that were little—but the interests of one that is far dearer to me than I can express, and who, I hope, will live many happy days upon earth, after I shall have sealed my belief in

the message of God, by blood that has of old been exposed a thousand times to all mortal perils, for the sake of things whereof I have long perceived the worthlessness. But a very short while ago, and I might have executed this thing for myself; but weakness overcame me at the moment of parting, and I forgot till it was too late."

"If it be any thing which you would have me convey to any one, say where I may find the person," said I, "and be assured I shall deliver it in safety."

"Sir," he proceeded, "it is even so—I have here with me certain writings, which I have carried for these twenty years continually in my bosom. Among these, is one of the sacred books of the faith for which I am to die, and I would fain have it placed in the hands of one to whom I know it will be dearest of all, for the sake of that which it contains; but, I hope, dear also for the sake of him that bequeaths it. Will you seek out a certain Roman lady, and undertake

to give into her own hands, in secret, the scroll, which I shall give you ?”

“ I will do my endeavour,” said I ; “ and if I cannot find means to execute your command, I shall destroy the book with my own hands before I quit Rome—for my stay here is uncertain.”

“ If you cannot find means to do what I ask safely,” he replied, “ I do not bid you destroy the book—*that* is yours to do with as it shall seem good to you—but I conjure you to read it before you throw it away. Nay, even as it is, I conjure you to read it before you seek to give it to her whose name I shall mention.”

“ Old man,” said I, “ almost I believe that I already know her name, and more besides. If it be so that I have conjectured aright, be assured that all you ask shall be fulfilled to the letter ; be assured also, that I would die with you to-morrow, rather than live to be the cause or instrument of any evil thing to her that but now visited you in your dungeon.”

“ Alas !” cried the old man, starting up, “ lay not this also, Oh Lord ! upon my head. Let the old bear witness—but let the young be spared, to serve thee in happier years upon the earth !”

“ Be not afraid,” said I, “ if it was Athanasia, no one suspected it but myself ; and I have already told you that I would die rather than bring evil upon her head.”

“ Yes,” he answered, after a pause—“ it was, indeed, Athanasia.—Yes, young man, who is it but she that would have left the halls of nobles, and the couches of peace, to breathe at midnight the air of a dungeon, that she might solace the last moments of a poor man, and, save the bond of Christ, of a stranger ! But if you have known her before, and spoken with her before, then surely she must indeed be safe in your hands. You know where she dwells—that I myself know not.—Here is the scroll, from which that noble maiden has heard my humble voice essay to expound the words of eternal life. I charge you to approach her with reve-

rence, and give into her own hands my dying bequest ; yet, as I have said, deliver it not to her till you have yourself read what it contains."

"Christian," said I, placing the writing in my bosom, "have no fear—I will read your book, and ere two nights have gone over my head, I shall find means to place it in the hands of Athanasia; and now, farewell."

"Nay, not yet, for the last time. Will you not come in the morning, and behold the death of a Christian?"

"Alas!" said I, "what will it avail that I should torture myself with looking on the shedding of your blood? The prince may have reason to regard you as an offender against the state; but I have spoken with you in your solitude, and I know that your heart is noble. Would to heaven, that by going thither I could avert your fate! but that is in your own hands, and though die you will, why should I see you die?"

"Methinks, sir," he replied, "it may be weakness; but yet methinks it would give

me some farther comfort in my death, to know that there was at least one Roman there, who would not see me die without pity ; and besides I must have you constrain yourself, that you may be able to carry the tidings of my departure to her of whom we have spoken. Her prayers will be with me, but not her eyes. You must tell Athanasia the manner of my death.”

“ For that cause,” said I, “ I will constrain myself, and be present in the Amphitheatre.”

“ Then, farewell,” said he ; “——and yet go not. In whatsoever faith you live,—in whatsoever faith you die, the blessing of an old man and a Christian can do you no harm.” So saying, the old man stood up, and leaning his hand on my head as I sat, pronounced over me a blessing which I never shall forget. “ The Lord bless thee—the Lord enlighten thy darkness—the Lord plant his seed in thy kind heart—the Lord give thee also to die the death of a Christian !”

When he had said so, he sat down again ; and I departed greatly oppressed in spirit, yet feeling, I know not how or why, as I would rather have lost many merry days, than that dark and sorrowful hour in the prison of this old man. The soldiers in the guard-room were so much engaged in their different occupations, that they heeded me not as I stept silently to the gate ; and I was soon out of sight of their flaming watch-fires, and far from the sounds of that noisy mirth of theirs, which contrasted so strangely with the mournful silence of the dungeon I had quitted.

There was something in the total silence of the proud Roman streets—in their dreary and heavy desertedness—that accorded far better with the feelings of my mind as I walked along ; and I ruminated on all that I had seen and heard, without being disturbed by any sight or sound of life, or the excitement of life. Wherever there is shadow, there is also brightness ; but the uniform face of the grey twilight admits of no

bold contrasts of the deep and the dazzling ; and it is then that the mind also can best array itself in the calm sobriety of contemplation. It was not, indeed, the first time that I had thought of death ; but it was the first time that I had been in the presence of a human being, foreseeing distinctly, and quietly awaiting, the termination of his mortal existence, and I could not help asking of myself, with a certain fearful anxiety, how, under similar circumstances of terror, I should have myself been able to sustain my spirits ?—to what resources I should, in such a moment, look for the support, which seemed to have been vouchsafed so abundantly to this old man ; by what charm, in fine,—by what tenet of philosophy, or by what hope of religion,—I should, in the midst of life, be able to reconcile myself to a voluntary embrace of death ? To avoid disgrace, indeed, and dishonour, said I, I think I could be Roman enough to dare the worst ; but this poor man is willing to die, rather than acknowledge, by

one offering on the altar, the deities in whose worship all his Greek ancestors have been trained ; yet who, except perhaps a few obscure individuals that have adopted the same new superstition, would think this man dishonoured by returning to the religion of his fathers ? Deep indeed must be his conviction of the truth of that which he professes to believe, — serious indeed must be his faith, and high his trust. I could not help sometimes thinking to myself, what if, after all, his faith should be true, and his trust wise ? The thoughts of the gentle Athanasia, too, were not unmingled with my meditations concerning the heroic demeanour of Thraso ; and I felt within myself some obscure presentiment, that from her lips I should yet receive explanation of all, which at that moment appeared to me to be so much enveloped in mystery.

Musing and meditating thus, it was no wonder that I, who knew so little of Rome, should have soon wandered from the straight

way to the home of my kinsman. In truth, but that I at last caught at the turning of a street a glimpse of the Flavian Amphitheatre, which I had before passed on my way from the feast of Rubellia—and of which I had been hearing and thinking so much during my visit to the quarters of the Prætorians—I might, perhaps, have been long enough of discovering whereabouts I was. I had a pretty accurate notion of the way from that grand edifice to the house of Licinius, and therefore moved towards it immediately, intending to pass straight down from thence into the Sacred Way. But when I came close to the Amphitheatre, I found that, surrounded on all sides by a city of sleep and silence, that region was already filled with all manner of noise and tumult, in consequence of the preparations which had begun to be made for the spectacles of the succeeding day. The east was just beginning to be streaked with the first faint blushes of morning; but

the torches and innumerable lanterns, in the hands of the different workmen and artificers employed there, threw more light than was sufficient to give me an idea of all that was going forwards. On one side, the whole way was blocked up with a countless throng of waggons ; the conductors of which, almost all of them Ethiopians and Numidians, were lashing each other's horses, and exchanging, in their barbarous tongues, violent outcries of, I doubt not, more barbarous wrath and execration. The fearful bellowings that resounded from any of the waggons, which happened to be set in motion amidst the choaking throng, intimated that savage beasts were confined within them ; and when I had discovered this, and then regarded the prodigious multitude of the waggons, I cannot say what horror came over me at thinking what cruel sights, and how lavish in cruelty, were become the favourite pastimes of the most refined of peoples. I recognized the well-

known short deep snort of the wild boar, and the long hollow bark of the wolf; but a thousand fierce sounds, mingled with these, were equally new and terrific to my ears. One voice, however, was so grand in its notes of sullen rage, that I could not help asking a soldier, who sate on horseback near me, from what wild beast it proceeded. The man answered, that it was a Lion; but then what laughter arose among some of the rabble, that had overheard my interrogation; and what contemptuous looks were thrown upon me by the naked negroes, who sate grinning in the torch-light, on the tops of their carriages! Then one or two of the soldiers would be compelled to ride into the midst of the confusion, to separate some of these wretches, fighting with their whips about precedence in the approaching entrance to the Amphitheatre; and then it seemed to me that the horses could not away with the strong sickly smell of some of the beasts that were carried there,

for they would prance, and caper, and rear on end, and snort as if panic-struck, and dart themselves towards the other side; while some of the riders were thrown off in the midst of the tumult, and others, with fierce and strong bits, compelled the frightened or infuriated animals to endure the thing they abhorred—in their wrath and pride forcing them even nearer than was necessary to the hated waggons. In another quarter, this close-mingled pile of carts and horses was surmounted by the enormous heads of elephants, thrust high up into the air, some of them with their huge lithe trunks lashing and beating (for they too, as you have heard, would rather die than snuff in the breath of these monsters of the woods,) while the tiara'd heads of their leaders would be seen tossed to and fro by the contortions of those high necks, whereon for the most part they had their sitting-places. There was such a cry of cursing, and such a sound of whips and cords, and such blowing of horns,

and whistling and screaming ; and all this mixed with such roaring, and bellowing, and howling from the savage creatures within the caged waggons, that I stood, as it were, aghast and terrified, by reason of the tumult that was round about me.

I went in, however, for a moment, to the Amphitheatre itself, by a little side-way, admission to which was afforded to me in return for a few pence. Here, as yet, all things were in order, for the hour had not yet come for giving the wild beasts entrance to the several huge dens, or cages, prepared for them along one side of the arena. A few carpenters only were seen in one corner, erecting a sort of low stage, and singing merrily at their work, of whom I made inquiry concerning the purpose of that which they were setting up ; whereupon one of these fellows also began to jeer and to laugh, saying,—“ Whence come you, good sir, that you do not know a common scaffold when you see it? It is surely not the first time that

a Christian has had his head chopped off in this Amphitheatre ?”

“ By Pluto, I am not so sure about that matter,” quoth another. “ I don’t know whether any of the dogs were ever beheaded here or not ; if they have been, I can only say it was better than they deserved.”

“ There spoke a true man,” cries a third. “ I say with the old Flavian, boys, that beheading is too pretty a death for a Jew, any day of the year. No, no ; keep beheading for Romans—let citizens have their own. Things are come to a pretty pass now-a-days, when they shew us nothing but lions against lions, and tigers against tigers. By Jove, I would rather see one of those misbelieving Atheists set right before the mouth of a true Getulian lion’s cage, and hear his bones cracked ere all be over,—I say, I would rather see that, than fifty of your mere beast-fights.”

“ After all,” rejoined the first, “ it must

be allowed that Domitian had a fine eye for the Amphitheatre."

"Who doubts it?" says the other. "Rome has never seen any thing that deserved to be called a show, since he was killed by that low pack of sneaking traitors. They say, Nero was still better at that sort of work; but 'let the skinless Jew believe,' as the saying is;—seeing is believing with me. I desire to see no better sport than poor Domitian gave us the very week before his death. We shall never live to see his like again!"

"Come, boys," rejoins one of the rest; "don't speak so despairingly neither. I had begun to think that these *good princes*, as they call them, would never shew us a bit of real sport again at all. Now, this is at least something. Slowly and surely, as they say. Who can tell what may follow? and, besides, if the worst come to the worst, we shall still have lions against lions, tigers against tigers, Dacians against Dacians, and now and then a Jew or a Christian, or

whatever you please to call him, exhibited *solus* on such a stage as this. Come, come, dont make matters worse than they are.”

