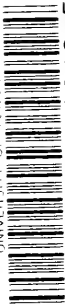


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THE
LAST DAYS
OF
POMPEII.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PELHAM,"
"EUGENE ARAM," "ENGLAND, AND THE ENGLISH."
&c. &c.

"Such is Vesuvius! and these things take place in it every year. But all eruptions which have happened since would be trifling, even if all summed into one, compared to what occurred at the period we refer to. * * * * *

"Day was turned into night, and night into darkness—an inexpressible quantity of dust and ashes was poured out, deluging land, sea, and air, and burying two entire cities, Herculaneum and Pompeii, while the people were sitting in the theatre!"

DION CASSIUS, lib. lxxvi.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET;

SUCCESSOR TO HENRY COLBURN.

1834.



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Fleet Street, Fleet Street.

DEDICATION

TO SIR WILLIAM GELL,

&c. &c.

DEAR SIR,

IN publishing a work, of which Pompeii furnishes the subject, I can think of no one to whom it can so fitly be dedicated as yourself. Your charming volumes upon the Antiquities of that City have indissolubly connected your name with its earlier—(as your residence in the vicinity has identified you with its more recent)—associations.

I trust that these pages will find you in better health than when we parted at Naples; and that, whatever example your friends may derive from your philosophy, will be drawn from an industry in intellectual acquisitions, never to be wearied, rather than from a patience under suffering, never to be excelled.

Ere you receive these volumes, I hope to be deep in the perusal of your forthcoming work upon “the Topography of Rome and its Vicinity.”

DEDICATION.

The glance at its contents which you permitted me at Naples, sufficed to convince me of its interest and value; and as an Englishman, and as one who has loitered under the portico, I rejoice to think, that in adding largely to your own reputation, you will also renovate our Country's claim to eminence in those departments of learning, in which of late years we have but feebly supported our ancient reputation. Venturing thus a prediction of the success of your work, it would be a little superfluous to express a wish for the accomplishment of the prophecy! But I may add a more general hope, that you will long have leisure and inclination for those literary pursuits, to which you bring an erudition so extensive;—and that they may continue, as now, sometimes to beguile you from yourself, and never to divert you from your friends.

I have the honour to be,

Dear Sir,

Very faithfully yours,

THE AUTHOR.

Leamington, September 21, 1834.

P R E F A C E.

ON visiting those disinterred remains of an ancient City, which, more perhaps than either the delicious breeze or the cloudless sun, the violet valleys and orange groves, of the South, attract the traveller to the neighbourhood of Naples ; on viewing, still fresh and vivid, the houses, the streets, the temples, the theatres of a place existing in the haughtiest age of the Roman empire,—it was not unnatural, perhaps, that a writer who had before laboured, however unworthily, in the art to revive and to create, should feel a keen desire to people once more those deserted streets, to repair those graceful ruins, to reanimate the bones which were yet spared to his survey ; to traverse the gulph of eighteen centuries, and to wake to a second existence — the City of the Dead !

And the reader will easily imagine how sensibly this desire grew upon one who felt he could per-

form his undertaking, with Pompeii itself at the distance of a few miles—the sea that once bore her commerce, and received her fugitives, at his feet — and the fatal mountain of Vesuvius, still breathing forth smoke and fire, constantly before his eyes !*

I was aware, however, from the first, of the great difficulties with which I had to contend. To paint the manners and exhibit the life of the middle ages, required the hand of a master genius ; yet, perhaps, the task is slight and easy, in comparison with that which aspires to portray a far earlier and more unfamiliar period. With the men and customs of the feudal time we have a natural sympathy and bond of alliance ; those men were our own ancestors — from those customs we received our own — the creed of our chivalric fathers is still ours — their tombs yet consecrate our churches — the ruins of their castles yet frown over our val-

* Nearly the whole of this work was written at Naples last winter. On my return to England, I was indeed too much occupied with political matters, to have a great deal of superfluous leisure for works purely literary, except in those, not unwelcome, intervals when the Parliament going to sleep allows the other objects of life to awake — dismissing its wearied legislators, some to hunt, some to shoot, some to fatten oxen, and others — to cultivate literature !

leys. We trace in their struggles for liberty and for justice, our present institutions; and in the elements of their social state we behold the origin of our own.

But with the classical age we have no household and familiar associations. The creed of that departed religion, the customs of that past civilization, present little that is sacred or attractive to our northern imagination; they are rendered yet more trite to us by the scholastic pedantries which first acquainted us with their nature, and are linked with the recollection of studies, which were imposed as a labour, and not cultivated as a delight.

Yet the task, though arduous, seemed to me worth attempting; and in the time and the scene I have chosen, much may be found to arouse the curiosity of the reader, and enlist his interest in the descriptions of the author. It was the first century of our religion—it was the most civilized period of Rome—the conduct of the story lies amidst places whose relics we yet trace—the catastrophe is among the most awful which the tragedies of Ancient History present to our survey.

From the ample materials before me, my endeavour has been to select those which would be most

attractive to a modern reader;—the customs and superstitions least unfamiliar to him—the shadows that, when reanimated, would present to him such images as, while they represented the past, might be least uninteresting to the speculations of the present. It did, indeed, require a greater self-control than the reader may at first imagine, to reject much that was most inviting in itself; but which, while it might have added attraction to parts of the work, would have been injurious to the symmetry of the whole. Thus, for instance, the date of my story is that of the short reign of Titus, when Rome was at its proudest and most gigantic eminence of unbridled luxury and unrivalled power. It was, therefore, a most inviting temptation to the author, to conduct the characters of his tale, during the progress of its incidents, from Pompeii to Rome. What could afford such materials for description, or such field for the vanity of display, as that gorgeous City of the world, whose grandeur could lend so bright an inspiration to fancy,—so favourable and so solemn a dignity to research? But, in choosing for my subject—my catastrophe, *The Destruction of Pompeii*, it required but little insight into the

higher principles of art to perceive that to Pompeii the story should be rigidly confined.

Placed in contrast with the mighty pomp of Rome, the luxuries and gaud of the vivid Campanian city would have sunk into insignificance. Her awful fate would have seemed but a petty and isolated wreck in the vast seas of the imperial sway; and the auxiliary I should have summoned to the interest of my story, would only have destroyed and overpowered the cause it was invoked to support. I was therefore compelled to relinquish an episodical excursion so alluring in itself, and, confining my story strictly to Pompeii, to leave to others the honour of delineating the hollow but majestic civilization of Rome.

The city, whose fate supplied me with so superb and awful a catastrophe, supplied easily from the first survey of its remains, the characters most suited to the subject and the scene; the half Grecian colony of Hercules, mingling with the manners of Italy so much of the costumes of Hellas, suggested of itself the characters of Glaucus and Ione. The worship of Isis, its existent fane, with its false oracles unveiled; the trade of Pompeii with Alex-

andria; the associations of the Sarnus with the Nile, called forth the Egyptian Arbaces—the base Calenus—and ~~the~~ fervent Apæcides. The early struggles of Christianity with the Heathen superstition, suggested the creation of Olinthus; and the Burnt Fields of Campania, long celebrated for the spells of the Sorceress, naturally produced the Saga of Vesuvius. For the existence of the Blind Girl I am indebted to a casual conversation with a gentleman, well known amongst the English at Naples for his general knowledge of the many paths of life. Speaking of the utter darkness which accompanied the first recorded eruption of Vesuvius, and the additional obstacle it presented to the escape of the inhabitants, he observed, that the blind would be the most favoured in such a moment, and find the easiest deliverance. This remark originated the creation of Nydia.

The characters, therefore, are the natural offspring of the scene and time—the incidents of the tale are equally consonant, perhaps, to the then existent society: for it is not only the ordinary habits of life, the feasts and the forum, the baths and the amphitheatre, the commonplace routine of the classic luxury, which we

recall the Past to behold ; equally important and more deeply interesting are the passions, the crimes, the misfortunes, and reverses that might have chanced to the shades we thus summon to life. We understand any epoch of the world but ill, if we do not examine its romance ;—there is as much truth in the poetry of life as in its prose.

As the greatest difficulty in treating of an unfamiliar and distant period, is to make the characters introduced ‘live and move’ before the eye of the reader, so such should doubtless be the first object of a work of the present description :—and all attempts at the display of learning should be considered but as means subservient to this, the main, requisite of fiction. [The first art of the Poet (the Creator) is to breathe the breath of life into his creatures—the next is to make their words and actions appropriate to the era in which they are to speak and act. This last art is perhaps the better effected by not bringing the art itself constantly before the reader—by not crowding the page with quotations, and the margin with notes. Perpetual references to learned authorities have, in fiction, something at once wearisome and arrogant.] They appear like the author’s eulogies

on his own accuracy and his own learning—they do not serve to elucidate his meaning, but to parade his erudition. The intuitive spirit which infuses antiquity into ancient images is, perhaps, the true learning which a work of this nature requires—without it, pedantry is offensive; with it, useless. No man who is thoroughly aware of what Prose Fiction has now become, of its dignity—of its influence—of the manner in which it has gradually absorbed all similar departments of literature—of its power in teaching as well as amusing—can so far forget its connection with History—with Philosophy—with Politics—its utter harmony with Poetry, and obedience to Truth, as to debase its nature to the level of scholastic frivolities; he raises scholarship to the creative, and does not bow the creative to the scholastic.

With respect to the language used by the characters introduced, I have studied carefully to avoid what has always seemed to me a fatal error in those who have attempted, in modern times, to introduce the beings of a classical age.*

* What the strong common sense of Sir Walter Scott has expressed so well in his Preface to *Ivanhoe* (1st edition), appears to me, at least, as applicable to one, a writer who draws from classical,—as to one who borrows from feudal—Antiquity. Let

Authors have mostly given to them the stilted sentences—the cold and didactic solemnities of

me avail myself of the words I refer to, and humbly and reverently appropriate them for the moment. “It is true, that I neither can, nor do pretend, to the observation [observance?] of complete accuracy even in matters of outward costume, much less in the more important points of language and manners. But the same motive which prevents my writing the dialogue of the piece in Anglo-Saxon, or in Norman-French, [*in Latin or in Greek,*] and which prohibits my sending forth this essay printed with the types of Caxton or Wynken de Worde [*written with a reed upon five rolls of parchment—fastened to a cylinder, and adorned with a boss*], prevents my attempting to confine myself within the limits of the period in which my story is laid. It is necessary for exciting interest of any kind, that the subject assumed should be, as it were, *translated* into the manners as well as the language of the age we live in.”

* * * * *

“In point of justice therefore to the multitudes, who will, I trust, devour this book with avidity [*hem!*], I have so far explained ancient manners in modern language, and so far detailed the characters and sentiments of my persons, that the modern reader will not find himself, I should hope, much trammelled by the repulsive dryness of mere antiquity. In this, I respectfully contend, I have in no respect exceeded the fair licence due to the author of a fictitious composition.”

* * * * *

“It is true,” proceeds my authority, “that this licence is confined within legitimate bounds; the author must introduce nothing inconsistent with the manners of the age.”—*Preface to Ivanhoe.*

I can add nothing to these judicious and discriminating remarks—they form the true canons of criticism, by which all Fiction that portrays the Past should be judged.

language which they find in the more admired of the classical writers; it is an error as absurd to make Romans in common life talk in the periods of Cicero, as it would be in a novelist to endow his English personages with the long-drawn sentences of Johnson or Burke. The fault is the greater, because, while it pretends to learning, it betrays in reality the ignorance of just criticism—it fatigues—it wearies—it revolts—and we have not the satisfaction, in yawning, to think that we yawn eruditely. To impart anything like fidelity to the dialogues of classic actors, we must beware (to use a university phrase) how we “*cram*” for the occasion!—Nothing can give to a writer a more stiff and uneasy gait, than the sudden and hasty adoption of the toga. We must bring to our task the familiarized knowledge of many years:—the allusions, the phraseology—the language generally—must flow from a stream that has long been full; the flowers must be transplanted from a living soil, and not bought second-hand at the nearest market-place. This advantage, which is, in fact, only that of familiarity with our subject, is one derived rather from accident than merit, and depends upon the degree in which

the classics have entered into the education of our youth, and the studies of our maturity. Yet even did a writer possess the utmost advantage of this nature which education and study can bestow, it might be scarcely possible so entirely to transport himself to an age so different from his own, but that he would incur some inaccuracies, some errors of inadvertence or forgetfulness. And when, in works upon the Manners of the Ancients, works even of the gravest character composed by the profoundest scholars, some such imperfections will often be discovered even by a critic, in comparison, but superficially informed, it would be far too presumptuous in me to hope that I have been more fortunate than men infinitely more learned, in a work in which learning is infinitely less required. It is for this reason, that I venture to believe, that scholars themselves will be the most lenient of my judges. Enough, if this book, whatever its imperfections, should be found a portrait—unskilful perhaps in colouring—faulty in drawing—but, not altogether an unfaithful likeness of the features and the costume of the age which I have attempted to paint:—may it be (what is far more important) a just representation of the

human passions and the human heart, whose elements in all ages are the same! One word more,—let me be permitted to remind the reader, that if I have succeeded in giving some interest and vitality to a description of classic manners and to a tale of a classic age, I have succeeded where all hitherto have failed:* a necessary corollary from this proposition is one equally consolatory though less triumphant, viz. if I have failed in the attempt, I fail where no one has succeeded. After this sentence, I can but conclude at once.—Can I say anything more effectually to prove, that an author never shows half so much ingenuity as in making out the best possible case for his own performance?

* I must be pardoned for not excepting even Barthélemy. His *Anacharsis* is a work of wonderful ability, labour, elegance, and research. But there is no life in it! It does not, to be sure, profess to be actually a romance, but even as a book of Imaginary travels, it is formal and tedious. The external erudition is abundant, but the inward spirit is wanting. He has not been exhilarated by the wine of antiquity, but he has accumulated a prodigious quantity of labels. “*Anacharsis*,” says Schlegel, well and wittily, “views things, in his travels, not as a young Scythian, but as an old Parisian!” Yes, and as a Parisian who never gives you the notion that he has travelled at all—except in an arm-chair!

THE
LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

BOOK I.

Quid sit futurum cras, fuge quærere ;
Quem sors dierum cunque dabit, lucro
Appone ; nec dulces amores
Sperne puer, neque tu choreas.

HOR. lib. I. Od. ix.

THE LAST DAYS

OF

POMPEII.

CHAPTER I.

THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF POMPEII.

“Ho, Diomed, well met — do you sup with Glaucus to-night?” said a young man of small stature, who wore his tunic in those loose and effeminate folds which proved him to be a gentleman and a coxcomb.

“Alas, no! dear Clodius; he has not invited me,” (replied Diomed, a man of a portly frame and of middle age :) “by Pollux, a scurvy trick! for they say his suppers are the best in Pompeii.”

“Pretty well — though there is never enough of wine for me. It is not the old Greek blood that flows in his veins, for he pretends that wine makes him dull the next morning.”

“There may be another reason for that thrift,” said Diomed, raising his brows, “with all his conceit and extravagance he is not so rich, I fancy, as he affects to be, and perhaps loves to save his amphoræ better than his wit.”

“An additional reason for supping with him while the sesterces last. Next year, Diomed, we must find another Glaucus.”

“He is fond of the dice too, I hear.”

“He is fond of every pleasure, and while he likes the pleasure of giving suppers, we are all fond of *him*.”

“Ha, ha, Clodius, that is well said. Have you ever seen my wine-cellars, by the by?”

“I think not, my good Diomed.”

“Well, you must sup with me some evening; I have tolerable Murænae* in my reservoir, and I will ask Pansa the Ædile to meet you.”

“Oh, no state with me!—*Persicos odi apparatus*, I am easily contented. Well, the day wanes; I am for the baths—and you?”—

“To the Quæstor—business of state—afterwards to the temple of Isis. *Vale!*”

* Murænae—lampreys.

“An ostentatious, bustling, ill-bred fellow,” muttered Clodius to himself, as he sauntered slowly away. “He thinks with his feasts and his wine-cellars to make us forget that he is the son of a freedman;—and so we will, when we do him the honour of winning his money: these rich plebeians are a harvest for us spendthrift nobles.”

Thus soliloquizing, Clodius arrived in the Via Domitiana, which was crowded with passengers and chariots, and exhibited all that gay and animated exuberance of life and motion which we find at this day in the streets of Naples.

The bells of the cars as they rapidly glided by each other, jingled merrily on the ear, and Clodius with smiles or nods claimed familiar acquaintance with whatever equipage was most elegant or fantastic—in fact, no young man was better known about Pompeii.

“What, Clodius! and how have you slept on your good fortune?” cried, in a pleasant and musical voice, a young man, in a chariot of the most fastidious and graceful fashion. Upon its surface of bronze were elaborately wrought, in the still exquisite workmanship of Greece, reliefs of the

Olympian games: the two horses that drew the car were of the rarest breed of Parthia; their slender limbs seemed to disdain the ground and court the air, and yet at the slightest touch of the charioteer, who stood behind the young owner of the equipage, they paused motionless, as if suddenly transformed into stone,—lifeless, but lifelike, as one of the breathing wonders of Praxiteles. The owner himself was of that slender and beautiful symmetry from which the sculptors of Athens drew their models; his Grecian origin betrayed itself in his light but clustering locks, and the perfect harmony of his features. He wore no toga, which in the time of the emperors had indeed ceased to be the general distinction of the Romans, and was especially ridiculed by the pretenders to fashion; but his tunic glowed in the richest hues of the Tyrian dye, and the fibulæ, or buckles, by which it was fastened sparkled with emeralds: around his neck he wore a chain of gold, which in the middle of his breast twisted itself into the form of a serpent's head, from the mouth of which hung pendant a large signet ring of elaborate and most exquisite work-

manship; the sleeves of the tunic were loose, and fringed at the hand with gold; and across the waist a girdle wrought in arabesque designs, and of the same material as the fringe, served in lieu of pockets for the receptacle of the handkerchief and the purse, the stylus and the tablets.

“My dear Glaucus!” said Clodius, “I rejoice to see that your losses have so little affected your mien. Why you seem as if you had been inspired by Apollo, and your face shines with happiness like a glory; any one might take you for the winner and me for the loser.”

“And what is there in the loss or gain of those dull pieces of metal that should change our spirit, my Clodius? Per Jove! while, yet young, we can cover our full locks with chaplets—while yet the cithara sounds on unsated ears—while yet the smile of Lydia or of Chlœe flashes over our veins in which the blood runs so swiftly, so long shall we find delight in the sunny air, and make bald Time itself but the treasurer of our joys. You sup with me to-night, you know.”

“Who ever forgets the invitation of Glaucus!”

“But which way go you now?”

“Why I thought of visiting the baths, but it wants yet an hour to the usual time.”

“Well, I will dismiss my chariot, and go with you. So so, my Phylas,” stroking the horse nearest to him, which by a low neigh and with backward ears, playfully acknowledged the courtesy; “a holiday for you to-day. Is he not handsome, Clodius?”

“Worthy of Phœbus,” returned the noble parasite, — “or of Glaucus.”

CHAPTER II.

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL, AND THE BEAUTY OF FASHION.
—THE ATHENIAN'S CONFESSION.—THE READER'S INTRO-
DUCTION TO ARBACES OF EGYPT.

TALKING lightly on a thousand matters, the two young men sauntered through the streets: they were now in that quarter which was filled with the gayest shops, their open interiors all and each radiant with the gaudy yet harmonious colours of frescos, inconceivably varied in fancy and design. The sparkling fountains, that at every vista threw upwards their grateful spray in the summer air; the crowd of passengers, or rather loiterers, mostly clad in robes of the Tyrian dye; the gay groups collected round each more attractive shop; the slaves passing to and fro with buckets of bronze, cast in the most graceful shapes, and borne upon their heads; the country girls stationed at fre-

quent intervals with baskets of blushing fruit, and flowers more alluring to the antient Italians than to their descendants, (with whom, indeed, "*latet anguis in herba*," a disease seems lurking in every violet and rose) — (a) — the numerous haunts which fulfilled with that idle people the office of cafés and clubs at this day; the shops where on shelves of marble were ranged the vases of wine and oil, and before whose thresholds, seats, protected from the sun by a purple awning, invited the weary to rest and the indolent to lounge, — made a scene of such glowing and vivacious excitement, as might well give the Athenian spirit of Glaucus an excuse for its susceptibility to joy.

"Talk to me no more of Rome," said he to Clodius. "Pleasure is too stately and ponderous in those mighty walls: even in the precincts of the court — even in the golden house of Nero, and the incipient glories of the palace of Titus, there is a certain dulness of magnificence — the eye aches — the spirit is wearied; besides, my Clodius, we are discontented when we see the enormous luxury and wealth of others, with the mediocrity of our own state. But here we surrender ourselves

easily to pleasure, and we have the brilliancy of luxury without the lassitude of its pomp.”

“ It was from that feeling that you chose your summer retreat at Pompeii.”

“ It was. I prefer it to Baiaë: I grant the charms of the latter, but I love not the pedants who resort there, and who seem to weigh out their pleasures by the drachm.”

“ Yet you are fond of the learned, too; and as for poetry, why your house is literally eloquent with Æschylus and Homer, the epic and the drama.”

“ Yes, but those Romans who mimic my Athenian ancestors, do everything so heavily. Even in the chase they make their slaves carry Plato with them; and whenever the boar is lost, out they take their books and their papyrus, in order not to lose their time too. When the dancing girls swim before them in all the blandishment of Persian manners, some drone of a freedman, with a face of stone, reads them a section of *Cicero de Officiis*. Unskilful pharmacists! pleasure and study are not elements to be thus mixed together—they must be enjoyed separately; the

Romans lose both by this pragmatistical affectation of refinement, and prove that they have no souls for either. Oh, my Clodius, how little your countrymen know of the true versatility of a Pericles, of the true witcheries of an Aspasia!—It was but the other day that I paid a visit to Pliny. He was sitting in his summer-house writing, while an unfortunate slave played on the tibia. His nephew, (oh! whip me such philosophical coxcombs!) was reading Thueydides' description of the plague, and nodding his conceited little head in time to the music, while his lips were repeating all the loathsome details of that terrible delineation. The puppy saw nothing incongruous in learning at the same time a ditty of love, and a description of the plague."

"Why they *are* much the same thing," said Clodius.

"So I told him, in excuse for his coxcombry;—but my youth stared me rebukingly in the face, without taking the jest, and answered, that it was only the insensate ear that the music pleased, whereas the book (the description of the plague, mind you!) elevated the heart. 'Ah!' quoth

the fat uncle, wheezing, ‘my boy is quite an Athenian, always mixing the *utile* with the *dulci*.’ O Minerva, how I laughed in my sleeve! While I was there, they came to tell the boy-sophist that his favourite freedman was just dead of a fever. —‘Inexorable Death!’ cried he;—‘get me my Horace. How beautifully the sweet poet consoles us for these misfortunes!’ Oh! can these men love, my Clodius? Scarcely even with the senses. How rarely a Roman has a heart!—He is but the mechanism of genius—he wants its bones, and flesh.”

Though Clodius was secretly a little sore at these invectives on his countrymen, he affected to sympathise with his friend, partly because he was by nature a parasite, and partly because it was the fashion among the dissolute young Romans to affect a little contempt for the very birth which, in reality, made them so arrogant; it was the mode to imitate the Greeks, and yet to laugh at their own clumsy imitation.

Thus conversing, their steps were arrested by a crowd gathered round an open space where three streets met; and just where the porticos of a light

and graceful temple threw their shade, there stood a young girl, with a flower-basket on her right arm, and a small three-stringed instrument of music in the left hand, to whose low and soft tones she was modulating a wild and half barbaric air. At every pause in the music she gracefully waved her flower-basket round, inviting the loiterers to buy ; and many a sesteree was showered into the basket, either in compliment to the music, or in compassion to the songstress—for she was blind.

“ It is my poor Thessalian,” said Glaucus, stopping ; “ I have not seen her since my return to Pompeii. Hush ! her voice is sweet ; let us listen.”

THE BLIND FLOWER-GIRL'S SONG.

1.

Buy my flowers — O buy — I pray,
 The Blind Girl comes from afar :
 If the Earth be as fair as I hear them say,
 These Flowers her children are !
 Do they her beauty keep ?
 They are fresh from her lap, I know ;
 For I caught them fast asleep
 In her arms an hour ago,

With the air which is her breath —
Her soft and delicate breath —
Over them murmuring low !

On their lips her sweet kiss lingers yet,
And their cheeks with her tender tears are wet.
For she weeps,—that gentle mother weeps,—
(As morn and night her watch she keeps,
With a yearning heart and a passionate care)
To see the young things grow so fair;—
She weeps — for love she weeps -
And the dews are the tears she weeps,
From the well of a mother's love !

2.

Ye have a world of light,
Where Love in the lov'd rejoices ;
But the Blind Girl's home is the House of Night,
And its Beings are empty voices.

As one in the realm below,
I stand by the streams of woe ;
I hear the vain shadows glide,
I feel their soft breath at my side,

And I thirst the lov'd forms to see,
And I stretch my fond arms around,
And I catch but a shapeless sound,
For the living are ghosts to me.

Come buy — come buy ! —
Hark ! how the sweet things sigh,
(For they have a voice like ours)
“ The breath of the Blind Girl closes
“ The leaves of the saddening roses—
“ We are tender, we sons of Light,
“ We shrink from this child of Night ;
“ From the grasp of the Blind Girl free us ;
“ We yearn for the eyes that see us
“ We are for Night too gay,
“ In your eyes we behold the day—
“ O buy—O buy the flowers !”

“ I must have yon bunch of violets, sweet Nydia,” said Glaucus, pressing through the crowd, and dropping a handful of small coins into the basket ; “ your voice is more charming than ever.”

The blind girl started forward as she heard the Athenian's voice — then as suddenly paused, while

the blood rushed violently over neck, cheek, and temples.

“So you are returned!” said she in a low voice; and then repeated, half to herself, “Glaucus is returned!”

“Yes, child, I have not been at Pompeii above a few days. My garden wants your care as before—you will visit it, I trust, to-morrow. And mind, no garlands at my house shall be woven by any hands but those of the pretty Nydia.”

Nydia smiled joyously, but did not answer; and Glaucus, placing the violets he had selected in his breast, turned gaily and carelessly from the crowd.

“So, she is a sort of client of yours, this child,” said Clodius.

“Ay—does she not sing prettily? She interests me, the poor slave!—besides, she is from the land of the Gods’ hill—Olympus frowned upon her cradle—she is of Thessaly.”

“The witches’ country.”

“True; but for my part I find every woman a witch; and at Pompeii, by Venus’ the very air seems to have taken a love philtre, so handsome

does every face without a beard seem in my eyes."

"And, lo! one of the handsomest in Pompeii, old Diomed's daughter, the rich Julia," said Clodius, as a young lady, her face covered by her veil, and attended by two female slaves, approached them, in her way to the baths.

"Fair Julia, we salute thee," said Clodius.

Julia partially raised her veil, so as with some coquetry to display a bold Roman profile, a full dark bright eye, and a cheek over whose natural olive, art shed a fairer and softer rose.

"And Glaucus, too, is returned!" said she, glancing meaningly at the Athenian. "Has he forgotten," she added in a half whisper, "his friends of the last year?"

"Beautiful Julia! even Lethe itself, if it disappear in one part of the earth, rises again in another. Jupiter does not allow us ever to forget for more than a moment; but Venus, more harsh still, vouchsafes not even a moment's oblivion."

"Glaucus is never at a loss for fair words."

"Who is, when the object of them is so fair?"

"We shall see you both at my father's villa soon," said Julia turning to Clodius.

“ We will mark the day in which we visit you with a white stone,” answered the gamester.

Julia dropped her veil, but slowly, so that her last glance rested on the Athenian with affected timidity and real boldness; the glance bespoke tenderness and reproach.

The friends passed on.

“ Julia is certainly handsome,” said Glaucus.

“ And last year you would have made that confession in a warmer tone.”

“ True: I was dazzled at the first sight, and mistook for a gem that which was but an artful imitation.”

“ Nay,” returned Clodius, “ all women are the same at heart. Happy he who weds a handsome face and a large dower. What more can he desire?”

Glaucus sighed.

They were now in a street less crowded than the rest, at the end of which they beheld that broad and most lovely sea, which upon those delicious coasts seems to have renounced its prerogative of terror,—so soft are the crisping winds that hover around its bosom, so glowing and so various are the hues which it takes from the rosy

clouds, so fragrant are the perfumes which the breezes from the land scatter over its depths. From such a sea might you well believe that Anadyomene rose to take the empire of the earth.

“It is still early for the bath,” said the Greek, who was the creature of every poetical impulse; “let us wander from the crowded city, and look upon the sea while the Noon yet laughs along its billows.”

“With all my heart,” said Clodius; “and the bay, too, is always the most animated part of the city.”

Pompeii was the miniature of the civilization of that age. Within the narrow compass of its walls was contained, as it were, a specimen of every gift which luxury offered to power. In its minute but glittering shops, its tiny palaces, its baths, its forum, its theatre, its circus—in the energy yet corruption—in the refinement yet the vice—of its people, you beheld a model of the whole empire. It was a toy, a plaything, a showbox, in which the Gods seemed pleased to keep the representation of the Great Monarchy of Earth, and which they afterwards hid from Time, to give to the wonder of Posterity;—the moral of the

maxim, that under the sun there is nothing new.

Crowded in the glassy bay were the vessels of commerce and the gilded galleys for the pleasures of the rich citizens. The boats of the fishermen glided rapidly to and fro; and afar off you saw the tall masts of the fleet under the command of Pliny. Upon the shore sate a Sicilian, who, with vehement gestures and flexile features, was narrating to a group of fishermen and peasants a strange tale of shipwrecked mariners and friendly dolphins,—just as at this day, in the modern neighbourhood, you may hear upon the Mole of Naples.

Drawing his comrade from the crowd, the Greek bent his steps towards a solitary part of the beach, and the two friends, seated on a small crag which rose amidst the smooth pebbles, inhaled the voluptuous and cooling breeze which, dancing over the waters, kept music with its invisible feet. There was perhaps something in the scene that invited them to silence and reverie. Clodius, shading his eyes from the burning sky, was calculating the gains of the last week; and the Greek, leaning upon his hand, and shrinking not from that sun,—his nation's tutelary deity, —with whose fluent

light of poesy, and joy, and love, his own veins were filled, gazed upon the broad expanse, and envied, perhaps, every wind that bent its pinions towards the shores of Greece.

“Tell me, Clodius,” said the Greek at last, “hast thou ever been in love?”

“Yes, very often.”

“He who has loved often,” answered Glaucus, “has loved never. There is but one Eros, though there are many counterfeits of him.”

“The counterfeits are not bad little gods, upon the whole,” answered Clodius.

“I agree with you,” returned the Greek. “I adore even the shadow of Love; but I adore himself yet more.”

“Art thou then in sober and earnest love? Hast thou that feeling the poets describe—a feeling that makes us neglect our suppers, forswear the theatre, and write elegies? I should never have thought it. You dissemble well.”

“I am not far gone enough for that,” returned Glaucus, smiling; “or rather I say with Tibullus,

‘Whom soft love rules, where'er his path,
Walks safe and sacred.’

In fact, I am not in love; but I could be if there were but occasion to see the object. Eros would light his torch, but the priests have given him no oil."

"Shall I guess the object?—Is it not Diomed's daughter? She adores you, and does not affect to conceal it; and by Hercules! I say again and again, she is both handsome and rich. She will bind the door-posts of her husband with golden fillets."

"No, I do not desire to sell myself. Diomed's daughter is handsome, I grant; and at one time, had she not been the grandchild of a freedman, I might have——Yet no—she carries all her beauty on her face; her manners are not maidenlike, and her mind knows no culture save that of pleasure!"

"You are ungrateful. Tell me, then, who is the fortunate virgin?"

"You shall hear, my Clodius. Several months ago, I was sojourning at Neapolis, a city utterly to my own heart, for it still retains the manners and stamp of its Grecian origin,—and it yet merits the name of Parthenope, from its delicious air, and its beautiful shores. One day I entered the temple of Minerva, to offer up my prayers, not for myself

more than for the city on which Pallas smiles no longer. The temple was empty and deserted. The recollections of Athens crowded fast and meltingly upon me: imagining myself still alone in the temple, and absorbed in the earnestness of my devotion, my prayer gushed from my heart to my lips, and I wept as I prayed. I was startled in the midst of my devotions, however, by a deep sigh; I turned suddenly round, and just behind me was a female. She had raised her veil also in prayer; and when our eyes met, methought a celestial ray shot from those dark and shining orbs at once into my soul. Never, my Clodius, have I seen mortal face more exquisitely moulded: a certain melancholy softened and yet elevated its expression; that unutterable something which springs from the soul, and which our sculptors have imparted to the aspect of Psyche, gave her beauty I know not what of divine and noble; tears were rolling down her eyes. I guessed at once that she was also of Athenian lineage; and that in my prayer for Athens her heart had responded to mine. I spoke to her, though with a faltering voice—‘Art thou not, too, Athenian?’

said I, ‘O beautiful virgin?’ At the sound of my voice she blushed, and half drew her veil across her face.—‘My forefathers’ ashes,’ said she, ‘repose by the waters of Ilyssus: my birth is of Neapolis; but my heart, as my lineage, is Athenian.’—‘Let us, then,’ said I, ‘make our offerings together;’ and, as the priest now appeared, we stood side by side, while we followed the priest in his ceremonial prayer; together we touched the knees of the goddess—together we laid our olive garlands on the altar. I felt a strange emotion of almost sacred tenderness at this companionship. We, strangers from a far and fallen land, stood together and alone in that temple of our country’s deity: was it not natural that my heart should yearn to my countrywoman, for so I might surely call her? I felt as if I had known her for years, and that simple rite seemed, as by a miracle, to operate on the sympathies and ties of time. Silently we left the temple, and I was about to ask her where she dwelt, and if I might be permitted to visit her, when a youth, in whose features there was some kindred resemblance to her own, and who stood upon the steps

of the fane, took her by the hand. She turned round and bade me farewell. The crowd separated us; I saw her no more. On reaching my home I found letters, which obliged me to set out for Athens, for my relations threatened me with litigation concerning my inheritance. When that suit was happily over, I repaired once more to Neapolis; I instituted inquiries throughout the whole city, I could discover no clue of my lost countrywoman, and hoping to lose in gaiety all remembrance of that beautiful apparition, I hastened to plunge myself amidst the luxuries of Pompeii. This is all my history. I do not love; but I remember and regret."