The coarse laughter of these men, and the cold heartlessness of their discourse, sickened my very soul; and I remember, as if it were but yesterday, the loathing with which I turned from them. The filthy ruffians shewed that they knew well enough I was displeased with them, and I half regretted, as I strode away from them, the want of that Prætorian helmet, which I well knew would have effectually preserved me from the insolence of their mirth. Howbeit, I was too well pleased to gain a distance at which I could no longer be troubled with them, and walked with rapid steps along the wide streets, over the tall buildings of which the light of the morning was now beginning to shine red and broad; while the air, being agitated with a quick and strong breeze, refreshed my cheeks and temples as I moved onwards;

whereof, indeed, I had need, being heated with the glare and noise from which I had escaped, and faint withal, after the manner of the young, from the want of sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

I WAS admitted into the house by Dromo, who seemed to have been looking out for me ; for he opened the door almost before I had time to knock at it. He regarded me as I entered with a very cunning face ; insomuch, that I comprehended without difficulty, he believed me to have spent the night in some scene of debauch ; but he, nevertheless, attended me, without saying a word, into my chamber. He then assumed a countenance of great reflection, and advised me, with much appearance of friendly concern, to go to bed, even although I could not stay long there ; “ because,” said he, “ you will feel much fresher when you get up ; and let me tell you, you must

be up early, for I have already been with Licinius, who intends to send Sextus with a present to the fair Lady Rubellia immediately after breakfast; and you may be sure Sextus will insist on your company, for he can do nothing without you. Ah! had it not been for a certain pretty creature that I could name, the young gentleman would not, I am confident, have permitted you to be going the rounds in this way by yourself. But I take it something amiss, and shall tell him so, that he did not depute me (who am not particularly enamoured of any young lady just at present,) to go with you, and take care of your safety. I only wonder how you have got home so well, as it is."

"Indeed," said I, "good Dromo, I cannot help wondering a little at that part of it myself—for I have been all through the city, and lost my way half-a-dozen times over, and yet here you see I am."

"The more reason," quoth the slave, "that you should send some nice little of-

fering to Mercury's Temple over the way, in the morning—a few sesterces will be quite handsome—and if you have no objections, I shall willingly take care of them for you. Mercury, as all men will tell you, is the great guardian of all that travel about in the dark ; and besides, he is himself the patron of all love expeditions. But to say the truth, you are not the only person that owes a gift to that shrine ; for the worthy sage—Xerophrastes—he, too, has been a night-traveller as well as you—and he has not yet come in. I have my doubts whether, when he does so, he will be as sober as you are—but I must take care to be at my post, and admit him in silence, for the time is not yet come to blow his private doings. Trust me, this is not the only vagary I have set down to his account—all in good time—all in good time.—But what says my master Valerius, touching the offering to the great God Hermes ?”

I saw, by the expression of the knave's face, that it was necessary the sesterces

should be forthcoming; though I had my doubts whether he would have been satisfied with seeing them entrusted to any other hands than his own.

“Here they are,” said I, “my good Dromo; and remember, that although Mercury, among other things, is the god of thieves also, he will not be well pleased if you curtail his offering.”

“Never mind”—answered the varlet, as he was shuffling out of the room—“never mind—Mercury and I understand each other of old.—Go you to bed, and try to get a little of your own old British red into your cheeks again; for Licinius has a hawk’s eye, and will be sure to have his suspicions, if he see you come down with such a haggard woe-begone look as you wear just at present. You must remember you have not a long beard to cover half your face, and all your iniquities, like the venerable Xerophrates.”

So saying, he left me to my couch, indeed, but not to slumber; for busy thoughts

kept me broad awake, till, after the lapse of perhaps an hour, young Sextus entered my apartment, already arrayed with more than usual elegance, to execute, however unwillingly, the message of his father. He had in his hand a small casket of open ivory-work, which he flung down on my bed, saying, "Get up, my dear Valerius, and save me at least from the pain of going alone, with these gewgaws, to this rich lady. Would to Heaven my father would marry her himself, and then I should have no objection to carry as many caskets for him as he pleases. But do you get up and assist me; and as we go along, you shall tell me what you have seen and heard in company with your jovial Prætorian."

I was soon ready, and ascended, along with my young friend, a splendid chariot, which Licinius had commanded to be ready for our conveyance. I told him shortly, as we glided through the streets, as much as I judged it expedient to be made known concerning the events of the preceding

night ; and, in particular, when I perceived that our charioteer was making a long circuit, in order to avoid the neighbourhood of the Amphitheatre of Vespasian, I could not help expressing to him the effect which had been produced in my mind, by my casual inspection of the preparations made therein for the festival of the day.

“ I am afraid,” said he, after hearing my story, “ that if such have been your feelings, in seeing some of the preparations alone, you will scarcely be willing to witness the exhibition itself ; and yet I would fain have you to overcome your aversion, both because, whatever you may think of the propriety or impropriety of such things, it is not fitting that you should go away from Rome without once, at least, seeing with your own eyes how they are actually conducted ; and more particularly, because I much suspect Rubellia intends to be present at the festival—in which case I should be sorry to be compelled to attend upon

her without you ; and as to leaving her at the gate of the Amphitheatre, that, you know, would be quite impossible, unless I wished openly to contradict the wishes of my father."

I did not think it fitting to inform young Sextus of the promise under which I had already come, to be present at this great show, for purposes very different from those of paying attention to Rubellia, or shielding him from the necessity of spending a whole morning alone with her ; but to set his mind at rest, I assured him he should not want any comfort my presence could afford him ; although not without, at the same time, expressing my astonishment that he should consider it at all probable a lady so delicate as Rubellia would choose to sit among the spectators of an exhibition, so abounding in circumstances of cruelty.

"Nay, nay," answered he, "as for that matter, there is scarcely a lady in Rome that would be more scrupulous on that head

than my gay widow ; and, to tell you the truth, one of the things that makes me most unwilling to go myself, is the fear that Sempronia also may be there ; and, perhaps, when she sees me with Rubellia, give credence to some of the reports which have been circulated (not without my father's assent, I think, if all were known,) concerning this odious marriage, which I swear to you shall never take place, although Licinius were to drive me from his door, and adopt a stranger in room of me."

" In good truth, Sextus," I made answer, " if Sempronia thinks there is any thing serious between the widow and you, she must think you a pretty rascal, for the violent love you made to herself the whole of the day we were at the Villa. But I am sure she will easily perceive, by your countenance, that you do not regard Rubellia, handsome as she is, with any extraordinary admiration ; whereas—if you were not conscious of it, I am sure she must have been so—there was never a face of more passion-

ate love than yours, all the time you were in *her* company. And even now, the very mention of her name calls a glow into your cheeks,—yes, and even into your eyes,—that I think would flatter Rubellia, could she excite such another, more than all the jewels of all the caskets your father will ever send to her.”

“Distract me not, Oh Valerius!” said the youth, interrupting me—“distract me not with speaking of that too lovely, and, I fear, too scornful girl. Do you not perceive that we have at last struck into the Suburra, and are quite near to Rubellia’s house?”

“Indeed and so we are,” said I, looking out of the carriage. “I suspect you are quite right in thinking she means to be present at the Amphitheatre, for there is a crowd, see you, of urchins, assembled all about her gate, and I perceive it is a brilliant groupe of equipages that has attracted them. Of a surety, she proposes to go thither in all her splendour.”

“ Good Heavens !” replied he, “ I believe all the world is to be there. I don’t remember ever to have passed so many gay chariots in my life ; and as for the rabble, see what a stream of heads continues pouring down out of every alley along the street. My only hope is, that Rubellia may arrive too late for the best situations, and perhaps disdain to witness the spectacle from any inferior part of the Amphitheatre ; and yet she must have interest, no doubt, to have secured herself good accommodation beforehand.”

He had scarcely said so when our chariot stopped, and we just descended from it in time to meet Rubellia stepping down from her portico with a gay cluster of attendants all about her. On seeing us, however, she immediately beckoned with her finger, and said, “ Oh ! are you come at last ? Well, I must take Valerius along with myself, for I insist upon it, that I shall be better able to point out to him what is worthy of his notice, than any one of my company ; and

you, Sextus Licinius, come you also into my chariot—we will not separate you from your Orestes.” She said so with an air of sprightly ease and indifference, and immediately sprung into the carriage. An elderly lady, with a broad merry face, went into it also, but there was still room for Sextus and myself; and as for the rest of the party, they followed us in the other carriages that were waiting behind that of Rubellia.

The crowds by this time had accumulated in the street to such an extent, that our horses could not advance otherwise than at a very leisurely pace; but the noise of the multitude as they rushed along, and the tumult of expectation visible on every countenance, prevented us from thinking of any thing but the approaching festival. The variety, however, and great splendour of the equipages around us, could not but attract some portion of my attention. Now it was an open chariot, it may be, drawn by three or four milk-white Thessalian horses abreast, in which reclined some gorgeous

female, blazing all over with jewellery, with a cluster of beautiful boys or girls around her, administering odours to her nostril; and perhaps some haughty Knight or Senator now and then offering the more precious refreshment of his flattery to her ear. Then, perhaps, would come rumbling along, a close clumsy waggon, of the old-fashioned matronly sort, stuck quite full of the members of some substantial plebeian family—the fat, comfortable-looking citizen, and his demure spouse, sitting well back on their cushions, and having their knees loaded with a joyous and exulting progeny of little lads and lasses, whose faces would, every now and then, be thrust half-out of the window, in spite of the frown of the father and the mother's tugging at their skirts. And then, again, there might be heard a cry of "Place, place," and a groupe of lictors would be discovered, shoving every body aside with their rods, to clear the passage before the litter of some dignified magistrate, who, from pride or gout, preferred

that species of motion to the jolting of a chariot. Such a portly person as this would soon be hurried past us, in virtue of the obsequience enforced by his attendants, but not before we had time to observe the richness of the silken cushions on which he lay extended, and the sweetness of the cloud of perfumes that was hovering about him, or yet the air of majesty with which he submitted himself to the fan of the favoured freedman, whose business it was to keep those authoritative cheeks free from the contamination of common plebeian dust and flies. Anon, a jolly band of young gallants, on horseback, would come pushing rapidly along, to not a few of whom the fair Rubellia would vouchsafe her salutation as they passed. But wherever the carriage was stopped for an instant, by reason of the crowding together of all this multitude, it was wonderful to see the number of old emaciated men, and withered hags, that would make their way close up to the windows, and begin calling upon Rubellia, and

all of her attendants, to give them money to purchase a single morsel of food. The widow herself leaned back on these occasions, as if to avoid the sight of these poor creatures; but she 'pointed with her finger to a bag of small coin that hung in a corner of the chariot, and from it Sextus distributed abundantly to the one side, and I to the other; and yet it was impossible to give to every one; insomuch, that we were surrounded all the way with a mingled clamour of benedictions from those that had received, and execrations from those that had got nothing, and noisy ever-renewed solicitations from that ever-swelling army of mendicants. At last, however, we arrived in safety at the western gate of that proud Amphitheatre—the same around which I had, the night before, witnessed that scene of tumultuous preparation. One of the officers in waiting there, no sooner descried the equipage of Rubellia, than he caused a space to be laid open for her approach, and himself advanced, with great civility, to hand

her into the interior of the Amphitheatre ; but she whispered to Sextus and me, by no means to separate from her in the crowd, although, indeed, the care we were obliged to take of the old lady that was with her, might have been sufficient pledge that we could not be removed to any considerable distance.

Behold me, therefore, in the midst of the Flavian Amphitheatre, and seated, under the wing of this luxurious lady, in one of the best situations which the range of benches set apart for the females and their company, afforded. There was a general silence in the place at the time we entered and seated ourselves, because proclamation had just been made that the gladiators, with whose combats the exhibition of the day was appointed to commence, were about to enter upon the arena, and shew themselves in order to the people. As yet, however, they had not come forth from that place of concealment to which so many of their number were, of necessity, destined

never to return; so that I had leisure to collect my thoughts, and to survey for a moment, without disturbance, the mighty and most motley multitude, piled above, below, and on every side around me, from the lordly senators, on their silken couches, along the parapet of the arena, up to the impenetrable mass of plebeian heads which skirted the horizon, above the topmost wall of the Amphitheatre itself. Such was the enormous crowd of human beings, high and low, assembled therein, that when any motion went through their assembly, the noise of their rising up or sitting down could be likened to nothing, except, perhaps, the far-off sullen roaring of the illimitable sea, or the rushing of a great night-wind amongst the boughs of a forest. It was the first time that I had ever seen a peopled amphitheatre—nay, it was the first time that I had ever seen any very great multitude of men assembled together, within any fabric of human erection; so that you cannot doubt there was, in the scene before me, enough to im-

press my mind with a very serious feeling of astonishment—not to say of veneration. Not less than eighty thousand human beings, (for such they told me was the stupendous capacity of the building,) were here met together. Such a multitude can no where be regarded, without inspiring a certain indefinite indefinable sense of majesty; least of all, when congregated within the wide sweep of such a glorious edifice as this, and surrounded on all sides with every circumstance of ornament and splendour, befitting an everlasting monument of Roman victories, the munificence of Roman princes, and the imperial luxury of universal Rome. Judge then, with what eyes of wonder all this was surveyed by me, who had but of yesterday, as it were, emerged from the solitary stillness of a British valley—who had been accustomed all my life to consider as among the most impressive of human spectacles, the casual passage of a few scores of legionaries, through some dark alley of a wood, or awe-struck village of barbarians.

Trajan himself was already present, but in nowise, except from the canopy over his ivory chair, to be distinguished from the other Consul that sate over against him ; tall, nevertheless, and of a surety very majestic in his demeanour ; grave, sedate, and benign in countenance, even according to the likeness which you have seen upon his medals and statues. He was arrayed in a plain gown, and appeared to converse quite familiarly, and without the least affectation of condescension, with such Patricians as had their places near him ; among whom Sextus and Rubellia pointed out many remarkable personages to my notice ; as for example, Adrian, who afterwards became emperor ; Pliny, the orator, a man of very courtly presence, and lively, agreeable aspect ; and, above all, the historian Tacitus, the worthy son-in-law of our Agricola, in whose pale countenance I thought I could easily recognize the depth, but sought in vain to discover any traces of the sternness

of his genius. Of all the then proud names that were whispered into my ear, could I recollect or repeat them now, how few would awaken any interest in your minds ! Those, indeed, which I have mentioned, have an interest that will never die. Would that the greatest and the best of them all were to be remembered only for deeds of greatness and goodness !

The proclamation being repeated a second time, a door on the right hand of the arena was laid open, and a single trumpet sounded, as it seemed to me, mournfully, while the gladiators marched in with slow steps, each man—naked, except being girt with a cloth about his loins—bearing on his left arm a small buckler, and having a short straight sword suspended by a cord around his neck. They marched, as I have said, slowly and steadily ; so that the whole assembly had full leisure to contemplate the forms of the men ; while those who were, or who imagined themselves to be skilled

in the business of the arena, were fixing, in their own minds, on such as they thought most likely to be victorious, and laying wagers concerning their chances of success, with as much unconcern as if they had been contemplating so many irrational animals, or rather, indeed, I should say, so many senseless pieces of ingenious mechanism. The wide diversity of complexion and feature exhibited among these devoted athletes, afforded at once a majestic idea of the extent of the Roman empire, and a terrible one of the purposes to which that wide sway had too often been made subservient. The beautiful Greek, with a countenance of noble serenity, and limbs after which the sculptors of his country might have modelled their god-like symbols of graceful power, walked side by side with the yellow-bearded savage, whose gigantic muscles had been nerved in the freezing waves of the Elbe or the Danube, or whose thick strong hair was congealed and shagged on

his brow with the breath of Scythian or Scandinavian winters. Many fierce Moors and Arabs, and curled Ethiopians were there, with the beams of the southern sun burnt in every various shade of swarthiness upon their skins. Nor did our own remote island want her representatives in the deadly procession, for I saw among the armed multitude—and that not altogether without some feelings of more peculiar interest—two or three gaunt barbarians, whose breasts and shoulders bore uncouth marks of blue and purple, so vivid in the tints, that I thought many months could not have elapsed since they must have been wandering in wild freedom along the native ridges of some Silurian or Caledonian forest. As they moved around the arena, some of these men were saluted by the whole multitude with noisy acclamations, in token, I supposed, of the approbation wherewith the feats of some former festival had deserved to be remembered. On the appearance of

others, groans and hisses were heard from some parts of the Amphitheatre, mixed with contending cheers and huzzas from others of the spectators. But by far the greater part were suffered to pass on in silence ;— this being in all likelihood the first—alas ! who could tell whether it might not also be the last day of their sharing in that fearful exhibition !

Their masters paired them shortly, and in succession they began to make proof of their fatal skill. At first, Scythian was matched against Scythian—Greek against Greek—Ethiopian against Ethiopian—Spaniard against Spaniard ; and I saw the sand dyed beneath their feet with blood streaming from the wounds of kindred hands. But these combats, although abundantly bloody and terrible, were regarded only as preludes to the serious business of the day, which consisted of duels between Europeans on the one side, and Africans on the other ; wherein it was the well-nigh

intransgressible law of the Amphitheatre, that at least one out of every pair of combatants should die on the arena before the eyes of the multitude. Instead of shrinking from the more desperate brutalities of these latter conflicts, the almost certainty of their fatal termination seemed only to make the assembly gaze on them with a more intense curiosity, and a more inhuman measure of delight. Methinks I feel as if it were but of yesterday, when,—sickened with the protracted terrors of a conflict, that seemed as if it were never to have an end, although both the combatants were already covered all over with hideous gashes,—I at last bowed down my head, and clasped my hands upon my eyes, to save them from the torture of gazing thereon farther: And I had scarcely done so, when Rubellia laid her hand upon my elbow, whispering, “Look, look, now look,” in a voice of low steady impatience. I did look, but not to the arena: No; it was upon

the beautiful features of that woman's face that I looked, and truly it seemed to me as if they presented a spectacle almost as fearful as that from which I had just averted mine eyes. I saw those rich lips parted asunder, and those dark eyes extended in their sockets, and those smooth cheeks suffused with a stedfast blush, and that lovely bosom swelled and glowing; and I hated Rubellia as I gazed, for I knew not before how utterly beauty can be brutalized by the throbbings of a cruel heart. But I looked round to escape from the sight of her;—and then the hundreds of females that I saw with their eyes fixed, with equal earnestness, on the same spot of horrors, taught me, even at the moment, to think with more charity of that pitiless gaze of one.

At that instant all were silent, in the contemplation of the breathless strife; inso-much, that a groan, the first that had escaped from either of the combatants, although low and reluctant, and half-suppressed,

sounded quite distinctly amidst the deep hush of the assembly, and being constrained thereby to turn mine eyes once more downwards, I beheld that, at length, one of the two had received the sword of his adversary quite through his body, and had sunk before him upon the sand. A beautiful young man was he that had received this harm, with fair hair, clustered in glossy ringlets upon his neck and brows ; but the sickness of his wound was already visible on his drooping eye-lids, and his lips were pale, as if the blood had rushed from them to the untimely outlet. Nevertheless, the Moorish gladiator who had fought with him, had drawn forth again his weapon, and stood there awaiting in silence the decision of the multitude, whether at once to slay the defenceless youth, or to assist in removing him from the arena, if perchance the blood might be stopped from flowing, and some hope of recovery even yet extended to him. Hereupon there arose, on the

instant, a loud voice of contention ; and it seemed to me as if the wounded man regarded the multitude with a proud, and withal contemptuous glance, being aware, without question, that he had executed all things so as to deserve their compassion, but aware, moreover, that even had that been freely vouchsafed to him, it was too late for any hope of safety. But the cruelty of their faces, it may be, and the loudness of their cries, were a sorrow to him, and filled his dying breast with loathing. Whether or not the haughtiness of his countenance had been observed by them with displeasure, I cannot say ; but so it was, that those who had cried out to give him a chance of recovery, were speedily silent, and the Emperor looking round, and seeing all the thumbs turned downwards, (for that is, you know, the signal of death,) was constrained to give the sign, and forthwith the young man, receiving again without a struggle the sword of the Moor into his gashed bosom, breathed forth his life, and

lay stretched out in his blood upon the place of guilt. With that a joyous clamour was uplifted by many of those that looked upon it, and the victorious Moor being crowned with an ivy garland, was carried in procession around the arena by certain young men, who leaped down for that purpose from the midst of the assembly. In the meantime, those that had the care of such things, dragged away, with a filthy hook, the corpse of him that had been slain; and then, raking up the sand over the blood that had fallen from him, prepared the place, with indifferent countenances, for some other cruel tragedy of the same kind,—while all around me, the spectators were seen rising from their places, and saluting each other; and there was a buzz of talking as universal as the silence had been during the combat; some speaking of it, and paying and receiving money lost and won upon its issue; some already laughing merrily, and discoursing concerning other matters, even as if nothing uncommon had been witnessed; while others

again appeared to be entirely occupied with the martial music which ever struck up majestically at such pauses in the course of the cruel exhibition ; some beating time upon the benches before them, others lightly joining their voices in unison with the proud notes of the trumpets and clarions. But as for Rubellia, she talked gaily with Sextus, inviting him to ridicule me along with her, for the strangeness of behaviour I had displayed.

The sun, by this, had already mounted high in the heavens, and the glare became so intolerable, that men could no longer fight on equal terms ; which being perceived, the Emperor gave command to look after the wild beasts, and, in the mean time, (for I heard his voice distinctly) to hold Thraso the Christian in readiness, and give warning to the Flamens that they should have their altar set forth.

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER saying so, the Emperor, attended by those immediately about his person, withdrew by his private method of access ; but Rubellia told me he had only gone to the Palatine by the subterraneous path, for the purpose of taking some refreshment, and that there was no doubt he would return in time to witness the remaining parts of the spectacle. This example, however, was followed in some sort by a great part of the spectators, for some departed altogether from the walls of the Amphitheatre, while many more were seen moving from place to place, crossing from one vomitory to another, and paying their respects to different parties of friends, who had occupied places at a distance from them during the

combats of the gladiators. In the meantime, certain servants of Trajan's household were observed giving directions in the arena to a great number of persons who afterwards began to distribute baskets of dried fish, bread, and other eatables, among such as chose to accept of them; while viands of a more costly description were introduced among the wealthy, by slaves and freedmen of their own. Neither were the bearers of water-jars idle, nor such as make a trade of selling fruit and wine upon the Roman streets; least of all, those whose traffic is in snow, for the purpose of cooling liquor;—of whom, I believe, hundreds were scrambling in all quarters over the benches, and whistling shrilly as they moved, which is their method of signifying the presence of that in which they deal.

Now, the Lady Rubellia was not one of those who would ever leave her friends destitute of the means of refreshment on such an occasion as this; and accordingly two or three of her household were soon with us,

bearing jars of sweet-meats in their hands, also divers baskets of fruit, and flasks of wine, with all other appurtenances of a luxurious collation. We had scarcely begun to taste of these things, when our attention was attracted by some one leaping, with great activity, from one row of benches to another behind us, and looking round; I discovered, with ease, the rosy countenance of Sabinus, whose anxiety to join us was, as I immediately suspected, the cause of all this violent exertion. An ordinary person would have sought some circuitous method of approach, rather than attempt the sheer descent from one of the stone parapets which rose immediately in our rear; but the brawny limbs of the Centurion shrunk not from that adventurous leap, and, in a word, I soon found him seated beside us, and bowing and smiling to Rubellia with all his usual mixture of boldness and suavity. He delayed not long from participation in the delicacies that stood before us; but, on the contrary, forthwith lift-

ed up a goblet full of Falernian, and having set it to his lips, drank down, without stopping, till he could see the very foundation of its interior gold. His fingers also soon became acquainted with the receptacles of fruit and confectionary ; and, from the zealous attention he paid to their contents, I was half inclined to have some little suspicion, that he might perhaps have remained in his original situation, had he not chanced to observe the slaves of Rubellia, as they came up the vomitory, with their comely-looking, napkin-covered baskets upon their heads. As it was, his arrival was highly acceptable to all of us, except perhaps to Rubellia herself, who I thought looked as if she were not overmuch pleased with the interruption his mirthful talk occasioned to the conversation on which she had been endeavouring to fix the attention of Licinius.

For that, however, another interruption, no less effectual, had been already prepared in another part of the assembly, from which the sage Xerophrastes had for some time,

I doubt not, been casting eyes, not less longing than those of the Prætorian, on the banquet wherein we were sharing. There was such a crowd, however, immediately below us, that I know not whether the philosopher would ever have been able to make his way to the coveted region where we sate, had it not been that we heard his voice in disputation, and entreated those that opposed his passage, if possible, to make room for him. The first glimpse we had of his countenance, shewed us that the squeezing of those about him, had been giving him serious inconvenience ; for his countenance was wonderfully purple, and the drops of perspiration stood visible on his bald front ; insomuch, that although we could not help smiling at his ruefulness of visage, it would have been excessively cruel to neglect giving our assistance to extricate him from a plight apparently so agonizing.

The persons to whom he was immediately addressing himself, moreover, seemed

to be listening to him with such utter unconcern, that it was impossible not to feel somewhat displeased with them, for treating so disrespectfully one whom his grey hairs alone might have entitled to at least some decent portion of courtesy. In vain did he represent to them (for we heard his strong voice distinctly every now and then, in spite of the tumult that surrounded him,) that it was not for the sake of any personal ease or convenience, he was desirous of penetrating into an upper part of the Amphitheatre. In vain did he seek to explain to them that it was the call of duty, and the sense of moral obligation, which instigated him to that difficult and perilous ascent. In vain did he reiterate “My pupil”—“my disciple”—“my young disciple”—“my scholar Sextus Licinius”—“the son of Caius Licinius”—“the son of the great orator Caius Licinius is there,—and how can I permit myself to remain absent from him !”—In vain did he enlarge upon the constancy of attention, which

philosophers owe to those who are placed by the hands of parents under their superintendance. In vain did he address himself to the pity of the young ; not less vainly did he appeal to the reason of the old, obtesting half the deities of Olympus to the purity of his motives, and the truth of his statements ;—all were alike careless of him, his motives, his statements, his duties, his sufferings, and his desires. No sooner, however, did Sextus and I begin to shew the interest we took in his situation, than Sabinus raised himself up on the bench, and called aloud on those that surrounded the old man, with a voice of much sternness and authority, to let him pass immediately at their peril.