As Clodius was about to reply, a slow and stately step approached them, and, at the sound it made amongst the pebbles, each turned, and each recognised the new-comer.

It was a man who had scarcely reached his fortieth year, of tall stature, and of a thin but nervous and sinewy frame. His skin, dark and bronzed, betrayed his eastern origin; and his features had something Greek in their outline, (especially in the chin, the lip, the brow, and the throat,) save that the nose was somewhat raised and

aquiline ; and the bones, hard and visible, forbade that fleshy and waving contour which on the Grecian physiognomy preserved even in manhood the round and beautiful curves of youth. His eyes, large and black as the deepest night, shone with no varying and uncertain lustre. A deep, thoughtful, and half melancholy calm seemed unalterably fixed in their majestic and commanding gaze. His step and mien were peculiarly sedate and lofty, and something foreign in the fashion and the sober hues of his sweeping garments added to the impressive effect of his quiet countenance and stately form. Each of the young men, in saluting the new-comer, made mechanically, and with care to conceal it from him, a slight gesture or sign with their fingers ; for Arbaces, the Egyptian, was supposed to possess the fatal gift of the evil eye.

“ The scene must indeed be beautiful,” said Arbaces, with a cold though courteous smile, “ which draws the gay Clodius, and Glaucus the all-admired, from the crowded thoroughfares of the city.”

“ Is Nature ordinarily so unattractive ?” asked the Greek.

“ To the dissipated—yes.”

“ An austere reply, but scarcely a wise one. Pleasure delights in contrasts ; it is from dissipation that we learn to enjoy solitude, and from solitude, dissipation.”

“ So think the young philosophers of the garden,” replied the Egyptian ; “ they mistake lassitude for meditation, and imagine that, because they are sated with others, they know the delight of loneliness. But not in such jaded bosoms can Nature awaken that enthusiasm which alone draws from her chaste reserve all her unspeakable beauty ; she demands from you, not the exhaustion of passion, but all that fervour from which you only seek, in adoring her, a release. When, young Athenian, the Moon revealed herself in visions of light to Endymion, it was after a day passed not amongst the feverish haunts of men, but on the still mountains and in the solitary valleys of the hunter.”

“ Beautiful simile !” cried Glaucus ; “ most unjust application ! Exhausted ! ah ! youth is never exhausted ; and by me, at least, one moment of satiety has never been known !”

Again the Egyptian smiled, but his smile was cold and blighting, and even the unimaginative Clo-

dius froze beneath its light. He did not, however, reply to the passionate exclamation of Glaucus; but, after a pause, he said in a soft and melancholy voice,

“After all, you do right to enjoy the hour while it smiles for you; the rose soon withers, the perfume soon exhales—and we, O Glaucus! strangers in the land, and far from our fathers’ ashes, what is there left for us, but Pleasure or Regret?—for you the first, perhaps for me the last.”

The bright eyes of the Greek were suddenly suffused with tears. “Ah, speak not, Arbaces,” he cried—“speak not of our ancestors. Let us forget that there were ever other liberties than those of Rome!—and Glory!—oh, vainly, would we call her ghost from the fields of Marathon and Thermopylæ!”

“Thy heart rebukes thee while thou speakest,” said the Egyptian; “and in thy gaities this night thou wilt be more mindful of Leæna* than of Lais. *Vale!*”

* Leæna, the heroic mistress of Aristogeiton, when put to the torture, she bit out her tongue that the pain might not induce her to betray the conspiracy against the sons of Pisistratus. The statue of a lioness, erected in her honour, was to be seen at Athens in the time of Pausanias.

Thus saying, he gathered his robe around him, and slowly swept away.

“I breathe more freely,” said Clodius. “Imitating the Egyptians, we sometimes introduce a skeleton at our feasts. In truth, the presence of such an Egyptian as yon gliding shadow were spectre enough to sour the richest grape of the Falernian.”

“Strange man !” said Glaucus, musingly ; “yet, dead though he seem to pleasure, and cold to the objects of the world, scandal belies him, or his house and his heart could tell a different tale.”

“Ah ! there are whispers of other orgies than those of Osiris in his gloomy mansion. He is rich, too, they say. Can we not get him amongst us, and teach him the charms of dice ? Pleasure of pleasures ! hot fever of hope and fear ! inexpressible unjaded passion ! how fiercely beautiful thou art, O Gaming !”

“Inspired—inspired,” cried Glaucus, laughing ; “the oracle speaks poetry in Clodius. What miracle next !”

CHAPTER III.

PARENTAGE OF GLAUCUS.—DESCRIPTION OF THE HOUSES
OF POMPEII.—A CLASSIC REVEL.

HEAVEN had given to Glaucus every blessing but one: it had given him beauty, health, fortune, genius, illustrious descent, a heart of fire, a mind of poetry; but it had denied him the heritage of freedom. He was born in Athens, the subject of Rome. Succeeding early to an ample inheritance, he had indulged that inclination for travel so natural to the young, and had drunk deep of the intoxicating draught of pleasure, amidst the gorgeous luxuries of the Imperial Court.

He was an Alcibiades without ambition. He was what a man of imagination, youth, fortune, and talents, readily becomes when you deprive him of the inspiration of glory. His house at Rome was the theme of the debauchees, but also of

the lovers of art; and the sculptors of Greece delighted to task their skill in adorning the porticos and *exedra* of an Athenian. His retreat in Pompeii—alas! the colours are faded now, the walls stripped of their paintings!—its main beauty, its elaborate finish of grace and ornament, is gone;—yet when first given once more to the day, what eulogies, what wonder did its minute and glowing decorations create—its paintings—its mosaics! Passionately enamoured of poetry and the drama, which recalled to Glaucus the wit and the heroism of his race, that fairy mansion was adorned with representations of Æschylus and Homer. And antiquaries, who resolve taste to a trade, have turned the patron to the professor, and still, (though the error is now acknowledged,) they style in custom, as they first named in mistake, the disburied house of the Athenian Glaucus, “**THE HOUSE OF THE DRAMATIC POET.**”

Previous to our description of this house, it may be as well to convey to the reader a general notion of the houses of Pompeii, which he will find to resemble strongly the plans of Vitruvius; but with all those differences in detail, of caprice and taste,

which, being natural to mankind, have always puzzled antiquaries. We shall endeavour to make this description as clear and unpedantic as possible.

You enter then, usually, by a small entrance passage, (called *vestibulum*,) into a hall, sometimes with (but more frequently without) the ornament of columns; around three sides of this hall are doors communicating with several bed-chambers, (among which is the porter's,) the best of these being usually appropriated to country visitors. At the extremity of the hall, on either side to the right and left, if the house is large, there are two small recesses, rather than chambers, generally devoted to the ladies of the mansion; and in the centre of the tessellated pavement of the hall is invariably a square shallow reservoir for rain-water, (classically termed *impluvium*,) which was admitted by a hole in the roof above; the said aperture being covered at will by an awning. Near this impluvium, which had a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the ancients, were sometimes (but at Pompeii more rarely than at Rome) placed images of the household gods;—the hospitable hearth, often mentioned by the Roman poets, and conse-

erated to the Lares, was at Pompeii almost invariably formed by a moveable *brasier* ; while in some corner, often the most ostentatious place, was deposited a huge wooden chest, ornamented and strengthened by bands of bronze or iron, and secured by strong hooks upon a stone pedestal so firmly as to defy the attempts of any robber to detach it from its position. This chest was supposed to be the money-box, or coffer of the master of the house ; though, as no money has been found in any of the chests discovered at Pompeii, it is probable that it was sometimes rather designed for ornament than use.

In this hall (or *atrium*, to speak classically) the clients and visitors of inferior rank were usually received. In the houses of the more ‘respectable,’ an *atriensis*, or slave peculiarly devoted to the service of the hall, was invariably retained, and his rank among his fellow-slaves was high and important. The reservoir in the centre must have been rather a dangerous ornament, but the centre of the hall was like the grass-plot of a college, and interdicted to the passers to and fro, who found ample space in the margin. Right opposite the

entrance, at the other end of the hall, was an apartment (*tablinum*), in which the pavement was usually adorned with rich mosaics, and the walls covered with elaborate paintings. Here were usually kept the records of the family, or those of any public office that had been filled by the owner: on one side of this saloon, if we may so call it, was often a dining-room, or *triclinium*; on the other side, perhaps, what we should now term a cabinet of gems, containing whatever curiosities were deemed most rare and costly; and invariably a small passage for the slaves to cross to the farther parts of the house, without passing the apartments thus mentioned. These rooms all opened on a square or oblong colonnade, technically termed peristyle. If the house was small, its boundary ceased with this colonnade, and in that case its centre, however diminutive, was ordinarily appropriated to the purpose of a garden, and adorned with vases of flowers placed upon pedestals, while under the colonnade, to the right and left, were doors, admitting to bed-rooms*, to a second *triclinium*, or

* The Romans had bed-rooms appropriated not only to the sleep of night, but also to the day siesta (*cubicula diurna*).

eating room (for the ancients generally appropriated two rooms at least to that purpose, one for summer, and one for winter, or perhaps, one for ordinary, the other for festive, occasions); and if the owner affected letters, a cabinet, dignified by the name of library,—for a very small room was sufficient to contain the few rolls of papyrus which the ancients deemed a notable collection of books.

At the end of the peristyle was generally the kitchen. Supposing the house was large, it did not end with the peristyle, and the centre thereof was not in that case a garden, but might be perhaps adorned with a fountain, or basin for fish, and at its end, exactly opposite to the tablinum, was generally another eating room, on either side of which were bed-rooms, and perhaps a picture-saloon or *pinatheca*.* These apartments communicated again with a square or oblong space, usually adorned on three sides with a colonnade like the peristyle, and very much resembling the peristyle, only longer. This was the proper *viridarium* or garden, being usually adorned with a fountain, or

* In the stately palaces of Rome, the *pinatheca* usually communicated with the atrium.

statues, and a profusion of gay flowers : at its extreme end was the gardener's house ; on either side, beneath the colonnade, were sometimes, if the size of the family required it, additional rooms.

At Pompeii, a second or third story was rarely of importance, being built only above a small part of the house, and containing rooms for the slaves ; differing in this respect from the more magnificent edifices of Rome, which generally contained the principal eating-room (or *cænaculum*) on the second floor. The apartments themselves were ordinarily of small size ; for in those delightful climes they received any extraordinary number of visitors in the peristyle (or portico), the hall, or the garden ;— and even their banquet rooms, however elaborately adorned and carefully selected in point of aspect, were of diminutive proportions ; for the intellectual ancients, being fond of society not of crowds, rarely feasted more than nine at a time, so that large dinner-rooms were not so necessary with them as with us.* But the suite of rooms seen at once from the entrance, must have had a very imposing

* When they entertained very large parties, the feast was usually served in the hall.

effect ; you beheld at once the hall richly paved and painted—the tablinum—the graceful peristyle, and (if the house extended farther) the opposite banquet-room and the garden, which closed the view with some gushing fount, or marble statue.

The reader will now have a tolerable notion of the Pompeian houses, which resembled in some respects the Grecian, but mostly the Roman fashion of domestic architecture. In almost every house there is some difference in detail from the rest, but the principal outline is the same in all. In all you find the hall, the tablinum, and the peristyle, communicating with each other ; in all you find the walls richly painted, and in all the evidence of a people fond of the refining elegances of life. The purity of the taste of the Pompeians in decoration is however questionable : they were fond of the gaudiest colours, of fantastic designs ; they often painted the lower half of their columns a bright red, leaving the rest uncoloured ; and where the garden was small, its wall was frequently tinted to deceive the eye as to its extent, imitating trees, birds, temples, &c. in perspective — a meretricious delusion which the

graceful pedantry of Pliny himself adopted, with a complacent pride in its ingenuity.

But the house of Glaucus was at once one of the smallest, and yet of the most adorned and finished of all the private mansions of Pompeii: it would be a model at this day for the house of "a single man in Mayfair"—the envy and despair of the cœlibian purchasers of buhl and marquetric.

You enter by a long and narrow vestibule, on the floor of which is the image of a dog in mosaic, with the well-known "Cave Canem,"—or "beware the dog." On either side, is a chamber of some size; for the interior house not being large enough to contain the two great divisions of private and public apartments, these two rooms were set apart for the reception of visitors who neither by rank nor familiarity were entitled to admission in the penetralia of the mansion.

Advancing up the vestibule, you enter an atrium, that when first discovered was rich in paintings, which *in point of expression* would scarcely disgrace a Raphael. You may see them now transplanted to the Neapolitan Museum; they are

still the admiration of connoisseurs—they depict the parting of Achilles and Briseis. Who does not acknowledge the force, the vigour, the beauty, employed in delineating the forms and faces of Achilles and the immortal slave !

On one side the atrium, a small staircase admitted to the apartments for the slaves on the second floor; there too were two or three small bed-rooms, the walls of which portrayed the rape of Europa, the battle of the Amazons, &c.

You now enter the tablinum, across which at either end hung rich draperies of Tyrian purple, half withdrawn.* On the walls was depicted a poet reading his verses to his friends, and in the pavement was inserted a small and most exquisite mosaic, typical of the instructions given by the director of the stage to his comedians.

You passed through this saloon, and entered the peristyle; and here (as I have said before was usually the case with the smaller houses of Pompeii) the mansion ended. From each of the seven columns that adorned this court hung festoons of garlands; the centre, supplying the place of a

* The tablinum was also secured at pleasure by sliding doors.

garden, bloomed with the rarest flowers placed in vases of white marble, that were supported on pedestals. At the left end of this small garden was a diminutive fane, resembling one of those small chapels placed at the side of roads in Catholic countries, and dedicated to the Penates; before it stood a bronze tripod: to the left of the colonnade were two small cubiculi or bedrooms; to the right was the triclinium, in which the guests were now assembled.

This room is usually termed by the antiquaries of 'Naples the chamber of Leda;' and in the beautiful work of Sir William Gell the reader will find an engraving from that most delicate and graceful painting of Leda, presenting her new-born to her husband, from which the room derives its name. This beautiful apartment opened upon the fragrant garden. Round the table of citrean* wood, highly polished and delicately wrought with silver arabesques, were placed the three couches, which were yet more common at Pompeii

* The most valued wood—not the modern citron tree. Some, amongst whom is my learned friend, Mr. W. S. Landor, conjecture it with much plausibility to have been mahogany.

than the semicircular seat that had grown lately into fashion at Rome; and on these couches of bronze studded with richer metals, were laid thick quiltings covered with elaborate broidery, and yielding luxuriously to the pressure.

“ Well, I must own,” said the ædile Pansa, “ that your house, though scarcely larger than a case for one’s fibulæ, is a gem of its kind. How beautifully painted is that parting of Achilles and Briseis!—what a style!—what heads!—what a—hem!”

“ Praise from Pansa is indeed valuable on such subjects,” said Clodius gravely. “ Why, the paintings on *his* walls—Ah! there is, indeed, the hand of a Zeuxis!”

“ You flatter me, my Clodius; indeed you do,” quoth the ædile, who was celebrated through Pompeii for having the worst paintings in the world; for he was patriotic, and patronized none but Pompeians—“ you flatter me: but there is something pretty—Ædepol, yes—in the colours, to say nothing of the design;—and then for the kitchen, my friends—ah! that was all my fancy.”

“ What is the design?” said Glaucus. “ I

have not yet seen your kitchen, though I have often witnessed the excellence of its cheer."

"A cook, my Athenian—a cook sacrificing the trophies of his skill on the altar of Vesta, with a beautiful *muræna* (taken from the life) on a spit at a distance:—there is some invention there!"

At that instant the slaves appeared, bearing a tray covered with the first preparative initia of the feast. Amidst delicious figs, fresh herbs strewed with snow, anchovies, and eggs, were ranged small cups of diluted wine sparingly mixed with honey. As these were placed on the table, young slaves bore round to each of the five guests (for there were no more) the silver basin of perfumed water and napkins edged with a purple fringe. But the *ædile* ostentatiously drew forth his own napkin, which was not, indeed, of so fine a linen, but in which the fringe was twice as broad, and wiped his hands with the parade of a man who felt he was calling for admiration.

"A splendid *mappa* that of yours," said Clodius; "why, the fringe is as broad as a girdle."

"A trifle, my Clodius, a trifle! They tell me

this stripe is the latest fashion at Rome: but Glaucus attends to these things more than I."

"Be propitious, O Bacchus!" said Glaucus, inclining reverentially to a beautiful image of the god placed in the centre of the table, at the corners of which stood the Lares and the salholders. The guests followed the prayer, and then, sprinkling the wine on the table, they performed the wonted libation.

This over, the convivialists reclined themselves on the couches, and the business of the hour commenced.

"May this cup be my last!" said the young Sallust, as the table, cleared of its first stimulants, was now loaded with the substantial part of the entertainment, and the ministering slave poured forth to him a brimming cyathus — "May this cup be my last, but it is the best wine I have drunk at Pompeii!"

"Bring hither the amphora," said Glaucus, "and read its date and its character."

The slave hastened to inform the party that the scroll fastened to the cork betokened its birth from Chios, and its age a ripe fifty years.

“ How deliciously the snow has cooled it !” said Pansa ; “ it is just enough.”

“ It is like the experience of a man who has cooled his pleasures sufficiently to give them a double zest,” exclaimed Sallust.

“ It is like a woman’s No,” added Glaucus ; “ it cools, but to inflame the more.”

“ When is our next wild-beast fight ?” said Clodius to Pansa.

“ It stands fixed for the ninth ide of August,” answered Pansa, “ on the day after the Vulcanalia ; we have a most lovely young lion for the occasion.”

“ Whom shall we get for him to eat ?” asked Clodius. “ Alas ! there is a great scarcity of criminals. You must positively find some innocent or other to condemn to the lion, Pansa !”

“ Indeed I have thought very seriously about it of late,” replied the ædile gravely. “ It was a most infamous law that which forbade us to send our own slaves to the wild beasts. Not to let us do what we like with our own, that’s what I call an infringement on property itself.”

“Not so in the good old days of the Republic,” sighed Sallust.

“And then this pretended mercy to the slaves is such a disappointment to the poor people. How they do love to see a good tough battle between a man and a lion; and all this innocent pleasure they may lose (if the gods don’t send us a good criminal soon) from this cursed law.”

“What can be worse policy,” said Clodius sententiously, “than to interfere with the manly amusements of the people?”

“Well, thank Jupiter and the Fates! we have no Nero at present,” said Sallust.

“He was, indeed, a tyrant; he shut up our amphitheatre for ten years.”

“I wonder it did not create a rebellion,” said Sallust.

“It very nearly did,” returned Pansa, with his mouth full of wild boar.

Here the conversation was interrupted for a moment by a flourish of flutes, and two slaves entered with a single dish.

“Ah! what delicacy hast thou in store for us

now, my Glaucus?" cried the young Sallust, with sparkling eyes.

Sallust was only twenty-four, but he had no pleasure in life like eating—perhaps he had exhausted all the others; yet had he some talent, and an excellent heart—as far as it went.

"I know its face, by Pollux!" cried Pansa; "it is an Ambracian kid. Ho!" (snapping his fingers, an usual signal to the slaves,) "we must prepare a new libation in honour to the new-comer."

"I had hoped," said Glaucus, in a melancholy tone, "to have procured you some oysters from Britain; but the winds that were so cruel to Cæsar have forbid us the oysters."

"Are they in truth so delicious?" asked Lepidus, loosening to a yet more luxurious ease, his ungirdled tunic.

"Why, in truth, I suspect it is the distance that gives the flavour; they want the richness of the Brundisium oyster. But at Rome no supper is complete without them."

"The poor Britons! There is some good in them after all," said Sallust: "they produce an oyster!"

“ I wish they would produce us a gladiator,” said the ædile, whose provident mind was still musing over the wants of the amphitheatre.

“ By Pallas !” cried Glaucus, as his favourite slave crowned his steaming locks with a new chaplet, “ I love these wild spectacles well enough when beast fights beast ; but when a man, one with bones and blood like ours, is coldly put on the arena, and torn limb from limb, the interest is too horrid : I sicken — I gasp for breath — I long to rush and defend him. The yells of the populace seem to me more dire than the voices of the Furies chasing Orestes. I rejoice that there is so little chance of that bloody exhibition for our next show !”

The ædile shrugged his shoulders ; the young Sallust, who was thought the best-natured man in Pompeii, stared in surprise. The graceful Lepidus, who rarely spoke for fear of disturbing his features, cried “ Per Hercle !” The parasite Clodius, muttered “ Ædepol ;” and the sixth banqueter, who was the umbra of Clodius, (*b*) and whose duty it was to echo his richer friend, when

he could not praise him,—the parasite of a parasite,—muttered also “Ædepol.”

“Well, you Italians are used to these spectacles; we Greeks are more merciful. Ah, shade of Pindar!—the rapture of a true Grecian game—the emulation of man against man—the generous strife—the half-mournful triumph—so proud to contend with a noble foe, so sad to see him overcome! But ye understand me not.”

“The kid is excellent,” said Sallust.

The slave, whose duty it was to carve, and who valued himself on his science, had just performed that office on the kid to the sound of music, his knife keeping time, beginning with a low tenor, and accomplishing the arduous feat amidst a magnificent diapason.

“Your cook is of course from Sicily?” said Pansa.

“Yes, of Syracuse.”

“I will play you for him,” said Clodius; “we will have a game between the courses.”

“Better that sort of game certainly, than a beast fight; but I cannot stake my Sicilian—

you have nothing so precious to stake me in return."

"My Phillida — my beautiful dancing girl!"

"I never buy women," said the Greek, carelessly re-arranging his chaplet.

The musicians, who were stationed in the portico without, had commenced their office with the kid; they now directed the melody into a more soft, a more gay, yet it may be a more intellectual strain; and they chaunted that song of Horace, beginning "*Persicos odi*," &c. so impossible to translate, and which they imagined applicable to a feast that, effeminate as it seems to us, was simple enough for the gorgeous revelry of the time. We are witnessing the domestic and not the princely feast — the entertainment of a gentleman, not an emperor or a senator.

"Ah, good old Horace," said Sallust compassionately, "he sang well of feasts and girls, but not like our modern poets."

"The immortal Fulvius, for instance," said Clodius.

"Ah, Fulvius the immortal!" said the umbra.

"And Spuræna, and Caius Mutius who wrote

three epics in a year — could Horace do that, or Virgil either ?” said Lepidus. “Those old poets all fell into the mistake of copying sculpture instead of painting. Simplicity and repose—that was their notion ; but we moderns have fire and passion and energy — we never sleep, we imitate the colours of painting, its life and its action. Immortal Fulvius !”

“By the way,” said Sallust, “have you seen the new ode by Spuræna, in honour of our Egyptian Isis ?—it is magnificent—the true religious fervour.”

“Isis seems a favourite divinity at Pompeii,” said Glaucus.

“Yes !” said Pansa, “she is exceedingly in repute just at this moment ; her statue has been uttering the most remarkable oracles. I am not superstitious, but I must confess that she has more than once assisted me materially in my magistracy with her advice. Her priests are so pious too ! none of your gay, none of your proud, ministers of Jupiter and Fortune ; they walk barefoot, eat no meat, and pass the greater part of the night in solitary devotion !”

“An example to our other priesthods, indeed !

—Jupiter's temple wants reforming sadly," said Lepidus, who was a great reformer for all but himself.

"They say that Arbaces the Egyptian has imparted some most solemn mysteries to the priests of Isis," observed Sallust; "he boasts his descent from the race of Rameses, and declares that in his family the secrets of remotest antiquity are treasured."

"He certainly possesses the gift of the evil eye," said Clodius; "if I ever come upon that Medusa front without the previous charm, I am sure to lose a favourite horse, or throw the *canes** nine times running."

"The last would be indeed a miracle!" said Sallust gravely.

"How mean you, Sallust?" returned the gamester, with a flushed brow.

"I mean what you would *leave* me if I played often with you; and that is—nothing."

Clodius answered only by a smile of disdain.

"If Arbaces were not so rich," said Pansa, with a stately air, "I should stretch my authority a

* *Canes* or *Canicule*, the lowest throw at dice.

little, and enquire into the truth of the report which calls him an astrologer and a sorcerer. Agrippa, when ædile of Rome, banished all such terrible citizens. But a rich man — it is the duty of an ædile to protect the rich !”

“What think you of this new sect, which I am told has even a few proselytes in Pompeii, these followers of the Hebrew God—Christus?”

“Oh, mere speculative visionaries,” said Clodius; “they have not a single gentleman amongst them; their proselytes are poor, insignificant, ignorant people !”

“Who ought, however, to be crucified for their blasphemy,” said Pansa with vehemence: “they deny Venus and Jove! Nazarene is but another name for atheist. Let me catch them, that’s all !”

The second course was gone — the feasters fell back on their couches — there was a pause while they listened to the soft voices of the South, and the music of the Arcadian reed. Glaucus was the most rapt and the least inclined to break the silence, but Clodius began already to think that they wasted time.

“*Bene vobis!* (your health!) my Glaucus,” said

he, quaffing a cup to each letter of the Greek's name, with the ease of the practised drinker. "Will you not be avenged on your ill-fortune of yesterday? See, the dice court us."

"As you will!" said Glaucus.

"The dice in August, and I an *ædile*," (*c*) said Pansa magisterially; "it is against all law."

"Not in your presence, grave Pansa," returned Clodius, rattling the dice in a long box; "your presence restrains all licence; it is not the thing, but the excess of the thing that hurts."

"What wisdom!" murmured the *umbra*.

"Well, I will look another way," said the *ædile*.

"Not yet, good Pansa; let us wait till we have supped," said Glaucus.

Clodius reluctantly yielded, concealing his vexation with a yawn.

"He gapes to devour the gold," whispered Lepidus to Sallust, in a quotation from the *Aulularia* of Plautus.

"Ah! how well I know these *polypi*, who hold all they touch," answered Sallust in the same tone, and out of the same play.

The second course, consisting of a variety of fruits, pistachio nuts, sweetmeats, tarts, and confectionary tortured into a thousand fantastic and airy shapes, was now placed upon the table, and the ministri, or attendants, also set there the wine (which had hitherto been handed round to the guests) in large jugs of glass, each bearing upon it the schedule of its age and quality.

“Taste this Lesbian, my Pansa,” said Sallust; “it is excellent.”

“It is not very old,” said Glaucus, “but it has been made precocious like ourselves, by being put to the fire:—the wine to the flames of Vulcan—we to those of his wife—to whose honour I pour this cup.”

“It is delicate,” said Pansa, “but there is perhaps the least particle too much of rosin in its flavour.”

“What a beautiful cup!” cried Clodius, taking up one of transparent crystal, the handles of which were wrought with gems, and twisted in the shape of serpents, the favourite fashion at Pompeii.

“This ring,” said Glaucus, taking a costly jewel

from the first joint of his finger and hanging it on the handle, "gives it a richer show, and renders it less unworthy of thy acceptance, my Clodius, whom may the Gods give health and fortune long and oft to crown it to the brim!"

"You are too generous, Glaucus," said the gamester, handing the cup to his slave, "but your love gives it a double value."

"This cup to the Graces!" said Pansa, and he thrice emptied his calix. The guests followed his example.

"We have appointed no director to the feast," cried Sallust.

"Let us throw for him, then," said Clodius, rattling the dice-box.

"Nay," cried Glaucus, "no cold and trite director for us; no dictator of the banquet; no *rex convivii*. Have not the Romans sworn never to obey a king? shall we be less free than your ancestors? Ho! musicians, let us have the song I composed the other night: it has a verse on this subject, "the Bacchic hymn of 'The Hours.'"

The musicians struck their instruments to a wild Tonic air, while the youngest voices in the

band chaunted forth in Greek words, as numbers,
the following strain :—

THE EVENING HYMN OF THE HOURS.

I.

Through the summer day, through the weary day,
 We have glided long ;
Ere we speed to the Night through her portals grey,
 Hail us with song !—
 With song, with song,
 With a bright and joyous song —
Such as the Cretan maid,
 While the twilight made her bolder,
Woke, high through the ivy shade,
 When the wine-god first consoled her.
From the hush'd, low-breathing skies,
Half-shut, look'd their starry eyes,
 And all around,
 With a loving sound,
 The Ægean waves were creeping :
 On her lap lay the lynx's head ;
 Wild thyme was her bridal bed ;
 And aye through each tiny space,
 In the green vine's green embrace,

The Fauns were slyly peeping :—
 The Fauns, the prying Fauns
 The arch, the laughing Fauns—
 The Fauns were slyly peeping !

II.

Flagging and faint are we
 With our ceaseless flight,
 And dull shall our journey be
 Through the Realm of Night.
 Bathe us, O bathe our weary wings
 In the purple wave, as it freshly springs
 To your cups from the fount of light —
 From the fount of light—from the fount of light ;
 For there, when the sun has gone down in night,
 There in the bowl we find him.
 The grape is the well of that summer sun,
 Or rather the stream that he gazed upon,
 Till he left in truth, like the Thespian youth,*
 His soul, as he gazed, behind him.

III.

A cup to Jove, and a cup to Love,
 And a cup to the son of Maia,
 And honour with three, the band zone-free,
 The band of the bright Aglaia.

* Narcissus.

But since every bud in the wreath of pleasure

Ye owe to the sister Hours,

No stinted cups, in a formal measure,

The Bromian law makes ours.

He honours us most who gives us most,

And boasts with a Bacchanal's honest boast,

He never will *count* the treasure.

Fastly we fleet, then seize our wings,

And plunge us deep in the sparklingsp rings ;

And aye, as we rise with a dripping plume,

We 'll scatter the spray round the garland's bloom.

We glow — we glow.

Behold, as the girls of the Eastern wave

Bore once with a shout to their crystal cave

The prize of the Mysian Hylas,

Even so—even so,

We have caught the young god in our warm embrace.

We hurry him on in our laughing race ;

We hurry him on, with a whoop and song,

The cloudy rivers of Night along —

Ho, ho !—we have caught thee, Psilas !

The guests applauded loudly: when the poet is your host, his verses are sure to charm.

“Thoroughly Greek,” said Lepidus: “the wildness, force, and energy of that tongue, it is impossible to imitate in the Roman poetry.”

“It is, indeed, a great contrast,” said Clodius, ironically at heart, though not in appearance, “to the old-fashioned and tame simplicity of that ode of Horace which we heard before. The air is beautifully Ionic: the word puts me in mind of a toast — Companions, I give you the beautiful Ione.”

“Ione — the name is Greek,” said Glaucus, in a soft voice, “I drink the health with delight. But who is Ione?”

“Ah! you have but just come to Pompeii, or you would deserve ostracism for your ignorance,” said Lepidus conceitedly; “not to know Ione, is not to know the chief charm of our city.”

“She is of most rare beauty,” said Pansa; “and what a voice!”

“She can feed only on nightingales’ tongues,” said Clodius.

“Nightingales’ tongues! — beautiful thought,” sighed the umbra.

“Enlighten me, I beseech you,” said Clodius.

“ Know then,” began Lepidus —

“ Let me speak,” cried Clodius; “ you draw out your words as if you spoke tortoises.”

“ And you speak stones,” muttered the coxcomb to himself, as he fell back disdainfully on his couch.

“ Know then, my Glaucus,” said Clodius, “ that Ione is a stranger who has but lately come to Pompeii. She sings like Sappho, and her songs are her own composing; and as for the tibia, and the cithara, and the lyre, I know not in which she most outdoes the Muses. Her beauty is most dazzling. Her house is perfect; such taste—such gems—such bronzes! She is rich, and generous as she is rich.”

“ Her lovers, of course,” said Glaucus, “ take care that she does not starve; and money lightly won is always lavishly spent.”

“ Her lovers—ah there is the enigma! Ione has but one vice—she is chaste. She has all Pompeii at her feet, and she has no lovers: she will not even marry.”

“ No lovers!” echoed Glaucus.

“ No; she has the soul of Vesta, with the girdle of Venus.”

“What refined expressions!” said the umbra.

“A miracle!” cried Glaucus. “Can we not see her?”

“I will take you there this evening,” said Clodius; “meanwhile,” added he, once more rattling the dice——

“I am your’s!” said the complaisant Glaucus. “Pansa, turn your face!”

Lepidus and Sallust played at odd and even, and the umbra looked on, while Glaucus and Clodius became gradually absorbed in the chances of the dice.

“Per Jove!” cried Glaucus, “this is the second time I have thrown the *caniculæ* (the lowest throw).”

“Now Venus befriend me!” said Clodius, rattling the box for several moments, “O Alma Venus—it is Venus herself!” as he threw the highest cast named from that goddess,—whom he who wins money indeed usually propitiates!

“Venus is ungrateful to me,” said Glaucus gaily; “I have always sacrificed on her altar.”

“He who plays with Clodius,” whispered Lepidus, “will soon, like *Plantus’s Curculio*, put his *pallium* for the stakes.”

“ Poor Glaucus—he is as blind as Fortune herself,” replied Sallust in the same tone.

“ I will play no more,” said Glaucus, “ I have lost thirty sestertia.”

“ I am sorry,” began Clodius.

“ Amiable man !” groaned the umbra.

“ Not at all !” exclaimed Glaucus ; “ the pleasure of your gain compensates the pain of my loss.”

The conversation now became general and animated ; the wine circulated more freely ; and Ione once more became the subject of eulogy to the guests of Glaucus.

“ Instead of outwatching the stars, let us visit one at whose beauty the stars grow pale,” said Lepidus.

Clodius, who saw no chance of renewing the dice, seconded the proposal ; and Glaucus, though he civilly pressed his guests to continue the banquet, could not but let them see, that his curiosity had been excited by the praises of Ione ; they therefore resolved to adjourn (all at least but Pansa and the umbra) to the house of the fair Greek. They drank therefore to the health of Glaucus and of Titus—they performed their last libation—they resumed their slippers—they de-

scended the stairs—passed the illumined atrium—and walking unbitten over the fierce dog painted on the threshold, found themselves beneath the light of the moon just risen, in the lively and still crowded streets of Pompeii.