Many eyes were forthwith turned towards us ; and whether it were the dignity and haughtiness of the Centurion's own voice and attitude, or that his prætorian garb alone gave him much weight in the assembly, the resistance, whereby the Stoic had been so long and so grievously ob-

structed, was very soon relaxed, and Xerophrates enjoyed an opportunity of almost entirely recovering his usual serenity of aspect before he reached us. The first thing he did was to accept of a goblet which I held out to him, and to drain it in a manner that would have done no discredit to the Centurion himself; then he swallowed two or three great handfuls of grapes; and then at length turning round, with much courtesy did he thank us all, but most of all the Centurion, for the part he had taken in working out his deliverance, from the hands, as he expressed it, of those inhuman and illiterate persons, enemies alike to science and to virtue; “while you,” he continued, “Oh! most brave and gallant warrior, have shewn that in your breast, as in that of Epaminondas of old—of Alexander himself indeed—and of your own illustrious Julius—the reverence of the muses, and of divine philosophy, does not disdain to inhabit along with the ardour of active pa-

triotism, and the spirit-stirring delights of Mars."

"Oh! as for that," interrupted Rubellia, with a smile, "all the world knows that Sabinus is quite a philosopher—he was just beginning a very learned harangue when we were attracted by your voice in the crowd; and you have the more reason to thank him, because he was cut very unseasonably short, in consequence of the distress in which we perceived you."

"Most noble lady!" replied the Stoic, "you know not how much you have delighted me; from the first moment, indeed, that my eyes rested upon the countenance of your heroic friend, I suspected that he had subjected himself to some other discipline besides that of camps. I saw the traces of thought, lady—and serious contemplation. The mind can never exercise its faculties, without conveying some symptoms of those internal operations to the external surface of the visage. The soul can

never energize habitually, without betraying its activity in the delicacy and acumen, which the more elegant and susceptible parts of the corporeal frame acquire during those elaborate and mysterious processes of thought. I saw, therefore, and suspected. But what thanks are not due to you, for having so agreeably confirmed me in this happy suspicion! Of a surety, the noise and tumult of the camp is not so well adapted for the theoretic or contemplative life, as perfect leisure and retirement; yet, who shall doubt that the soul of great energy can overcome all such disadvantages? Who shall think that the spirit of Socrates did not eagerly philosophize during the campaign he served?—Who shall say that the Stagyrite must have suspended his acute, although imperfect investigations, even although he had accompanied his royal pupil across the Hellespont, and attended all the motions of his victorious army, instead of staying at home to teach the youth of Greece?—Who, fi-

nally," said he, casting his courteous eyes full on the Prætorian, "shall suspect but that this generous warrior has been effectually advancing the growth of philosophic science, within his own mind at least,—if not composing works in his intervals of leisure, destined hereafter to benefit and instruct the world, even although he may have been attending the flight of the Roman Eagles from utmost Britain to the desert frontiers of the Parthian?"

"Nobody, indeed," replied the sportive lady, "nobody, indeed, who has enjoyed any opportunity of being acquainted with the Centurion, can have any doubt on that head.—Sabinus," she continued, turning towards him, "what philosophic treatise are you at present engaged with? Come, now, speak out, and truly, are you still busy with your *περι της φυσικης τρι οιστρης βακχικης*,* that you were quoting from

* "Concerning the nature of the Bacchic Stimulus."

the other night—or are you deep in ‘*the delight of contemplation*,’—or——”

“Not at all,” quoth the Centurion, interrupting her; “I am only deep in *love*——”

Saying so, he laid his hand in a very tender fashion upon his breast, and even, as I thought, began to throw a little sentiment into his eyes; but he had no opportunity of going on with his speech, for Xerophrates had no sooner heard him utter the word *love*, than he immediately began to pour out a new rhapsody.

“Love!” quoth he, “Ha! love:—in good sooth, a noble subject, and one concerning which not a few laudable treatises have been composed by the philosophers. Yet, without question, much remains to be done in this matter; and I should be most proud if the illustrious Sabinus would vouchsafe to me a perusal of his invaluable speculations. Without question,” he continued, “you have commenced with a pro-

per definition and division of the subject. You have distinguished betwixt what is properly called *love*, and the other more or less kindred affections, with which hallucinating writers have too often committed the error of confounding it. You have described, in the first place, the difference between it and the *Storgé* or natural affection which parents have for their offspring—an affection in which not a few of the irrational tribes appear (if physiologists may be trusted,) to be even superior to the human race.”

“ Hens, for example,” quoth the Centurion, with a face of infinite gravity.

“ Even so—*hens*,” continued the sage; “ an apt illustration and an acute.—I perceive, indeed, lady,” whispered he to Rubellia, “ that you have not deceived me concerning the attainments of this your noble friend.—Hens—a most acute illustration!—See you now, O Sextus!” he went on, “ it is not the characteristic of true phi-

losophy to despise those illustrations which are drawn from the affairs of ordinary life, and the common surfaces of things. No : it is rather her part to shew forth her own intrinsic excellence and splendour, by raising that which is in itself low and customary, to unknown and unexpected dignity, by her methods of felicitous and beautifying application. See you, now, with what unexampled skill this hero—this philosopher, I should rather say—may I presume to add—this brother-philosopher? has illustrated the nature of *love* in this treatise of his, by introducing the domestic habits of your common household fowl. Such things should not pass unheeded by the young aspirants to learning, because these, more than any other circumstances, may furnish them with encouragement to proceed in their course, by shewing how many of the materials of philosophy lie every where under the eyes of the most common traveller of the path of life ; and how assuredly it is the

fault of the individual himself, if he neglect the means of spiritual advancement, which are sure to be afforded in whatever situation may chance to have been assigned to him."

"I beg your pardon for interrupting you," said Rubellia; "but Sabinus has almost finished the grapes while you have been speaking; and I would only just beg to suggest, that it is the fault of the individual, Xerophrastes, if he neglects the means of corporeal refreshment, which may yet be afforded him by what remains in the basket."

"Most kind lady," resumed he, "your benevolence is worthy of your nobility.—But you know not how much the philosophy I have embraced, tends to lessen the natural desires of man for such things as you allude to—nevertheless," he continued, "I will not refuse to partake yet farther of your bounty; for, of a surety, I have been sorely dealt with in the multitude, as yourselves witnessed."

So saying, he took hold of the basket, and began to feel in the bottom of it, but found very little to his purpose; for, to say the truth, the rest of the party had been almost as eager in their attentions to it, as the jolly Centurion himself. A few slender bunches, notwithstanding, were still there, one of which the philosopher thrust into his mouth, and the rest he concealed beneath one of the folds of his huge mantle, until he should have made an end of his criticism on the imaginary treatise of the newly dubbed sage Sabinus. While he was busied in hemming and coughing, and other obvious, and not to be mistaken preparations for a renewal of his harangue, I could with difficulty keep myself from laughing outright, so egregiously was the natural language of the broad, jovial, and unreflective countenance of our worthy Centurion, at variance from the notion of his attainments and pursuits, which this merry lady had been amusing herself with instilling into the mind of the pedagogue. Rubellia her-

self, however, appeared to enjoy the thing far more keenly than either Sextus or I; insomuch, that I was afraid Xerophrastes would penetrate through the joke she was playing off upon him, before he had given himself his full swing in regard to the commendation of the Prætorian. But Sabinus, on his side, was, as it seemed, of opinion, that he had already heard enough of such disquisitions; for he had scarcely seen out the last cup of Rubellia's Falernian, ere he began to give hints that he wished very much to descend into the arena, for the purpose of observing the animals about to be exhibited, while they were yet in their cages. Xerophrastes, however, even when he had heard him signify this desire, appeared still to be resolved on considering him as one of the philosophic order of mankind; for he at once offered to accompany him, saying, that the visit was of course intended for the gratification of some scientific curiosity, and that therefore he should think himself extremely culpable, did he neglect the opportunity of going along with him.

“Come, come, then,” quoth the good-natured Sabinus, “since you will have it so, by all means prepare yourself for the descent: but at least allow me to precede you, that there may be no risk of any more untimely obstructions, such as you have already this day experienced.”

“Most assuredly, noble Centurion,” replied Xerophrastes, “in this, as in all things, I shall be proud to be enumerated among your followers. Sextus, my pupil, also,” he added, “and his friend, will of a certainty accompany us, that they may benefit by our discourse, as well as by seeing whatever may be subjected to our observation.”

“Nay, my friend,” said Rubellia, “that were not quite fair, neither; would you leave the ladies entirely by themselves in the midst of the Amphitheatre? I hope Sextus Licinius, at least, will have the courtesy to remain with us for our protection.”

So saying, she laid her hand on my companion’s arm, with a look which satisfied

me she was quite resolved not to part with him. The old lady who was with her then said something about the impropriety of leaving only one of the party to attend upon two females; but I took advantage of her low tone to pretend ignorance of that which she had uttered, and immediately rose to accompany the Centurion and Xerophrates.

“ You had better go quickly,” said Sextus, as we departed; “ for surely the interval of the spectacles must, by this time, be well nigh at an end; and if those that have gone out once begin to rush in again, you may perhaps have some difficulty in regaining your places.”

“ Give fear to the winds,” quoth Sabbinus; “ am not I with them, that know every lion-feeder in Rome by the head-mark? and how do you suppose that there is any chance of the exhibition recommencing without my having sufficient warning? It is not for nothing that I have lost and

won so many thousand sesterces in the Amphitheatre. No, no—I wish only as much respect were paid to experience every where else, as it is in the Arena to your true old Better. Already,” he added, “ I perceive that half-a-dozen of those knowing characters down below, about the entrances to the dens, have detected me, even at this distance, and I know they are wondering very much among themselves that I have not yet descended amongst them. They must fancy my purse is in a very poor state indeed, when I don’t seem to think it worth while to take even a single peep at the beasts ere they are brought out of their cages. Come, Xerophrastes, my most worthy brother in philosophy, and you, my jolly fellow-voyager, Valerius, let us be alert, and move downwards, else we may chance, when all is done, to arrive the day after Plataea.”

With that we began to descend with much alacrity, and, leaving the reluctant Sextus to his fate, were soon near to the

margin of the arena. We had no sooner arrived there, than an old skin-dried limping Numidian, with a bit of lion's hide fastened round his loins—one who, from his leanness and blackness, had very much the appearance of having been baked to a cinder,—observed the Centurion, and drew near to him with many nods and significant grins of recognition. Sabinus, on his part, seemed noways backward to acknowledge this old acquaintance ; but, on the contrary, began to talk with him in a strange sort of broken dialect, which, as I afterwards learned, was chiefly composed of Punic vocables,—and all, I doubt not, concerning the business of the day. After this had lasted some minutes, he took Xerophrastes and me by the hand, and seemed to introduce us to the Numidian, who then desired us all to come down, and he would conduct us to a place where we should see something not unworthy of being seen. I was just about to follow these directions when I felt my gown seized from behind, and looking round, ob-

served that it was my faithful man Boto, who, from the heat and confusion of his aspect, appeared not to have come thither without a considerable struggle. Sabinus seeing him, said, “ Ah! my old friend Boto, how have you come to this part of the Amphitheatre? We must not leave you behind us, however: Of a surety, you have never seen a lion—you shall descend along with your master; and who knows but we may persuade Xerophrastes that you also are a brother philosopher?”

“ Most noble master,” replied the grateful slave, “ I saw you and Valerius from the very topmost bench of the place, where I have been sitting for these three hours with Dromo, and I no sooner saw you than I was determined to draw near to you, if it were possible. To go from this place up to yonder quarter would perhaps be impossible; but it is never a very difficult matter to go down in this world; so, saving your presence, masters all, I trundled myself

over the benches, and when heads were in my way, I e'en trundled myself over them too."

"It is well, good Briton," quoth the Centurion—by this time we had crossed the arena—"and now prepare to exercise your eyes as well as you already have exercised your limbs; for know, that very near to you is the abode of nobler animals than even your lord hath ever observed."

With this the old Numidian opened one of the iron doors looking in upon the arena, and having received some money from us, admitted us to the sight of a long flight of marble steps, which appeared to descend into the bowels of the earth, far below the foundation of the Amphitheatre.

"Come along, masters," quoth he; "we had better go down this way, for we shall have a better view of the animals so, than on the other side. My master, Sabinus, will tell you all, that old Aspar knows as much about these things as any Numidian in the place."

“ Indeed, since my old friend Bisbal is gone,” quoth the Centurion, “ there is not another of the whole set that is to be compared to you.”

“ Ah!” replied Aspar, “ Bisbal was a great man ; there is not a feeder in Rome that is worthy to tie the latchet of his sandals, if he were alive.”

“ Why, as to that,” said the other, “ old Bisbal was very seldom worth a pair of sandals worth the tying, when he was alive ; but, come on, we have no great leisure for talking now, and Aspar can, of a surety, shew a lion with any Bisbal that ever wielded a whip.—Come on.”

We soon reached a large vaulted place, apparently below the Amphitheatre, the sides of which were almost entirely covered with iron-gratings,—while up and down the open space were strolling many strange groupes of men, connected in different capacities with the bloody spectacles of the arena. On one hand, we saw some of the gladiators, who had already been combat-

ing, walking to and fro with restless and agitated steps, as if they had not yet been able to recover themselves from the violent state of excitement into which their combats had thrown them. Even of such as had been victorious, I observed that not a few partook in all these symptoms of uneasiness ; and the contrast thus exhibited to the proud and haughty mien of calmness they had so lately been displaying, affected me with a strange sense of the irrational and inhuman life these unhappy persons were condemned by folly or necessity to lead. The blood had forsaken the lips and cheeks of others, and from the fixed stare of their eyes, it appeared that their minds were entirely withdrawn from everything passing around them. Their limbs, so recently nerved to the utmost shew of vigour, were now relaxed and unstrung, and they trod the marble-floor with heavy and straggling feet. But they that appeared to me to be in the most wretched state, were such as, they told us, expected to be led forth shortly to

contend with the wild beasts, in whose immediate vicinity they were now walking. The prospect of combating with a human opponent calls into action the fierceness and the pride of man ; but he that has to fight with a beast, how should he not be weighed down with the sense of mortal degradation ; and how should the Reason that is in him not fill him, in such a prospect, with dispiriting and humbling, rather than with strengthening and stimulating thoughts ? Howbeit, the Centurion, although the most good-natured of mankind, being rendered from custom quite callous to these things, immediately entered into conversation with some of those unfortunates, in a tone of coolness and unconcern that shocked me the more, because it did not seem in the smallest degree to shock those to whom his words were addressed. Among other topics, he enlarged at much length to one of them upon the best method of evading the attack of a tiger.

“ Look ye now,” said he, “ there are some that are always for taking things, as they call it, in good time,—these will be pointing their swords before the creature makes his spring ; but I have seen what comes of that, and so has old Aspar here, if he would be honest enough to confess it. The true way is to watch his eye when he is setting ; let him fairly fix upon his mark, and spring ; but at the moment when he is taking his leap, then is the time for the gladiator to start aside, and have at him with a side-thrust. Your side-thrust is the only one I would lay an *as* upon.”

“ It was always on the side-thrust,” quoth the grinning Aspar,—“ it was always on your cool steady side-thrust, the moment he had sprung, that the great Bisbal used to stake himself. Ha ! ha ! I was fond of the side-thrust in my day myself ; but I got a scratch once—witness my poor leg, masters,—and since then I am a poor feeder.”

“ I was always clear for the side-thrust,” quoth Sabinus. “ I never saw it fail but

twice, and then, to be sure, the men died ; but they could have had no chance at all with the front-guard ; and it is always something," continued he, clapping one of the poor expecting gladiators on the back,—“ it is always something to have a chance. Be sure you try him with the side-thrust, if it come to your turn to-day.”

The poor creature—he also was an African—lifted up his head on being so addressed, and shewed all his white teeth in a melancholy attempt at a smile ; but said not a word in reply, and forthwith became as down-cast as ever again. But the Centurion took little or no heed of the manner in which his advice had been received. He contemplated the man's figure for a moment, as if to form some judgment concerning the measure of his strength ; and after doing the like in regard to some of his companions, commanded Aspar to shew us where the prime lions of the day were reposing.

The Numidian no sooner heard him say so, than he seized in his hand a long pole that was leaning against one of the pillars of the vault, and led us to a certain part of the grated-wall, behind which was the den, wherein six monstrous Atlantic lions were kept. I looked in upon them with wonder, and not without dread, through the iron network of the doors. An imperfect gleam of light descended from above upon their tawny hides and glaring eyes. They, like the gladiators, seemed also to be preparing for the combat; but not like them in fear, nor in cold dewy tremours; for the deprivation of food, which they had been made to suffer in prospect of the exhibition, had roused all the energies of their savage natures; inso-much, that a sulky and yearning rage seemed to spread through every nerve and sinew of their gigantic frames, and to make them paw their quadrangular prison with long and pliant strides. They moved, however, as yet in total silence; so that Boto having fixed his eyes upon them, took courage to

approach the grate,—slowly, nevertheless, and with a face that appeared to lengthen an inch for every inch he advanced. But when he had almost touched the bars, one of the huge lions came forward towards him, with something between a growl and a sigh, which made Boto spring backward with great and surprising agility, and with such force, that both he and Xerophrastes, who happened unfortunately to have been standing a little way behind him, were overthrown at all their length upon the floor.

Hereupon the Centurion, and the limping old keeper, immediately burst out into loud laughter; but Xerophrastes rising, and shaking his garment, said, with some warmth, “Think not, Oh Sabinus, that any sudden start of fear has thus ridiculously stretched me upon the floor; but attribute the mischance only to this rude offspring of British earth, whose unreclaimed natural feelings are still shamefully affected by natural causes.”

“Castor and Pollux,” quoth the Centurion,—“you take everything too seriously, my friend.”

“I take it not seriously,” replied he, with admirable gravity. “My philosophy forbids me to do so; it has steeled me against externals.”

“Has it so, in faith?” rejoined the Centurion. “I think something of your equanimity is, in fact, owing to the trying circumstance, that you have in reality received no injury whatever from your tumble. And as to steeling, let me tell you, I think the iron in the grated-door there is much better placed, than in the bosom of a philosopher; for, in the door, it serves the purpose of preventing all harm; but if these animals were once out, all the mental steel of which you boast would not save every bone in your body from being cracked in the twanging of a bow-string.”

“You speak,” replied Xerophrastes, “as if you had embraced the tenets of a sect not worthy of the lovers of wisdom—You

speak as if the artificial contrivances of human workmen were all in all. An iron-cage may confine wild beasts ; but can cages be made for all those misfortunes to which mankind are liable, and against which the force of the mind is their only means of defence? Can you cage the Eumenides, when they come to avenge a life spent in ignoble indolence and degrading luxury?"

"In truth," replied the Centurion, with a smile, "I have never seen the Eumenides except once, and that was in the theatre of Athens. But Boto, perhaps, has been more fortunate. Did you ever see the Eumenides, good Boto?"

"No, master," replied, stupidly, the perplexed Boto, "I never was at the theatre."

"Ye Gods!" exclaimed the Stoic, his lips smiling with lofty scorn—"Ye Gods! of a surety this Britain must have been the last spot rescued from the dominion of Chaos!"

CHAPTER XIII.

BUT while we were yet contemplating those enormous animals, and amused with the perplexity of Boto, the trumpets were blown in the Amphitheatre, and no sooner did the sound of them penetrate into the vaults, than it was evident, from the bustle which ensued, that the Emperor had returned to his place, and that the spectacle was about to recommence. With all speed, therefore, did we reascend to the upper air, leaving the gladiators in the act of mustering in their respective quarters of the gloomy vault ; and the feeders not less busied in preparing their beasts for the ex-

pected combat. Had we not been under the protection of Sabinus, we should have attempted in vain to regain our places ; but he being an acknowledged and current authority, known in every department of the Amphitheatre, the door-keepers, and other functionaries, durst refuse him nothing ; insomuch, that room was made for us where no room appeared ; and, in a word, we shortly found ourselves once more seated by the side of Rubellia and Sextus.

The day was by this time considerably advanced ; and, in spite of the awnings spread all over head, the rays of the sun were so powerful, that the marble benches felt hot to the touch, wherever they were exposed to them ; and altogether there was such a glare and fervour throughout the place, that my eyes began to be weary of gazing ; and very gladly would I have retired, rather than remain to see out the rest of the exhibition. Nevertheless, there was no appearance of any one having gone away in weariness ; but, on the contrary, the seats,

and even the passages, seemed to be more crowded than they had been in the anterior part of the morning.

The arena was perfectly vacant, when I looked down upon it ; but in a short time, a single old man, who, as Rubellia told me, had, without doubt, been found guilty of some atrocious wickedness, was led forth from a small wicket on the one side, and presently his fetters being struck off, those that conducted him retired, leaving him alone upon the sand. The eyes of this malefactor refused at first to look stedfastly on the objects around him, and it seemed to me that he had probably been long confined in some dark place, so grievously did the dazzling splendour, reflected from the floor and walls, appear to bewilder and confound him. Nevertheless, after a brief space, he seemed, in some measure, to recover himself, and assumed a posture of calm resignation, leaning with one hand against the parapet, as if he needed support to uphold himself. Pallid and extenuated were the outlines of the old

man's visage, and his hair and beard exhibited not a little of the squalidness attendant on long and hopeless confinement; yet there was something in the attitude, and even in the countenance, of the man, which made me harbour the suspicion that he had not, at some former period, been altogether unacquainted with the luxuries and refinements of social life. The beauty, indeed, of the mould in which his form had originally been cast, might, perhaps, have been the sole cause of these casual demonstrations of elegance; yet it was impossible not to regard the man with greater interest, by reason of the contrast which imagination could suggest between what he once might have been, perhaps had been, and what he now was.

A feeling of somewhat the same sort seemed, of a truth, to pervade many more in the assembly besides myself; and I heard a continual whispering among those around me, as if there was a general anxiety to learn

something concerning the history of the man. No one, however, appearing to be able to say any thing concerning him, I kept my eyes fixed upon himself, awaiting the issue in silence. Judge then, what was my surprise, when one of the heralds of Trajan, having commanded that there should be silence in the Amphitheatre, said, "Let Thraso of Antioch come forth, and answer to the things that shall be alleged against him." To which the old man, that was alone in the arena, immediately made reply,— "Here am I—my name is Thraso of Antioch."—In vain, however, even after hearing the well-remembered voice, did I attempt to persuade myself that the face was such as I had pictured within myself; for, as to seeing it, I have already told you that utter darkness prevailed in the dungeon all the time I was there with him.

Then arose the Prefect of the city, who had his place immediately under the chair of the Prince, and said in a voice, which,

although not loud, was heard distinctly all through the Amphitheatre,—“Thraso of Antioch, being accused of blasphemy and contempt for the Gods, has been brought hither, either to refute this charge, by doing homage at the altar of Jupiter Best and Greatest; or, persisting in his rebellion against Rome, and the Prince, and the religion of the state, to suffer openly the punishment which the laws of the state have affixed to such perversity. Let him remain where he is until the Flamens invite us all to join in the sacrifice.”

Then Thraso, hearing these words, stepped forth into the middle of the arena, and folding his arms upon his breast, stood there composedly, without once lifting up his eyes, either to the place from which the Prefect had spoken to him, or to any other region of the Amphitheatre. The situation in which he stood was such, that I commanded, where I sat, a full and distinct view of every movement of the old

man's countenance, and assuredly my eyes were in no danger of being directed away from him. For a few moments there was perfect silence throughout the assembly, until at length the same herald, who had previously spoken, made proclamation for the doors to be thrown open, that the priests of Jupiter might have access to the arena. Whereupon there was heard forthwith a noise, as of the turning of some heavy machinery, and a part of the ground-work of the arena itself appeared to be giving way, right over against that quarter in which Thraso had his station. But of this the purpose was soon manifested, when there arose from underneath into the space thus vacated, a certain wooden stage, or platform, covered all over with rich carpetings, whereof the centre was occupied by a marble altar, set forth already with all the usual appurtenances of sacrifice, and surmounted on one side by a gigantic statue of bronze, in which it was easy to recognise all the features

of the great Phidian Jupiter. Neither had the altar any sooner made its appearance there, and the sound of the machinery, by which its great weight had been lifted, ceased to be heard, than even as the herald had given command, the main gates of the Amphitheatre were expanded, and thereby a free passage prepared for the procession of the Flamens. With that, all those that were present in the Amphitheatre, arose from their seats and stood up, and a sweet symphony of lutes and clarions ushered in the sacred band to the place appointed for them. And, first of all, there marched a train of fifty beautiful boys, and then an equal number of very young maidens, all, both boys and maidens, arrayed in white tunics, and having their heads crowned with oaken garlands, and bearing in their hands fresh branches of the oak tree, which, above all the other trees of the forest, is, as you have heard and well know, held dear and sacred to Jupiter. Then these youthful bands

were separated, and they arranged themselves, the boys on the right, and the girls on the left hand of the altar, some of them standing on the arena itself, and others on either side, upon the steps of the platform whereon the altar was fixed ; and beautiful, indeed, was their array, and comely and guiltless were their looks ; and much modesty was apparent, both in the downcast eyes and closed lips, with which some of them stood there to await the issue of their coming, and in the juvenile admiration wherewith others of them were regarding the wide and splendid assemblage around them ; insomuch, that I could not but feel within myself a certain dread and fearfulness, when I saw the feet of so many tender and innocent ones placed there upon the same hot and guilty sand, which had so often drunk the blood of fierce beasts and cruel malefactors—alas !—which had drunk the blood of the innocent also—and which was yet to drink thereof abundantly.