They passed the jewellers' quarter, sparkling with lights, caught and reflected by the gems displayed in the shops, and arrived at last at the door of Ione. The vestibule blazed with rows of lamps; curtains of embroidered purple hung on either aperture of the tablinum, whose walls and mosaic pavement glowed with the richest colours of the artist; and under the portico which surrounded the odorous viridarium, they found Ione already surrounded by adoring and applauding guests.

“Did you say she was Athenian?” whispered Glaucus, ere he passed into the peristyle.

“No, she is from Neapolis.”

“Neapolis!” echoed Glaucus; and, at that moment, the group dividing on either side of Ione, gave to his view that bright, that nymph-like beauty, which for months had shone down upon the waters of his memory.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEMPLE OF ISIS.—ITS PRIEST.—THE CHARACTER OF
ARBACES DEVELOPES ITSELF.

THE story returns to the Egyptian. We left Arbaces upon the shores of the noon-day sea, after he had parted from Glaucus and his companion. As he approached to the more crowded part of the bay, he paused, and gazed upon that animated scene with folded arms, and a bitter smile upon his dark features.

“Gulls, dupes, fools that ye are!” muttered he to himself; “whether business or pleasure, trade or religion be your pursuit, you are equally cheated by the passions that ye should rule! How I could loathe you, if I did not hate—yes, hate!—Greek or Roman, it is from us, from the dark lore of Egypt, that ye have stolen the fire that gives you souls—your knowledge—your poesy—your laws—your

arts—your barbarous mastery of war (all how tame and mutilated, when compared with the vast original!)—ye have filched, as a slave filches the fragments of the feast, from us! And now, ye, mimics of a mimic,—Romans forsooth! the mushroom herd of robbers!—*ye* are our masters! the Pyramids look down no more on the race of Rameses—the eagle cowers over the serpent of the Nile. *Our* masters—no, not *mine*! My soul, by the power of its wisdom, controls and chains you, though the fetters are unseen. So long as craft can master force, so long as Religion has a cave from which oracles can dupe mankind, the wise hold an empire over earth. Even from your vices, Arbaces distills his pleasures:—pleasures unprofaned by vulgar eyes—pleasures vast, wealthy, inexhaustible, of which your enervate minds, in their unimaginative sensuality, cannot conceive or dream! Plod on, plod on, fools of ambition and of avarice! your petty thirst for fasces and quæstorships, and all the mummery of servile power, provokes my laughter and my scorn. My power can extend wherever man believes. I ride over the souls that the purple veils. Thebes may fall, Egypt be a

name; the world itself furnishes the subjects of Arbaces."

Thus saying, the Egyptian moved slowly on; and, entering the town, his tall figure towered above the crowded throng of the forum, and swept towards the small but graceful temple consecrated to Isis. (*d*)

That edifice was then but of recent erection, the ancient temple had been thrown down in the earthquake sixteen years before, and the new building had become as much in vogue with the versatile Pompeians, as a new church or a new preacher may be with us. The oracles of the goddess at Pompeii were indeed remarkable not more for the mysterious language in which they were clothed, than for the credit which was attached to their mandates and predictions. If they were not dictated by a divinity, they were framed at least by a profound knowledge of mankind; they applied themselves exactly to the circumstances of individuals, and made a notable contrast to the vague and loose generalities of their rival temples. As Arbaces now arrived at the rails which separated the profane from the sacred place, a crowd composed of all

elasses, but especially of the commercial, collected, breathless and reverential, before the many altars which rose in the open court. In the walls of the cella, elevated on seven steps of Parian marble, various statues stood in niches, and those walls were ornamented with the pomegranate consecrated to Isis. An oblong pedestal occupied the interior building, on which stood two statues, one of Isis, and its companion represented the silent and mystic Orns. But the building contained many other deities to grace the court of the Egyptian deity: her kindred and many-titled Bacchus, and the Cyprian Venus, a Grecian disguise for herself, rising from her bath, and the dog-headed Anubis, and the ox Apis, and various Egyptian idols of uncouth form and unknown appellations.

But we must not suppose that among the cities of Magna Græcia, Isis was worshipped with those forms and ceremonies which were of right her own. The mongrel and modern nations of the South, with a mingled arrogance and ignorance, confounded the worships of all climes and ages. And the profound mysteries of the Nile were degraded by a hundred

meretricious and frivolous admixtures from the creeds of Cephisus and of Tibur. The temple of Isis in Pompeii was served by Roman and Greek priests, ignorant alike of the language and the customs of her ancient votaries, and the descendant of the dread Egyptian kings, beneath the appearance of reverential awe, now secretly laughed to scorn the puny mummeries which imitated the solemn and typical worship of his burning clime.

Ranged now on either side the steps was the sacrificial crowd, arrayed in white garments, while at the summit stood two of the inferior priests, the one holding a palm branch, the other a slender sheaf of corn. In the narrow passage in front thronged the bystanders.

“And what,” whispered Arbaces to one of the bystanders, who was a merchant engaged in the Alexandrian trade, which trade had probably first introduced in Pompeii the worship of the Egyptian goddess — “What occasion now assembles you before the altars of the venerable Isis? It seems by the white robes of the group before me, that a sacrifice is to be rendered, and by the as-

sembly of the priests, that ye are prepared for some oracle. To what question is it to vouchsafe a reply?"

"We are merchants," replied the bystander (who was no other than Diomed) in the same voice, "who seek to know the fate of our vessels, which sail for Alexandria to-morrow. We are about to offer up a sacrifice and implore an answer from the goddess. I am not one of those who have petitioned the priest to sacrifice, as you may see by my dress, but I have some interest in the success of the fleet; — *per Jove!* yes. I have a pretty trade, else how could I live in these hard times?"

The Egyptian replied gravely, "that though Isis was properly the goddess of agriculture, she was no less the patron of commerce." These turning his head towards the east, Arbaces seemed absorbed in silent prayer.

And now in the centre of the steps appeared a priest robed in white from head to foot, the veil parting over the crown; two new priests relieved those hitherto stationed at either corner, being naked half way down the breast, and covered, for

the rest, in white and loose robes. At the same time, seated at the bottom of the steps, a priest commenced a solemn air upon a long wind-instrument of music. Half way down the steps stood another flamen, holding in one hand the votive wreath, in the other a white wand ; while, adding to the picturesque scene of that eastern ceremony, the stately Ibis (bird sacred to the Egyptian worship) looked mutely down from the wall upon the rite, or stalked beside the altar at the base of the steps.

At that altar now stood the sacrificial flamen.*

The countenance of Arbaces seemed to lose all its rigid calm while the aruspices inspected the entrails, and to be intent in pious anxiety—to rejoice and brighten as the signs were declared favourable, and the fire began bright and clearly to consume the sacred portion of the victim amidst odours of myrrh and frankincense. It was then that a dead silence fell over the whispering crowd, and the priests gathering round the cella, another priest, naked save by a cincture round the middle,

* See a singular picture in the Museum of Naples, of an Egyptian sacrifice.

rushed forward, and dancing with wild gestures, implored an answer from the goddess. He ceased at last in exhaustion, and a low murmuring noise was heard within the body of the statue: thrice the head moved, and the lips parted, and then a hollow voice uttered these mystic words —

“There are waves like chargers that meet and glow,
There are graves ready wrought in the rocks below;
On the brow of the Future the dangers lower,
But blest are your barks in the fearful hour.”

The voice ceased — the crowd breathed more freely — the merchants looked at each other — “Nothing can be more plain,” murmured Diomed; “there is to be a storm at sea, as there very often is at the beginning of autumn, but our vessels are to be saved. O beneficent Isis!”

“Lauded eternally be the goddess!” said the merchants; “what can be less equivocal than her prediction?”

Raising one hand in sign of silence to the people, for the rites of Isis enjoined what to the lively

Pompeians was an impossible suspense from the use of the vocal organs, the chief priest poured his libation on the altar, and after a short concluding prayer, the ceremony was over and the congregation dismissed. Still, however, as the crowd dispersed themselves here and there, the Egyptian lingered by the railing, and when the space became tolerably cleared, one of the priests approaching it, saluted him with great appearance of friendly familiarity.

The countenance of the priest was remarkably unprepossessing — his shaven skull was so low and narrow in the front as nearly to approach to the conformation of that of an African savage, save only towards the temples, where, in that organ styled acquisitiveness by the pupils of a science modern in name, but best practically known (as their sculpture teaches us) amongst the antients, two huge and almost preternatural protuberances yet more distorted the unshapely head; — around the brows the skin was puckered into a web of deep and intricate wrinkles — the eyes, dark and small, rolled in a muddy and yellow orbit — the nose, short yet coarse, was distended at the nostrils like a satyr's — and the thick

but pallid lips, the high cheek-bones, the livid and motley hues that struggled through the parchment skin, completed a countenance which none could behold without repugnance, and few without terror and distrust—whatever the wishes of the mind, the animal frame was well fitted to execute them ; the wiry muscles of the throat, the broad chest, the nervous hands and lean gaunt arms, which were bared above the elbow, betokened a form capable alike of great active exertion and passive endurance.

“ Calenus,” said the Egyptian to this fascinating flamen, “ you have improved the voice of the statue much by attending to my suggestion ; and your verses are excellent — always prophesy good fortune, unless there is an absolute impossibility of its fulfilment.”

“ Besides,” added Calenus, “ if the storm does come, and if it does overwhelm the accursed ships, have we not prophesied it? and are the barks not blest to be at rest?—for rest prays the mariner in the *Ægean* sea, or at least so says Horace ;—can the mariner be more at rest in the sea than when he is at the bottom of it !”

“Right, my Calenus; I wish Apæcides would take a lesson from your wisdom. But I desire to confer with you relative to him and to other matters: you can admit me into one of your less sacred apartments?”

“Assuredly,” replied the priest, leading the way to one of the small chambers which surrounded the open gate. Here they seated themselves before a small table spread with dishes containing fruit and eggs, and various cold meats, with vases of excellent wine, of which while the companions partook, a curtain, drawn across the entrance opening to the court, concealed them from view, but admonished them by the thinness of the partition to speak low or to speak no secrets; they chose the former alternative.

“Thou knowest,” said Arbaces, in a voice that scarcely stirred the air, so soft and inward was its sound, “that it has ever been my maxim to attach myself to the young. From their flexible and unformed minds, I can carve out my fittest tools. I weave—I warp—I mould them at my will. Of the men I make merely followers or servants; of the women——”

“Mistresses,” said Calenus, as a livid grin distorted his ungainly features.

“Yes, I do not disguise it, woman is the main object — the great appetite of my soul. As *you* feed the victim for the slaughter, *I* love to rear the votaries of my pleasure. I love to train, to ripen their minds — to unfold the sweet blossom of their hidden passions, in order to prepare the fruit to my tastes. I loathe your ready-made and ripened courtesans; it is in the soft and unconscious progress of innocence to desire that I find the true charm of love: it is thus that I defy satiety; and by contemplating the freshness of others, I sustain the freshness of my own sensations. From the young hearts of my victims I draw the ingredients of the cauldron in which I re-youth myself. But enough of this: to the subject before us. You know, then, that in Neapolis some time since I encountered Ione and Apæcides, brother and sister, the children of Athenians who had settled at Neapolis. The death of their parents, who knew and esteemed me, constituted me their guardian. I was not unmindful of the trust. The youth, docile and mild, yielded readily

to the impression I sought to stamp upon him. Next to woman, I love the old recollections of my ancestral land ; I love to keep alive — to propagate on distant shores, (which her colonies perchance yet people,) her dark and mystic creeds. It may be that it pleases me to delude mankind, while I thus serve the deities. To Apæcides I taught the solemn faith of Isis. I unfolded to him something of those sublime allegories which are couched beneath her worship. I excited in a soul peculiarly alive to religious fervour that enthusiasm which imagination begets on faith. I have placed him amongst you : he is one of you.”

“ He is so,” said Calenus ; “ but in thus stimulating his faith, you have robbed him of wisdom. He is horrorstruck that he is no longer duped : our sage delusions — our speaking statues and secret staircases, dismay and revolt him ; he pines ; he wastes away ; he mutters to himself ; he refuses to share our ceremonies. He has been known to frequent the company of men suspected of adherence to that new and atheistical creed which denies all our gods, and terms our oracles the inspirations of that malevolent spirit of which

Eastern tradition speaks. Our oracles — alas ! we know well whose inspirations *they* are !”

“ This is what I feared,” said Arbaces, musingly, “ from various reproaches he made me when I last saw him. Of late he hath shunned my steps : I must find him : I must continue my lessons ; I must lead him into the Adytus of Wisdom. I must teach him that there are two stages of sanctity — the first, FAITH — the next, DELUSION : the one for the vulgar — the second for the sage.”

“ I never passed through the first,” said Calenus ; “ nor you either, I think, my Arbaces.”

“ You err,” replied the Egyptian gravely. “ I believe at this day (not indeed that which I teach, but that which I teach not,) Nature has a sanctity against which I cannot — (nor would I,) steel conviction. I believe in mine own knowledge, and that has revealed to me :—but no matter ! Now to earthlier and more inviting themes. If I thus fulfilled my object with Apæcides, what was my design for Ione ? Thou knowest already I intend her for my queen — my bride — my heart’s Isis.

Never till I saw her knew I all the love of which my nature was capable."

"I hear from a thousand lips that she is a second Helen," said Calenus, and he smacked his own lips, but whether at the wine or at the notion, it is not easy to decide.

"Yes, she has a beauty that Greece itself never excelled," resumed Arbaces. "But that is not all: she has a soul worthy to match with mine. She has a genius beyond that of woman—keen—dazzling—bold. Poetry flows spontaneous to her lips: utter but a truth, and, however intricate and profound, her mind seizes and commands it. Her imagination and her reason are not at war with each other; they harmonize and direct her course, as the winds and the waves direct some lofty bark. With this she unites a daring independence of thought: she can stand alone in the world; she can be brave as she is gentle: this is the nature I have sought all my life in woman, and never found till now. Ione must be mine! In her I have a double passion; I wish to enjoy a beauty of spirit as of form."

“ She is not yours yet, then,” said the priest.

“ No : she loves me — but as a friend :— she loves me with her mind only. She fancies in me the paltry virtues which I have only the profounder virtue to disdain. But you must pursue with me her history. The brother and sister were young and rich : Ione is proud and ambitious — proud of her genius — the magic of her poetry — the charm of her conversation. When her brother left me, and entered your temple, in order to be near him she removed also to Pompeii. She has suffered her talents to be known. She summons crowds to her feasts ; her voice enchants them ; her poetry subdues. She delights in being thought the successor of Erinna.”

“ Or of Sappho ?”

“ But Sappho without love ! I encouraged her in this boldness of career — in this indulgence of vanity and of pleasure—I loved to steep her amidst the dissipations and luxury of this abandoned city. Mark me, Calenus ! I desired to enervate her mind ! — it has been too pure to receive yet the breath which I wish not to pass, but burningly to eat into, the crystal mirror. I wished her to be

surrounded by lovers, hollow, vain, and frivolous, (lovers that her nature must despise,) in order to feel the want of love. Then, in those soft intervals of lassitude that succeed to excitement, I can weave my spells — excite her interest — attract her passions — possess myself of her heart. For it is not the young, nor the beautiful, nor the gay, that alone can fascinate Ione; her imagination must be won, and the life of Arbaces has been one scene of triumph over the imaginations of his kind.”

“ And hast thou no fear, then, of thy rivals? The gallants of Italy are skilled in the art to please.”

“ None! — her Greek soul despises the barbarian Romans, and would scorn itself if it admitted a thought of love for one of that upstart race.”

“ But thou art an Egyptian, not a Greek!”

“ Egypt,” replied Arbaces, “ is the mother of Athens. Her tutelary Minerva is our deity; and her founder Cecrops was the fugitive of Egyptian Sais. This have I already taught to her; and in my blood she venerates the eldest dynasties of earth. But yet I will own that of

late some uneasy suspicions have crossed my mind. She is more silent than she used to be ; she loves melancholy and subduing music ; she sighs without an outward cause. This may be the beginning of love—it may be the want of love. In either case it is time for me to begin my operations on her fancies and her heart : in the one case, to divert the source of love to me ; in the other, in me to awaken it. It is for this that I have sought you.”

“ And how can I assist you ? ”

“ I am about to invite her to a feast in my house : I wish to dazzle—to bewilder—to inflame her senses. Our arts—the arts by which Egypt trained her young noviciates, must be employed ; and under veil of the mysteries of religion, I will open to her the secrets of love.”

“ Ah ! now I understand :—one of these voluptuous banquets that, despite our dull vows of mortified coldness, we, thy priests of Isis, have shared at thy house.”

“ No, no ! Thinkest thou her chaste eyes are ripe for such scenes ? No :—but first we must ensnare the brother — an easier task. Listen to me, while I give you my instructions.”

CHAPTER V.

MORE OF THE FLOWER GIRL.—THE PROGRESS OF LOVE.

THE sun shone gaily into that beautiful chamber in the house of Glaucus, which I have before said is now called ‘the room of Leda.’ The morning rays entered through rows of small casements at the higher part of the room, and through the door which opened on the garden, that answered to the inhabitants of the southern cities the same purpose that a greenhouse or conservatory does to us. The size of the garden did not adapt it for exercise, but the various and fragrant plants with which it was filled gave a luxury to that indolence so dear to the dwellers in a sunny clime. And now the odours, fanned by a gentle wind creeping from the adjacent sea, scattered themselves over that chamber, whose walls vied with the richest colours of the most glowing

flowers. Besides the gem of the room—the painting of Leda and Tyndareus, in the centre of each compartment of the walls were set other pictures of exquisite beauty. In one you saw Cupid leaning on the knees of Venus, in another, Ariadne sleeping on the beach, unconscious of the perfidy of Theseus. Merrily the sunbeams played to and fro on the tessellated floor and the brilliant walls—far more happily came the rays of joy to the heart of the young Glaucus.

“I have seen her then,” said he, as he paced that narrow chamber; “I have heard her—nay, I have spoken to her again—I have listened to the music of her song, and she sung of glory and of Greece. I have discovered the long-sought idol of my dreams; and, like the Cyprian sculptor, I have breathed life into my own imaginings.”

Longer, perhaps, had been the enamoured soliloquy of Glaucus, but at that moment a shadow darkened the threshold of the chamber, and a young female, still half a child in years, broke upon his solitude. She was dressed simply in a white tunic, which reached from the neck to the ankles; under her arm she bore a basket of

flowers, and in the other hand she held a bronze water-vase ; her features were more formed than exactly became her years, yet they were soft and feminine in their outline, and without being beautiful in themselves they were almost made so by their beauty of expression ; there was something ineffably gentle, and you would say patient in her aspect—a look of resigned sorrow, of tranquil endurance, had banished the smile but not the sweetness from her lips ; something timid and cautious in her step—something wandering in her eyes, led you to suspect the affliction which she had suffered from her birth—she was blind ;—but in the orbs themselves there was no visible defect, their melancholy and subdued light was clear, cloudless, and serene. “ They tell me that Glaucus is here,” said she ; “ may I come in ?”

“ Ah, my Nydia,” said the Greek, “ is that you ? I knew you would not neglect my invitation.”

“ Glaucus did but justice to himself,” answered Nydia with a blush, “ for he has always been kind to the poor blind girl.”

“ Who could be otherwise ?” said Glaucus tenderly, and in the voice of a compassionate brother.

Nydia sighed and paused before she resumed, without replying to his remark. “You have but lately returned?”

“This is the sixth sun that hath shone upon me at Pompeii.”

“And you are well? Ah, I need not ask—for who that sees the earth, which they tell me is so beautiful, can be ill?”

“I am well—and you, Nydia?—how you have grown! next year you will be thinking of what answer we shall make your lovers.”

A second blush passed over the cheek of Nydia, but this time she frowned as she blushed. “I have brought you some flowers,” said she, without replying to a remark that she seemed to resent, and feeling about the room till she found the table that stood by Glaucus, she laid the basket upon it: “they are poor, but they are fresh gathered.”

“They might come from Flora herself,” said he kindly, “and I renew again my vow to the Graces that I will wear no other garlands while thy hands can weave me such as these.”

“And how find you the flowers in your viridarium?—are they thriving?”

“Wonderfully so—the Lares themselves must have tended them.”

“Ah, now you give me pleasure, for I came, as often as I could steal the leisure, to water and tend them in your absence.”

“How shall I thank thee, fair Nydia?” said the Greek. “Glaucus little dreamed that he left one memory so watchful over his favourites at Pompeii.”

The hand of the child trembled, and her breast heaved beneath her tunic. She turned round in embarrassment. “The sun is hot for the poor flowers,” said she, “to-day, and they will miss me, for I have been ill lately, and it is nine days since I visited them.”

“Ill, Nydia! yet your cheek has more colour than it had last year.”

“I am often ailing,” said the blind girl touchingly, “and as I grow up I grieve more that I am blind. But now to the flowers!” So saying, she made a slight reverence with her head, and pass-

ing into the viridarium busied herself with watering the flowers.

“Poor Nydia,” thought Glaucus, gazing on her: “thine is a hard doom. Thou seest not the earth—nor the sun—nor the ocean—nor the stars—above all thou canst not behold Ione.”

At that last thought his mind flew back to the past evening, and was a second time disturbed in its reveries by the entrance of Clodius. It was a remarkable thing, and a proof how much a single evening had sufficed to increase and to refine the love of the Athenian for Ione, that whereas he had confided to Clodius the secret of his first interview with her, and the effect it had produced on him, he now felt an invincible aversion even to mention to him her name. He had seen Ione bright, pure, unsullied in the midst of the gayest and most profligate gallants of Pompeii, charming rather than awing the boldest into respect, and changing the very nature of the most sensual and the least ideal;—as by her intellectual and refining spells she reversed the fable of Circe, and converted the animals into men. They who could not understand her soul were

etherealised, as it were, by the magic of her beauty—they who had no heart for poetry had ears at least for the melody of her voice. Seeing her thus surrounded, purifying and brightening all things with her presence, Glaucus almost for the first time felt that of which his own nature was capable, he felt how unworthy of the goddess of his dreams had been his companions and his pursuits. A veil seemed lifted from his eyes, he saw that immeasurable distance between himself and his associates which the deceiving mists of pleasure had hitherto concealed; he was refined by a sense of his courage in aspiring to Ione. He felt that henceforth it was his destiny to look upward and to soar. He could no longer breathe that name, which sounded to the sense of his ardent fancy as something sacred and divine, to lewd and vulgar ears. She was no longer the beautiful girl once seen and passionately remembered—she was already the mistress, the divinity of his soul. This feeling who has not experienced?—if thou hast not, then thou hast never loved!

When Clodius therefore spoke to him in affected transports of the beauty of Ione, Glaucus felt

only resentment and disgust that such lips should dare to praise her; he answered coldly, and the Roman imagined that his passion was cured instead of heightened. Clodius scarcely regretted it, for he was anxious that Glaucus should marry an heiress yet more richly endowed—Julia, the daughter of the wealthy Diomed, whose gold the gamester imagined he could readily divert into his own coffers. Their conversation did not flow with its usual ease, and no sooner had Clodius left him than Glaucus bent his way to the house of Ione. In passing by the threshold he again encountered Nydia, who had finished her graceful task. She knew his step on the instant.

“ You are early abroad,” said she.

“ Yes; for the skies of Campania rebuke the sluggard who neglects them.”

“ Ah, would I could see them !” murmured the blind girl, but so low that Glaucus did not overhear the complaint.

The Thessalian lingered on the threshold a few moments, and then guiding her steps by a long staff, which she used with great dexterity, she

took her way homeward. She soon turned from the more gaudy streets, and entered a quarter of the town but little loved by the decorous and the sober. But from the low and rude evidences of vice around her, she was saved by her misfortune. And at that hour the streets were quiet and silent, nor was her youthful ear shocked by the sounds which too often broke along the obscene and obscure haunts she patiently and sadly traversed.

She knocked at the back-door of a sort of tavern; it opened, and a rude voice bade her give an account of the sesterces. Ere she could reply, another voice less vulgarly accented said,

“Never mind those petty profits, my Burbo. The girl’s voice will be wanted again soon at our rich friend’s revels; and he pays, as thou knowest, pretty high for his nightingale’s tongues.”

“Oh, I hope not—I trust not,” cried Nydia trembling, “I will beg from sunrise to sunset, but send me not there.”

“And why?” asked the same voice.

“Because—because I am young, and delicately born, and the female companions I

meet there are not fit associates for one who—
who—”

“Is a slave in the house of Burbo,” returned the voice ironically, and with a coarse laugh.

The Thessalian put down the flowers, and, leaning her face on her hands, wept silently.

Meanwhile, Glaucus sought the house of the beautiful Neapolitan. He found Ione sitting amidst her attendants, who were at work around her. Her harp stood at her side, for Ione herself was unusually idle, perhaps, unusually thoughtful, that day. He thought her even more beautiful by the morning light, and in her simple robe, than amidst the blazing lamps, and decorated with the costly jewels of the previous night;—not the less so from a certain paleness that overspread her transparent hues, not the less so from the blush that mounted over them when he approached. Accustomed to flatter, flattery died upon his lips when he addressed Ione. He felt it beneath her to *utter* the homage which every *look* conveyed. They spoke of Greece; this was a theme on which Ione loved rather to listen, than to converse; it

was a theme on which the Greek could have been eloquent for ever. He described to her the silver groves that yet clad the banks of Ilyssus, and the temples, already despoiled of half their glories—but how beautiful in decay! He looked back on the melancholy city of Harmodius the free, and Pericles the magnificent, from the height of that distant memory, in which all the ruder and darker shades were mellowed into light. He had seen the land of poetry chiefly in the poetical age of early youth; and the associations of patriotism were blended with those of the flush and spring of life. And Ione listened to him, absorbed and mute; dearer were those accents, and those descriptions, than all the prodigal adulation of her numberless adorers. Was it a sin to love her countrymen? she loved Athens, in him—the gods of her race, the land of her dreams, spoke to her in his voice! From that time they daily saw each other. At the cool of the evening they made excursions on the placid sea. By night they met again in Ione's porticos and halls. Their love was sudden, but it was strong; it filled all the sources of their life. Heart—brain—sense—imagination, all were

its ministers and priests. As you take some obstacle from two objects that have a mutual attraction—they met, and united at once; their wonder was, that they had lived separate so long. And it was natural that they should so love. Young, beautiful, and gifted—of the same birth, and the same souls; there was poetry in their very union. They imagined the heavens smiled upon their affection. As the persecuted seek refuge at the shrine, so they recognized in the altar of their love an asylum from the sorrows of earth; they covered it with flowers—they knew not of the serpents that lay coiled behind.

One evening, the fifth after their first meeting at Pompeii, Glaucus and Ione, with a small party of chosen friends, were returning from an excursion round the bay; their vessel skimmed lightly over the twilight waters, whose lucid mirror was only broken by the dripping oars. As the rest of the party conversed gaily with each other, Glaucus lay at the feet of Ione, and he would have looked up in her face, but he did not dare. Ione broke the pause between them.

“ My poor brother,” said she, sighing, “ how once he would have enjoyed this hour.”

“ Your brother !” said Glaucus, “ I have not seen him. Occupied with you, I have thought of nothing else, or I should have asked, if that was not your brother, for whose companionship you left me at the Temple of Minerva, in Neapolis.

“ It was.”

“ And is he here ?”

“ He is—”

“ At Pompeii ! and not constantly with you ? impossible !”

“ He has other duties,” answered Ione, sadly : “ he is a priest of Isis.”

“ So young, too, and that priesthood, in its laws at least, so severe !” said the warm and bright-hearted Greek, in surprise and pity. “ What could have been his inducement ?”

“ He was always enthusiastic and fervent in religious devotion ; and the eloquence of an Egyptian—our friend and guardian—kindled in him the pious desire to consecrate his life to the most mystic of our deities. Perhaps, in the intensesness

of his zeal, he found in the severity of that peculiar priesthood its peculiar attraction."

"And he does not repent his choice?—I trust he is happy?"

Ione sighed deeply, and lowered her veil over her eyes.

"I wish," said she, after a pause, "that he had not been so hasty. Perhaps, like all who expect too much, he is revolted too easily!"

"Then he is not happy in his new condition—and this Egyptian, was he a priest himself? was he interested in recruits to the sacred band?"

"No. His main interest was in our happiness. He thought he promoted that of my brother. We were left orphans."

"Like myself," said Glaucus, with a deep meaning in his voice.

Ione cast down her eyes as she resumed—

"And Arbaces sought to supply the place of our parent. You must know him. He loves genius."

"Arbaces! I know him already; at least we speak when we meet. But for your praise, I would not seek to know more of him. My heart

inclines readily to most of my kind. But that dark Egyptian, with his gloomy brow and icy smile, seems to me to sadden the very sun. One would think that, like Epimenides the Cretan, he had spent forty years in a cave, and had found something unnatural in the daylight ever afterwards."

"Yet, like Epimenides, he is kind, and wise, and gentle," answered Ione.

"Oh, happy that he has thy praise! He needs no other virtues to make him dear to me."

"His calm, his coldness," said Ione, evasively pursuing the subject, "are perhaps but the exhaustion of past sufferings, as yonder mountain, (and she pointed to Vesuvius,) which we see, dark and tranquil in the distance, once nursed the fires for ever quenched."

They both gazed on the mountain as Ione said these words; the rest of the sky was bathed in rosy and tender hues, but over that grey summit, rising amidst the woods and vineyards that then clomb half way up the ascent, there hung a black and ominous cloud, the single frown of the landscape. A sudden and unaccountable gloom came over each

as they thus gazed, and in that sympathy which love had already taught them, and which bade them in the slightest shadows of emotion, the faintest presentiment of evil, turn for refuge to each other, their gaze at the same moment left the mountain, and full of unimaginable tenderness met. What need had they of words to say they loved !

CHAPTER VI.

THE FOWLER SNARES AGAIN THE BIRD THAT HAD JUST ESCAPED, AND SETS HIS NETS FOR A NEW VICTIM.

IN the history I relate, the events are crowded and rapid as those of the drama. I write of an epoch in which days sufficed to ripen the ordinary fruits of years.

Meanwhile, Arbaces had not of late much frequented the house of Ione, and when he had visited her he had not encountered Glaucus, nor knew he, as yet, of that love which had so suddenly sprung up between himself and his designs. In his interest for the brother of Ione, he had been forced too, a little while, to suspend his interest in Ione herself. His pride and his selfishness were aroused and alarmed at the sudden change which had come over the spirit of the youth. He trembled, lest himself should lose a docile pupil, and

Isis an enthusiastic servant. Apæcides had ceased to seek or to consult him. He was rarely to be found; he turned sullenly from the Egyptian, nay, he fled when he perceived him in the distance. Arbaces was one of those haughty and powerful spirits accustomed to master others; he chafed at the notion that one, once his own, should ever elude his grasp. He swore inly that Apæcides should not escape him.

It was with this resolution that he passed through a thick grove in the city, which lay between his house and that of Ione, in his way to the latter; and there, leaning against a tree, and gazing on the ground, he came unawares on the young priest of Isis.

“Apæcides,” said he, and he laid his hand affectionately on the young man’s shoulder.

The priest started, and his first instinct seemed to be that of flight. “My son,” said the Egyptian, “what has chanced that you desire to shun me?”

Apæcides remained silent and sullen, looking down on the earth, as his lips quivered, and his breast heaved with emotion.

“Speak to me, my friend,” continued the Egyp-

tian. "Speak. Something burdens thy spirit. What hast thou to reveal?"

"To thee—nothing."

"And why is it to me thou art thus unconfidential?"

"Because thou hast been my enemy."

"Let us confer," said Arbaces, in a low voice; and drawing the reluctant arm of the priest in his own, he led him to one of the seats which were scattered within the grove. They sate down, and in those gloomy forms there was something congenial to the shade and solitude of the place.

Apæcides was in the spring of his years, yet he seemed to have exhausted even more of life than the Egyptian—his delicate and regular features were worn and colourless—his eyes were hollow and shone with a brilliant and feverish glare—his frame bowed prematurely, and in his hands, which were small to effeminacy, the blue and swollen veins indicated the lassitude and weakness of the relaxed fibres—you saw in his face a strong resemblance to Ione, but the expression was altogether different from that majestic and spiritual calm which breathed so divine and classical a re-

pose over his sister's beauty. In her, enthusiasm was visible, but it seemed always suppressed and restrained; this made the charm and sentiment of her countenance; you longed to awaken a spirit which reposed, but evidently did not sleep. In Apæcides the whole aspect betokened the fervour and passion of his temperament, and the intellectual portion of his nature, seemed, by the wild fire of the eyes—the great breadth of the temples, when compared with the height of the brow—the trembling restlessness of the lips—to be swayed and tyrannized over by the imaginative and ideal. Fancy, with the sister, had stopped short at the golden goal of poetry; with the brother, less happy, and less restrained, it had wandered into visions more intangible and unembodied;—and the faculties which gave genius to the one, threatened madness to the other.

“You say I have been your enemy,” said Arbaces; “I know the cause of that unjust accusation—I have placed you amidst the priests of Isis—you are revolted at their trickeries and imposture—you think that I too have deceived you—the purity of your mind is offended—you imagine that I am one of the deceitful—”

“ You knew the jugglings of that impious craft” — answered Apæcides, “ why did you disguise them from me? — When you excited my desire to devote myself to the office whose garb I bear, you spoke to me of the holy life of men resigning themselves to knowledge — you have given me for companions an ignorant and sensual herd who have no knowledge, but that of the grossest frauds — you spoke to me of men sacrificing the earthlier pleasures to the sublime cultivation of virtue — you place me amongst men reeking with all the filthiness of vice — you spoke to me of the friends, the enlighteners of our common kind — I see but their cheats and deluders! Oh, it was basely done! — you have robbed me of the glory of youth, of the convictions of virtue, of the sanctifying thirst after wisdom — young as I was, rich, fervent, the sunny pleasures of earth before me, I resigned all without a sigh, nay, with happiness and exultation in the thought that I resigned them for the abstruse mysteries of diviner wisdom, for the companionship of gods — for the revelations of heaven — and now — now —”

Convulsive sobs checked the priest's voice; he

covered his face with his hands, and large tears forced themselves through the wasted fingers, and ran profusely down his vest.

“What I promised to thee, that will I give, my friend, my pupil; these have been but trials to thy virtue—it comes forth the brighter for thy novitiate—think no more of those dull cheats—assort no more with those menials of the goddess, the atrienses* of her hall—you are worthy to enter into the penetralia; I henceforth will be your priest, your guide, and you who now curse my friendship, shall live to bless it!”

The young man lifted up his head and gazed with a vacant and wondering stare upon the Egyptian.

“Listen to me,” continued Arbaces, in an earnest and solemn voice, casting first his searching eyes around to see that they were still alone. “From Egypt came all the knowledge of the world; from Egypt came the lore of Athens, and the profound policy of Crete; from Egypt came those early and mysterious tribes which (long before the hordes of Romulus swept over the plains of

* The slaves who had the care of the atrium.

Italy, and in the eternal cycle of events drove back civilization into barbarism and darkness,) possessed all the arts of wisdom and the graces of intellectual life. From Egypt came the rites and the grandeur of that solemn Cære, whose inhabitants taught their iron vanquishers of Rome, all that they yet know of elevated in religion and sublime in worship. And how deemest thou, young man, that that dread Egypt, the mother of countless nations, achieved her greatness, and soared to her cloudeapt eminence of wisdom?—it was the result of a profound and holy policy. Your modern nations owe their greatness to Egypt—Egypt her greatness to her priests. Rapt in themselves, coveting a sway over the nobler part of man, his soul and his belief, these ancient ministers of God were inspired with the grandest thought that ever occurred to mortals. From the revolutions of the stars, from the seasons of the earth, from the round and unvarying circle of human destinies, they devised an august allegory; they made it gross and palpable to the vulgar by the signs of gods and goddesses, and that which in reality was Government they named Religion. Isis is a fable

— start not — that for which Isis is a type, is a reality, an immortal being ; Isis is nothing ; Nature, which she represents, is the mother of all things — dark, ancient, inscrutable, save to the gifted few. ‘None among mortals hath ever taken off my veil,’ so saith the Isis that you adore ; but to the wise that veil *hath* been removed, and we have stood face to face with the solemn loveliness of Nature. The priests then were the benefactors, the civilizers of mankind ; true, they were also cheats, impostors if you will. But think you, young man, that if they had not deceived their kind they could have served them. The ignorant and servile vulgar must be blinded to attain to their proper good ; they would not believe a maxim—they revere an oracle. The Emperor of Rome sways the vast and various tribes of earth, and harmonizes the conflicting and disunited elements ; thence come peace, order, law, the blessings of life. Think you it is the man, the emperor, that thus sways?—no, it is the pomp, the awe, the majesty that surround him, *these* are his impostures, his delusions ; our oracles and our divinations, our rites and our ceremonies, are the means

of *our* sovereignty and the engines of *our* power. They are the same means to the same end, the welfare and harmony of mankind — you listen to me rapt and intent—the light begins to dawn upon you.”

Apæcides remained silent, but the changes rapidly passing over his speaking countenance betrayed the effect produced upon him by the words of the Egyptian — words made tenfold more eloquent by the voice, the aspect, and the manner of the man.

“ While, then,” resumed Arbaces, “ our fathers of the Nile thus achieved the first elements by whose life chaos is destroyed, namely the obedience and reverence of the multitude for the few, they drew from their majestic and starred meditations that wisdom which was *no* delusion : they invented the codes and regularities of law — the arts and glories of existence. They asked belief ; they returned the gift by civilization. Were not their very cheats a virtue ? Trust me, whosoever in yon far heavens of a diviner and more beneficent nature look down upon our world — smile approvingly upon the wisdom which has worked such

ends. But you wish me to apply these generalities to yourself; I hasten to obey the wish. The altars of the goddess of our ancient faith must be served, and served too by the stolid and soulless things that are but as pegs and hooks whereon to hang the fillet and the robe. Remember two sayings of Sextus the Pythagorean, sayings borrowed from the lore of Egypt. The first is, "Speak not of God to the multitude;" the second is, "The Man worthy of God is a god among men." As Genius gave to the ministers of Egypt worship, that empire in late ages so fearfully decayed, thus by Genius only can the dominion be restored. I saw in you, Apæcides, a pupil worthy of my lessons—a minister worthy of the great ends which may yet be wrought: your energy, your talents, your purity of faith, your earnestness of enthusiasm, all fitted you for that calling which demands so imperiously high and ardent qualities: I fanned therefore your sacred desires; I stimulated you to the step you have taken. But you blame me that I did not reveal to you the little souls and the juggling tricks of your companions. Had I done so, Apæ-

cides, I had defeated my own object: your noble nature would have at once revolted, and Isis would have lost her priest."

Apæcides groaned aloud. The Egyptian continued, without heeding the interruption.

"I placed you, therefore, without preparation, in the temple; I left you suddenly to discover and to be sickened by all those mummeries which dazzle the herd. I desired that you should perceive how those engines are moved by which the fountain that refreshes the world casts its waters in the air. It was the trial ordained of old to all our priests. Those who accustom themselves to the impostures of the vulgar, are left to practise them;—for those like you, whose higher natures demand higher pursuit, Religion opens more godlike secrets. I am pleased to find in you the character I had expected. You have taken the vows; you cannot recede. Advance—I will be your guide."

"And what wilt thou teach me, O singular and fearful man? New cheats—new—"

"No—I have thrown thee into the abyss of Disbelief; I will lead thee now to the eminence of Faith. Thou hast seen the false types; thou shalt

learn now the realities they represent. There is no shadow, Apæcides, without its substance. Come to me this night. Your hand."

Impressed, excited, bewildered by the language of the Egyptian, Apæcides gave him his hand, and master and pupil parted.

It was true that for Apæcides there was no retreat. He had taken the vows of celibacy; he had devoted himself to a life that at present seemed to possess all the austerities of fanaticism, without the consolations of belief. It was natural that he should yet cling to a yearning desire to reconcile himself to an irrevocable career. The powerful and profound mind of the Egyptian yet claimed an empire over his young imagination; excited him with vague conjecture, and kept him alternately vibrating between hope and fear.

Meanwhile Arbaces pursued his slow and stately way to the house of Ione. As he entered the tablinum, he heard a voice from the porticos of the peristyle beyond, which, musical as it was, sounded displeasingly on his ear — it was the voice of the young and beautiful Glaucus, and for the first time an involuntary thrill of jealousy crossed the breast

of the Egyptian. On entering the peristyle, he found Glaucus seated by the side of Ione. The fountain in the odorous garden cast up its silver spray in the air, and kept a delicious coolness in the midst of the sultry noon. The handmaids, almost invariably attendant on Ione, who with her freedom of life preserved the most delicate modesty, sate at a little distance; by the feet of Glaucus lay the lyre on which he had been playing to Ione one of the Lesbian airs. The scene—the group before Arbaces, was stamped by that peculiar and refined ideality of poesy which we yet not erroneously imagine to be the distinction of the ancients,—the marble columns, the vases of flowers, the statue, white and tranquil, closing every vista, and, above all, the two living forms, from which a sculptor might have caught either inspiration or despair!

Arbaces, pausing for a moment, gazed on the pair with a brow from which all the usual stern serenity had fled; he recovered himself by an effort, and slowly approached them, but with a step so soft and echoless, that even the attendants heard him not; much less Ione and her lover.

“ And yet,” said Glaucus, “ it is only before we love that we imagine that our poets have truly described the passion—the instant the sun rises, all the stars that had shone in his absence vanish into air. The poets exist only in the night of the heart; they are nothing to us when we feel the full glory of the god.”

“ A gentle and most glowing image, noble Glaucus.”

Both started, and recognised behind the seat of Ione, the cold and sarcastic face of the Egyptian.

“ You are a sudden guest,” said Glaucus rising, and with a forced smile.

“ So ought all to be, who know they are welcome;” returned Arbaces, seating himself, and motioning to Glaucus to do the same.

“ I am glad,” said Ione, “ to see you at length together; for you are suited to each other, and you are formed to be friends.”

“ Give me back some fifteen years of life,” replied the Egyptian, “ before you can place me on an equality with Glaucus. Happy should I be to receive his friendship; but what can I

give him in return? Can I make to him the same confidences that he would repose in me?—of banquets and garlands—of Parthian steeds, and the chances of the dice: these pleasures suit his age, his nature, his career; they are not for mine.”

So saying, the artful Egyptian looked down and sighed; but from the corner of his eye he stole a glance towards Ione, to see how she received these insinuations of the pursuits of her visiter. Her countenance did not satisfy him. Glaucus, slightly colouring, hastened gaily to reply. Nor was he, perhaps, without the same wish to disconcert and abash the Egyptian.

“ You are right, wise Arbaces,” said he, “ we can esteem each other, but we cannot be friends. My banquets lack the secret salt, which, according to rumour, gives such zest to your own. And per Hercle! when I have reached your age, if I, like you, may think it wise to pursue the pleasures of manhood; like you I shall be doubtless sarcastic on the gallantries of youth.”

The Egyptian raised his eyes to Glaucus with a sudden and piercing glance.

“ I do not understand you,” said he coldly, “ but it is the custom to consider wit lies in obscurity.” He turned as he spoke from Glaucus, with a scarcely perceptible sneer of contempt, and after a moment’s pause, addressed himself to Ione; “ I have not, beautiful Ione,” said he, “ been fortunate enough to find you within doors, the last two or three times that I have visited your vestibule.”

“ The smoothness of the sea has tempted me much from home,” replied Ione, with a little embarrassment.

The embarrassment did not escape Arbaces; but, without seeming to heed it, he replied with a smile; “ You know the old poet says, that ‘ Women should keep within doors, and there converse.’ ” *

“ The poet was a cynic,” said Glaucus, “ and hated women.”

“ He spake according to the customs of his country, and that country is your boasted Greece. To different periods different customs. Had our forefathers known Ione, they had made a different law.”

* Euripides.

“ Did you learn these pretty gallantries at Rome ?” said Arbaces, with ill suppressed emotion.

“ One certainly would not go for gallantries to Egypt,” retorted Glaucus, playing carelessly with his chain.

“ Come, come,” said Ione, hastening to interrupt a conversation which she saw, to her great distress, was so little likely to cement the intimacy she had desired to effect between Glaucus and her friend. “ Arbaces must not be so hard upon his poor pupil. An orphan, and without a mother’s care—I may be to blame for the independent and almost masculine liberty of life that I have chosen, yet it is not greater than the Roman women are accustomed to—it is not greater than the Grecian ought to be. Alas! is it only to be among *men*, that freedom and virtue are to be deemed united? Why should the slavery that destroys you, be considered the only method to preserve us? Ah! believe me, it has been the great error of men—and one that has worked bitterly on their destinies, to imagine that the nature of women is (I will not say inferior, that may be

so, but) so different from their own, in making laws unfavourable to the intellectual advancement of women. Have they not, in so doing, made laws against their children whom women are to rear—against the husbands of whom women are to be the friends, nay, sometimes the advisers?” Ione stopped short suddenly, and her face was suffused with the most enchanting blushes. She feared lest her enthusiasm had led her too far; yet she feared the austere Arbaces less than the courteous Glaucus, for she loved the last; and it was not the custom of the Greeks to allow their women (at least such of their women as they most honoured) the same liberty and the same station as those of Italy enjoyed. She felt, therefore, a thrill of delight as Glaucus earnestly replied—

“ Ever mayest thou think thus, Ione—ever be your pure heart your unerring guide! Happy had it been for Greece, if she had given to the chaste, the same intellectual charms that are so celebrated amongst the less worthy of her women. No state falls from freedom—from

knowledge, while your sex smile only on the free, and, by appreciating, encourage the wise."

Arbaces was silent: for it was neither his part to sanction the sentiment of Glaucus, nor to condemn that of Ione, and, after a short and embarrassed conversation, Glaucus took his leave of Ione.

When he was gone, Arbaces drawing his seat nearer to the fair Neapolitan's, said in those bland and subdued tones, in which he knew so well how to veil the mingled art and fierceness of his character,

"Think not, my sweet pupil, if so I may call you, that I wish to shackle that liberty you adorn while you assume, but which, if not greater, as you rightly observe, than that possessed by the Roman women, must at least be accompanied by great circumspection, when arrogated by one unmarried. Continue to draw crowds of the gay, the brilliant, the wise themselves, to your feet—continue to charm them with the conversation of an Aspasia, the music of an Erinna—but reflect, at least, on those censorious

tongues which can so easily blight the tender reputation of a maiden, and while you provoke admiration, give, I beseech you, no victory to envy."

"What mean you, Arbaces?" said Ione, in an alarmed and trembling voice: "I know you are my friend, that you desire only my honour and my welfare. What is it you would say?"

"Your friend—ah, how sincerely! May I speak then as a friend, without reserve and without offence?"

"I beseech you, do so."

"This young profligate, this Glaucus, how didst thou know him? Hast thou seen him often?" and as Arbaces spoke, he fixed his gaze steadfastly upon Ione, as if he sought to penetrate into her soul.

Recoiling before that gaze, with a strange fear which she could not explain, the Greek answered with confusion and hesitation, "He was brought to my house as a countryman of my father's, and I may say of mine. I have known him only within this last week or so: but why these questions?"

"Forgive me," said Arbaces, "I thought you

might have known him longer. Base insinuator that he is !”

“ How ! what mean you ? Why that term ?”

“ It matters not : let me not rouse your indignation against one who does not deserve so grave an honour.”

“ I implore you speak. What has Glaucus insinuated ? or rather, in what do you suppose he has offended ?”

Smothering his resentment at the last part of Ione’s question, Arbaces continued, “ You know his pursuits, his companions, his habits ; the comesatio and the alea, (the revel and the dice,) make his occupation ;—and amongst the associates of vice how can he dream of virtue ?”

“ Still you speak riddles. By the Gods, I entreat you, say the worst at once.”

“ Well then, it must be so : know, my Ione, that it was but yesterday that Glaucus boasted openly—yes, in the public baths, of your love to him. He said, it amused him to take advantage of it. Nay, I will do him justice, he praised your beauty. Who could deny it ? But he laughed scornfully, when his Clodius, or his Lepidus,

asked him, if he loved you enough for marriage, and when he purposed to adorn his doorposts with flowers?"

"Impossible! How heard you this base slander?"

"Nay, would you have me relate to you all the comments of the insolent coxcombs, with which the story has circled through the town. Be assured that I myself disbelieved at first, and that I have now painfully been convinced by several ear-witnesses of the truth of what I have reluctantly told thee."

Ione sank back, and her face was whiter than the pillar against which she leant for support.

"I own it vexed—it irritated me, to hear your name thus lightly pitched from lip to lip, like some mere dancing girl's fame. I hastened this morning to seek and to warn you. I found Glaucus here. I was stung from my self-possession. I could not conceal my feelings; nay, I was uncourteous in thy presence. Canst thou forgive thy friend, Ione?"

Ione placed her hand in his, but replied not.

"Think no more of this," said he, "but let it be a warning voice, to tell thee how much pru-

dence thy lot requires. It cannot hurt thee, Ione, for a moment; for a gay thing like this could never have been honoured by even a serious thought from Ione. These insults only wound when they come from one we love; far different indeed is he whom the lofty Ione shall stoop to love."

"Love," muttered Ione, with an hysterical laugh. "Ay indeed."

It is not without interest to observe in those remote times, and under a social system so widely different from the modern—the same small causes that ruffle and interrupt the "course of life," which operate so commonly at this day;—the same inventive jealousy, the same cunning slander, the same crafty and fabricated retailings of petty gossip which so often now suffice to break the ties of the truest love, and counteract the tenor of circumstances most apparently propitious.—When the bark sails on over the smoothest wave, the fable tells us of the diminutive fish that can cling to the keel and arrest its progress:—so is it ever with the great passions of mankind—and we should paint life but ill if, even in times the most pro-

digal of romance, and of the romance of which we most largely avail ourselves, we did not also describe the mechanism of those trivial and household springs of mischief which we see every day at work in our chambers and at our hearths. It is in these, the lesser intrigues, of life, that we mostly find ourselves at home with the past;—if you scorn them, you are *only* a romance writer—and you do not interest the heart because you do not portray it.

Most cunningly had the Egyptian appealed to Ione's ruling foible—most dexterously had he applied the poisoned dart to her pride. He fancied he had arrested what at most he hoped, from the shortness of the time she had known Glaucus, was but an incipient fancy, and hastening to change the subject, he now led her to talk of her brother. Their conversation did not last long. He left her, resolved not again to trust so much to absence, but to visit—to watch her—every day.

No sooner had his shadow glided from her presence, than woman's pride—her sex's dissimulation—deserted his intended victim, and the haughty Ione burst into passionate tears.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GAY LIFE OF THE POMPEIAN LOUNGER. A MINIATURE
LIKENESS OF THE ROMAN BATHS.

WHEN Glaucus left Ione, he felt as if he trod upon air. In the interview with which he had just been blessed, he had for the first time gathered from her distinctly, that his love was not unwelcome to, and would not be unrewarded by, her. This hope filled him with a rapture, for which earth and heaven seemed too narrow to afford a vent. Unconscious of the sudden enemy he had left behind, and forgetting not only his taunts but his very existence, Glaucus passed through the gay streets, repeating to himself, in the wantonness of joy, the music of the soft air to which Ione had listened with such intentness; and now he entered the street of Fortune with its raised foot-path—its houses painted without, and the open doors

admitting the view of the glowing frescos within. Each end of the street was adorned with a triumphal arch; and as Glaucus now came before the temple of Fortune, the jutting portico of that beautiful fane, which is supposed to have been built by one of the family of Cicero, perhaps by the orator himself, imparted a dignified and venerable feature to a scene otherwise more brilliant than lofty in its character. That temple was one of the most graceful specimens of Roman architecture. It was raised on a somewhat lofty podium, and between two flights of steps ascending to a platform, stood the altar of the goddess. From this platform another flight of broad stairs led to the portico, from the height of whose fluted columns hung festoons of the richest flowers. On either side the extremities of the temple were placed statues of Grecian workmanship; and at a little distance from the temple rose the triumphal arch crowned with an equestrian statue of Caligula, which was flanked by trophies of bronze. In the space before the temple a lively throng were assembled — some seated on benches and discussing the politics of

the empire, some conversing on the approaching spectacle of the amphitheatre. One knot of young men were lauding a new beauty, another discussing the merits of the last play; a third group, more stricken in age, were speculating on the chance of the trade with Alexandria, and amidst these were many merchants in the Eastern costume, whose loose and peculiar robes, painted and gemmed slippers, and composed and serious countenances, formed a striking contrast to the tunicked forms and animated gestures of the Italians. For that impatient and lively people had, as now, a language distinct from speech—a language of signs and motions inexpressibly significant and vivacious: their descendants retain it, and the learned Jorio hath written a most entertaining work upon that species of hieroglyphical gesticulation.

Sauntering through the crowd, Glaucus soon found himself amidst a group of his merry and dissipated friends.

“ Ah!” said Sallust, “ it is a lustrum since I saw you.”

“ And how have you spent the lustrum? What new dishes have you discovered?”

“ I have been scientific,” returned Sallust, “ and have made some experiments in the feeding of lampries ; I confess I despair of bringing them to the perfection which our Roman ancestors attained.”

“ Miserable man ! and why ?”

“ Because,” returned Sallust, with a sigh, “ it is no longer lawful to give them a slave to eat. I am very often tempted to make away with a very fat carptor (butlér) that I possess, and pop him slyly into the reservoir. He would give the fish a most oleaginous flavour ! But slaves are not slaves now-a-days, and have no sympathy with their master’s interest—or Davus would destroy himself to oblige me !”

“ What news from Rome ?” said Lepidus, as he languidly joined the group.

“ The Emperor has been giving a splendid supper to the senators,” answered Sallust.

“ He is a good creature,” quoth Lepidus ; “ they say he never sends a man away without granting his request.”

“ Perhaps he would let me kill a slave for my reservoir,” returned Sallust eagerly.

“Not unlikely,” said Glaucus, “for he who grants a favour to one Roman, must always do it at the expense of another. Be sure that for every smile Titus has caused, a hundred eyes have wept.”

“Long live Titus!” cried Pansa, overhearing the Emperor’s name as he swept patronizingly through the crowd, “he has promised my brother a questorship, because he had run through his fortune.”

“And wishes to now enrich himself among the people, my Pansa,” said Glaucus.

“Exactly so,” said Pansa.

“That is putting the people to some use,” said Glaucus.

“To be sure,” returned Pansa. “Well, I must go and look after the *ærarium*—it is a little out of repair;” and followed by a long train of clients, distinguished from the rest of the throng by the togas they wore, (for togas, once the sign of freedom in a citizen, were now the badge of servility to a patron,) the *ædile* fidgeted fussily away.

“Poor Pansa!” said Lepidus, “he never has

time for pleasure. Thank heaven I am not an ædile!"

"Ah, Glaucus! *care caput*, how are you? gay as ever!" said Clodius, joining the group.

"Are you come to sacrifice to Fortune?" said Sallust.

"I sacrifice to her every night," returned the gamester.

"I do not doubt it. No man has made more victims!"

"Per Hercle, a biting speech!" cried Glaucus, laughing.

"The dog's letter is never out of your mouth, Sallust," said Clodius, angrily; "you are always snarling."

"I may well have the dog's letter in my mouth, since, whenever I play with you, I have the dog's throw in my hand," returned Sallust.

"Hist!" said Glaucus, taking a rose from a flower girl, who stood beside.

"The rose is the token of silence," replied Sallust; "but I love only to see it at the supper table."

"Talking of that, Diomed gives a grand feast

this week," said Sallust; "are you invited, Glaucus?"

"Yes; I received an invitation this morning."

"And I, too," said Sallust, drawing a square piece of papyrus from his girdle; "I see that he asks us an hour earlier than usual; an earnest of something sumptuous."*

"Oh! he is rich as Cræsus," said Clodius; "and his bill of fare is as long as an epic."

"Well, let us to the baths," said Glaucus; "this is the time when all the world is there; and Fulvius, whom you admire so much, is going to read us his last ode."

The young men assented readily to the proposal, and they strolled to the baths.

Although the public thermæ or baths were instituted rather for the poorer citizens than the wealthy, for the last had baths in their own houses; yet, to the crowds of all ranks who resorted to them, it was a favourite place for conversation, and for that indolent lounging so dear to a gay and thoughtless people. The baths at Pompeii differed of course in

* The Romans sent tickets of invitation, like the moderns, specifying the hour of the repast; which, if the intended feast was to be sumptuous, was earlier than usual.

plan and construction from the vast and complicated thermæ of Rome ; and, indeed, it seems that in each city of the empire, there was always some slight modification of arrangement in the general architecture of the public baths. This mightily puzzles the learned,—as if architects and fashion were not capricious before the nineteenth century ! Our party entered by the principal porch in the street of Fortune. At the wing of the portico sat the keeper of the baths, with his two boxes before him, one for the money he received, one for the tickets he dispensed. Round the walls of the portico were seats crowded with persons of all ranks ; while others, as the regimen of the physicians prescribed, were walking briskly to and fro the portico, stopping every now and then to gaze on the innumerable notices of shows, games, sales, exhibitions, which were painted or inscribed upon the walls. The general subject of conversation was, however, the spectacle announced in the amphitheatre ; and each new comer was fastened upon by a group eager to know if Pompeii had been so fortunate as to produce some monstrous criminal, some happy case of sacrilege or of murder, which would allow the

ædiles to provide a man for the jaws of the lion ; all other more common exhibitions seemed dull and tame, when compared with the possibility of this fortunate occurrence.

“ For my part,” said one jolly-looking man, who was a goldsmith, “ I think the Emperor, if he is as good as they say, might have sent us a Jew.”

“ Why not take one of the new sect of Nazarenes ?” said a philosopher: “ I am not cruel—but an atheist, one who denies Jupiter himself, deserves no mercy.”

“ I care not how many gods a man likes to believe in,” said the jeweller, “ but to deny all gods, is something monstrous.”

“ Yet I fancy,” said Glaucus, “ that these people are not absolutely atheists. I am told that they believe in a God—nay, in a future state.”

“ Quite a mistake, my dear Glaucus,” said the philosopher, “ I have conferred with them—they laughed in my face when I talked of Pluto and Hades.”

“ O ye gods !” exclaimed the goldsmith in horror, “ are there any of these wretches in Pompeii ?”

“ I know there are a few—but they meet so pri-

vately, that it is impossible to discover who they are.”

As Glaucus turned away, a sculptor who was a great enthusiast in his art—looked after him admiringly.

“ Ah !” said he, “ if we could get *him* on the arena—there would be a model for you ! what limbs ! what a head ! he ought to have been a gladiator ! A subject—a subject—worthy of our art ! Why don’t they give him to the lion ?”

Meanwhile Fulvius, the Roman poet, whom his contemporaries declared immortal, and who, but for this history, would never have been heard of in our neglectful age, came eagerly up to Glaucus: “ Oh, my Athenian, my Glaucus, you have come to hear my ode. That is indeed an honour; you, a Greek—to whom the very language of common life is poetry. How I thank you ! It is but a trifle; but if I secure your approbation—perhaps I may get an introduction to Titus. O, Glaucus ! a poet without a patron, is an amphora without a label; the wine may be good, but nobody will laud it !—And what says Pythagoras, ‘ Frankincense to the gods—but praise to man.’ A patron,

then, is the poet's priest; he procures him the incense and obtains him his believers."

"But all Pompeii is your patron, and every portico an altar in your praise."

"Ah! the poor Pompeians are very civil—they love to honour merit. But they are only the inhabitants of a petty town—*spero meliora!* shall we within?"

"Certainly; we lose time till we hear your poem."

At this instant there was a rush of some twenty persons from the baths into the portico; and a slave stationed at the door of a small corridor now admitted the poet, Glaucus, Clodius, and a troop of the bard's other friends, into the passage.

"A poor place this compared with the Roman *thermæ!*" said Lepidus disdainfully.

"Yet is there some taste in the ceiling," said Glaucus, who was in a mood to be pleased with everything; pointing to the stars which studded the roof.

Lepidus shrugged his shoulders, but was too languid to reply.

They now entered a somewhat spacious cham-

ber, which served for the purposes of the apoditerium, (that is, a place where the bathers prepared themselves for their luxurious ablutions). The vaulted ceiling was raised from a cornice, glowingly coloured with motley and grotesque paintings; the ceiling itself was panelled in white compartments bordered with rich crimson; the unsullied and shining floor was paved with white mosaics, and along the walls were ranged benches for the accommodation of the loiterers. This chamber did not possess the numerous and spacious windows which Vitruvius attributes to his more magnificent *frigidarium*. The Pompeians, as all the southern Italians, were fond of banishing the light of their sultry skies, and combined in their voluptuous associations the idea of luxury with darkness. Two windows of glass* alone admitted the soft and shaded ray; and the compartment in which one of these casements was placed, was adorned with a large relief of the Destruction of the Titans.

* The discoveries at Pompeii have controverted the long established error of the antiquaries, that glass windows were unknown to the Romans—the use of them was not however common among the middle and inferior classes in their private dwellings.

In this apartment Fulvius seated himself with a magisterial air, and his audience gathering round him, encouraged him to commence his recital.

The poet did not require much pressing. He drew forth from his vest a roll of papyrus, and after hemming three times, as much to command silence as to clear his voice, he began that wonderful ode, of which, to the great mortification of the author of this history, no single verse can be discovered.

By the plaudits he received, it was doubtless worthy of his fame; and Glaucus was the only listener who did not find it excel the best odes of Horace.

The poem concluded, those who took only the cold bath, began to undress; they suspended their garments on hooks fastened in the wall, and receiving, according to their condition, either from their own slaves, or those of the *thermæ*, a loose robe, withdrew into that graceful and circular building, which yet exists, to shame the unlaving posterity of the south.

The more luxurious departed by another door to the tepidarium, a place which was heated to a

voluptuous warmth, partly by a moveable fireplace, principally by a suspended pavement, beneath which was conducted the caloric of the laconicum.

Here this portion of the intended bathers, after unrobing themselves, remained for some time enjoying the artificial warmth of the luxurious air. And this room, as befitted its important rank in the long process of ablution, was more richly and elaborately decorated than the rest; the arched roof was beautifully carved, and painted; the windows above, of ground glass, admitted but wandering and uncertain rays; below the massive cornices were rows of figures in massive and bold relief; the walls glowed with crimson, the pavement was skilfully tessellated in white mosaics. Here the habituated bathers, men who bathed seven times a-day, would remain in a state of enervate and speechless lassitude, either before, or (mostly) after the water-bath; and many of these victims of the pursuit of health, turned their listless eyes on the new comers, recognising their friends with a nod, but dreading the fatigue of conversation.

From this place the party again diverged, according to their several fancies, some to the sudatorium, which answered the purpose of our vapour-baths, and from thence to the warm-bath itself; those more accustomed to exercise, and capable of dispensing with so cheap a purchase of fatigue, resorted at once to the calidarium or water-bath.

In order to complete this sketch, and give to the reader an adequate notion of this, the main, luxury of the ancients, we will accompany Lepidus, who regularly underwent the whole process, save only the cold-bath, which had gone lately out of fashion. Being then gradually warmed in the tepidarium, which has just been described, the delicate steps of the Pompeian *elegant* were conducted to the sudatorium. Here let the reader depict to himself the gradual process of the vapour-bath, accompanied by an exhalation of spicy perfumes. After our bather had undergone this operation, he was seized by his slaves, who always awaited him at the baths, and the dews of heat were removed by a kind of scraper, which (by the way) a modern traveller has gravely declared to be used only to remove the dirt, not one particle of which could ever

settle on the polished skin of the practised bather. Thence, somewhat cooled, he passed into the water-bath, over which fresh perfumes were profusely scattered, and on emerging from the opposite part of the room, a cooling shower played over his head and form. Then wrapping himself in a light robe, he returned once more to the tepidarium, where he found Glaucus, who had not encountered the sudatorium; and now, the main delight and extravagance of the bath commenced. Their slaves anointed the bathers from vials of gold, of alabaster, or of crystal, studded with profusest gems, and containing the rarest unguents gathered from all quarters of the world. The number of these smegmata, used by the wealthy, would fill a modern volume—especially if the volume were printed by a fashionable publisher; *Amoracinum*, *Megallium*, *Nardum*,—*omne quod exit in um*;—while soft music played in an adjacent chamber, and such as used the bath in moderation, refreshed and restored by the grateful ceremony, conversed with all the zest and freshness of rejuvenated life.

“Blest be he who invented baths!” said Glaucus, stretching himself along one of those bronze

seats (then covered with soft cushions) which the visiter to Pompeii sees at this day in that same tepidarium: “Whether he were Hercules, or Bacchus, he deserved deification.”

“But tell me,” said a corpulent citizen, who was groaning and wheezing under the operation of being rubbed down, “tell me, O Glaucus—evil chance to thy hands, O slave, why so rough?—tell me—ugh—ugh!—are the baths at Rome really so magnificent?” Glaucus turned, and recognised Diomed, though not without some difficulty, so red and so inflamed were the good man’s cheeks, by the sudatory, and the scraping, he had so lately undergone. “I fancy they must be a great deal finer than these. Eh?” Suppressing a smile, Glaucus replied,

“Imagine all Pompeii converted into baths, and you would then form a notion of the size of the imperial thermæ of Rome.—But a notion of the *size* only. Imagine every entertainment for mind and body—enumerate all the gymnastic games our fathers invented—repeat all the books Italy and Greece have produced—suppose places for all these games, admirers for all these works—add to this, baths of the vastest size, the most com-

plicated construction — intersperse the whole with gardens, with theatres, with porticos, with schools — suppose, in one word, a city of the gods, composed but of palaces and public edifices, and you may form some faint idea of the glories of the great baths of Rome.

“Per Hercle!” said Diomed, opening his eyes. “Why it would take a man’s whole life to bathe.”

“At Rome, it often does so,” replied Glaucus, gravely. “There are many who live only at the baths. They repair there the first hour in which they are opened, and remain till that in which they are closed. They seem as if they knew nothing of the rest of Rome, as if they despised all other existence.”

“Per Hercle!”

“Even those who bathe only thrice a day, contrive to consume their lives in the occupation. They take their exercise in the tennis court or the porticos, to prepare them for the first bath; they lounge into the theatre to refresh themselves after it. They take their prandium under the trees, and think over their second bath. By the time it is prepared, the prandium is digested.

From the second bath, they stroll into one of the peristyles to hear some new poet recite ; or into the library to sleep over an old one. Then comes the supper, which they still consider but a part of the bath ; and then a third time they bathe again, as the best place to converse with their friends."

" Per Hercle ! but we have their imitators at Pompeii."

" Yes, and without their excuse. The magnificent voluptuaries of the Roman baths are happy ; they see nothing but gorgeousness and splendour, they visit not the squalid parts of the city, they know not that there is poverty in the world. All Nature smiles for them, and her only frown is the last one which sends them to bathe in Coeytus. Believe me, they are your only true philosophers!"

While Glaucus was thus conversing, Lepidus with closed eyes and scarce perceptible breath, was undergoing all the mystic operations, not one of which he ever suffered his attendants to omit. After the perfumes and the unguents, they scattered over him the luxurious powder which prevented any farther accession of heat ; and this being rubbed away by the smooth surface of the

pumice, he began to indue, not the garments he had put off, but those more festive ones termed 'the synthesis,' with which the Romans marked their respect for the coming ceremony of supper, if rather, from its hour (three o'clock in our measurement of time), it might not be more fitly denominated dinner. This done, he at length opened his eyes and gave signs of returning life.

At the same time too, Sallust betokened by a long yawn the evidence of existence.

"It is supper time," said the epicure; "you Glaucus and Lepidus come and sup with me."

"Recollect you are all three engaged to my house this week," cried Diomed, who was mighty proud of the acquaintance of men of fashion.

"Ah, ah! we recollect," said Sallust, "the seat of memory, my Diomed, is certainly in the stomach."

Passing now once again into the cooler air, and so into the street, our gallants of that day concluded the ceremony of a Pompeian bath.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARBACES COGS HIS DICE WITH PLEASURE AND WINS THE GAME.