And after them there came in the priests themselves of Jupiter, arrayed in the white garments of sacrifice, walking two by two, the oldest and principal of them coming last. And behind them again, were certain younger assistants, clothed also in white, who led by a cord of silk inwrought with threads of silver, a milk-white steer, without spot or blemish, whose horns were already gilt, and his broad brows crowned with oak leaves and roses. And last of all entered the Vestal Virgins, none of whom had ever before been seen by me, and they also walked two by two; and no one could contemplate, without veneration, the majesty of their demeanour. With broad fillets were they bound around the forehead, and deep flowing veils hung down to their feet, entirely covering their faces and their hands; nevertheless, their dignity was apparent; and it was not the less impressive, by reason of the great mystery in which all things about them appeared to be enveloped.

Imagine, therefore, to yourselves, how magnificent was the appearance of all things, when youths and damsels, and priests and vestals, had taken their places, according to the custom of their sacred observances ; and all that innumerable company of spectators yet standing up in the Amphitheatre, the choral-hymn was begun, in which every voice there was united, except only that of Thraso the Christian. Now, it was the soft low voices of the young maidens that sounded, and then these would pause, and give place to the clearer and more piercing notes of the boys that stood on the other side of the altar ; then again the priestesses of Vesta would break in from afar with their equable harmony ; and anon these in their turn ceasing, the Flamens of Jupiter would lift up their strong deep chaunting, until, at the appointed signal from him that stood on the highest step of the altar, with the cup of libation in his hand, the whole people that were present burst in and joined in the rushing stream of the bur-

den, " Jupiter,—Jupiter, hear us!—hear us, Father of Gods and men!" while the wine was poured out, gushing red upon the marble, and the incense flung on high from fifty censers, rolled its waves of smoke all over the surface of the arena, and quite up to the gorgeous canopy of that resounding Amphitheatre. Magnificent, indeed, was the spectacle, and majestic the music; yet in the midst of it, how could I take away my eyes from the pale and solitary old man, by reason of whose presence alone all these things were so? With calm eyes did he regard all the pageantry of those imperial rites,—with closed lips did he stand amidst all the shouting multitudes. He bowed not his head; he lifted not up his hand; neither would he bend his knee, when the victim was slain before the horns of the altar; neither would he in any thing give semblance of being a partaker in the worship.

At length the song ceased, and there was a proclamation again for deep silence; and

the Prefect of the city, addressing himself once more to Thraso, said unto him, “ Impious and unhappy man, with great clemency have all things been conducted as concerning thee. When, after long imprisonment, and innumerable exhortations in private and in public, thou hadst always rejected every means of safety, and spurned from thee the pardon of those, in whose hands thy being is placed, yet, notwithstanding of all thine obstinacy and continual rebellion, was it determined, that, in the face of all the people, thou shouldst once more have free grace offered to thee, provided only thou shouldst, when all the assembly worshipped, join thy voice with them, and bow thy head also toward the altar of Jupiter. Nevertheless, all that now hear me shall bear witness, that, with open and visible contumacy, thou hast rejected this opportunity also, of being reconciled unto the prince and the empire,—that, when every knee bent, and every voice was lifted

up, thou alone hast stood upright, and thy lips alone have been closed. If it be so, that, from some inflicted, rather than voluntary perversion of mind, thou hast never yet been able to understand the danger in which thou art placed, know now, that there remains no hope at all for thee, except for a moment ; and let the strong fear of death open thine eyes, that thou mayest see where thou art, and for what purpose thou hast been brought hither. Thou art a born subject of Rome, and thy life can only be held by thee, in virtue of obedience to the laws of the Prince and the Senate. These laws are clearer and more distinct upon nothing, than the necessity that all men should acknowledge the deities of Rome ; and of good reason, since, if they be despised, and their authority set at naught, by what means shall an oath be ratified, or a pledge given ; or how may the head, which counsels and protects, be assured that the members shall not be lifted up against it ?

Let silence remain in the assembly, and let Thraso of Antioch make his election, whether he will give obedience to the laws, or suffer the penalty of their transgression."

Then the Prefect, and all those round about Trajan, sat down, and there was a deep silence throughout the lower region of the Amphitheatre, where, for the most part, they of condition were placed ; but when the rabble, that sat above, beheld the stern and resolute countenance with which the old man stood there upon the arena, it seemed as if they were enraged thereby beyond measure, and there arose among them a fierce uproar, and a shouting of hatred ; and, amidst groans and hisses, there was a cry from innumerable voices, of " Christian ! Christian !—Blasphemer ! Blasphemer !—Atheist ! Atheist !—A tiger ! A tiger !—Let loose a tiger upon the Christian !"

Nevertheless, the old man preserved unmoved the stedfastness of his demeanour,

and lifting up his eyes to the place from whence the tumult proceeded, regarded the ferocious multitude with a visage, not of anger, or of scornfulness, but rather of pity, and of calmness ; insomuch, that I perceived the nobles and senators were somewhat ashamed of the outcry, and the Prefect of the city arose from his place, and beckoned with his hand, until the people were weary of shouting, and order was, in some measure, re-established in the Amphitheatre.

Then Thraso, perceiving that silence once more prevailed, lifted up his hand, and bowed himself before Trajan, and the great men of authority that were near to his chair, and said, with a firm clear voice, in the Roman tongue, “ My name, O Trajan, is Thraso—the son of Androboulos. I am a native of Antioch, in Syria, and have in all things, except only in what pertains to this cause, observed throughout all the years of my life the statutes of the empire, as they, by whose accusation I have been led hither, shall them-

selves be constrained to bear abundant witness for me this day. My father was a Greek of Macedonian extraction, being descended from one of those that came into Syria beneath the banners of the great King Seleucus ; but he took to wife a maiden of the Hebrew nation, and in process of time became a proselyte to the faith of her fathers. Nevertheless, he lived in trust and honour beneath the governors appointed by those that were before you in the empire, and brought up me and all his children to reverence, in all things that are lawful, the authority of Cæsar. But as to the faith of the true God, whose worshippers ye blindly and foolishly call atheists and blasphemers, from that he neither swerved himself, nor would permit any of those that were in his household to depart. Now, when he had been a dweller for some time in Jerusalem, the great city of the Jews, he began to examine into those things which were reported publicly concerning Jesus of Naza-

reth, who is also called the Christ, of which things, not a few, that had been eye-witnesses, were then living in that city. And when he had been satisfied from their testimony, that those miracles, of which you have all heard, were in truth performed in the sight of the people by Jesus of Nazareth, and had listened unto the words of their teachers, and saw how they proved that the old prophets of the Hebrews had foretold those wonderful works, he perceived that Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the Christ of God, and the great Deliverer that had been promised to that people, even from the time of the patriarchs, and the beginning of their nation. And he believed on him with all his household ; and I also, from a stripling, have, although unworthy, been a Christian ; for by that name were they first called in Antioch, the city of my birth,

“ But being brought into trouble by reason of his religion, which the rulers of the

Jews abhorred, my father departed, after a time, from Jerusalem, and dwelt with my mother in one of the villages of Palestine, until his death. Not long after which time, the Jews rebelled against Cæsar, and the great war began, which terminated in the overthrow of Jerusalem, and the utter ruin of their nation. Now, when Vespasian first came with his army into those regions, I, being without employment in the place where we had our habitation, and having, moreover, taken up a great, and perhaps a sinful, wrath against the Jews, on account of the sufferings which my father had undergone among them, and of the evils which, at their hands, our whole household had sustained, joined myself to one of the bands of Syrian auxiliaries; and although my mother entreated me, could not be persuaded to refrain from following the camp of Cæsar along with them. Of which thing it has often since then repented me, and in which, it may be, I still hold myself not to

have done altogether as was right ; for if the Jews had offended Cæsar, it was, indeed, a reasonable thing that Cæsar should visit them with his vengeance ; but, peradventure, it behoved not any of them that were descended from the fathers of that people, to take part in the warfare. Nevertheless, being then young, and full of life, and, as I have said, irritated by the sense of domestic injuries, I scrupled not to fulfil in all things the duty of a true soldier, and followed the eagles of Vespasian and his son, even to the day when the lines were drawn around the Holy City ; and it was manifest, that the war could have no end, but in the eternal overthrow of the power of the Jews. Neither did the length of the siege weary me, or produce within me any sort of unwillingness ; but, on the contrary, so long as the city was beleaguered, I remained with the band in which I had numbered myself, and did in all things such service as my strength would permit.

Even among the soldiers that have guarded my prison, since I was led into Rome for the sake of that accusation which has been brought against me in the matter of my belief,—even among them, I have seen the faces of some that were my comrades in that fierce war, and that long beleaguering, who also, if they be commanded, will not refuse to bear testimony before you, that all these are true, even as I have said, and that I was a faithful soldier, both of Vespasian and of Titus, unto the last. Neither, indeed, did I lay down arms immediately when Jerusalem had been sacked, and the Temple burnt, according to the prediction of Christ, but went with Cæsar along the sea-coast, and was present with him all through the journeyings he made in Egypt, even to the day when he made his great festival at Alexandria, and crowned the Ox Apis with his own hands, in the presence of all that people. On which day it was, that, for the first time, I also was

accused of being a Christian, and at the command of Titus himself, was interrogated by one of the rulers of the army.

“ Now with shame and confusion of face must I acknowlege, that on that day I, from desire of life, forgot myself utterly, and being deserted of all stedfastness, went up to the altar in presence of my judge, and offered gifts there to one of the idols of the Egyptians, whereon I was declared free of all blame ; and even received honour and commendation thereafter from them, on account of my services in the war. But, from that day, my spirit sunk within me, and I knew not what to do, by reason of the sorrow that came upon me for that which I had done ; insomuch, that I grew weary of all things, and determined to leave the band in which I was serving, that I might seek out, if it were possible, the habitation of my mother, and make atonement in secret for the wickedness of which I, unhappy and fearful man, had been guilty at Alexandria. Being absolved, therefore, from my oath of

service, on account of the length of time I had remained with the army, I departed from Egypt, and, after a time, found out my mother where she was dwelling in the mountainous country of Palestine, to the north of Jerusalem. In going thither, however, I was constrained to pass by the place where I had so long lain in your camp, O, Romans ! and to look with my own eyes on the sorrowful desolation of that ancient city, where so many holy prophets of the Hebrews had ministered, and so many great kings reigned in the days of the old time, when their nation flourished, and was chosen and favoured of the Almighty. And it was then, indeed, that I first began to repent me of having been present in the host of Titus, and of having had a part in that terrible destruction ; to which, when I added the recollection of my own miserable timorousness, when I was accused, by reason of the faith that was in me, at Alexandria—of a surety, great was my perplexity, and I fled across the mountains with much

speed, seeking in vain to fly from the stings and perpetual torment of my own meditations, which nevertheless continued even more and more to sink into my spirit; insomuch, that when I came into the place where my mother was dwelling, scarcely could she recognize me, wasted and worn as I was with that perpetual misery of shame and repentance. Without reproaches, however, and indeed with great kindness, did she receive me into her habitation, even although, as I have said, she had been much offended with me because of my going up to the beleaguerment of the city of her fathers. But when I, being humbled, made confession to her and her household, and to all the faithful that were in that place, of the grievous sin whereof I had been guilty in Egypt, both she and all the rest of them busied themselves continually to comfort me, and to assure me that there was yet hope, if my repentance were sincere, and my resolution immove-

able never again to yield myself to any similar temptation. One of them also, that had been ordained of the disciples of Christ to minister in holy things among the scattered believers that dwelt up and down in that region, came not many days after to the same place, and having publicly heard my confession in presence of the Church there, gave unto me absolution, and admitted me once more to be a partaker with them in the ordinances of the sanctuary. From which day, O Trajan ! I have never again been so far deserted of myself, as to fall back into that miserable error, or by any cowardly word of mine, to deny the faith that is in me, which is the faith of the True God that made heaven and earth, and of his Son Jesus Christ, whom he sent into the world to teach loving kindness, and long-suffering, and patience, among all kindreds, and tongues, and nations of mankind ; and to make expiation, by the accursed death of the cross, for the evil and the wicked.

ness that is in the world. From which faith, should I now depart, out of terror for that which, by your command, may befall me in this place, of a surety no comfort could ever again come to me in my mind, for I should be bowed down, and utterly miserable, out of grief and shame; which as you yourself, O Cæsar, will admit and acknowledge, is far worse than death itself, or any evil which the body of man can sustain. Neither could I have any hope of being reconciled unto the True God, whom I should have so, once and again, denied; insomuch, that neither in life nor in death should I be able to have any happiness;—for in life, what happiness is there to him that is ashamed of himself?—and, in departing from life, what comfort can be given to him, that, knowing the truth, hath openly abjured the truth for the sake of a few, at the utmost, and these most miserable and unhappy years? I am an old man, and my near kindred and my friends are already dead, so that poor after all, and not worthy to be

mentioned, is the sacrifice on which I have this day resolved. And as for you, O Romans, should I now make shipwreck of my faith, and tell a lie to save my life before you, with what contempt would yourselves be constrained forthwith to look upon me? Whosoever is wise among you, according to the philosophy of the earth, would utterly despise me; and whosoever is brave and stedfast of spirit, would think foul scorn that a soldier of Titus should be so much afraid to die. Therefore, O Trajan, am I resolved to endure all things rather than sacrifice to your gods; and if such be your will, I will not refuse to die for this cause, to which witness has already been borne in Rome by the blood of so many apostles, and other noble martyrs of Christ."

The old man, having said these words, bowed himself once more reverently before Trajan, and then folding his arms in his cloak, appeared to await submissively, yet boldly, whatever might be appointed concerning him. Stedfastly did I look upon

his face at that moment, to see whether it might exhibit no traces of wavering, or at least, if pride barred irresolution, whether, nevertheless, there might not appear some token of natural sorrow, and human unwillingness to die; yet in vain did I scrutinize and seek therein for any such symptoms of spiritual weakness; for although it was visible that, with the exertion of so long standing and speaking, to say nothing of thought and anxiety, his bodily strength was much spent, still his eye preserved all its firmness, and his brow remained quite serene; and the parched lips of the old man did not once betray the least shadow of trembling. Methinks I see him even now, as he then stood—his deep calm eyes sometimes turned upwards to Trajan, but for the most part bent downwards to the ground, beneath those grey brows of his, whose dark shade rested upon his large solemn eyelids. Upon his broad front, as he stooped, no hair appeared, but long hoary ringlets, clustered down on either side, ming-

ling with the venerable, although dishevelled beard, that lay upon his bosom. Heroic meekness was enthroned visibly upon all his lineaments, and a murmur began to run through the assembly, as if—even in a Christian—it were not possible to contemplate such things without admiration.

But as they afterwards related to me—for I myself was not indeed sufficiently attentive to it—Trajan, who had as yet, during all the occurrences of the day, preserved unmoved the majestic serenity of his countenance, when he observed this last movement in the spirit of the assembly, began all at once to be very indignant, that such things should occur in such a place, in consequence of the appearance merely, and the language, of a culprit and a Christian. I confess it, that I was too much occupied with gazing on Thraso, to have any leisure for remarking the particulars of the deportment of any other person present—no, not even of Trajan himself; yet such had been

the effect produced on me by the history which the old man delivered of himself, that I indeed was not prepared at the moment to find the strong arm of power directed ruthlessly, and immediately against him. At least, said I to myself, after such a statement as this, the Prince will institute an inquiry among all those now present in the capital, who are likely to be able either to contradict essentially, or to confirm essentially, the narrative in which this man has thought fit to embody his only defence. Many years indeed have elapsed since the walls of Jerusalem were shattered by the engines of Rome, and the golden gate of its antique temple refused to be any protection against the furious soldiery of Titus. Yet surely not a few of such as were present in that proud host, must be still in life ; yea, not a few of them must be now present in the capital of the world. The old spearman, with whom I talked in the guard-room, and beside the ramparts underneath

which Thraso was imprisoned, he surely cannot be the only witness that remains to give testimony to the truth of that which we have heard. He at least there is, and we shall forthwith have him at least confronted with Thraso.

Such were my own thoughts within me ; judge, therefore, what was my astonishment when I heard the trumpet sound, and perceived that its note, without any word being spoken, was at once received as a sufficient warning by the priests and the vestals, and the youths and the damsels, and all those that had in any way been connected with the service of the altar, that had appeared on the arena, to retire from the place whereon they stood, and leave the old man there alone, to await the issue of his destiny. Immediately on the signal being given by the trumpet, did all these begin to move away ; but although in silence they had at first marched into the Amphitheatre, they did not retire from it in silence. Another hymn, on the contrary,

in which also, as it seemed, different parts were allotted for each different order of singers, was begun to be sung by them even before they had moved from the arena ; and after the last of their procession had disappeared behind the wide folding-doors of the Amphitheatre, we still heard their voices chaunting solemnly until they had entered the great Temple of Isis and Serapis, which, as I think, I have already said, stands over against it, on the very brink of the Esquiline. And while all were yet listening to their singing, and to the divine harmony of lutes, and other sweet-sounding instruments, that accompanied their voices, the slaves, and other attendants upon the duties of the place, removed every thing from the arena, except only the altar and statue of Jupiter, which were still left where they had been placed ; insomuch, that ere they had made an end of singing, and we of listening, the old man was left alone there as at the beginning, when he

first came forth into the centre of the Amphitheatre.

But just when deep silence once more prevailed all over the immense assembly, and expectation was most intense concerning what should be at length commanded by Trajan, it fell out so, that a little bald ape escaped through the bars of one of the grated doors, which were along the boundary-wall of the arena, and leaping forth upon the sand, began to skip up and down, challenging, by all manner of foolish gestures, the attention of those that sate over against it, leaning down from the parapet. And immediately certain painted courtezans, that were sitting not far from thence, with gilded breasts and bright-coloured garlands, and all other gorgeous trappings of the degradation of harlotry, began to throw down apples and nuts to the obscene creature, and to testify much delight in the grimaces with which it received them, hopping to and fro, and cast-

ing them away, and then catching them up again, with continual gibbering and prating ; and no sooner did the rabble that were above perceive these things, than they all, as with one consent, began to applaud and to shout loudly ; insomuch, that the vaulted vomitories and wide arches of entrance, and all the marble walls of the spacious Amphitheatre, re-echoed in a moment with peals of laughter, and with every wild sound of carelessness and merriment. While, in the meantime, the African feeders and naked gladiators, and all those hangers-on of the Amphitheatre, whom we had seen in the dark places down below, hearing now the sounds that had arisen among the assembly, began to shew themselves in crowds from behind the same grated doors through one of which the monkey had escaped, and to partake in the mirth of the spectators, and to whistle upon the creature, and to excite it to new caperings, by their outcries and jeerings ; insomuch, that it seemed as if the minds of all present were en-

tirely occupied with the pranks of this brute; and that almost it was forgotten amidst the tumult, not only for what purpose all that solemn and stately pageantry of priests and vestals had just been exhibited before them; but even that such a being as Thraso was standing there upon the same arena, whereon that moping ape was diverting the multitude by its ridiculous gestures.

Now, for myself, who had never before looked upon any creature of this disgusting tribe, and had gathered only some general notion of its appearance, from the treatises of the physiologists, and the narratives of travellers, I could not, indeed, refuse to contemplate at first its motions, with some curiosity and attention; but of a truth, I knew not, after the scene had lasted for a little space, whether to be more humbled within myself by the monkey's filthy mimickings of the form and attitudes of mankind, or by the display of brutish heartlessness, which burst forth from

all that countless multitude, while gazing on that spectacle of humiliation.

But it was not until my eye fell again on Thraso, who stood all this time solitary and silent amidst the surrounding hubbub, that my sorrow and indignation were the greatest, and that I felt the deepest scorn for the minds of those that filled the Amphitheatre around me. There stood the old man even as before, with his arms folded in his gown, and his eyes resting on the sand before him, pale, calm, and unmoved in his meekness, even as if his ears had not once received any sound of all the shoutings and the joyous laughters of that un pitying rabble, that had come there to behold him die. Once, indeed—it was but once—I thought I could perceive that a slight emotion of contempt wreathed for an instant his thin and bloodless lips; but it seemed as if that were but the involuntary and momentary passing over him of one proud thought, and that he spurned it from

him immediately, as a thing unworthy of the resolute and determined mind of his integrity, choosing rather to array himself in the divine armour of patience, than to oppose, with any weapon of human passion, the insults heaped upon his head by the cruel callousness of that degenerate congregation of men. And, whether it were so, that the sight of all this did not affect me alone with such reflections, or only that they in authority were afraid too much of the day might be occupied with what formed so unseemly an addition to the regular and ordained business of the assembly,—concerning this matter, I, indeed, cannot pretend to offer any conjecture; but so it was, that while the uproar of mirth was yet at its height, certain of the lictors that were about the consular chairs, leapt down into the arena, and beat the monkey back again among the feeders, and other base hirelings, that stood behind the grated doors of which I have spoken. Whereupon there

was at once an end of the tumult, and the lictors having reascended to their places, the eyes of all men there present began once more to fix themselves upon Thraso the Christian.

And he also, when he perceived that it was so, and was sensible of the silence that once more prevailed, it seemed as if he, too, were aware that at last his appointed hour had come, and that he must needs prepare himself in good earnest for the abiding of the issue. For, instead of continuing stedfast in his place, as he had done during all the time he had as yet been exposed there, it appeared as if now at length, being swallowed up in the contemplation of his approaching fate, he had quite forgotten all the rules he had laid down to himself concerning his behaviour on the arena.—Of a surety, I mean not to say that he had now lost remembrance of the courage which hitherto he had manifested,—or even, that any the least symptom of

changeableness was made visible upon his countenance. But it seemed to me, of a truth, that of such things as he had determined upon within himself before he came thither, touching the mere external demeanour of his bodily frame, the memory now, in this final moment of expectation, had somewhat passed away ; for Thraso stood still no longer on the centre of the arena ; but retaining his arms folded as they had been, and his eyes fixed upon the sand, he began to pace rapidly to and fro, in presence of all the multitude—traversing all the open space whereon he alone now was, from side to side, without so much as once looking up, or exhibiting any token that he was conscious of the presence of any man. By and by, nevertheless, in the deeper knittings of his brows, and in the closer pressure of his extenuated lips, and then again in the quivering of the nerves and muscles upon the arms and legs of the old man, as he moved to and fro be-

fore us, it was testified abundantly how keenly the spirit was at work within; the strong soul wrestling, it may be, with some last stirring temptations of the flesh, and the mind itself not altogether refusing to betray its sympathy with the natural shudderings of the body. But the moment that the herald of Trajan commanded attention in the assembly, and that the Prefect of the city, who had formerly spoken unto him, began again to prepare himself for speaking, that moment did the old man appear to return at once again entirely to himself; and he fixed his eyes upon the Prefect with even the same stedfastness as when he made his oration to Trajan, and the whole assembly of the people.

“By all the gods,” whispered Sabinus at that moment into my ear,—“by all the gods of Olympus, this old man is a true soldier of Vespasian and of Titus. He will die, Valerius, for this superstition, even with the constancy of a Roman.”

“With all the constancy of a philoso-

pher, say rather," quoth Xerophrastes, who had overheard his whisper—"yea, with all the constancy of a philosopher. Of a surety, there must be some lessons of nobility in this faith of the Jews."

"Now, speak not, but look at the old man," interrupted Rubellia; "the signal is given for the executioner to come forth upon the arena."

And I looked, and saw that the Prefect of the city was standing up in his place, immediately below the chair of Trajan, and immediately he began to speak; and he said, first, looking towards the people,—
"Let there be silence, and let no man stir in this place until this matter be ended." And then addressing himself, as it seemed, to Thraso,—
"With all patience," proceeded he, "have the words which this man chose to utter in his defence, been listened unto; but it must be manifest to all men, that they contain no shadow of apology, but rather afford the strongest confirmation of all that had before been alleged against him.