THE evening darkened over the restless city, as Apæcides took his way to the house of the Egyptian. He avoided the more lighted and populous streets; and as he strode onward with his head-buried in his bosom, and his arms folded within his robe, there was something startling in the contrast, which his solemn mien and wasted form presented to the thoughtless brows and animated air of those who occasionally crossed his path.

At length, however, a man of a more sober and staid demeanour, and who had twice passed him with a curious but doubting look, touched him on the shoulder.

“Apæcides,” said he, and he made a rapid sign with his hands: it was the sign of the cross.

“ Well, Nazarene,” replied the priest, and his pale face grew paler, “ what wouldst thou ?”

“ Nay,” returned the stranger, “ I would not interrupt thy meditations ; but the last time we met, I seemed not to be so unwelcome.”

“ You are not unwelcome, Olinthus, but I am sad and weary, nor am I able this evening to discuss with you those themes which are most acceptable to you.”

“ O backward of heart,” said Olinthus with bitter fervour ; “ and art thou sad and weary, and wilt thou turn from the very springs that refresh and heal !”

“ O earth,” cried the young priest, striking his breast passionately, “ from what regions shall my eyes open to the true Olympus, where thy gods really dwell. Am I to believe with this man, that none whom for so many centuries my fathers worshipped, have a being or a name. Am I to break down, as something blasphemous and profane, the very altars which I have deemed most sacred ; or am I to think with Arbaces—what ?”—

He paused, and strode rapidly away in the impatience of a man who strives to get rid of himself.

But the Nazarene was one of those hardy, vigorous, and enthusiastic men, among whom God in all times has worked the revolutions of earth, and above all, whether in the establishment—whether in the reformation—of His own religion, who were formed to convert, because formed to endure—men whom nothing discourages, nothing dismays; in the fervour of belief they are inspired and they inspire. Their reason first kindles their passion, but the passion is the instrument they use; they force themselves into men's hearts, while they appear only to appeal to their judgment. Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm; it is the real allegory of the tale of Orpheus—it moves stones, it charms brutes. Enthusiasm is the genius of Sincerity, and Truth accomplishes no victories without it.

Olinthus did not then suffer Apæcides thus easily to escape him. He overtook, and addressed him thus—

“ I do not wonder, Apæcides, that I distress you; that I shake all the elements of your mind, that you are lost in doubt, that you drift here and there in the vast ocean of uncertain and benighted thought. I wonder not at this, but bear

with me a little ; watch and pray, — the darkness shall vanish, the storm sleep, and God himself, as He came of yore on the seas of Samaria, shall walk over the lulled billows, to the delivery of your soul. Ours is a Religion jealous in its demands, but how infinitely prodigal in its gifts ! It troubles you for an hour, it repays you by Immortality.”

“ Such promises,” said Apæcides sullenly, “ are the tricks by which man is ever gulled. Oh, glorious were the promises which led me to the shrine of Isis !”

“ But,” answered the Nazarene, “ ask thy reason, can that religion be sound, which outrages all morality ? You are told to worship your gods. What are those gods even according to yourselves ? What their actions, what the attributes of their divinity ? Are they not all represented to you as the blackest of criminals ? yet you are asked to serve them as the holiest of divinities. Jupiter himself is a parricide and an adulterer. What are the meaner divinities, but imitators of his vices ? You are told not to murder, but you worship murderers : you are told not to commit adultery,

and you make your prayers to an adultercr. Oh! what is this but a mockery of the holiest part of man's nature, which is faith. Turn now to the God, the one, the true God, to whose shrine I would lead you. If He seem to you too sublime, too shadowy, for those human associations, those touching connections between Creator and creature, to which the weak heart clings—contemplate Him in his Son, who put on mortality like ourselves. His mortality is not indeed declared, like that of your fabled gods, by the vices of our nature, but by the practice of all its virtues. In Him are united the austerest morals with the tenderest affections. If He were but a mere man, He had been worthy to become a god. You honour Socrates—he has his sect, his disciples, his schools. But what are the doubtful virtues of the Athenian, to the bright, the undisputed, the active, the unceasing, the devoted holiness of Christ? I speak to you now only of his human character. He came in that as the Pattern of future ages, to show us the form of virtue which Plato thirsted to see embodied. This was the true sacrifice that He made for man: but the halo that encircled

his dying hour not only brightened earth, but opened to us the sight of heaven! You are touched—you are moved. God works in your heart. His spirit is with you. Come, resist not the holy impulse, come at once—unhesitatingly. A few of us are now assembled to expound the word of God. Come, let me guide you to them. You are sad, you are weary. Listen then to the words of God. ‘Come to me,’ saith He, ‘all ye that are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!’”

“I cannot now,” said Apæcides; “another time.”

“Now—now,” exclaimed Olinthus, earnestly, and clasping him by the arm.

But Apæcides, yet unprepared for the renunciation of that faith—that life, for which he had sacrificed so much, and still haunted by the promises of the Egyptian, extricated himself forcibly from the grasp, and feeling an effort necessary to conquer the irresolution which the eloquence of the Christian had begun to effect in his heated and feverish mind, he gathered up his robes and fled away with a speed that defied pursuit.

Breathless and exhausted, he arrived at last in a

remote and sequestered part of the city, and the lone house of the Egyptian stood before him. As he paused to recover himself, the moon emerged from a silver cloud, and shone full upon the walls of that mysterious habitation.

No other house was near, the darksome vines clustered far and wide in front of the building, and behind it rose a copse of lofty forest-trees, sleeping in the melancholy moonlight; beyond, stretched the dim outline of the distant hills, and amongst them the quiet crest of Vesuvius, not then so lofty as the traveller beholds it now.

Apæcides passed through the arching vines, and arrived at the broad and spacious portico. Before it, on either side of the steps, reposed the image of the Egyptian Sphynx, and the moonlight gave an additional and yet more solemn calm to those large and harmonious, and passionless features, in which the sculptors of that type of wisdom united so much of loveliness with awe; half way up the extremities of the steps, darkened the green and massive foliage of the aloe, and the shadow of the eastern palm cast its long and unwavering boughs partially over the marble surface of the stairs.

Something there was in the stillness of the place, and the strange aspect of the sculptured sphynxes, which thrilled the blood of the priest with a nameless and ghostly fear, and he longed even for an echo to his noiseless steps, as he ascended to the threshold.

He knocked at the door, over which was wrought an inscription, in characters unfamiliar to his eyes; it opened without a sound, and a tall Ethiopian slave, without question or salutation, motioned to him to proceed.

The wide hall was lighted by lofty candelabra of elaborate bronze, and round the walls were wrought vast hieroglyphics, in dark and solemn colours, which contrasted strangely with the bright hues and graceful shapes with which the inhabitants of Italy decorated their abodes. At the extremity of the hall, a slave, whose countenance, though not African, was darker by many shades than the usual colour of the south, advanced to meet him.

“I seek Arbaces,” said the priest, but his voice trembled even in his own ear. The slave bowed his head in silence, and leading Apæcides

to a wing without the hall, conducted him up a narrow staircase, and then traversing several rooms, in which the stern and thoughtful beauty of the sphynx still made the chief and most impressive object of the priest's notice,—Apæcides found himself in a dim and half-lighted chamber in the presence of the Egyptian.

Arbaces was seated before a small table, on which lay unfolded several scrolls of papyrus, impressed with the same character as that on the threshold of the mansion. A small tripod stood at a little distance, from the incense in which the smoke slowly rose. Near this was a vast globe, depicting the signs of heaven, and upon another table lay several instruments, of curious and quaint shape, whose uses were unknown to Apæcides. The further extremity of the room was concealed by a curtain, and the oblong window in the roof admitted the rays of the moon, mingling sadly with the single lamp which burned in the apartment.

“Seat yourself, Apæcides,” said the Egyptian without rising.

The young man obeyed.

“You ask me—” resumed Arbaces, after a short pause, in which he seemed absorbed in thought. “You ask me—or would do so, the mightiest secrets which the soul of man is fitted to receive; it is the enigma of life itself that you desire me to solve. Placed like children in the dark, and but for a little while, in this dim and confined existence, we shape out spectres in the obscurity; our thoughts now sink back into ourselves in terror, now wildly plunge themselves into the guideless gloom, guessing what it may contain;—stretching our helpless hands here and there, lest, blindly, we stumble upon some hidden danger; not knowing the limits that confine, thinking now they suffocate us with confusion, thinking now that they extend far away into eternity. In this state all wisdom consists necessarily in the solution of two questions—‘what are we to believe, and what are we to reject.’ These questions you desire me to decide.”

Apæcides bowed his head in assent.

“Man *must* have some belief,” continued the Egyptian, in a tone of sadness. “He must fasten his hope to something: it is our common nature

that you inherit. When aghast and terrified to see that in which you have been taught to place your faith, swept away, you float over a dreary and shoreless sea of incertitude, you cry for help, you ask for some plank to cling to, some land, however dim and distant, to attain. Well then—listen. You have not forgotten our conversation of to-day.”

“Forgotten !”

“I confessed to you, that those deities, for whom smoke so many altars, were but inventions. I confessed to you that our rites and ceremonies were but mummeries, to cheat the herd to their proper good. I explained to you that from those cheats came the bonds of society, the harmony of the world, the power of the wise; that power is in the obedience of the vulgar. Continue we then these salutary delusions—if man must have some belief, continue to him that which his fathers have made dear to him, and which custom sanctifies and strengthens. In seeking a subtler faith for us, whose senses are too spiritual for the gross one, let us leave others that support which crumbles from ourselves. This is wise—it is benevolent.”

“Proceed.”

“This being settled,” resumed the Egyptian, “the old land-marks being left uninjured for those whom we are about to desert—we gird up our loins and depart to new climes of faith. Dismiss at once from your recollection, from your thought, all that you have believed before. Suppose the mind a blank, an unwritten scroll, fit to receive impressions for the first time. Look round the world—observe its order—its regularity—its design. Something must have created it—the design speaks a designer—in that certainty we first touch land. But what is that something?—a God you cry. Stay—no confused and confusing names. Of that which created the world, we know, we can know, nothing, save these attributes—Power and Unvarying Regularity—stern—crushing—relentless Regularity—heeding no individual cases—rolling—sweeping—burning on—no matter what scattered hearts, severed from the general mass, fall ground and scorched beneath its wheels. The mixture of evil with good—the existence of suffering and of crime—in all times have perplexed the wise. They created a God—they supposed him

benevolent. How then came this evil—why did he permit—nay, why invent—why perpetuate it? To account for this, the Persian creates a second spirit, whose nature is evil, and supposes a continual war between that and the God of good. In our own shadowy and tremendous Typhon, the Egyptians image a similar demon. Perplexing blunder that yet more bewilders us!—folly that arose from the vain delusion that makes a palpable—a corporeal—a human Being—of this unknown power—that clothes the Invisible with attributes and a nature similar to the Seen. No—to this Designer let us give a name that does not command our bewildering associations—and the mystery becomes more clear—that name is NECESSITY. Necessity, say the Greeks, compel the gods,—then why the gods?—their agency becomes unnecessary—dismiss them at once. Necessity is the ruler of all we see;—power, regularity—these two qualities make its nature. Would you ask more?—you can learn nothing—whether it be eternal—whether it compel us, its creatures, to new careers after that darkness which we call death—we cannot tell. There leave we this

ancient—unseen—unfathomable power—and come to that which, to our eyes, is the great minister of its functions. This we can task more, from this we can learn more—its evidence is around us—its name is NATURE. The error of the sages has been to direct their researches to the attributes of Necessity—where all is gloom and blindness. Had they confined their researches to Nature—what of knowledge might we not already have achieved? Here patience, examination, are never directed in vain. We see what we explore; our minds ascend a palpable ladder of causes and effects. Nature is the great spirit of the external universe—and Necessity imposes upon it the laws by which it acts—and imparts to us the powers by which we examine—those powers are curiosity and memory—their union is reason—their perfection is wisdom. Well, then, I examine by the help of these powers this inexhaustible Nature. I examine the earth—the air—the ocean—the heaven—I find that all have a mystic sympathy with each other—that the moon sways the tides—that the air maintains the earth, and is the medium of the life and sense of things—that by the knowledge of the

stars we measure the limits of the earth—that we portion out the epochs of time—that by their pale light we are guided into the abyss of the past—that in their solemn lore we discern the destinies of the future. And thus, while we know not that which Necessity is, we learn, at least, her decrees. And now, what morality do we glean from this religion?—for religion it is. I believe in two deities, Nature and Necessity; I worship the last by reverence, the first by investigation. What is the morality it teaches? This—all things are subject but to general rules; the sun shines for the joy of the many—it may bring sorrow to the few; the night sheds sleep on the multitude—but it harbours murder as well as rest; the forests adorn the earth—but shelter the serpent and the lion; the ocean supports a thousand barks—but it engulphs the one. It is only thus for the general, and not for the universal benefit, that Nature acts, and Necessity speeds on her awful course. This is the morality of the dread agents of the world—it is mine, who am their creature. I would preserve the delusions of priestcraft—for they are serviceable to the multitude; I would impart to

man the arts I discover—the sciences I perfect ; I would speed the vast career of civilizing lore :—in this I serve the mass—I fulfil the general law—I execute the great moral that Nature preaches. For myself I claim the individual exception ; I claim it for the Wise—satisfied that my individual actions are nothing in the great balance of good and evil ; satisfied that the product of my knowledge can give greater blessings to the mass, than my desires can operate evil on the few, (for the first can extend to remotest regions and humanize nations yet unborn,) I give to the world wisdom, to myself freedom. I enlighten the lives of others, and I enjoy my own. Yes ; our wisdom is eternal, but our life is short ; make the most of it while it lasts. Surrender thy youth to pleasure, and thy senses to delight. Soon comes the hour when the wine-cup is shattered, and the garlands shall cease to bloom. Enjoy while you may. Be still, O Apæcides, my pupil, and my follower ! I will teach thee the mechanism of Nature, her darkest and her wildest secrets—the lore which fools call magic—and the mighty mysteries of

the stars. By this shalt thou discharge thy duty to the mass; by this shalt thou enlighten thy race. But I will lead thee also to pleasures of which the vulgar do not dream; and the day which thou givest to men shall be followed by the sweet night which thou surrenderest to thyself."

As the Egyptian ceased, there rose about, around, beneath, the softest music that Lydia ever taught, or Ionia ever perfected. It came like a stream of sound—bathing the senses unawares;—enervating—subduing with delight. It seemed the melodies of invisible spirits, such as the shepherd might have heard in the golden age,—floating through the vales of Thessaly, or in the noontide glades of Paphos. The words which had rushed to the lip of Apæcides, in answer to the sophistries of the Egyptian, died tremblingly away. He felt it as a profanation to break upon that enchanted strain—the susceptibility of his excited nature, the Greek softness and ardour of his secret soul, were swayed and captured by surprise. He sank on the seat with parted lips

and thirsting ear — while in a chorus of voices, bland and melting as those which waked Psyche in the Halls of Love—rose the following song :—

THE HYMN OF EROS.

By the cool banks where soft Cephisus flows,
 A voice sailed trembling down the waves of air ;
 The leaves blushed brighter in the Teian's rose,
 The doves couch'd breathless in their summer air ;

While from their hands the purple flowerets fell,
 The laughing Hours stood listening in the sky ;—
 From Pan's green cave to Ægle's* haunted cell,
 Heaved the charmed earth in one delicious sigh.

“ Love, sons of earth ! I am the Power of Love,
 Eldest of all the gods with Chaos † born ;
 My smile sheds light along the courts above,
 My kisses wake the eyelids of the Morn.

“ Mine are the stars—there, ever as ye gaze
 Ye meet the deep spell of my haunting eyes ;
 Mine is the moon—and mournful, if her rays,
 'Tis that she lingers where her Carian lies.

* The fairest of the Naiads.

† Hesiod.

“ The flowers are mine—the blushes of the rose,
The violet charming Zephyr to the shade ;
Mine the quick light that in the Maybeam glows,
Mine every dream that leafs* the lonely glade.

“ Love, sons of earth—for love is earth’s soft lore,
Look where ye will—earth overflows with ME ;
Learn from the waves that ever kiss the shore,
And the winds nestling on the heaving sea.

“ All teaches love !”—The sweet voice, like a dream,
Melted in light—yet still the airs above,
The waving sedges and the whispering stream,
And the green forest rustling—murmured “ LOVE !”

As the voices died away, the Egyptian seized the hand of Apæcides, and led him wandering, intoxicated, yet half reluctant, across the chamber towards the curtain, at the far end ; and now, from behind that curtain, there seemed to burst a thousand sparkling stars ; the veil itself, hitherto dark, was now lighted by these fires behind, into the tenderest blue of heaven. It represented heaven

* The learned reader will recognise this image more than once among the antient poets.

itself,—such a heaven, as in the nights of June might have shone down over the streams of Castaly. Here and there were painted rosy and aerial clouds, from which smiled, by the limner's art, faces of divinest beauty,—and on which reposed the shapes of which Phidias and Apelles dreamed. And the stars which studded the transparent azure rolled rapidly as they shone, while the music that again woke with a livelier and lighter sound, seemed to imitate the melody of the joyous spheres.

“Oh! what miracle is this, Arbaces?” said Apæcides, in faltering accents. “After having denied the gods, art thou about to reveal to me—”

“Their pleasures!” interrupted Arbaces, in a tone so different from its usual cold and tranquil harmony that Apæcides started, and thought the Egyptian himself transformed: and now, as they neared the curtain, a wild—a loud—an exulting melody burst from behind its concealment. With that sound the veil was, as it were, to be rent in twain—it parted—it seemed to vanish into air; and a scene which no Sybarite ever more than rivalled, broke upon the dazzled gaze of the youthful priest.

A vast banquet-room stretched beyond, blazing with countless lights, which filled the warm air with the scents of frankincense, of jasmine, of violets, of myrrh; all that the most odorous flowers, all that the most costly spices could distil, seemed gathered into one ineffable and ambrosial essence: from the light columns that sprang upward to the airy roof, hung draperies of white, studded with golden stars. At the extremities of the room, two fountains cast up a spray, which, catching the rays of the roseate light, glittered like countless diamonds. In the centre of the room, as they entered, there rose slowly from the floor, to the sound of unseen minstrelsy, a table, spread with all the viands which sense ever devoted to fancy, and vases of that lost Myrrhine fabric,* so glowing in its colours, so transparent in its material, were crowned with the exotics of the East. The couches, to which this table was the centre, were covered with tapestries of azure, and gold; and from invisible tubes in the vaulted roof, descended showers of fragrant waters, that cooled the delicious air,

* Which, however, was probably the porcelain of China,—though this is a matter which admits of considerable dispute.

and contended with the lamps, as if the spirits of wave and fire disputed which element could furnish forth the most delicious odours. And now, from behind the snowy draperies, trooped such forms as Adonis beheld, when he lay on the lap of Venus. They came, some with garlands, others with lyres; they surrounded the youth, they led his steps to the banquet. They flung the chaplets round him in rosy chains. The earth — the thought of earth, vanished from his soul. He imagined himself in a dream, and suppressed his breath lest he should wake too soon; the senses to which he had never yielded as yet, beat in his burning pulse, and confused his dizzy and reeling sight. And while thus amazed and lost, once again, but in brisk and Bacchic measures, rose the magic strain.

ANACREONTIC.

In the veins of the calix foams and glows
The blood of the mantling vine,
But oh! in the bowl of Youth there glows,
A Lesbium, more divine!

Bright, bright,
As the liquid light,
Its waves through thine eyelids shine!

Fill up, fill up, to the sparkling brim,
 The juice of the young Lyæus,*
 The grape is the key that we owe to him,
 From the jail of the world to free us,
 Drink, drink,
 What need to shrink,
 When the lamps alone can see us?

Drink, drink, as I quaff from thine eyes,
 The wine of a softer tree,
 Give thy smiles to the god of the grape—thy sighs,
 Beloved one, give to me.
 Turn, turn,
 My glances burn,
 And thirst for a look from thee!

As the song ended, a group of three maidens, entwined with a chain of starred flowers, and who, while they imitated, might have shamed, the Graces, advanced towards him in the gliding measures of the Ionian dance; such as the Nereids wreathed in moonlight on the yellow sands of the Ægean wave, such as Cytherea taught her hand-

* Name of Bacchus, from *λυω* to unbind, to release.

maids, in the marriage-feast of Psyche and her son.

Now approaching, they wreathed their chaplet round his head; now kneeling, the youngest of the three proffered him the bowl, from which the wine of Lesbos foamed and sparkled. The youth resisted no more, he grasped the intoxicating cup, the blood mantled fiercely through his veins. He sank upon the breast of the nymph, who sat beside him, and turning with swimming eyes to seek for Arbaces whom he had lost in the whirl of his emotions, he beheld him seated beneath a canopy, at the upper end of the table, and gazing upon him with a smile that encouraged him to pleasure. He beheld him, but not as he had hitherto seen, with dark and sable garments, with a brooding and solemn brow: a robe that dazzled the sight, so studded was its whitest surface with gold and gems, blazed upon his majestic form; white roses, alternated with the emerald and the ruby, and shaped tiara-like, crowned his raven locks. He appeared like Ulysses to have gained the glory of a second youth—his features seemed to have exchanged thought for beauty, and he towered amidst the loveliness that surrounded

him, in all the beaming and relaxing benignity of an Olympian god.

“Drink, feast, love, my pupil!” said he; “blush not that thou art passionate and young. That which thou art, thou feelest in thy veins—that which thou shalt be, survey!”

With this he pointed to a recess, and the eyes of Apæcides, following the gesture, beheld on a pedestal placed between the statues of Bacchus and Idalia, the form of a skeleton.

“Start not,” resumed the Egyptian, “that friendly guest admonishes us but of the shortness of life. From its jaws I hear a voice that summons us TO ENJOY.”

As he spoke, a group of nymphs surrounded the statue; they laid chaplets on its pedestal, and while the cups were emptied and refilled at that glowing board, they sang the following strain:—

BACCHIC HYMNS TO THE IMAGE OF
DEATH.

I.

Thou art in the land of the shadowy Host,
Thou that didst drink and love;
By the Solemn River, a gliding ghost,
But thy thought is ours above!

If memory yet can fly
 Back to the golden sky,
 And mourn the pleasures lost !
 By the ruined hall these flowers we lay,
 Where thy soul once held its palace ;
 When the rose to thy scent and sight was gay,
 And the smile was in the chalice,
 And the cithara's silver voice
 Could bid thy heart rejoice
 When night eclipsed the day.

Here a new group advancing, turned the tide of
 the music into a quicker and more joyous strain :

2.

Death, death is the gloomy shore,
 Where we all sail,
 Soft, soft, thou gliding oar ;
 Blow soft sweet gale.
 Chain with bright wreaths the hours,
 Victims if all,
 Ever, mid song and flowers,
 Victims should fall !

Pausing for a moment, yet quicker and quicker
 danced the silver-footed music :

Since Life's so short, we'll live to laugh;
 Ah! wherefore waste a minute!
 If youth's the cup we yet can quaff,
 Be love the pearl within it!

A third band now approached with brimming cups, which they poured in libation upon that strange altar; and once more, slow and solemn, rose the changeful melody:

3.

Thou art welcome, Guest of gloom,
 From the far and fearful sea!
 When the last rose sheds its bloom,
 Our board shall be spread with thee!
 All hail, dark Guest!
 Who hath so fair a plea
 Our welcome Guest to be
 As thou, whose solemn hall
 At last shall feast us all—
 In the dim and dismal coast?—
 Long yet be *we* the Host!
 And thou, Dead Shadow, thou,
 All joyless though thy brow,
 Thou—but our passing *Guest!*

At this moment, she who sat beside Apæcides,
suddenly took up the song :

4.

Happy is yet our doom,
The earth and the sun are ours !
And far from the dreary tomb
Speed the wings of the rosy Hours—
Sweet is for thee the bowl,
Sweet are thy looks, my love ;
I fly to thy tender soul,
As the bird to its mated dove !
Take me, ah take !
Clasp'd to thy guardian breast,
Soft let me sink to rest ;
But wake me—ah wake,
And tell me with words and sighs,
But more with thy melting eyes,
That my sun is not set—
That the Torch is not quenched at the Urn,
That we love, and we breathe and burn.
Tell me—thou lov'st me yet !

NOTES TO BOOK I.

(a) p. 10.—“Flowers more alluring to the antient Italians than to their descendants,” &c.

The modern Italians, especially those of the more southern parts of Italy, have a peculiar horror of perfumes; they consider them remarkably unwholesome: and the Roman or Neapolitan lady requests her visiters not to use them. What is very strange, the nostril so susceptible of a perfume is wonderfully obtuse to its reverse. You may literally call Rome, “*Sentina Gentium.*”

(b) p. 48.—“The sixth banqueter who was the umbra of Clodius.”

A very curious and interesting Treatise might be written on the Parasites of Greece and Rome. In the former, they were more degraded than in the latter, country. The Epistles of Alciphron express in a lively manner the insults which they underwent for the sake of a dinner: one man complains, that fish-sauce was thrown into his eyes—that he was beat on the head, and given to eat stones covered with honey, while a courtesan threw at him a bladder filled with blood, which burst on his face and covered him with the stream. The manner in which these parasites repaid the hospitality of their hosts was like that of modern diners-out, by witty jokes and amusing stories; sometimes they indulged practical jokes on each other, “boxing one another’s ears.” The magistrates at Athens appear to have

looked very sternly upon these hungry buffoons, and they complain of stripes and a prison with no philosophical resignation. In fact, the parasite seems at Athens to have answered the purpose of the fool of the middle ages;—but he was far more worthless and perhaps more witty—the associate of courtezans, uniting the pimp with the buffoon. This is a character peculiar to Greece. The Latin comic writers make indeed prodigal use of the Parasite, yet he appears at Rome to have held a somewhat higher rank, and to have met with a somewhat milder treatment, than at Athens. Nor do the delineations of Terence, which, in portraying Athenian manners, probably soften down whatever would have been exaggerated to a Roman audience, present so degraded or so abandoned a character as the Parasite of Alciphron and Athenæus. The more haughty and fastidious Romans often disdained indeed to admit such buffoons as companions, and hired (as we may note in Pliny's Epistles) fools or mountebanks, to entertain their guests and supply the place of the Grecian Parasite. When (be it observed) Clodius is styled Parasite in the text, the reader must take the modern not the antient interpretation of the word.

A very feeble—but very flattering reflex of the Parasite was the *umbra* or shadow—who accompanied any invited guest—and who was sometimes a man of equal consequence—though usually a poor relative, or a humble friend—in modern cant “a toady.” Such is the *umbra* of our friend Clodius.

(c) p. 54.—“The dice in August and I an *ædile* !”

All games of chance were forbidden by law, (“*Vetita legibus aleæ.*”—Horat. Od. 24, l. 3.) except ‘in *Saturnalibus*,’ during the month of December the *ædiles* were charged with enforcing this law, which, like all laws against gaming in all times, was wholly ineffectual.

(d) p. 67.—“The small but graceful temple consecrated to Isis.”

Sylla is said to have transported to Italy the worship of the Egyptian Isis.* It soon became 'the rage'—and was peculiarly in vogue with the Roman ladies. Its priesthood were sworn to chastity, and like all such brotherhoods, were noted for their licentiousness. Juvenal styles the priestesses by a name (*Isiacæ lenæ*) that denotes how convenient they were to lovers, and under the mantle of night many an amorous intrigue was carried on in the purlieus of the sacred temples. A lady vowed for so many nights to watch by the shrine of Isis—it was a sacrifice of continence towards her husband—to be bestowed on her lover! While one passion of human nature was thus appealed to, another scarcely less strong was also pressed into the service of the goddess—namely Credulity. The priests of Isis arrogated a knowledge of magic and of the future. Among women of all classes—and among many of the harder sex—the Egyptian sorceries were consulted and revered as oracles. Voltaire, with much plausible ingenuity, endeavours to prove that the gypsies are a remnant of the antient priests and priestesses of Isis, intermixed with those of the goddess of Syria. In the time of Apuleius these holy impostors had lost their dignity and importance—despised and poor—they wandered from place to place, selling prophecies and curing disorders; and Voltaire shrewdly bids us remark, that Apuleius has not forgot their peculiar skill in filching from out-houses and court-yards—afterwards they practised palmistry and singular dances (query, the Bohemian dances?) “Such,” says the too conclusive Frenchman, “such has been the end of the antient religion of Isis and Osiris, whose very names still impress us with awe!” At the time in which my story is cast, the worship of Isis was however in the highest repute. And the wealthy

* In the Campanian cities, the trade with Alexandria was probably more efficacious than the piety of Sylla (no very popular example perhaps) in establishing the worship of the favourite deity of Egypt.

devotees sent even to the Nile, that they might sprinkle its mysterious waters over the altars of the goddess. I have introduced the Ibis in the sketch of the temple of Isis, although it has been supposed that that bird languished and died when taken from Egypt. But from various reasons, too long now to enumerate, I believe that the ibis was by no means unfrequent in the Italian temples of Isis, though it rarely lived long, and refused to breed in a foreign climate.

END OF BOOK I.

BOOK II.

“ Lucus tremescit, tota succusso solo
Nutavit aula, dubia quo pondus daret
Ac fluctuanti similis.”

Senec. *Thyestis*, v. 693.

CHAPTER I.

“ A FLASH HOUSE ” IN POMPEII—AND THE GENTLEMEN
OF THE CLASSIC RING.

To one of those parts of Pompeii, which were tenanted not by the lords of pleasure, but by its minions and its victims—the haunt of gladiators and prize-fighters—of the vicious and the penniless—of the savage and the obscene—the Alsatia of an antient city—we are now transported.

It was a large room, that opened at once on the confined and crowded lane. Before the threshold were a group of men, whose iron and well-strung muscles, whose short and hereulean necks, whose hardy and reckless countenances indicated the champions of the arena. On a shelf, without the shop, were ranged jars of wine and oil, and right over this was inserted in the wall a coarse painting, which exhibited gladiators drinking, so au-

tient and so venerable is the custom of signs! Within the room were placed several small tables, arranged somewhat in the modern fashion of "boxes," and round these were seated several knots of men, some drinking, some playing at dice, some at that more skilful game called '*duodecim scripta*,' which certain of the blundering learned have mistaken for chess, though it *rather*, perhaps, resembled backgammon of the two, and was usually, though not always, played by the assistance of dice. The hour was in the early forenoon, and nothing better, perhaps, than that unseasonable time itself denoted the habitual indolence of these tavern loungers. Yet, despite the situation of the house and the character of its inmates, it indicated none of that sordid squalor which would have characterized a similar haunt in a modern city. The gay disposition of all the Pompeians, who sought, at least, to gratify the sense even where they neglected the mind, was typified by the gaudy colours which decorated the walls, and the shapes, fantastic but not inelegant, in which the lamps, the drinking cups, the commonest household utensils were wrought.

“By Pollux,” said one of the gladiators, as he leant against the wall of the threshold, “the wine thou sellest us, old Silenus,” and as he spoke he slapped a portly personage on the back, “is enough to thin the best blood in one’s veins.”

The man thus caressingly saluted, and whose bared arms, white apron, and keys and napkin tucked carelessly within his girdle, indicated him to be the host of the tavern, was already passed into the autumn of his years; but his form was still so robust and athletic, that he might have shamed even the sinewy shapes beside him, save that the muscle had seeded as it were into flesh, that the cheeks were swelled and bloated, and the increasing stomach threw into shade the vast and massive chest which rose above it.

“None of thy scurrilous blusterings with me,” growled the gigantic landlord, in the gentle semi-roar of an insulted tiger, “my wine is good enough for a carcass which shall so soon soak the dust of the spoliarium.”*

* The place to which the killed or mortally wounded were dragged from the arena.

“Croakest thou thus, old raven,” returned the gladiator, laughing scornfully, “thou shalt live to hang thyself with despite when thou seest me win the palm crown; and when I get the purse at the Amphitheatre, as I certainly shall, my first vow to Hercules shall be to forswear thee and thy vile potations evermore.”

“Hear to him—hear to this modest Pyrgopolinices! He has certainly served under Bombastides Cluninstaridysarchides,” cried the host.* “Sporus, Niger, Tetraides, he declares he shall win the purse from you. Why, by the gods, each of your muscles is strong enough to stifle all his body, or *I* know nothing of the arena!”

“Ha!” said the gladiator, colouring with rising fury, “our lanista would tell a different story.”

“What story could he tell against me, vain Lydon?” said Tetraides, frowning.

“Or me, who have conquered in fifteen fights?” said the gigantic Niger, stalking up to the gladiator.

“Or me?” grunted Sporus, with eyes of fire.

* Miles Gloriosus, Act. I.; — as much as to say in modern phrase, “He has served under Bombastes Furioso.”

“Tush!” said Lydon, folding his arms, and regarding his rivals with a reckless air of defiance. “The time of trial will soon come; keep your valour till then.”

“Ay, do,” said the surly host; “and if I press down my thumb to save you, may the Fates cut my thread.”

“Your rope, you mean,” said Lydon, sneeringly; “here is a sesteree to buy one.”

The Titan wine-vender seized the hand extended to him, and griped it in so stern a vice that the blood spirted from the fingers’ ends over the garments of the bystanders.

They set up a savage laugh.

“I will teach thee, young braggart, to play the Macedonian with me. I am no puny Persian, I warrant thee! What, man! have I not fought twenty years in the ring and never lowered my arms once? and have I not received the rod from the Editor’s own hand as a sign of victory, and as a grace to retirement on my laurels? And am I now to be lectured by a boy?” So saying, he flung the hand from him in scorn.

Without changing a muscle, but with the same

smiling face with which he had previously taunted mine host, did the gladiator brave the painful grasp he had undergone. But no sooner was his hand released, than crouching for one moment as a wild cat crouches, you might see his hair bristle on his head and beard, and with a fierce and shrill yell he sprang on the throat of the giant with an impetus that threw him, vast and sturdy as he was, from his balance ;—and down, with the crash of a falling rock, he fell ;—while over him fell also his ferocious foe.

Our host perhaps had had no need of the rope so kindly recommended to him by Lydon, had he remained three minutes longer in that position. But, summoned to his assistance by the noise of his fall, a woman, who had hitherto kept in an inner apartment, rushed to the scene of battle. This new ally was in herself a match for the gladiator ; she was tall, lean, and with arms that could give other than soft embraces. In fact, the gentle helpmate of Burbo, the wine-seller, had like himself fought in the lists*—nay, under the

* Not only did women sometimes fight in the amphitheatres — but even those of noble birth participated in that meek ambition.

Emperor's eye. And Burbo himself, Burbo, the unconquered in the field, according to report, now and then yielded the palm to his soft Stratonice. This sweet creature no sooner saw the imminent peril that awaited her worse half, than without other weapons than those with which Nature had provided her, she darted upon the incumbent gladiator, and clasping him round the waist with her long and snake-like arms, lifted him with a sudden wrench from the body of her husband, leaving only his hands still clinging to the throat of his foe. So have we seen a dog snatched by the hind legs from the strife with a fallen rival, in the arms of some envious groom ; so have we seen one half of him high in air — passive and offenceless — while the other half, head, teeth, eyes, claws, seemed buried and engulfed in the mangled and prostrate enemy. Meanwhile the gladiators, lapped and pampered and glutted upon blood, crowded delightedly round the combatants—their nostrils distended—their lips grinning—their eyes gloatingly fixed on the bloody throat of the one—and the indented talons of the other.

“*Habet!* (he has got it!) *habet!*” cried they with a sort of yell, rubbing their nervous hands.

“*Non habeo*, ye liars, I have not *got* it,” shouted the host, as with a mighty effort he wrenched himself from those deadly hands, and rose to his feet breathless, panting, lacerated, bloody; and fronting with reeling eyes, the glaring look and grinning teeth of his baffled foe now struggling, (but struggling with disdain) in the gripe of the sturdy amazon.

“Fair play,” cried the gladiators, “one to one,” and crowding round Lydon and the woman, they separated our pleasing host from his courteous guest.

But Lydon, feeling ashamed at his present position, and endeavouring in vain to shake off the grasp of the virago, slipped his hand into his girdle, and drew forth a short knife. So menacing was his look, so brightly gleamed the blade, that Stratonice, who was used only to the fistie methods of battle, started back in alarm!

“O gods!” cried she, “the ruffian!—he has concealed weapons! is that fair? Is that like a gentleman and a gladiator? No indeed, I scorn

such fellows!" With that she contemptuously turned her back on the gladiator, and hastened to examine the condition of her husband.

But he, as much inured to these constitutional exercises as an English bull-dog is to a contest with a more gentle antagonist, had already recovered himself. The purple hues receded from the crimson surface of his cheek, the veins of the forehead retired into their wonted size. He shook himself with a complacent grunt, satisfied that he was still alive, and then looking at his foe from head to foot with an air of more approbation than he had ever bestowed upon him before—

"By Castor," said he, "thou art a stronger fellow than I took thee for! I see thou art a man of merit and virtue; give me thy hand, my hero."

"Jolly old Burbo!" cried the gladiators applauding, "staunch to the backbone—give him thy hand, Lydon."

"Oh, to be sure," said the gladiator: "but now I have tasted his blood, I long to lap the whole"—

"Per Herele!" returned my host, quite unmoved, "that is the true gladiator feeling. Pollux!

to think what good training may make a man ; why a beast could not be fiercer !”

“ A beast, O dullard ! we beat the beasts hollow !” cried Tetrades.

“ Well, well,” said Stratonice, who was now employed in smoothing her hair and adjusting her locks ; “ if ye are all good friends again, I recommend you to be quiet and orderly ; for some young noblemen, your patrons and backers, have sent to say, they will come here to pay you a visit— they wish to see you more at their ease than at the Schools, before they make up their bets on the great fight at the Amphitheatre. So they always come to my house for that purpose : they know we only receive the best gladiators in Pompeii— our society is very select, praised be the gods !”

“ Yes,” continued Burbo, drinking off a bowl, or rather a pail of wine, “ a man who has won my laurels can only encourage the brave. Lydon, drink, my boy ; may you have an honourable old age like mine !”

“ Come here,” said Stratonice, drawing her husband to her affectionately by the ears, in that

caress which Tibullus has so prettily described,
“Come here!”

“Not so hard, she-wolf, thou art worse than the gladiator,” murmured the huge jaws of Burbo.

“Hist!” said she, whispering him: “Calenus has just stole in, disguised, by the back way; I hope he has brought the sesterces.”

“Ho! ho! I will join him,” said Burbo; “meanwhile, I say, keep a sharp eye on the cups, attend to the score. Let them not cheat thee, wife; they are heroes to be sure, but then they are arrant rogues; Cacus was nothing to them.”

“Never fear me, fool,” was the conjugal reply; and Burbo, satisfied with the dear assurance, strode through the apartment, and sought the penetralia of his house.

“So those soft patrons are coming to look at our muscles,” said Niger: “who sent to previsa thee of it, my mistress?”

“Lepidus. He brings with him Clodius, the surest better in Pompeii, and the young Greek Glaucus.”

“A wager on a wager,” cried Tetraides: “Clo-

dus bets on me, for twenty sesterces! what say you, Lydon?"

"He bets on *me!*" said Lydon."

"No, on *me!*" granted Sporus.

"Dolts, do you think he would prefer any of you to Niger?" said the athletic, thus modestly naming himself.

"Well, well," said Stratonice, as she pierced a huge amphora for her guests, who had now seated themselves before one of the tables, "great men and brave, as ye all think yourselves, which of you will fight the Numidian lion, in case no malefactor should be found to deprive you of the option?"

"I who have escaped your arms, stout Stratonice," said Lydon, "might safely, I think, encounter the lion."

"But, tell me," said Tetraides, "where is that pretty young slave of yours, the blind girl, with bright eyes? I have not seen her a long time."

"Oh! she is too delicate for you, my son of Neptune,"* said the hostess, "and too nice even

* Son of Neptune, a Latin phrase for a boisterous, ferocious fellow.

for us, I think. We send her into the town to sell flowers and sing to the ladies; she makes us more money so, than she would by waiting on you. Besides, she has often other employments which lie under the rose."

"Other employments!" said Niger; "why she is too young for them."

"Silence, beast!" said Stratonice; "you think there is no play but the Corinthian. If Nydia were twice the age she is at present, she would be equally fit for Vesta, poor girl."

"But, harkye, Stratonice," said Lydon; "how didst thou come by so gentle and delicate a slave? she were more meet for the handmaid of some rich matron of Rome than for thee."

"That is true," returned Stratonice, "and some day or other I shall make my fortune by selling her. How came I by Nydia, thou askest?"

"Ay."

"Why, thou seest, my slave Staphyla,—thou rememberest Staphyla, Niger?"

"Ay, a large-handed wench, with a face like a comic mask. How should I forget her, by Pluto! whose handmaid she doubtless is at this moment."

“Tush, brute!—well, Staphyla died one day, and a great loss she was to me, and I went into the market to buy me another slave. But, by the gods, they were all grown so dear since I had bought poor Staphyla, and money was so scarce, that I was about to leave the place in despair, when a merchant plucked me by the robe: ‘Mistress,’ said he, ‘dost thou want a slave cheap,—I have a child to sell a bargain. She is but little and almost an infant it is true, but she is quick and quiet, docile and clever, sings well, and broiders, and is of good blood, I assure you.’ ‘Of what country?’ said I.’ ‘Thessalian.’ Now I knew the Thessalians were acute and gentle. So I said I would see the girl. I found her just as you see her now, scarcely smaller and scarcely younger in appearance. She looked patient and resigned enough, with her hands crossed on her bosom and her eyes downcast. I asked the merchant his price; it was moderate and I bought her at once. The merchant brought her to my house and disappeared in an instant. Well, my friends, guess my astonishment when I found she was blind. Ha! ha! a clever fellow that merchant! I ran at

once to the magistrates, but the rogue was already gone from Pompeii. So I was forced to go home in a very ill humour, I assure you: and the poor girl felt the effects of it too. But it was not her fault that she was blind, for she had been so from her birth. By degrees we got reconciled to our purchase. True, she had not the strength of Staphyla and was of very little use in the house, but she could soon find her way about the town, as well as if she had the eyes of Argus: and when one morning she brought us home a handful of sesterces, which she said she had got from selling some flowers she had gathered in our poor little garden, we thought the gods had sent her to us. So from that time, we let her go out as she likes, filling her basket with flowers which she wreaths into garlands after the Thessalian fashion, which pleases the gallants; and the great people seem to take a fancy to her, for they always pay her more than they do any other flower girl, and she brings all of it home to us, which is more than any other slave would do. So I work for myself, but I shall soon afford from her earnings to buy me a second Staphyla; doubtless the Thessalian kidnapper had

stolen the blind girl from gentle parents;* besides her skill in the garlands, she sings and plays on the cithara, which also brings money: and lately—but *that* is a secret."

"*That* is a secret—what!" cried Lydon, "art thou turned Sphynx?"

"Sphynx, no—why Sphynx?"

"Cease thy gabble, good mistress, and bring us our meat—I am hungry," said Sporus impatiently.

"And I too," echoed the grim Niger, whetting his knife on the palm of his hand.

The amazon stalked away to the kitchen, and soon returned with a tray laden with large pieces of meat half-raw; for so, as now, did the heroes of the prize-fight imagine they best sustained their hardihood and ferocity; they drew round the table with the eyes of famished wolves—the meat vanished, the wine flowed. So leave we those important personages of classic life, to follow the steps of Burbo.

* The Thessalian slave-merchants were celebrated for purloining persons of birth and education; they did not always spare those of their own country. Aristophanes sneers bitterly at that people, (proverbially treacherous,) for their unquenchable desire of gain by this barter of flesh.

CHAPTER II.

TWO WORTHIES.

IN the earlier times of Rome the priesthood was a profession, not of lucre, but of honour. It was embraced by the noblest citizens—it was forbidden to the plebeians. Afterwards, and long previous to the present date, it was equally open to all ranks—at least that part of the profession which embraced the flamens, or priests, not of religion generally, but of peculiar gods. Even the priest of Jupiter (the Flamen Dialis), preceded by a lictor, and entitled by his office to the entrance of the Senate, at first the especial dignity of the patricians, was subsequently the choice of the people. The less national and less honoured deities were usually served by plebeian ministers, and many embraced the profession, as now the Catholic Christians enter the monastic fraternity, less

from the impulse of devotion than the suggestions of a calculating poverty. Thus Calenus, the priest of Isis, was of the lowest origin. His relations, though not his parents, were freedmen. He had received from them a liberal education, and from his father a small patrimony which he had soon exhausted. He embraced the priesthood as a last resource from distress. Whatever the state emoluments of the sacred profession, which at that time were probably small, the officers of a popular temple could never complain of the profits of their calling. There is no profession so lucrative as that which practises on the superstition of the multitude.

Calenus had but one surviving relative at Pompeii, and that was Burbo. Various dark and disreputable ties, stronger than those of blood, united together their hearts and interests; and often the minister of Isis stole disguised and furtively from the supposed austerity of his devotions—and gliding through the back-door of the retired gladiator, a man infamous alike by vices and by profession, rejoiced to throw off the last rag of an hypocrisy which, but for the dictates of avarice, his ruling

passion, would at all times have sat clumsily upon a nature too brutal for even the mimicry of virtue.

Wrapt in one of those large mantles which came in use among the Romans in proportion as they dismissed the toga, whose ample folds well concealed the form, and in which a sort of hood (attached to it) afforded no less a security to the features, Calenus now sate in the small and private chamber of the wine-seller, from which a small faux, or passage, ran at once to that back entrance with which nearly all the houses of Pompeii were furnished.

Opposite to him sat the sturdy Burbo, carefully counting, on a table between them, a little pile of coins which the priest had just poured from his purse, for purses were as common then as now, with this difference—they were usually better furnished!

“ You see,” said Calenus, “ that we pay you handsomely, and you ought to thank me for recommending you to so advantageous a market.”

“ I do, my cousin, I do,” replied Burbo affectionately, as he swept the coins into a leathern receptacle which he then deposited in his girdle, drawing the buckle round his capacious waist more

closely than he was wont to do in the lax hours of his domestic avocations. "And by Isis, Pisis, and Nysis, or whatever other gods there may be in Egypt, my little Nydia is a very Hesperides, a garden of gold, to me."

"She sings well, and plays like a muse," returned Calenus; "those are virtues that he who employs me always pays liberally."

"He is a god," cried Burbo, enthusiastically; "every rich man, who is generous, deserves to be worshipped. But come, a cup of wine, old friend, tell me more about it. What does she do? she is frightened, talks of her oath, and reveals nothing."

"Nor will I, by my right hand; I too have taken that terrible oath of secrecy."

"Oath! what are oaths to men like us?"

"True, oaths of a common fashion; but this!" —and the stalwart priest shuddered as he spoke. "Yet," he continued, in emptying a huge cup of unmixed wine, "I will own to thee, that it is not so much the oath that I dread, as the vengeance of him who proposed it. By the gods! he is a mighty sorcerer, and could draw my confession from the

moon, did I dare to make it to her. Talk no more of this. By Pollux, wild as those banquets are which I enjoy with him, I am never quite at my ease there. I love, my boy, one jolly hour with thee, and one of the plain, unsophisticated, laughing girls that I meet in this chamber, all smokedried though it be, better than whole nights of those magnificent debauches."

"Ho! sayest thou so! to-morrow night, please the gods, we will have then a snug carousel."

"With all my heart," said the priest, rubbing his hands, and drawing himself nearer to the table.

At this moment, they heard a slight noise at the door, as of one feeling the handle. The priest lowered the cowl over his head.

"Tush," whispered the host, "it is but the blind girl," as Nydia opened the door and entered the apartment.

"Ho! girl, and how dost thou? thou lookest pale, thou hast kept late revels? No matter, the young must be always the young," said Burbo, encouragingly.

The girl made no answer, but she dropped on one of the seats with an air of lassitude. Her

colour went and came rapidly ; she beat the floor impatiently with her small feet, then she suddenly raised her face, and said with a determined voice—

“ Master, you may starve me if you will, you may beat me, you may threaten me with death, but I will go no more to that unholy place.”

“ How, fool !” said Burbo, in a savage voice, and his heavy brows met darkly over his fierce and bloodshot eyes ; “ How, rebellious ! take care.”

“ I have said it,” said the poor^o girl, crossing her hands on her breast.

“ What ! my modest one, sweet vestal, thou wilt go no more : very well, thou shalt be carried.”

“ I will raise the city with my cries,” said she, passionately, and the colour mounted to her brow.

“ We will take care of that, too ; thou shalt go gagged.”

“ Then may the gods help me !” said Nydia, rising ; “ I will appeal to the magistrates.”

“ *Thine oath, remember !*” said a hollow voice, as for the first time Calenus joined in the dialogue.

At those words, a trembling shook the frame of the unfortunate girl; she clasped her hands imploringly. "Wretch that I am," she cried, and burst violently into sobs.

Whether, or not, it was the sound of that vehement sorrow which brought the gentle Stratonice to the spot, her grisly form at this moment appeared in the chamber.

"How now, what hast thou been doing with my slave, brute?" said she, angrily, to Burbo.

"Be quiet, wife," said he, in a tone half sullen, half timid; "you want new girdles and fine clothes, do you? Well then, take care of your slave, or you may want them long. *Væ capiti tuo*—vengeance on thy head, wretched one!"

"What is this?" said the hag, looking from one to the other.

Nydia started as by a sudden impulse from the wall, against which she had leant; she threw herself at the feet of Stratonice; she embraced her knees, and looking up at her with those sightless, but touching eyes—

"O my mistress!" sobbed she, "you are a woman, you have had sisters, you have been

young like me, feel for me, save me ! I will go to those horrible feasts no more."

"Stuff," said the hag, dragging her up rudely by one of those delicate hands, fit for no harsher labour than that of weaving the flowers which made her pleasure or her trade ; "stuff ! these fine scruples are not for slaves."

"Harkye," said Burbo, drawing forth his purse, and chinking its contents ; "you hear this music, wife ; by Pollux, if you do not break in you colt with a tight rein, you will hear it no more."

"The girl is tired," said Stratonice, nodding to Calenus ; "she will be more docile when you next want her."

"*You ! you !* who is here ?" cried Nydia, casting her eyes round the apartment with so fearful and straining a survey, that Calenus rose in alarm from his seat—

"She *must* see with those eyes !" muttered he.

"Who is here ? Speak, in heaven's name ! Ah, if you were blind like me, you would be less cruel," said she ; and she again burst into tears.

“Take her away,” said Burbo, impatiently ;
“I hate these whimperings.”

“Come,” said Stratonice, pushing the poor child by the shoulders.

Nydia drew herself aside, with an air to which resolution gave dignity.

“Hear me,” she said, “I have served you faithfully—I, who was brought up—Ah ! my mother, my poor mother ! didst thou dream I should come to this ?” She dashed the tear from her eyes, and proceeded—“Command me in aught else, and I will obey ; but, I tell you now, hard, stern, inexorable as you are, I tell you, that I will go there no more ; or, if I am forced there, that I will implore the mercy of the Prætor himself—I have said it : hear me, ye gods, I swear !”

The hag’s eyes glowed with fire ; she seized the child by the hair, with one hand, and raised on high the other—that formidable right hand, the least blow of which seemed capable to crush the frail and delicate form that trembled in her grasp. That thought itself appeared to strike her, for she suspended the blow, changed her purpose,

and dragging Nydia to the wall, seized from a hook a rope, often, alas ! applied to a similar purpose ; and the next moment, the shrill, the agonized shrieks of the blind girl, rang piercingly through the house.

CHAPTER III.

GLAUCUS MAKES A PURCHASE THAT AFTERWARDS
COSTS HIM DEAR.

“HOLLO, my brave fellows!” said Lepidus, stooping his head, as he entered the low door-way of the house of Burbo. “We have come to see which of you most honours your lanista.” The gladiators rose from the table, in respect to three gallants, known to be among the gayest and richest youths of Pompeii, and whose voices were therefore the dispensers of amphitheatrical reputation.

“What fine animals,” said Clodius to Glaucus; “worthy to be gladiators.”

“It is a pity they are not warriors,” returned Glaucus.

A singular thing it was to see the dainty and fastidious Lepidus, whom in a banquet a ray of daylight seemed to blind, whom in the bath a breeze of air seemed to blast, in whom Nature seemed twisted and perverted from every natural

impulse, and curdled into one dubious thing of effeminacy and art ;—a singular thing was it to see this Lepidus, now all eagerness, and energy, and life, patting the vast shoulders of the gladiators with a blanched and girlish hand, feeling with a mincing gripe their great brawn and iron muscles, all lost in calculating admiration at that manhood which he had spent his life in carefully banishing from himself.

So have we seen at this day, the beardless flutterers of the saloons of London, thronging round the heroes of the Fivescourt—so have we seen them admire and gaze, and calculate a bet—so have we seen meet together in ludicrous yet in melancholy assemblage—the two extremes of civilized society—the patrons of pleasure and its slaves—vilest of all slaves—at once ferocious and mercenary ;—male prostitutes who sell their strength, as women their beauty ; beasts in act, but outdoing the beasts in motive, for the last at least do not mangle themselves for money !

“ Ha ! Niger, how will you fight,” said Lepidus, “ and with whom ? ”

“ Sporus challenges me,” said the grim giant ; “ we shall fight to the death, I hope.”

“Ah! to be sure,” grunted Sporus, with a twinkle of his small eye.

“He takes the sword, I the net and the trident: it will be rare sport. I hope the survivor will have enough to keep up the dignity of the crown.”

“Never fear, we ’ll fill the purse, my Hector,” said Clodius; “let me see, you fight against Niger? Glaucus, a bet—I back Niger.”

“I told you so,” cried Niger exultingly. “The noble Clodius knows me; count yourself dead already, my Sporus.”

Clodius took out his tablet, “A bet, ten sester-tia.* What say you?”

“So be it,” said Glaucus, “but whom have we here? I never saw this hero before,” and he glanced at Lydon, whose limbs were slighter than those of his companions, and who had something of grace, and something even of noble in his face, which his profession had not yet wholly destroyed.

“It is Lydon, a youngster, practised only with the wooden sword as yet,” answered Niger condescendingly. “But he has the true blood in him, and has challenged Tetraides.”

* A little more than 30*l.*

“*He challenged me,*” said Lydon, “I accept the offer.”

“And how do you fight?” asked Lepidus: “Chut, my boy, wait a while before you contend with Tetrades.” Lydon smiled disdainfully.

“Is he a citizen or a slave?” said Clodius.

“A citizen, we are all citizens here,” quoth Niger.

“Stretch out your arm, my Lydon,” said Lepidus, with the air of a connoisseur.

The gladiator, with a significant glance at his companions, extended an arm which, if not so huge in its girth as those of his comrades, was so firm in its muscles—so beautifully symmetrical in its proportions, that the three visitors uttered simultaneously an admiring exclamation.

“Well, man, what is your weapon?” said Clodius, tablet in hand.

“We are to fight first with the cestus; afterwards, if both survive, with swords,” returned Tetrades, sharply, and with an envious scowl.

“With the cestus,” cried Glaucus, “there you are wrong, Lydon. The cestus is the Greek fashion, I know it well. You should have encouraged flesh

for that contest ; you are far too thin for it—avoid the cestus.”

“ I cannot,” said Lydon.

“ And why ?”

“ I have said—because he has challenged me.”

“ But he will not hold you to the precise weapon.”

“ My honour holds me !” returned Lydon proudly.

“ I bet on Tetraides, two to one, at the cestus,” said Clodius ; “ shall it be, Lepidus ?—even betting, with swords.”

“ If you give me three to one, I will not take the odds,” said Lepidus ; “ Lydon will never come to the swords. You are mighty courteous.”

“ What say you, Glaucus ?” said Clodius.

“ I will take the odds three to one.”

“ Ten sestertia to thirty ?”

“ Yes.”*

Clodius wrote the bet in his book.

“ Pardon me, noble sponsor mine,” said Lydon

* The reader will not confound the *sestertii* with the *sestertia*. A *sestertium*, which was a *sum* not a *coin*, was a thousand times the value of a *sestertius* ; the first was equivalent to 8*l.* 1*s.* 5½*d.* the last to 1*d.* 3¼ farthings of our money.

in a low voice to Glaucus, "but how much think you the victor will gain?"

"How much? why, perhaps seven sestertia."

"You are sure it will be as much?"

"At least. But out on you! — a Greek would have thought of the honour, and not the money. Oh! Romans, everywhere ye are Romans!"

A blush mantled over the bronzed cheek of the gladiator.

"Do not wrong me, noble Glaucus; I think of both, but I should never have been a gladiator but for the money."

"Base! mayest thou fall! A miser never was a hero."

"I am not a miser," said Lydon haughtily, and he withdrew to the other end of the room.

"But I don't see Burbo, where is Burbo? I must talk with Burbo," cried Clodius.

"He is within," said Niger, pointing to the door at the extremity of the room.

"And Stratonice, the brave old lass, where is she?" quoth Lepidus.

"Why, she was here just before you entered, but she heard something that displeased her yonder

and vanished. Pollux! old Burbo had perhaps caught hold of some girl in the back-room. I heard a female's voice crying out; the old dame is as jealous as Juno.'

"Ho! excellent," cried Lepidus, laughing. "Come, Clodius, let us go shares with Jupiter,—perhaps he has caught a Leda."

At this moment a loud cry of pain and terror startled the group.

"Oh, spare me! spare me! I am but a child, I am blind,—is not *that* punishment enough?"

"O Pallas! I know that voice, it is my poor flower girl!" exclaimed Glaucus, and he darted at once into the quarter whence the cry rose.

He burst the door, he beheld Nydia writhing in the grasp of the infuriate hag; the cord, already dabbled with blood, was raised in the air, it was suddenly arrested.

"Fury!" said Glaucus, and with his left hand he caught Nydia from her grasp. "How dare ye use thus a girl,—one of your own sex,—a child?—My Nydia, my poor infant!"

"Oh! is that you, is that Glaucus," exclaimed the flower girl, in a tone almost of transport; the

tears stood arrested on her cheek, she smiled, she clung to his breast, she kissed his robe as she clung.

“And how dare you, pert stranger, interfere between a free woman and her slave! By the gods! despite your fine tunic and your filthy perfumes, I doubt whether you are even a Roman citizen, my mannikin.”

“Fair words, mistress, fair words,” said Clodius, now entering with Lepidus. “This is my friend and sworn brother; he must be put under shelter of your tongue, sweet one; it rains stones!”

“Give me my slave!” shrieked the virago, placing her mighty grasp on the breast of the Greek.

“Not if all your sister Furies could help you,” answered Glaucus. “Fear not, sweet Nydia; an Athenian never forsook distress!”

“Hollo!” said Burbo, rising reluctantly, “what turmoil is all this about a slave; let go the young gentleman, wife—let him go—for his sake the pert thing shall be spared this once.” So saying, he drew, or rather dragged, off his ferocious helpmate.

“Methought when we entered,” said Clodius, “there was another man present.”

“He is gone.”

For the priest of Isis had indeed thought it high time to vanish.

“ Oh, a friend of mine ! a brother cupman, a quiet dog, who does not love these snarlings,” said Burbo carelessly. “ But go, child, you will tear the gentleman’s tunic if you cling to him so tight ; go, you are pardoned.”

“ Oh, do not, do not forsake me !” cried Nydia, clinging yet closer to the Athenian.

Moved by her forlorn situation, her appeal to him, her own innumerable and touching graces, the Greek seated himself on one of the rude chairs. He held her on his knees—he wiped the blood from her shoulders with his long hair—he kissed the tears from her cheeks—he whispered to her a thousand of those soothing words with which we calm the grief of a child ;—and so beautiful did he seem in his gentle and consoling task, that even the fierce heart of Stratonice was touched. His presence seemed to shed light over that base and obscene haunt—young, beautiful, glorious, he was the emblem of all that earth made most happy comforting one that earth had abandoned !

“ Well, who could have thought our blind Nydia

had been so honoured," said the virago, wiping her heated brow.

Glaucus looked up at Burbo.

"My good man," said he, "this is your slave; she sings well, she is accustomed to the care of flowers, I wish to make a present of such a slave to a lady. Will you sell her to me?" As he spoke he felt the whole frame of the poor girl tremble with delight; she started up, she put her dishevelled hair from her eyes, she looked around, as if, alas! she had the power to *see*!

"Sell our Nydia! no, indeed," said Stratonice, gruffly.

Nydia sank back with a long sigh, and again clasped the robe of her protector.

"Nonsense," said Clodius imperiously, "you must oblige me. What, man! what, old dame! offend me, and your trade is ruined. Is not Burbo my kinsman Pansa's client? Am I not the oracle of the amphitheatre and its heroes? If I say the word, break up your wine-jars, you sell no more; Glaucus, the slave is yours."

Burbo scratched his huge head in evident embarrassment.

“ The girl is worth her weight in gold to me.”

“ Name your price, I am rich,” said Glaucus.

The antient Italians were like the modern, there was nothing they would not sell, much less a poor blind girl.

“ I paid six sestertia for her, she is worth twelve now,” muttered Stratonice.

“ You shall have twenty; come to the magistrates at once, and then to my house for your money.”

“ I would not have sold the dear girl for a hundred, but to oblige noble Clodius,” said Burbo whiningly. “ And you will speak to Pansa about the place of *designator* at the amphitheatre, noble Clodius; it would just suit me.”

“ Thou shalt have it,” said Clodius; adding in a whisper to Burbo, “ yon Greek can make your fortune; money runs through him like a sieve; mark to-day with white chalk, my Priam.”

“ *An dabis?*” said Glaucus, in the formal question of sale and barter.

“ *Dabitur,*” answered Burbo.

“ Then, then, I am to go with you,—with you, O happiness!” murmured Nydia.

“ Pretty one, yes ; and thy hardest task henceforth shall be to sing thy Grecian hymns to the loveliest lady in Pompeii.”

The girl sprang from his clasp, a change came over her whole face, so bright the instant before ; she sighed heavily, and then once more taking his hand, she said,

“ I thought I was to go to *your* house.”

“ And so thou shalt for the present ; come—we lose time.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE RIVAL OF GLAUCUS PRESSES ONWARD IN THE
RACE.

IONE was one of those brilliant characters which, but once or twice, flash across our career. She united in the highest perfection the rarest of earthly gifts—Genius and Beauty. No one ever possessed superior intellectual qualities without knowing them—the alliteration of modesty and merit is pretty enough, but where merit is great, the veil of that modesty you admire never disguises its extent from its possessor. It is the proud consciousness of certain qualities that it cannot reveal to the every-day world, that gives to genius that shy and reserved and troubled air, which puzzles and flatters you when you encounter it. Do not deceive yourself, vain worldling, by the thought that the embarrassed manner of your great man is a sign that

he does not know his superiority to you!—that which you take for modesty is but the struggle of self-esteem. He knows but too oppressively how immeasurably greater he is than you, and is only disconcerted, because, in the places you encounter him, he finds himself suddenly descended to your level. He has not conversation—he has not thoughts—he has not intercourse with such as you—it is *your* littleness that disconcerts him, not his own!

Ione, then, knew her genius, but, with that charming versatility that belongs of right to women, she had the faculty, so few of a kindred genius in the less malleable sex can claim;—the faculty to bend and model her graceful intellect to all whom it encountered. The sparkling fountain threw its waters alike upon the strand, the cavern, and the flowers; it refreshed, it smiled, it dazzled everywhere. That pride, which is the necessary result of superiority, she wore easily—in her breast it concentrated itself in independence. She pursued thus her own bright and solitary path. She asked no aged matron to direct and guide her—she walked alone by the

torch of her own unflickering purity. She obeyed no tyrannical and absolute custom. She moulded custom to her own will, but this so delicately and with so feminine a grace, so perfect an exemption from error, that you could not say she *outraged* custom, but *commanded* it. It was possible not to love Ione; perhaps she seemed too high for the love of vulgar natures; but if you did once love her, it was to adoration. The wealth of her graces was inexhaustible—she beautified the commonest action; a word, a look from her, seemed magic. Love her and you entered into a new world, you passed from this trite and commonplace earth. You were in a land in which your eyes saw everything through an enchanted medium. In her presence you felt as if listening to exquisite music; you were steeped in that sentiment which has so little of earth in it, and which music so well inspires—that intoxication which refines and exalts, which seizes, it is true, the senses, but gives them the character of the soul.

She was peculiarly formed then to command and fascinate the less ordinary and the bolder natures of men; to love her was to unite two passions,

that of love and of ambition—you aspired when you adored her. It was no wonder that she had completely chained and subdued the mysterious but burning soul of the Egyptian, a man in whom dwelt the fiercest passions. Her beauty and her soul alike enthralled him.

Set apart himself from the common world, he loved that daringness of character which also made itself among common things aloof and alone. He did not, or he would not see, that that very isolation put her yet more from him than from the vulgar. Far as the poles—far as the night from day, his solitude was divided from hers. He was solitary from his dark and solemn vices—she from her beautiful fancies, and her purity of virtue.

If it was not strange that Ione thus enthralled the Egyptian, far less strange was it that she had captured, as suddenly as irrevocably, the bright and sunny heart of the Athenian. The gladness of a temperament which seemed woven from the beams of light, had led Glaucus into pleasure. He obeyed no more vicious dictates, when he wandered into the dissipations of his time, than the exhilarating voices of youth and health. He threw

the brightness of his nature over every abyss and cavern through which he strayed. His imagination dazzled him, but his heart never was corrupted. Far more penetrating than his companions deemed, he saw that they sought to prey upon his riches and his youth, but he despised wealth save as the means of enjoyment, and youth was the great sympathy that united him to them. He felt, it is true, the impulse of nobler thoughts and higher aims than in pleasure could be indulged: but the world was one vast prison, to which the Sovereign of Rome was the Imperial gaoler;—and the very virtues, which in the free days of Athens would have made him ambitious, in the slavery of earth, made him inactive and supine. For in that unnatural and bloated civilization, all that was noble in emulation was forbidden. Ambition in the regions of a despotic and luxurious court, was but the contest of flattery and craft. Avarice had become the sole ambition—men desired prætorships and provinces only as the licence to pillage, and government was but the excuse of rapine. It is in small States that glory is most active and pure—the more confined the limits of the circle,

the more ardent the patriotism. Opinion is concentrated and strong—every eye reads your actions—your public motives are blended with your private ties—every spot in your narrow sphere is crowded with forms familiar since your childhood—the applause of your citizens is like the caresses of your friends. But in large States, the city is but the court; the provinces—unknown to you, unfamiliar in customs, perhaps in language,—have no claim on your patriotism, the ancestry of their inhabitants is not yours. In the court you desire favour instead of glory; at a distance from the court public opinion has vanished from you, and self-interest has no counterpoise.

Italy, Italy, while I write, your skies are over me—your seas flow beneath my feet, listen not to the blind policy which would unite all your crested cities, mourning for their republic, into one empire; false, pernicious delusion! your only hope of regeneration is in division. Florence, Milan, Venice, Genoa, may be free once more, if each is free. But dream not of freedom for the whole while you enslave the parts; the heart must be the centre of the system, the blood must circu-

late freely everywhere ; and in vast communities, you behold but a bloated and feeble giant, whose brain is imbecile, whose limbs are dead, and who pays in disease and weakness the penalty of transcending the natural proportions of health and vigour.

Thus thrown back upon themselves, the more ardent qualities of Glaucus found no vent, save in that overflowing imagination, which gave grace to pleasure and poetry to thought. Ease was less despicable than contention with parasites and slaves, and luxury could yet be refined though ambition could not be ennobled. But all that was best and brightest in his soul woke at once when he knew Ione. Here was an empire—worthy of demigods to attain ; here was a glory, which the reeking smoke of a foul society could not soil or dim. Love in every time, in every state, can thus find space for its golden altars. And tell me if there ever, even in the ages most favourable to glory, could be a triumph more exalted and elating than the conquest of one noble heart ?