Instead of departing from his error, or offering any extenuation of its magnitude, the words of his address have tended only to shew what was already well known to all that have had any dealings with the adherents of this blasphemous sect; that their obstinacy is as great as their atheism is perverse; and that no clemency can, without blame, be extended to their wilfulness, neither to the scorn wherewith they are resolved to regard all things sacred. Nevertheless, inquiry has been made, and confirmation has been given, by those who were present in the wars of the Divine Titus, as to that which this man hath said concerning his own service in the Roman host, throughout the glorious campaign of Palestine, and the siege of the city of the Jews. For which service, it hath seemed right unto Cæsar, Ever-Merciful, that no circumstance of needless shame be added unto the death by which this Christian must now expiate before all them who have seen his contempt of the sacrifice of Jupi-

piter, and heard his words of blasphemy against all the gods, the guilt of which, it is manifest to all, he hath been justly and necessarily accused. Let those, therefore, who had been commanded to bring forth a tiger, depart now with their beast, and let this man be beheaded before the Altar of Jupiter; after which, for this day, the assembly will disperse: for, until the morrow, the spectacle of the wild animals, which the Prince hath prepared, must be deferred.”

And when he had said so, the Prefect made his obeisance again to Cæsar, and sate down in his place, and immediately one of the doors of the arena was flung open, and there entered some slaves, bearing a wooden block upon their shoulders, behind whom followed also certain ill-favoured blacks, out of the company of African gladiators, one of whom carried bare, in his hand, a long and heavy sword, the surface of which glittered brightly as he moved, even as if it had been newly sharpened and burnished for the occasion. Seeing all which fatal

preparations, Thraso immediately flung aside the long cloak in which hitherto his arms, and all his body, had been wrapped; and after regarding those that had come in for a moment with a stedfast eye, he turned himself to the place where the Prefect was sitting, as if he had yet one word to say before he should submit himself unto the sword of the African; whereupon the Prefect said,—“ If the prisoner hath yet any thing to offer, it is not too late for mercy— Let him speak quickly.”

“ I have nothing more to offer, O Romans!” answered the old man, “ as concerning that of which I have spoken before. But since already some favour has been extended to me by reason of my services in the army of Cæsar, perhaps so neither will this be refused, that my body should be given to such as shall ask for it, that it may be treated without indignity after my soul is released from its habitation.”

“ It is granted,” replied the Prefect.—
“ Is there any thing more ?”

“There is nothing,” said the old man ;
“this is all I had to ask of you.”

With that the block, being already fixed upon the sand immediately in front of the Altar of Jupiter, one of the Africans moved towards Thraso, as if to conduct him to the place where it behoved him to kneel ; but he, observing what was his intention, forthwith prevented him, and walked, of himself, steadily close up to him in whose hand the sword was unsheathed. Being come thither, the old man immediately took his station over against the block, and having for a moment placed his hand upon his eyes, and moved his lips, as it seemed, in fervent supplication, dropped his one knee on the ground, and stretched forth his neck towards the block ; but suddenly, after he had done so, he sprung again upon his feet, and began to gaze with a keen eye all around the assembly, as if he were in search of some one to whom he had something to say, the which he could not die without speaking. In vain, however, as it

appeared, did he make this endeavour ; for after a little space, he shook his head despairingly, and gave over the stedfastness of his look. Nevertheless, he lifted up his voice, and, surveying once more the whole face of the Amphitheatre round about, from side to side, said audibly,—“ There is one here who made last night a promise to me in my dungeon. I cannot see him where he is ; but I conjure him to take good heed, and execute, as he is a man and a Roman, all those things which he said to me he would do.” · Now, when I heard him say so, I well knew within myself that it was for me only his eye had been searching, and half did I arise from my seat, that he might see I was there, and observe my resolution to keep the faith I had plighted voluntarily to him in his prison. But Sabinus, who had not witnessed without attention the deep interest with which I had all along been contemplating the behaviour of the old man, called to mind, without difficulty, how he had left

me the night before to do his errand to Thraso, and comprehending something of that which was meant, held me firm upon the bench, whispering at the same time, in an earnest manner, "As you regard me, Valerius, and as you regard your own safety, be still."

Being constrained after this manner, I neither rose up, nor made any attempt to attract the attention of Thraso—for which forbearance, I confess to you, I have since that day undergone the visitation of not a few bitter thoughts—but remained steadily in my place, while the old man once more addressed himself to kneel down upon the block that was before him. Calmly now at length did he kneel, and with much composure did he place himself. Yet, before the gladiator was ready to strike, he lifted up his head once again, and gazed upwards for a moment towards heaven, with such a countenance of faith and hope, that there went through all the assembly a murmur,

as it were, and a stirring breath of admiration. Then bowed he for the last time his grey hairs, and almost before he had rested his neck upon the tree, the strong sword of the African smote thereon with merciful fierceness, and the headless trunk falling backwards upon the sand, the blood spouted forth in a gushing stream, and sprinkled all over with red drops the base of the statue of Jupiter Capitolinus, and the surface of the marble altar, whereupon the sacrifice of the Flamens had that day been offered.

The executioner having made an end of his duty, forthwith wiped his sword from the blood of the Christian, and advancing towards the seats of the magistrates, claimed the largess that was due to him from the Prince's bounty, by reason of that which he had done,—which when he had received, as is the custom, he and all his attendants withdrew immediately from the arena; the Emperor at the same moment, and the

Consulars, and all they that were about him, departing also themselves from the assembly ; and the whole Amphitheatre speedily being filled with the clamours of an universal upbreking and dispersion of that great multitude.

But as for us that had been sitting with Rubellia, we could by no means be prevailed with to accept of the lady's invitation to go home with her to supper in the Suburra ; for the fatigue, which had attended the gazing on so many, and so various sorts of spectacles, was not inconsiderable, and the day being already far spent, we were all willing to retire, as speedily as might be, to our respective places of abode. As for me, from Sabinus also, and Xerophrastes and Sextus himself, I suddenly found myself separated, by reason of a sudden rushing among the crowd that surrounded the gates of the Amphitheatre ; so that after waiting there for a space, in expectation of being joined to them again, I perceived that

I must of necessity return homewards entirely by myself.

Neither, after a moment, was I sorry that the thing had so fallen out ; for, of a truth, the circumstances which had occurred in my presence, had taken such possession of my mind, that I was sensible a short time spent by myself was very needful for the regaining of my usual manner of converse. Nay, so much was I occupied with those things, that even after having come as far as the Arch of Titus, I could not refrain from turning back, and re-entering the walls of the Amphitheatre, that I might once more behold the place on which that old man had died. But when I had come into the edifice, I found it now almost utterly deserted of all the multitudes that had filled it ; insomuch, that, walking over from bench to bench, my steps sounded as in a solitary place. I saw from a distance the body of Thraso still lying on the spot where it had fallen ; but while I

was yet looking thereon, and had some purpose to approach nearer, there entered, by one of the private passages, those friends of his to whom he had entreated that his body might be given. Three men and three women were all they that came for that mournful office ; but both men and women of them had their faces wrapped in their garments, so that who they were, neither I, nor any one else, could be permitted to discover. Having lifted up the body and the head, they placed them together reverently in a linen-sheet, and then laying that upon a humble bier, they walked away with their sad burden, and disappeared from my view by the same postern through which they had entered at first upon the arena. But when they had gone away, the slaves of the edifice speedily came in to put the sand, and all other things therein, in order ; and seeing their labour commenced, I also was at length satisfied to take my final departure.

The sun had already been long gone down, ere I, filled with many melancholy meditations, and well nigh spent utterly with the weariness of a sleepless night and a thoughtful day, reached at length the Martian Field, and entered once more the hospitable mansion of my kinsman.

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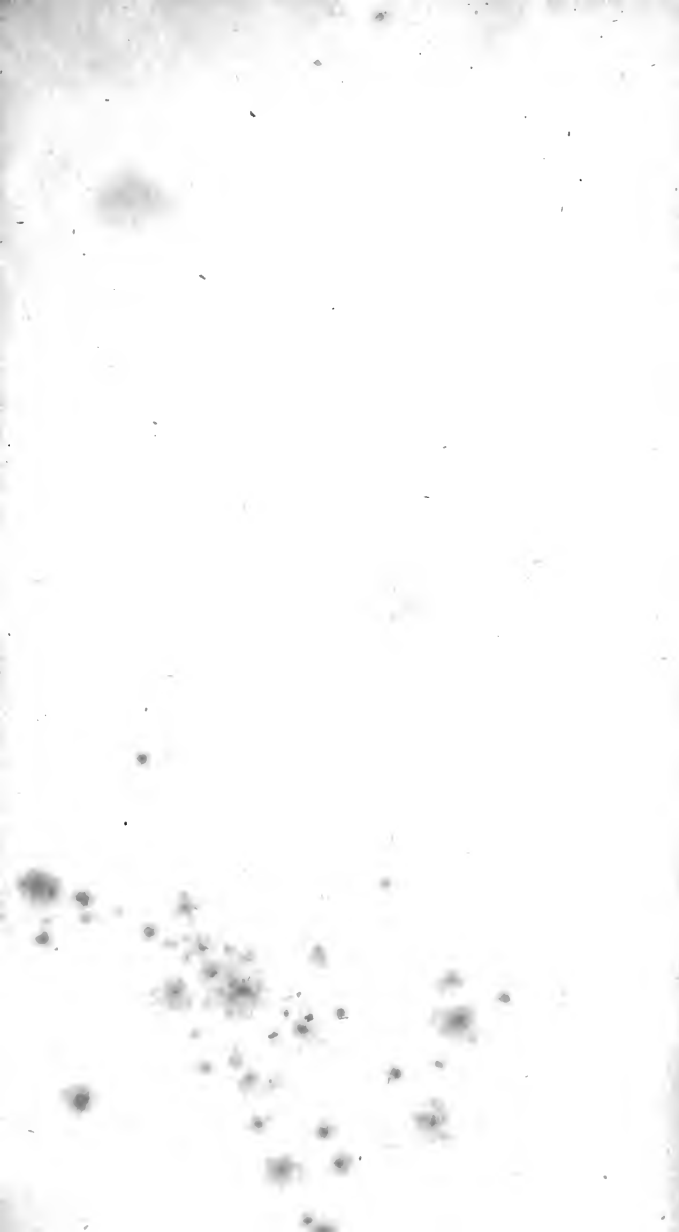
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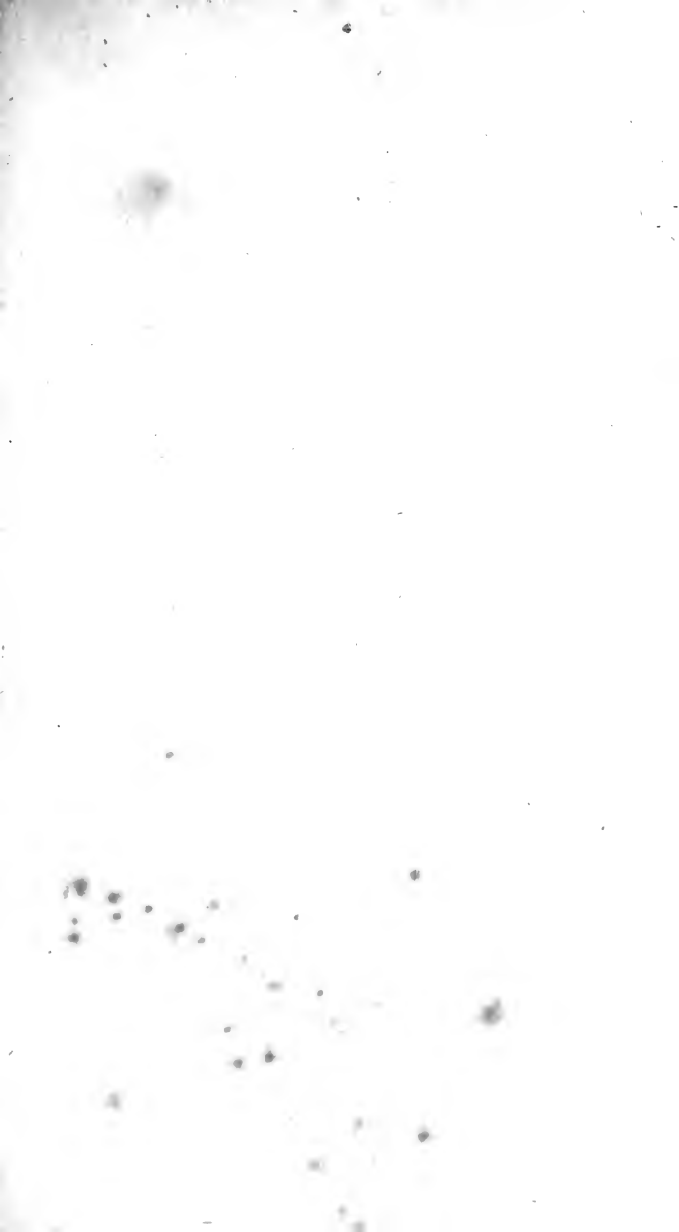
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