And whether it was that this sentiment inspired him, his ideas glowed more brightly—his soul

seemed more awake and more visible in Ione's presence. If natural to love her, it was natural that she should return the passion. Young, brilliant, eloquent, enamoured, and Athenian, he was to her as the incarnation of the poetry of her fathers' land. They were not like creatures of a world in which strife and sorrow are the elements; they were like things to be seen only in the holiday of Nature, so glorious and so fresh was their youth, their beauty, and their love. They seemed out of place in the harsh and every-day earth; they belonged of right to the Saturnian age, and the dreams of demigod and nymph. It was as if the poetry of life gathered and fed itself in them, and in their hearts were concentrated the last rays of the Sun of Delos and of Greece.

But if Ione was independent in her choice of life, so was her modest pride proportionably vigilant and easily alarmed. The falsehood of the Egyptian was invented by a deep knowledge of her nature. The story of coarseness—of indelicacy in Glaucus, stung her to the quick. She felt it a reproach upon her character and her career, a punishment above all to her love; she felt, for the

first time, how suddenly she had yielded to that love; she blushed with shame at a weakness, the extent of which she was startled to perceive; she imagined it was that weakness which had incurred the contempt of Glaucus; she endured the bitterest curse of noble natures—*humiliation!*—Yet her love, perhaps, was no less alarmed than her pride. If one moment she murmured reproaches upon Glaucus—if one moment she renounced, she almost hated, him—at the next she burst into passionate tears, her heart yielded to its softness, and she said in the bitterness of anguish, “He despises me—he does not love me!”

From the hour the Egyptian had left her, she had retired to her most secluded chamber—she had shut out her hand-maids—she had denied herself to the crowds that besieged her door. Glaucus was excluded with the rest; he wondered, but he guessed not why! He never attributed to his Ione—his queen—his goddess—that womanlike caprice of which the love-poets of Italy so unceasingly complain. He imagined her, in the majesty of her candour, above all the arts that torture. He was troubled, but his hopes were not

dimmed, for he knew already that he loved and was beloved ; what more could he desire as an amulet against fear ?

At deepest night, then, when the streets were hushed, and the high moon only beheld his devotions, he stole to that temple of his heart—her home ;* and wooed her after the beautiful fashion of his country. He covered her threshold with the richest garlands, in which every flower was a volume of sweet passion, and he charmed the long summer night with the sound of the Lycian lute ; and verses, which the inspiration of the moment sufficed to weave.

But the window above opened not ; no smile made yet more holy the shining air of night. All was still and dark. He knew not if his verse was welcome, and his suit was heard.

Yet Ione slept not, nor disdained to hear. Those soft strains ascended to her chamber ; they soothed—they subdued her. While she listened, she believed nothing against her lover ; but when they were stilled at last, and his step departed, the

* Athenæus—“ The true temple of Cupid is the house of the beloved one.”

spell ceased ; and, in the bitterness of her soul, she almost conceived in that delicate flattery, a new affront.

I said she was denied to all ; but there was one exception—there was one person who would not be denied, assuming over her actions and her house something like the authority of a parent: Arbaces, for himself, claimed an exemption from all the ceremonies observed by others. He entered the threshold with the licence of one who feels that he is privileged, and at home. He made his way to her solitude, and with that sort of quiet and unapologetic air, which seemed to consider the right as a thing of course. With all the independence of Ione's character, his art had enabled him to obtain a secret and powerful control over her mind. She could not shake it off ; sometimes she desired to do so ; but she never actively struggled against it. She was fascinated by his serpent eye. He arrested, he commanded her, by the magic of a mind long accustomed to awe and to subdue. Utterly unaware of his real character, or his hidden love, she felt for him the reverence which genius feels for wisdom, and virtue for sanctity.

She regarded him as one of those mighty sages of old, who attained to the mysteries of knowledge by an exemption from the passions of their kind. She scarcely considered him as a being, like herself, of the earth, but as an oracle at once dark and sacred. She did not love him, but she feared. His presence was unwelcome to her; it dimmed her spirit even in its brightest mood; he seemed with his chilling and lofty aspect, like some eminence which casts a shadow over the sun. But she never thought of forbidding his visits. She was passive under the influence which created in her breast, not the repugnance, but something of the stiffness, of terror.

Arbaces himself now resolved to exert all his arts to possess himself of that treasure he so burningly coveted. He was cheered and elated by his conquest over her brother. From the hour in which Apæcides fell beneath the voluptuous sorcery of that fête which we have described, he felt his empire over the young priest triumphant and ensured. He knew that there is no victim so thoroughly subdued, as a young and fervent man, for the

first time, delivered to the thralldom of the senses.

When Apæcides recovered, with the morning light, from the profound sleep which succeeded to the delirium of wonder and of pleasure, he was, it is true, ashamed—terrified—appalled. His vows of austerity and celibacy echoed in his ear; his thirst after holiness—had it been quenched at so unhalloved a stream? But Arbaces knew well the means by which to confirm his conquest. From the arts of pleasure, he led the young priest at once to those of his mysterious wisdom. He bared to his amazed eyes the initiatory secrets of the sombre philosophy of the Nile—those secrets plucked from the stars, and the wild chemistry, which in those days, when reason herself was but the creature of imagination, might well pass for the lore of a diviner magic. He seemed to the young eyes of the priest, as a being above mortality, and endowed with supernatural gifts. That yearning and intense desire for the knowledge which is not of earth—which had burnt from his boyhood in the heart of the priest—was dazzled, until it confused and mastered his clearer

sense. He gave himself to the art which thus addressed at once the two strongest of human passions, that of pleasure, and that of knowledge. He was loth to believe that one so wise could err—that one so lofty could stoop to deceive. Entangled in the dark web of metaphysical moralities, he caught at the excuse by which the Egyptian converted vice into a virtue. His pride was insensibly flattered that Arbaces had deigned to rank him with himself—to set him apart from the laws which bound the vulgar—to make him an august participator, both in the mystic studies, and the magic fascinations, of his solitude. The pure and stern lessons of that creed to which Olinthus had sought to make him convert, were swept away from his memory by the deluge of new passions. And the Egyptian, who was versed in the articles of that true faith, and who soon learned from his pupil the effect which had been produced upon him by its believers, sought, not unskillfully, to undo that effect, by a tone of reasoning, half sarcastic, and half earnest.

“This faith,” said he, “is but a borrowed plagiarism, from one of the many allegories invented by

our priests of old. Observe," he added, pointing to a hieroglyphical scroll—"observe, in these antient figures, the origin of the Christian's Trinity. Here are also three Gods—the Deity—the Spirit—and the Son. Observe that the epithet of the Son is 'Saviour'—observe, that the sign by which his human qualities are denoted, is the cross.* Note here, too, the mystic history of Osiris, how he put on death—how he lay in the grave, and how, thus fulfilling a solemn atonement, he rose again from the dead! In these stories we but design to paint an allegory from the operations of nature, and the evolutions of the eternal heavens. But, the allegory unknown, the types themselves have furnished to credulous nations the materials of many creeds. They have travelled to the vast plains of India; they have mixed themselves up in the visionary speculations of the Greek: becoming more and more gross and embodied, as they emerge farther from the shadows of their antique origin, they have assumed a human and palpable form in this novel faith; and the believers of

* The believer will draw from this vague coincidence a very different corollary than that of the Egyptian.

Galilee are but the unconscious repeaters of one of the superstitions of the Nile !”

This was the last argument which completely subdued the priest. It was necessary to him as to all — to believe in something ; — and undivided and, at last, unreluctant, he surrendered himself to that belief which Arbaces inculcated, and which all that was human in passion—all that was flattering in vanity—all that was alluring in pleasure—served to invite to, and contributed to confirm.

This conquest thus easily made, the Egyptian could now give himself wholly up to the pursuit of a far dearer and mightier object ; and he hailed, in his success with the brother, an omen of his triumph over the sister.

He had seen Ione on the day following the revel we have witnessed ; and which was also the day after he had poisoned her mind against his rival. The next day, and the next, he saw her also, and each time he laid himself out with consummate art, partly to confirm her impression against Glaucus, and principally to prepare her for the impressions he desired her to receive. The proud Ione took care to conceal the anguish she endured ; and the

pride of woman has an hypocrisy, which can deceive the most penetrating, and shame the most astute. But Arbaces was no less cautious not to recur to a subject which he felt it was most politic to treat as of the lightest importance. He knew that by dwelling much upon the fault of a rival, you only give him dignity in the eyes of your mistress: the wisest plan is, neither loudly to hate, nor bitterly to condemn: the wisest plan is, to lower him by an indifference of tone, as if you could not dream that *he* could be loved. Your safety is in concealing the wound to your own pride, and imperceptibly alarming that of the umpire, whose voice is fate! Such, in all times, will be the policy of one, who knows the science of the sex—it was now the Egyptian's.

He recurred no more then to the presumption of Glaucus: he mentioned his name, but not more often than that of Clodius or of Lepidus. He affected to class them together, as things of a low and ephemeral species; as things wanting nothing of the butterfly, save its innocence and its grace. Sometimes he slightly alluded to some invented debauch, in which he declared them com-

panions: sometimes he reverted to them as the antipodes of those lofty and spiritual natures, to whose order that of Ione belonged. Blinded alike by the pride of Ione, and, perhaps, by his own, he dreamed not that she already loved; but he dreaded lest she might have formed for Glaucus the first fluttering prepossessions that lead to love. And, secretly, he ground his teeth in rage and jealousy, when he reflected on the youth, the fascinations, and the brilliancy of that formidable rival he pretended to undervalue.

It was on the fourth day from the date of the close of the previous book, that Arbaces and Ione sate together.

“ You wear your veil at home,” said the Egyptian; “ that is not fair to those whom you honour with your friendship.”

“ But, to Arbaces,” answered Ione, who, indeed, had cast the veil over her features, to conceal eyes red with weeping—“ to Arbaces, who looks only to the mind, what matters it that the face is concealed.”

“ I do look only to the mind,” replied the Egyp-

tian; “show me then your face—for there I shall see it!”

“You grow gallant in the air of Pompeii,” said Ione, with a forced tone of gaiety.

“Do you think, fair Ione, that it is only at Pompeii that I have learned to value you.” The Egyptian’s voice trembled—he paused for a moment, and then resumed.

“There is a love, beautiful Greek, which is not the love only of the thoughtless and the young—there is a love which sees not with the eyes, which hears not with the ears; but in which soul is enamoured of soul. The countryman of thy ancestors, the cave-nursed Plato, dreamed of such a love—his followers have sought to imitate it; but it is a love that is not for the herd to echo—it is a love that only high and noble natures can conceive—it hath nothing in common with the sympathies and ties of coarse affection;—wrinkles do not revolt it—the homeliness of feature does not deter—it asks youth, it is true—but it asks it only in the freshness of the emotions—it asks beauty, it is true—but it is the beauty of the thought and of

the spirit. Such is the love, O Ione, which is a worthy offering to thee, from the cold and the austere. Austere and cold thou deemest me—such is the love that I venture to lay upon thy shrine—thou canst receive it without a blush.”

“And its name is Friendship!” replied Ione; her answer was innocent—yet it sounded like the reproof of one conscious of the design of the speaker.

“Friendship!” said Arbaces, vehemently; “No, that is a word too often profaned, to apply to a sentiment so sacred. Friendship! it is a tie that binds fools and profligates! Friendship! it is the bond that unites the frivolous hearts of a Glaucus and a Clodius! Friendship! no, *that* is an affection of earth, of vulgar habits and sordid sympathies; the feeling of which I speak, is borrowed from the stars*—it partakes of that mystic and ineffable yearning, which we feel when we gaze on them—it burns—yet it purifies—it is the lamp of Naphtha in the alabaster vase—glowing with fragrant odours, but shining only through the purest vessels. No; it is not love, and it is not friendship, that Arbaces feels for Ione. Give it no

* Plato.

name — earth has no name for it — it is not of earth — why debase it with earthly epithets, and earthly associations.”

Never before had Arbaces ventured so far, yet he felt his ground step by step; he knew that he uttered a language which, if at this day of affected platonisms, would speak unequivocally to the ears of beauty, was at that time strange and unfamiliar, to which no precise idea could be attached, from which he could imperceptibly advance or recede, as occasion suited; as hope encouraged, or fear deterred. Ione trembled, though she knew not why; her veil hid her features, and masked an expression, which, if seen by the Egyptian, would have at once damped and enraged him; in fact, he never was more displeasing to her — the harmonious modulation of the most suasive voice that ever disguised unhallowed thought, fell discordantly on her ear. Her whole soul was still filled with the image of Glaucus; and the accent of tenderness from another, only revolted and dismayed; yet she did not conceive that any passion more ardent than that platonism which Arbaces expressed, lurked beneath his words. She thought that he,

in truth, spoke only of the affection and sympathy of the soul ; but was it not precisely that affection and that sympathy which had made a part of those emotions she felt for Glaucus ; and could any other footstep than his approach the haunted adytus of her heart ?

Anxious at once to change the conversation, she replied, therefore, with a cold and indifferent voice, “ Whomsoever Arbaces honours with the sentiments of esteem, it is natural that his elevated wisdom should colour that sentiment with its own hues ; it is natural that his friendship should be purer than that of others, whose pursuits and errors he does not deign to share. But tell me, Arbaces, hast thou seen my brother of late ? he has not visited me for several days ; and when I last saw him, his manner disturbed and alarmed me much : I fear lest he was too precipitate in the severe choice that he has adopted, and that he repents an irrevocable step.”

“ Be cheered, Ione,” replied the Egyptian. “ It is true, that some little time since he was troubled and sad of spirit ; those doubts beset him, which were likely to haunt one of that fervent tempe-

rament which ever ebbs and flows, and vibrates between excitement and exhaustion. But *he*, Ione, *he* came to me in his anxieties and his distress; he sought one who pitied and loved him: I have calmed his mind; I have removed his doubts; I have taken him from the threshold of wisdom into its temple; and before the majesty of the goddess his soul is hushed and soothed. Fear not, he will repent no more; they who trust themselves to Arbaces, never repent but for a moment."

"You rejoice me," answered Ione: "My dear brother! in his contentment I am happy."

The conversation then turned upon lighter subjects; the Egyptian exerted himself to please, he condescended even to entertain; the vast variety of his knowledge enabled him to adorn and light up every subject on which he touched; and Ione, forgetting the displeasing effect of his former words, was carried away, despite her sadness, by the magic of his intellect. Her manner became unrestrained, and her language fluent. And Arbaces, who had waited his opportunity, now hastened to seize it.

"You have never seen," said he, "the interior

of my home ; it may amuse you to do so : it contains some rooms that may explain to you what you have often asked me to describe ; — the fashion of an Egyptian house ; not, indeed, that you will perceive in the poor and minute proportions of Roman architecture, the massive strength, the vast space, the gigantic magnificence, or even the domestic construction of the palaces of Thebes and Memphis ; but something there is, here and there, that may serve to express to you some notion of that antique civilization which has humanized the world. Devote, then, to the austere friend of your youth one of these bright summer evenings, and let me boast that my gloomy mansion has been honoured with the presence of the admired Ione.”

Unconscious of the pollutions of the mansion,—of the danger that awaited her, Ione readily assented to the proposal ; the next evening was fixed for the visit ; and the Egyptian, with a serene countenance, and a heart beating with fierce and unholy joy, departed. Scarce had he gone, when another visiter claimed admission—but now we return to Glaucus.

CHAPTER V.

THE POOR TORTOISE.—NEW CHANGES FOR NYDIA.

THE morning sun shone over the small and odorous garden enclosed within the peristyle of the house of the Athenian. He lay, reclined, sad and listlessly, on the smooth grass which intersected the viridarium; and a slight canopy stretched above broke the fierce rays of the summer sun.

When that fairy mansion was first disinterred from the earth, they found in the garden the shell of a tortoise that had been its inmate.* That animal, so strange a link in the creation, to whom Nature seems to have denied all the pleasures of life, save

* I do not know whether it be still preserved, (I hope so,) but the shell of a tortoise was found in the house appropriated, in this work, to Glaucus.

life's passive and dreamlike perception, had been the guest of the place for years before Glaucus purchased it; for years, indeed, which went beyond the memory of man, and to which tradition assigned an almost incredible date. The house had been built and rebuilt—its possessors had changed and fluctuated—generations had flourished and decayed—and still the tortoise dragged on its slow and unsympathizing existence. In the earthquake, which sixteen years before had overthrown many of the public buildings of the city, and scared away the amazed inhabitants, the house now inhabited by Glaucus had been terribly shattered. The possessors deserted it for many days; on their return, they cleared away the ruins which encumbered the viridarium, and found still the tortoise, unharmed and unconscious of the surrounding destruction. It seemed to bear a charmed life in its languid blood and imperceptible motions: yet was it not so inactive as it seemed; it held a regular and monotonous course: inch by inch it traversed the little orbit of its domain, taking months to accomplish the whole gyration. It was a restless voyager that tortoise!—patiently

and with pain did it perform its self-appointed journeys, evincing no interest in the things around it—a philosopher concentrated in itself! There was something grand in its solitary selfishness!—the sun in which it basked—the waters poured daily over it—the air, which it insensibly inhaled, were its sole and unfailling luxuries. The mild changes of the season, in that lovely clime, affected it not. It covered itself with its shell—as the saint in his piety—as the sage in his wisdom—as the lover in his hope.

It was impervious to the shocks and mutations of time;—it was an emblem of time itself: slow—regular—perpetual: unwitting of the passions that fret themselves around;—of the wear and tear of mortality. The poor tortoise!—nothing less than the bursting of volcanoes, the convulsions of the riven world, could have quenched its sluggish spark! The Inexorable Death, that spared not pomp or beauty, passed unheedingly by a thing to which death could bring so insignificant a change.

For this animal, the mercurial and vivid Greek felt all the wonder and affection of contrast. He

could spend hours in surveying its creeping progress, in moralizing over its mechanism. He despised it in joy,—he envied it in sorrow.

Regarding it now as he lay along the sward, its dull mass moving while it seemed motionless, the Athenian murmured to himself—

“The eagle dropped a stone from his talons, thinking to break thy shell—the stone crushed the head of a poet. This is the allegory of fate! Dull thing! Thou hadst a father and a mother; perhaps, ages ago, thou thyself hadst a mate. Did thy parents love, or didst thou? Did thy slow blood circulate more gladly when thou didst creep to the side of thy wedded one? Wert thou capable of affection? Could it distress thee if she was away from thy side? Couldst thou feel when she was present? What would I not give to know the history of thy mailed breast—to gaze upon the mechanism of thy faint desires—to mark what hair-breadth difference separates thy sorrow from thy joy? Yet, methinks, thou wouldst know if Ione were present! Thou wouldst feel her coming like a happier air, like a gladder sun. I envy thee now, for thou knowest not that she is

absent ; and I — would I could be like thee — between the intervals of seeing her ! What doubt, what presentiment, haunts me ! why will she not admit me ? Days have passed since I heard her voice. For the first time life grows flat to me. I am as one who is left alone at a banquet, the lights dead, and the flowers faded. Ah ! Ione, couldst thou dream how I adore thee !”

From these enamoured reveries, Glaucus was interrupted by the entrance of Nydia. She came with her light, though cautious step, along the marble tablinum. She passed the portico, and paused at the flowers which bordered the garden. She had her water-vase in her hand, and she sprinkled the thirsting plants, which seemed to brighten at her approach. She bent to inhale their odour. She touched them timidly and caressingly. She felt, along their stems, if any withered leaf, or creeping insect, marred their beauty. And as she hovered from flower to flower, with her earnest and youthful countenance, and graceful motions, you could not have imagined a fitter handmaid for the goddess of the garden.

“ Nydia, my child,” said Glaucus.

At the sound of his voice, she paused at once—listening, blushing, breathless; with her lips parted, her face upturned to catch the direction of the sound—she laid down the vase—she hastened to him—and wonderful it was to see how unerringly she threaded her dark way through the flowers, and came by the shortest path to the side of her new lord.

“Nydia,” said Glaucus, tenderly stroking back her long and beautiful hair—

“It is now three days since thou hast been under the protection of my household gods. Have they smiled on thee? Art thou happy?”

“Ah! so happy!” sighed the slave.

“And now,” continued Glaucus, “that thou hast recovered somewhat from the hateful recollections of thy former state; and now, that they have fitted thee (touching her brodered tunic) with garments more meet for thy delicate shape; and now, sweet child, that thou hast accustomed thyself to a happiness, which may the gods grant thee ever, I am about to pray at thy hands a boon.”

“Oh! what can I do for thee?” said Nydia, clasping her hands.

“ Listen,” said Glaucus, “ and young as thou art, thou shalt be my confidant. Hast thou ever heard the name of Ione ?”

The blind girl gasped for breath, and turning pale as one of the statues which shone upon them from the peristyle, she answered with an effort, and after a moment’s pause—

“ Yes, I have heard that she is of Neapolis, and beautiful.”

“ Beautiful ! her beauty is a thing to dazzle the day ! Neapolis ! nay, she is Greek by origin ; Greece only could furnish forth such shapes. Nydia,—I love her !”

“ I thought so,” replied Nydia calmly.

“ I love, and thou shalt tell her so. I am about to send thee to her. Happy Nydia, thou wilt be in her chamber—thou wilt drink the music of her voice,—thou wilt bask in the sunny air of her presence !”

“ What ! what ! wilt thou then send me from thee ?”

“ Thou wilt go to Ione,” answered Glaucus, in a tone that said, ‘ what more canst thou desire !’

Nydia burst into tears.

Glaucus, raising himself, drew her towards him with the soothing caresses of a brother.

“ My child, my Nydia, thou weepest in ignorance of the happiness I bestow on thee. She is gentle, and kind, and soft as the breeze of spring. She will be a sister to thy youth. She will appreciate thy winning talents; she will love thy simple graces as none other could, for they are like her own. Weepest thou still? fond fool! I will not force thee, sweet. Wilt thou not do for me this kindness?”

“ Well, if I can serve thee, command. See, I weep no longer. I am calm.”

“ That is my own Nydia,” continued Glaucus, kissing her hand. “ Go then to her:—if thou art disappointed in her kindness—if I have deceived thee, return when thou wilt? I do not *give* thee to another, I but lend. My home ever be thy refuge, sweet one. Ah! would it could shelter all the friendless and distressed. But if my heart whispers truly, I shall claim thee again soon, my child. My home and Ione’s will become the same, and thou shalt dwell with both.”

A shiver passed through the slight frame of

the blind girl, but she wept no more—she was resigned.

“ Go then, my Nydia, to Ione’s house—they shall show thee the way. Take her the fairest flowers thou canst pluck; the vase which contains them I will give thee, thou must excuse its unworthiness. They shall take, too, with thee the lute that I gave thee yesterday, and from which thou knowest so well to awaken the charming spirit. Thou shalt give her also this letter, in which, after a hundred efforts, I have embodied something of my thoughts. Let thy ear catch every accent—every modulation of her voice, and tell me, when we meet again, if its music should flatter me or discourage. It is now, Nydia, some days since I have been admitted to Ione; there is something mysterious in this exclusion. I am distracted with doubts and fears; learn, for thou art quick, and thy care for me will sharpen tenfold thy acuteness—learn the cause of this unkindness, speak of me as often as thou canst, let my name come ever to thy lips; *insinuate* how I love rather than *proclaim* it; watch if she sighs while thou speakest, if she answer thee,—or if she reprove—in what accents she

reproves. Be my friend, plead for me, and oh ! how vastly wilt thou overpay the little I have done for thee. Thou comprehendest, Nydia, thou art yet a child—have I said more than thou canst understand ?”

“ No.”

“ And thou wilt serve me ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Come to me when thou hast gathered the flowers, and I will give thee the vase I spake of ; seek me in the chamber of Leda : pretty one, thou dost not grieve now.”

“ Glaucus, I am a slave, what business have I with grief or joy ?”

“ Sayest thou so ? No, Nydia, be free. I give thee freedom—enjoy it as thou wilt, and pardon me that I reckoned on thy desire to serve me.”

“ You are offended. Oh ! I would not for that which no freedom can give, offend you, Glaucus ; my guardian, my saviour, my protector, forgive the poor blind girl ! She does not grieve even in leaving thee, if she can contribute to thy happiness.”

“ May the gods bless this grateful heart !” said Glaucus, greatly moved ;—and unconscious of the

fires he excited, he repeatedly kissed her forehead.

“Thou forgivest me,” said she, “and thou wilt talk no more of freedom; my happiness is to be thy slave, thou hast promised thou wilt not give me to another—”

“I have promised.”

“And now then, I will gather the flowers.”

Silently, Nydia took from the hand of Glaucus the costly and jewelled vase, in which the flowers vied with each other in hue and fragrance; tearlessly she received his parting admonition. She paused for a moment when his voice ceased—she did not trust herself to reply—she sought his hand—she raised it to her lips, dropped her veil over her face, and passed at once from his presence. She paused again as she reached the threshold—she stretched her hands towards it and murmured.

“Three happy days—days of unspeakable delight have I known since I passed thee—blessed threshold!—may peace dwell ever with thee when I am gone! And now, my heart tears itself from thee, and the only sound it utters bids me—die!”

CHAPTER VI.

THE HAPPY BEAUTY AND THE BLIND SLAVE.

A SLAVE entered the chamber of Ione. A messenger from Glaucus desired to be admitted.

Ione hesitated an instant.

“She is blind, that messenger,” said the slave; “she will do her commission to none but thee.”

Base is that heart which does not respect affliction! The moment she heard the messenger was blind, Ione felt the impossibility of returning a chilling reply. Glaucus had chosen a herald that was indeed sacred—a herald that could not be denied.

“What can he want with me? what message can he send?” and the heart of Ione beat quick. The curtain across the door was withdrawn, a soft and

echoless step fell upon the marble. And Nydia, led by one of the attendants, entered with her precious gift.

She stood still a moment, as if listening for some sound that might direct her.

“Will the noble Ione,” said she, in a soft and low voice, “deign to speak, that I may know whither to steer these benighted steps, and that I may lay my offerings at her feet?”

“Fair child,” said Ione, touched and soothingly, “give not thyself the pain to cross these slippery floors, my attendant will bring to me what thou hast to present;” and she motioned to the handmaid to take the vase.

“I may give them to none but thee,” answered Nydia; and guided by her ear, she walked slowly to the place where Ione sate, and kneeling when she came before her, proffered the vase.

Ione took it from her hand, and placed it on the table at her side. She then raised her gently, and would have seated her on the couch, but the girl modestly resisted.

“I have not yet discharged my office,” said she,

and she drew the letter of Glaucus from her vest. "This will, perhaps, explain why he who sent me chose so unworthy a messenger to Ione."

The Greek took the letter with a hand, the trembling of which Nydia at once felt and sighed to feel. With folded arms, and downcast looks, she stood before the proud and stately form of Ione ;—no less proud, perhaps, in her attitude of submission. Ione waved her hand and the attendants withdrew ; she gazed again upon the form of the young slave in surprise and beautiful compassion ; then, retiring a little from her, she opened and read the following letter :

"Glaucus to Ione sends more than he dares to utter. Is Ione ill ? thy slaves tell me 'no,' and that assurance comforts me. Has Glaucus offended Ione ? ah ! that question I may not ask from *them*. For five days I have been banished from thy presence. Has the sun shone ?—I know it not ; has the sky smiled ?—it has had no smile for me. My sun and my sky are Ione. Do I offend thee ? Am I too bold ? Do I say that on the tablet which my tongue has hesitated to breathe ? Alas ! it is in thine absence that I feel most the

spells by which thou hast subdued me. And absence, that deprives me of joy, brings me courage. Thou wilt not see me; thou hast banished also the common flatterers that flock around thee. Canst thou confound me with them? It is not possible! Thou knowest too well that I am not of them—that their clay is not mine. For even were I of the humblest mould, the fragrance of the rose has penetrated me, and the spirit of thy nature hath passed within me, to embalm, to sanctify, to inspire. Have they slandered me to thee, Ione? Thou wilt not believe them. Did the Delphic oracle itself tell me thou wert unworthy, I would not believe it: and am I less incredulous than thou? I think of the last time we met—of the song which I sang to thee—of the look that thou gavest me in return. Disguise it as thou wilt, Ione, there is something kindred between us, and our eyes acknowledged it, though our lips were silent. Deign to see me, to listen to me, and after that exclude me if thou wilt. I meant not so soon to say I loved. But those words rush to my heart—they will have way. Accept, then, my homage and my vows. We met first at the shrine

of Pallas; shall we not meet before a softer and a more antient altar.

“ Beautiful! adored Ione! If my hot youth and my Athenian blood have misguided and allured me, they have but taught my wanderings to appreciate the rest—the haven they have attained. I hang up my dripping robes on the Sea-god’s shrine. I have escaped shipwreck. I have found THEE. Ione, deign to see me; thou art gentle to strangers, wilt thou be less merciful to those of thine own land? I await thy reply. Accept the flowers which I send—their sweet breath has a language more eloquent than words. They take from the sun the odours they return—they are the emblem of the love that receives and repays tenfold—the emblem of the heart that drunk thy rays and owes to thee the germ of the treasures that it proffers to thy smile. I send these by one that thou wilt receive for her own sake, if not for mine. She, like us, is a stranger; her father’s ashes lie under brighter skies; but, less happy than we, she is blind and a slave. Poor Nydia! I seek as much as possible to repair to her the cruelties of Nature, and of Fate, in asking permission to place her

with thee. She is gentle, quick, and docile. She is skilled in music and the song; and she is a very Chloris* to the flowers. She thinks, Ione, that thou wilt love her; if thou dost not, send her back to me.

“One word more.—Let me be bold, Ione. Why thinkest thou so highly of yon dark Egyptian; he hath not about him the air of honest men? We Greeks learn mankind from our cradle; we are not the less profound, in that we affect no sombre mien; our lips smile, but our eyes are grave—they observe—they note—they study. Arbaces is not one to be credulously trusted: can it be, that he hath wronged me to thee? I think it, for I left him with thee; thou sawest how my presence stung him; since then, thou hast not admitted me. Believe nothing that he can say to my disfavour; if thou dost, tell me so at once; for this Ione owes to Glaucus. Farewell! This letter touches thine hand; these characters meet thine eyes—shall they be more blest than he who is their author. Once more, farewell!”

* The Greek Flora.

It seemed to Ione, as she read this letter, as if a mist had fallen from her eyes. What had been the supposed offence of Glaucus? that he had not really loved! And now, plainly, and in no dubious terms, he confessed that love. From that moment his power was fully restored. At every tender word in that letter, so full of romantic and trustful passion, her heart smote her. And had she doubted his faith, and had she believed another? and had she not, at least, allowed to him the culprit's right to know his crime, to plead in his defence?—the tears rolled down her cheeks—she kissed the letter—she placed it in her bosom; and, turning to Nydia, who stood in the same place, and in the same posture—

“Wilt thou sit, my child,” said she, “while I write an answer to this letter?”

“You will answer it then?” said Nydia, coldly; “well, the slave that accompanied me will take back your answer.”

“For you,” said Ione, “stay with me—trust me, your service shall be light.”

Nydia bowed her head.

“What is your name, fair girl?”

“They call me Nydia.”

“Your country?”

“The land of Olympus—Thessaly.”

“Thou shalt be to me a friend,” said Ione, caressingly, “as thou art already half a country-woman. Meanwhile, I beseech thee, stand not on these cold and glassy marbles—There! now thou art seated, I can leave thee for an instant.”

“Ione to Glaucus greeting,—come to me, Glaucus,” wrote Ione; “come to me to-morrow—I may have been unjust to thee; but I will tell thee, at least, the fault that has been imputed to thy charge. Fear not, henceforth, the Egyptian—fear none. Thou sayest thou hast expressed too much—alas! in these hasty words I have already done so—farewell!”

As Ione reappeared with the letter, which she did not dare to read after she had written—(Ah! common rashness, common timidity of love!)—Nydia started from her seat.

“You have written to Glaucus?”

“I have.”

“And will he thank the messenger who gives to him thy letter?”

Ione forgot that her companion was blind; she

blushed from the brow to the neck, and remained silent.

“ I mean this,” added Nydia, in a calmer tone ; “ the lightest word of coldness from thee will sadden him—the lightest kindness will rejoice. If it be the first, let the slave take back thine answer ; if it be the last, let me—I will return this evening.”

“ And why, Nydia,” asked Ione, evasively, “ wouldst thou be the bearer of my letter ?”

“ It is so, then !” said Nydia. “ Ah ! how could it be otherwise ; who could be unkind to Glaucus ?”

“ My child,” said Ione, a little more reservedly than before, “ thou speakest warmly — Glaucus, then, is amiable in thine eyes ?”

“ Noble Ione ! Glaucus has been that to me which neither fortune nor the gods have been—a *friend* !”

The sadness mingled with dignity with which Nydia uttered these simple words, affected the beautiful Ione ; she bent down and kissed her. “ Thou art grateful, and deservedly so ; why should I blush to say that Glaucus is worthy of thy gratitude ? Go, my Nydia — take to him thyself this letter — but return again. If I am from home,

when thou returnest—as this evening, perhaps, I shall be—thy chamber shall be prepared next my own. Nydia, I have no sister—wilt thou be one to me?”

The Thessalian kissed the hand of Ione, and then said, with some embarrassment,

“One favour, fair Ione—may I dare to ask it?”

“Thou canst not ask what I will not grant,” replied the Neapolitan.

“They tell me,” said Nydia, “that you are beautiful beyond the loveliness of earth. Alas! I cannot see that which gladdens the world! Wilt thou suffer me then to pass my hand over thy face—that is my sole criterion of beauty, and I usually guess aright?”

She did not wait for the answer of Ione, but, as she spoke, gently and slowly passed her hand over the bending and half averted features of the Greek—features which but one image in the world can yet depicture and recall—that image is the mutilated, but all wondrous, statue in her native city—her own Neapolis;—that Parian face, before which all the beauty of the Florentine Venus is poor and earthly—that aspect so full of har-

mony—of youth—of genius—of the soul—which modern speculators have supposed the representation of Psyche.*

Her touch lingered over the braided hair and polished brow—over the downy and damask cheek—over the dimpled lip—the swanlike and whitest neck. “I know, now, that thou art beautiful,” she said, “and I can picture thee to my darkness henceforth, and for ever !”

When Nydia left her, Ione sank into a deep but delicious reverie. Glaucus then loved her ; he owned it—yes, he loved her. She drew forth again that dear confession ; she paused over every word, she kissed every line ; she did not ask why he had been maligned, she only felt assured that he had been so. She wondered how she had ever believed a syllable against him ; she wondered how the Egyptian had been enabled to exercise a power against Glaucus : she felt a chill creep over her as she again turned to his warning against Arbaces, and her secret fear of that gloomy being dark-

* The wonderful remains of the statue, so called in the Museo Borbonico. The face, for sentiment and for feature, is the most beautiful of all which antient sculpture has bequeathed to us.

ened into awe. She was awakened from these thoughts by her maidens, who came to announce to her that the hour appointed to visit Arbaces was arrived; she started, she had forgotten the promise. Her first impression was to renounce it; her second, was to laugh at her own fears of her eldest surviving friend. She hastened to add the usual ornaments to her dress, and doubtful whether she should yet question the Egyptian more closely with respect to his accusation of Glaucus, or whether she should wait till, without citing the authority, she should insinuate to Glaucus the accusation itself, she took her way to the gloomy mansion of Arbaces.

CHAPTER VII.

IONE ENTRAPPED.—THE MOUSE TRIES TO GNAW THE NET.

“O DEAREST Nydia!” exclaimed Glaucus as he read the letter of Ione, “whitest-robed messenger that ever passed between earth and heaven—how, how shall I thank thee?”

“I am rewarded,” said the poor Thessalian.

“To-morrow, to-morrow, how shall I while the hours till then?”

The enamoured Greek would not let Nydia escape him, though she sought several times to leave the chamber; he made her recite to him over and over again every syllable of the brief conversation that had taken place between her and Ione; a thousand times, forgetting her misfortune, he questioned her of the looks, of the countenance of his

beloved ; and then quickly again excusing his fault, he bade her recommence the whole recital which he had thus interrupted. The hours thus painful to Nydia passed rapidly and delightedly to him, and the twilight had already darkened, ere he once more dismissed her to Ione with a fresh letter and with new flowers. Scarcely had she gone, than Clodius and several of his gay companions broke in upon him ; they rallied him on his seclusion during the whole day, and his absence from his customary haunts ; they invited him to accompany them to the various resorts in that lively city, which night and day proffered diversity to pleasure. Then, as now, in the south, (for no land perhaps losing more of greatness has retained more of custom,) it was the delight of the Italians to assemble at the evening ; and under the porticos of temples or the shade of the groves that interspersed the streets, listening to music, or the recitals of some inventive tale-teller ; they hailed the rising moon with libations of wine, and the melodies of song. Glaucus was too happy to be unsocial ; he longed to cast off the exuberance of joy that oppressed him. He willingly accepted the proposal of his comrades, and laugh-

ingly they sallied out together down the populous and glittering streets.

In the mean time Nydia once more gained the house of Ione, who had long left it; she inquired indifferently whither she had gone.

The answer arrested and appalled her.

“To the house of Arbaces—of the Egyptian? Impossible!”

“It is true, my little one,” said the slave who had replied to her question. “She has known the Egyptian long.”

“Long! ye gods, yet Glaucus loves her!” murmured Nydia to herself. “And has,” asked she aloud,—“has she often visited him before?”

“Never till now,” answered the slave: “If all the rumoured scandal of Pompeii be true, it would be better, perhaps, if she had not ventured there at present. But she, poor mistress mine, hears nothing of that which reaches us; the talk of the vestibulum reaches not to the peristyle.*”

“Never till now!” repeated Nydia. “Art thou sure?”

“Sure, pretty one; but what is that to thee or to us?”

* Terence.

Nydia hesitated a moment, and then putting down the flowers with which she had been charged, she called to the slave who had accompanied her, and left the house without saying another word.

Not till she had got half-way back to the house of Glaucus did she break silence, and even then she only murmured inly :

“She does not dream, she cannot, of the dangers into which she has plunged. Fool that I am,—shall I save her ? — yes, for I love Glaucus better than myself.”

When she arrived at the house of the Athenian, she learnt that he had gone out with a party of his friends, and none knew whither. He probably would not be home before midnight.

The Thessalian groaned ; she sank upon a seat in the hall, and covered her face with her hands as if to collect her thoughts. “There is no time to be lost,” thought she, starting up. She turned to the slave who had accompanied her.

“Knowest thou,” said she, “if Ione has any relative, any intimate friend at Pompeii ?”

“Why, by Jupiter !” answered the slave, “art thou silly enough to ask the question ? Every one

in Pompeii knows that Ione has a brother who, young and rich, has been — under the rose I speak — so foolish as to become a priest of Isis.”

“ A priest of Isis ! O gods ! his name ? ”

“ Apæcides.”

“ I know it all,” muttered Nydia : “ brother and sister then are to be both victims ! Apæcides ! yes that was the name I heard in ——, ha ! he well, then, knows the peril that surrounds his sister. I will to him.”

She sprang up at that thought, and taking the staff which always guided her steps, she hastened to the neighbouring shrine of Isis. Till she had been under the guardianship of the kindly Greek, that staff had sufficed to conduct the poor blind girl from corner to corner of Pompeii. Every street, every turning in the more frequented parts, was familiar to her ; and as the inhabitants entertained a tender and half superstitious veneration for those subject to her infirmity, the passengers had always given way to her timid steps. Poor girl, she little dreamt that she should, ere very many days were passed, find her blindness her protection, and a guide far safer than the keenest eyes.

But since she had been under the roof of Glaucus, he had ordered a slave to accompany her always; and the poor devil thus appointed, who was somewhat of the fattest, and who after having twice performed the journey to Ione's house, now saw himself condemned to a third excursion, (whither the gods only knew,) hastened after her, deploring his fate, and solemnly assuring Castor and Pollux, that he believed the blind girl had the talaria of Mércury as well as the infirmity of Cupid.

Nydia, however, required but little of his assistance to find her way to the popular temple of Isis: the space before it was now deserted, and she won without obstacle to the sacred rails.

“There is no one here,” said the fat slave: “what dost thou want, or whom? knowest thou not that the priests do not live in the temple?”

“Call out,” said she impatiently; “night and day there is always one flamen at least watching in the shrines of Isis.”

The slave called,—no one appeared.

“Seest thou no one?”

“No one.”

“Thou mistakest; I hear a sigh: look again.”

The slave, wondering and grumbling, cast round his heavy eyes, and before one of the altars, whose remains still crowd the narrow space, he beheld a form bending as in meditation.

“I see a figure,” said he, “and by the white garments it is a priest.”

“O flamen of Isis!” cried Nydia, “servant of the Most Ancient, hear me!”

“Who calls?” said a low and melancholy voice.

“One who has no common tidings to impart to a member of your body; I come to declare and not to ask oracles.”

“With whom wouldst thou confer? this is no hour for thy conference; depart, disturb me not: the night is sacred to the gods, the day to men.”

“Methinks I know thy voice; thou art he whom I seek; yet I have heard thee speak but once before. Art thou not the priest Apæcides?”

“I am that man,” replied the priest, emerging from the altar, and approaching the rail.

“Thou art! the gods be praised!” Waving her hand to the slave, she bade him withdraw to a distance, and he, who naturally imagined some superstition connected perhaps with the safety of lone

could alone lead her to the temple, obeyed, and seated himself on the ground at a little distance. "Hush!" said she, speaking quick and low; "art thou indeed Apæcides?"

"If thou knowest me, canst thou not recall my features?"

"I am blind," answered Nydia, "my eyes are in my voice, and *that* recognises thee: yet swear that thou art he."

"By the gods I swear it, by my right hand, and by the Moon."

"Hush! speak low—bend near—give me thy hand: knowest thou Arbaces?—Hast thou laid flowers at the feet of the dead?—Ah! thy hand is cold—hark yet!—hast thou taken the awful vow?"

"Who art thou, whence comest thou, pale maiden?" said Apæcides fearfully: "I know thee not, thine is not the breast on which this head hath lain; I have never seen thee before."

"But thou hast heard my voice: no matter, those recollections it should shame us both to recall. Listen, thou hast a sister."

"Speak! speak! what of her?"

“Thou knowest the Banquets of the Dead, stranger,—it pleases thee, perhaps, to share them—would it please thee to have thy sister a partaker? would it please thee that Arbaces was her host?”

“O gods, he dare not! Girl, if thou mockest me, tremble. I will tear thee limb from limb.”

“I speak the truth; and while I speak, Ione is in the halls of Arbaces—for the first time his guest. Thou knowest if there be peril in that first time! Farewell! I have fulfilled my charge.”

“Stay! stay!” cried the priest, passing his wan hand over his brow; “If this be true, what, what can be done to save her? They may not admit me. I know not all the mazes of that intricate mansion. O Nemesis! justly am I punished!”

“I will dismiss yon slave, be thou my guide and comrade; I will lead thee to the private door of the house: I will whisper to thee the word which admits. Take some weapon: it may be needful!”

“Wait an instant,” said Apæcides, retiring into one of the cells that flank the temple, and re-appearing in a few moments wrapped in a large cloak, which was then much worn by all classes, and which concealed his sacred dress. “Now!” he

said, grinding his teeth, "if Arbaces hath dared to — but he dare not ! he dare not ! Why should I suspect him ? Is he so base a villain ? I will not think it — yet, sophist ! dark bewilderer that he is ! O gods, protect !—hush ! *are* there gods ? Yes, there is one goddess, at least, whose voice I can command ; and that is—Vengeance !"

Muttering these disconnected thoughts, Apæcides, followed by his silent and sightless companion, hastened through the most solitary paths to the house of the Egyptian.

The slave, abruptly dismissed by Nydia—shrugged his shoulders—muttered an adjuration, and, nothing loth, rolled off to his cubiculum.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SOLITUDE AND SOLILOQUY OF THE EGYPTIAN --
HIS CHARACTER ANALYSED.

WE must go back a few hours in the progress of our story. At the first grey dawn of the day, which Glaucus had already marked with white, the Egyptian was seated sleepless and alone, on the summit of the lofty and pyramidal tower which flanked his house. A tall parapet around it served as a wall, and conspired, with the height of the edifice and the gloomy trees that girded the mansion, to defy the prying eyes of curiosity or observation. A table, on which lay a scroll filled with mystic figures, was before him. On high, the stars waxed dim and faint, and the shades of night melted from the sterile mountain tops; only above Vesuvius there rested a deep and massy cloud, which for several days past had gathered darker and more solid over

its summit. The struggle of night and day was more visible over the broad ocean, which stretched calm, like a gigantic lake; and bounded by the circling shores that, covered with vines and foliage, and gleaming here and there with the white walls of sleeping cities, sloped to the scarce rippling waves.

It was the hour, above all others, most sacred to the daring and antique art of the Egyptian; the art which would read our changeful destinies in the stars.

He had filled his scroll, he had noted the moment and the sign; and, leaning upon his hand, he had surrendered himself to the thoughts which his calculation excited.

“*Again* do the stars forewarn me! Some danger, then, assuredly awaits me!” said he slowly; “some danger, violent and sudden in its nature. The stars wear for me the same mocking menace which, if our chronicles do not err, they once wore for Pyrrhus—for him, doomed to strive for all things—to enjoy none;—restless, agitated, fated—all attacking, nothing gaining—battles without fruit, laurels without triumph, fame without success; at last made craven by his own superstitions, and

slain like a dog by a tile from the hand of an old woman ! Verily, the stars flatter when they give me a type in this fool of war — when they promise to the ardour of my wisdom the same results as to the madness of his ambition—perpetual exercise—no certain goal—the Sisyphus task, the mountain and the stone!—the stone, a gloomy image!—it reminds me, that I am threatened with somewhat of the same death as the Epirote. Let me look again. ‘Beware!’ say the shining prophets? ‘how thou passest under ancient roofs, or besieged walls, or overhanging cliffs — a stone, hurled from above, is charged by the curses of Destiny against thee!’ And, at no distant date from this, comes the peril: but I cannot of a certainty read the day and hour. Well! if my glass runs low, the sands shall sparkle to the last. Yet, if I ’scape this peril—ay, if I ’scape — bright and clear as the moonlight track along the waters glows the rest of my existence. I see honours, happiness, success, shining upon every billow of the dark gulf beneath which I must sink at last. What, then, with such destinies *beyond* the peril, shall I succumb *to* the peril? My soul whispers hope, it

sweeps exultingly beyond the boding hour, it revels in the future — its own courage is its fittest omen. If I were to perish so suddenly and so soon, the shadow of death would darken over me, and I should feel the icy presentiment of my doom. My soul, that so smiles within me, would express, in sadness and in gloom, its forecast of the dreary Orcus. It smiles,—it assures me of deliverance.”

As he thus concluded his soliloquy, the Egyptian involuntarily rose. He paced rapidly the narrow space of that star-roofed floor; and, pausing at the parapet, looked again upon the grey and melancholy heavens. The chills of the faint dawn came refreshingly upon his brow, and gradually his mind resumed its natural and collected calm. He withdrew his gaze from the stars, as one after one they receded into the depths of heaven; and his eyes fell over the broad expanse below. Dim in the silenced port of the city rose the masts of the gallees: along that mart of luxury and of labour was stilled the mighty hum. No lights, save here and there from before the columns of a temple, or in the porticos of the voiceless forum, broke the wan and fluctuating light of the strug-

gling morn. From the heart of the torpid city—so soon to vibrate with a thousand passions—there came no sound; the streams of life circulated not; they lay locked and torpid under the ice of sleep. From the huge space of the amphitheatre, with its stony seats rising one above the other—coiled and round as some slumbering monster—rose a thin and ghastly mist, which gathered darker, and more dark, over the scattered foliage that gloomed in its vicinity. The city seemed as, after the awful change of seventeen ages, it seems now to the traveller,—a City of the Dead.*

The ocean itself—that serene and tideless sea—lay scarce less hushed, save that from its deep bosom came, softened by the distance, a faint and regular murmur, like the breathing of its sleep; and curving far, as with outstretched arms, into the green and beautiful land, it seemed unconsciously to clasp to its breast the cities sloping to its margin—Stabiae, and Herculaneum, and Pompeii—those children and darlings of the deep.

* When Sir Walter Scott visited Pompeii with Sir William Gell, almost his only remark was the exclamation, “The City of the Dead—the City of the Dead!”

“Ye slumber,” said the Egyptian, as he scowled over the cities, the boast and flower of Campania : “ye slumber ! — would it were the eternal repose of death ! As ye now — jewels in the crown of empire — so once were the cities of the Nile ! Their greatness hath perished from them — they sleep amidst ruins — their palaces and their shrines are tombs — the serpent coils in the grass of their streets — the lizard basks in their solitary halls. By that mysterious law of Nature, which humbles one to exalt the other, ye have thriven upon their ruins — thou, haughty Rome, hast usurped the glories of Sesostris and Semiramis — thou art a robber, clothing thyself with their spoils ! And these — slaves in thy triumph — that I (the last son of forgotten monarchs) survey below, reservoirs of thine all-pervading power and luxury, I curse as I behold ! The time shall come when Egypt shall be avenged ! when the Barbarian’s steed shall make his manger in the Golden House of Nero ! and thou that hast sown the wind with conquest, shalt reap the harvest in the whirlwind of desolation.”

As the Egyptian uttered a prediction which

Fate so fearfully fulfilled, a more solemn and boding image of ill omen never occurred to the dreams of painter or of poet. The morning light, which can pale so wanly even the young cheek of beauty, gave his majestic and stately features almost the colours of the grave, with the dark hair falling massively around them, and the dark robes flowing long and loose — and the arm outstretched from that lofty eminence—and the glittering eyes, fierce with a savage gladness,—half prophet and half fiend !

He turned his gaze from the city and the ocean —before him lay the vineyards and meadows of the rich Campania. The gate and walls—ancient, half Pelasgic—of the city, seemed not to bound its extent. Villas and villages stretched on every side up the ascent of Vesuvius, not nearly then so steep or so lofty as at present. For as Rome itself is built on an exhausted volcano, so in similar security the inhabitants of the South tenanted the green and vine-clad places around a volcano whose fires they believed at rest for ever. From the gate stretched the long Street of Tombs, various

in size and architecture, by which, on that side, the city is yet approached. Above all, rose the cloud-capt summit of the Dread Mountain, with the shadows, now dark, now light, betraying the mossy caverns and ashy rocks, which testified the past conflagrations, and might have prophesied—but Man is blind—that which was to come!

Difficult was it then and there to guess the causes why the tradition of the place wore so gloomy and stern a hue; why, in those smiling plains, for miles around—to Baiaë and Misenum—the poets had imagined the entrance and thresholds of their hell—their Acheron, and their fabled Styx: why in those Phlegræ,* now laughing with the vine, they placed the battles of the gods, and supposed the daring Titans to have sought the victory of Heaven—save indeed, that yet, in you seared and blasted summit, fancy might think to read the characters of the Olympian thunderbolt.

But it was neither the rugged height of the still volcano, nor the fertility of the sloping fields,

* Or Phlegræi campi; viz. scorched or burnt fields.

nor the melancholy avenue of tombs, nor the glittering villas of a polished and luxurious people, that now arrested the eye of the Egyptian. On one part of the landscape, the mountain of Vesuvius descended to the plain in a narrow and uncultivated ridge, broken here and there by jagged crags and copses of wild foliage. At the base of this lay a marshy and unwholesome pool, and the intent gaze of Arbaces caught the outline of some living form moving by the marshes, and stooping ever and anon as if to pluck its rank produce.

“Ho!” said he aloud, “I have then another companion in these unworldly night watches. The Witch of Vesuvius is abroad. What doth she, too—as the credulous imagine—doth she, too, learn the lore of the great stars? Hath she been uttering foul magic to the moon, or culling (as her pauses betoken) foul herbs from the venomous marsh? Well, I must see this fellow labourer. Whoever strives to know, learns that no human lore is despicable. Despicable only you—ye fat and bloated things—slaves of luxury—sluggards in thought—who, cultivating nothing but the barren sense, dream

that its poor soil can produce alike the myrtle and the laurel. No, the wise only can enjoy!—to us only *true* luxury is given, when mind, brain, invention, experience, thought, learning, imagination, all contribute like rivers to swell the seas of SENSE!—Ione!”

As Arbaces uttered that last and charmed word, his thoughts sunk at once into a more deep and profound channel. His steps paused, he took not his eyes from the ground; once or twice he smiled joyously, and then, as he turned from his place of vigil, and sought his couch, he muttered, “If death frowns so near, I will say at least that I have lived—Ione sha’l be mine.”

The character of Arbaces was one of those intricate and varied webs, in which even the mind that sate within it was sometimes confused and perplexed. In him, the son of a fallen dynasty, the outcast of a sunken people, was that spirit of discontented pride, which ever rankles in one of a sterner mould, who feels himself inexorably shut from the sphere in which his fathers shone, and to which nature as well as birth no less entitled him-

self. This sentiment hath no benevolence ; it wars with society, it sees enemies in mankind. But with this sentiment did not go its common companion, poverty. Arbaces possessed wealth which equalled that of most of the Roman nobles. And this enabled him to gratify to the utmost the passions which had no outlet in business or ambition. Travelling from clime to clime, and beholding still Rome everywhere, he increased both his hatred of society and his passion for pleasure. He was in a vast prison, which however he could fill with the ministers of luxury. He could not escape from the prison, and his only object therefore was to give it the character of the palace. The Egyptians, from the earliest time, were devoted to the joys of sense ; Arbaces inherited both their appetite for sensuality and the glow of imagination which struck light from its rottenness. But still, unsocial in his pleasures as in his graver pursuits, and brooking neither superior nor equal, he admitted few to his companionship save the willing slaves of his profligacy. He was the solitary lord of a crowded harem. But withall, he felt condemned to that satiety

which is the constant curse of men whose intellect is above their pursuits, and that which once had been the impulse of passion froze down to the ordinance of custom. From the disappointments of sense he sought to raise himself by the cultivation of knowledge; but as it was not his object to serve mankind, so he despised that knowledge which is practical and useful. His dark imagination loved to exercise itself in those more visionary and obscure researches which are ever the most delightful to a wayward and solitary mind, and to which he himself was invited by the daring pride of his disposition, and the mysterious traditions of his clime. Dismissing faith in the confused creeds of the Heathen world, he reposed the greatest faith in the power of human wisdom. He did not know, perhaps no one in that age distinctly did, the limits which Nature imposes upon our discoveries. Seeing that the higher we mount in knowledge the more wonders we behold, he imagined that Nature not only worked miracles in her ordinary course, but that she might, by the cabala of some master soul, be diverted from that course itself. Thus he pur-

sued Science, across her appointed boundaries, into the land of perplexity and shadow. From the truths of astronomy he wandered into astrologic fallacy. From the secrets of chemistry he passed into the spectral labyrinth of magic; and he who could be sceptical as to the power of the gods, was credulously superstitious as to the power of man.

The cultivation of magic, carried at that day to a singular height among the would-be-wise, was especially eastern in its origin; it was alien to the early philosophy of the Greeks, nor had it been received by them with favour until Ostanes, who accompanied the army of Xerxes, introduced, amongst the simple credulities of Hellas, the solemn superstitions of Zoroaster. Under the Roman Emperors it had become, however, naturalized at Rome, (a meet subject for Juvenal's fiery wit.) Intimately connected with magic was the worship of Isis, and the Egyptian religion was the means by which was extended the devotion to Egyptian soecry. The theurgic, or benevolent magic, the goetic, or dark and evil necromancy, were alike in pre-eminent repute

during the first century of the Christian era; and the marvels of Faustus are not comparable to those of Apollonius. (*a*) Kings, courtiers, and sages, all trembled before the professors of the dread science. And not the least remarkable of his tribe was the formidable and profound Arbaces. His fame and his discoveries were known to all the cultivators of magic, they even survived himself; but it was not by his real and worldly name that he was honoured by the sorcerer and the sage. He received from their homage a more mystic appellation, and was long remembered in Magna Græcia, and the Eastern plains, by the name of “Hermes, the Lord of the Flaming Belt.” His subtle speculations and boasted attributes of wisdom, recorded in various volumes, were among those tokens “of the curious arts,” which the Christian converts most joyfully yet most fearfully burnt at Ephesus, depriving posterity of the proofs of the cunning of the fiend.

The conscience of Arbaces was solely of the intellect—it was awed by no moral laws. If man imposed these checks upon the herd, so he believed

that man, by superior wisdom, could raise himself above them. “ If (he reasoned) I have the genius to impose laws, have I not the right to command my own creations? Still more, have I not the right to control—to evade—to scorn—the fabrications of yet meaner intellects than my own!” Thus, if he were a villain, he justified his villainy by what ought to have made him virtuous, namely,—the elevation of his capacities.

As all men have more or less the passion of power, in Arbaces that passion corresponded exactly to his character. It was not the passion of an external and brute authority. He desired not the purple and the fasces, the insignia of vulgar command. His pride, his contempt for Rome, which made the world, (and whose haughty name he regarded with the same disdain as that which Rome herself lavished upon the barbarian,) would never have permitted him to aspire to sway over others, for that would have rendered him at once the tool or creature of the Emperor. He, the Son of the Great Race of Rameses—*he* execute the orders of, and receive his power from, another!—the mere

notion filled him with rage. But in rejecting an ambition that coveted nominal distinctions, he but indulged the more in the ambition to rule the heart. Honouring mental power as the greatest of earthly gifts, he loved to feel that power palpably in himself, by extending it over all whom he encountered. Thus had he ever sought the young—thus had he ever fascinated and controlled them. He loved to find subjects in men's souls—to rule over an invisible and immaterial empire!—had he been less sensual and less wealthy, he might have sought to become the founder of a new religion. As it was, his energies were checked by his pleasures. Besides, however, the vague love of this moral sway (vanity so dear to sages!) he was influenced by a singular and dream-like devotion to all that belonged to the mystic Land his ancestors had swayed. Although he disbelieved in her deities, he believed in the allegories they represented (or rather he interpreted those allegories anew). He loved to keep alive the *worship* of Egypt, because he thus maintained the shadow and the recollection of her *power*. He loaded, therefore, the altars of Osiris

and of Isis with regal donations, and was ever anxious to dignify their priesthood by new and wealthy converts. The vow taken—the priesthood embraced—he usually chose the comrades of his pleasures from those whom he had made his victims, partly because he thus secured to himself their secrecy, partly because he thus yet more confirmed to himself his peculiar power. Hence the motives of his conduct to Apæcides, strengthened as these were, in that instance, by his passion for Ione.

He had seldom lived long in one place; but as he grew older, he grew more wearied of the excitement of new scenes, and he had sojourned among the delightful cities of Campania for a period which surprised even himself. In fact, his pride somewhat crippled his choice of residence. He could not live in those burning climes, which he deemed of right his own hereditary possession, and which now cowered, supine and sunken, under the wings of the Roman eagle. Rome herself was hateful to his indignant soul; nor did he love to find his riches rivalled by the minions of the court, and cast into comparative poverty by the mighty magnificence of the court itself. The Campanian

cities proffered to him all that his nature craved ; the luxuries of an unequalled clime ;—the imaginative refinements of a voluptuous civilization. He was removed from the sight of a superior wealth ; he was without rivals to his riches ; he was free from the spies of a jealous court. As long as he was rich none pried into his conduct. He pursued the dark tenor of his way undisturbed and secure.

It is the curse of sensualists never to love till the pleasures of sense begin to pall—their ardent youth is frittered away in countless desires ; their hearts are exhausted. So, ever chasing love, and taught by a restless imagination to exaggerate perhaps its charms, the Egyptian had spent all the glory of his years without attaining the object of his desires. The beauty of to-morrow succeeded the beauty of to-day, and the shadows bewildered him in his pursuit of the substance. When, two years before the present date, he beheld Ione, he saw, for the first time, one whom he imagined he could *love*. He stood, then, upon that bridge of life, from which man sees before him distinctly a wasted youth on the one side, and the darkness of

approaching age upon the other ; a time in which we are more than ever anxious perhaps to secure to us, ere it be yet too late, whatever we have been taught to consider necessary to the enjoyment of a life of which the brighter half is gone.

With an earnestness and a patience which he had never before commanded for his pleasures, Arbaces had devoted himself to win the heart of Ione. It did not content him to love, he desired to be loved. In this hope, he had watched the expanding youth of the beautiful Neapolitan : and knowing the influence that the mind possesses over those who are taught to cultivate the mind, he had contributed willingly to form the genius and enlighten the intellect of Ione, in the hope that she would be thus able to appreciate what he felt would be his best claim to her affection ; viz. a character which, however criminal and perverted, was rich in its original elements of strength and grandeur. When he felt that character to be acknowledged, he willingly allowed, nay, encouraged her, to mix among the idle votaries of pleasure, in the belief that her soul, fitted for higher commune, would miss the companionship of his own, and that in comparison

with others, she would learn to love himself. He had forgot, that as the sunflower to the sun, so youth turns to youth, until his jealousy of Glaucus suddenly apprised him of his error. From that moment, though, as we have seen, he knew not the extent of his danger, a fiercer and more tumultuous direction was given to a passion long controlled. Nothing kindles the fire of love like a sprinkling of the anxieties of jealousy; it takes then a wilder, a more resistless, flame; it forgets its softness; it ceases to be tender; it assumes something of the intensity—of the ferocity—of hate.

Arbaces resolved to lose upon cautious and perilous preparations no longer time; he resolved to place an irrevocable barrier between himself and his rivals; he resolved to possess himself of the person of Ione: Not that in his present love, so long nurst and fed by hopes purer than those of passion alone, he would have been contented with that mere possession. He desired the heart, the soul, no less than the beauty of Ione; but he imagined that once separated by a daring crime from the rest of mankind—once bound to Ione by a tie that slavery could not break, she would be

driven to concentrate her thoughts in him—that his arts would complete his conquest, and that, according to the true moral of the Roman and the Sabine, the empire obtained by force would be cemented by gentler means. This resolution was yet more confirmed in him by his belief in the prophecies of the stars; they had long foretold to him this year, and even the present month, as the epoch of some dread disaster, menacing life itself. He was driven to a certain and limited date. He resolved to crowd, monarch-like, on his funeral pyre, all that his soul held most dear. In his own words, if he were to die, he resolved to feel that he had lived, and that Ione should be his own!

CHAPTER IX.

WHAT BECOMES OF IONE IN THE HOUSE OF ARBACES.—
THE FIRST SIGNAL OF THE WRATH OF THE DREAD FOE.

WHEN Ione entered the spacious hall of the Egyptian, the same awe which had crept over her brother impressed itself also upon her; there seemed to her as to him something ominous and warning in the still and mournful faces of those dread Theban monsters, whose majestic and passionless features, the marble so well portrayed,—

“ Their looks, with the reach of past ages, was wise,
“ And the soul of eternity thought in their eyes.”

The tall Ethiopian slave grinned as he admitted her, and motioned to her to proceed. Half way up the hall, she was met by Arbaces himself, in festive robes, which glittered with jewels. Although it was broad day without, the mansion, according

to the practice of the luxurious, was artificially darkened, and the lamps cast their still and odour-giving light over the rich floors and ivory roofs.

“Beautiful Ione,” said Arbaces, as he bent to touch her hand, “it is you that have eclipsed the day—it is your eyes that light up the halls—it is your breath which fills them with perfumes.”

“You must not talk to me thus,” said Ione, smiling; “you forget that your lore has sufficiently instructed my mind, to render these graceful flatteries to my person unwelcome. It was you who taught me to disdain adulation; will you unteach your pupil?”

There was something so frank and charming in the manner of Ione, as she thus spoke, that the Egyptian was more than ever enamoured, and more than ever disposed to renew the offence he had committed; he, however, answered quickly and gaily, and hastened to renew the conversation.

He led her through the various chambers of a house, which seemed to contain to her eyes, unexperienced to other splendour than the minute elegance of Campanian cities, the treasures of the world.

In the walls were set pictures of inestimable art; the lights shone over statues of the noblest age of Greece. Cabinets of gems, each cabinet itself a gem, filled up the interstices of the columns; the most precious woods lined the thresholds and composed the doors; gold and jewels seemed prodigalized all around. Sometimes they were alone in these rooms—sometimes they passed through silent rows of slaves, who, kneeling as she passed, proffered to her offerings of bracelets, of chains, of gems, which the Egyptian vainly entreated her to receive.

“ I have often heard,” said she, wonderingly, “ that you were rich; but I never dreamed of the amount of your wealth.”

“ Would I could coin it all,” replied the Egyptian, “ into one crown, which I might place upon that snowy brow !”

“ Alas ! the weight would crush me ; I should be a second Tarpeia,” answered Ione, laughingly.

“ But thou dost not disdain riches—O Ione ! they know not what life is capable of, who are not wealthy. Gold is the great magician of earth—it realizes our dreams—it gives them the power of a

God—there is a grandeur, a sublimity in its possession: it is the mightiest, yet, the most obedient of our slaves.”

The artful Arbaces sought to dazzle the young Neapolitan by his treasures and his eloquence; he sought to awaken in her the desire to be mistress of what she surveyed; he hoped that she would confound the owner with the possessions, and that the charms of his wealth would be reflected on himself. Meanwhile, Ione was secretly somewhat uneasy at the gallantries which escaped from those lips, which, till lately, had seemed to disdain the common homage we pay to beauty. And with that delicate subtlety, which woman alone possesses, she sought to ward off shafts deliberately aimed, and to laugh or to talk away the meaning from his warming language. Nothing in the world is more pretty than that same species of defence; it is the charm of the African necromancer, who professed with a feather to turn aside the winds.

The Egyptian was intoxicated and subdued by her grace even more than by her beauty; it was with difficulty that he suppressed his emotions; alas!

the feather was only powerful against the summer breezes,—it would be the sport of the storm.

Suddenly, as they stood in one hall, which was surrounded by draperies of silver and white, the Egyptian clapped his hands, and as if by enchantment, a banquet rose from the floor,—a couch or throne, with a crimson canopy, ascended simultaneously at the feet of Ione — and at the same instant from behind the curtains swelled the invisible and softest music.

Arbaces placed himself at the feet of Ione, and children, young and beautiful as Loves, ministered to the feast.

The feast was done, the music sank into a low and subdued strain, and Arbaces thus addressed his beautiful guest.

“Hast thou never in this dark and uncertain world—hast thou never aspired, my pupil, to look beyond — hast thou never wished to put aside the veil of futurity, and to behold on the shores of Fate the shadowy images of things to be? For it is not the Past alone that has its ghosts; each event *to come* has also its spectrum—its shade; when the

hour arrives, life enters it, the shadow becomes corporeal, and walks the world. Thus, in the land beyond the grave, are ever two impalpable and spiritual hosts, the things to be, the things that have been! If by our wisdom we can penetrate that land, we see the one as the other, and learn, as *I* have learnt, not alone the mysteries of the dead, but also the destiny of the living.”

“As thou hast learnt!—can wisdom attain so far?”

“Wilt thou prove my knowledge, Ione, and behold the representation of thine own fate? It is a drama more striking than those of Æschylus—it is one I have prepared for thee, if thou wilt see the shadows perform their part.”

The Neapolitan trembled;—she thought of Glauceus, and sighed as well as trembled;—were their destinies to be united? Half incredulous, half believing, half awed, half alarmed by the words of her strange host, she remained for some moments silent, and then answered.

“It may revolt—it may terrify—the knowledge of the future will, perhaps, only embitter the present!”

“Not so, Ione; I have myself looked upon thy future lot, and the ghosts of thy Future bask in the

gardens of Elysium ; amidst the asphodel and the rose they prepare the garlands of thy sweet destiny, and the Fates, so harsh to others, weave only for thee the web of happiness and love. Wilt thou then come and behold thy doom, so that thou mayst enjoy it beforehand ?”

Again the heart of Ione murmured ‘ *Glaucus* ;’ she uttered a half audible assent ; the Egyptian rose, and taking her by the hand, he led her across the banquet-room — the curtains withdrew, as by magic hands, and the music broke forth in a louder and gladder strain ; they passed a row of columns, on either side of which fountains cast aloft their fragrant waters ; they descended by broad and easy steps into a garden. The eve had commenced ; the moon was already high in heaven, and those sweet flowers that sleep by day, and fill, with ineffable odours, the airs of night, were thickly scattered amidst alleys cut through the star-lit foliage ;—or, gathered in baskets, lay like offerings at the feet of the frequent statues that gleamed along their path.

“ Whither wouldst thou lead me, Arbaces ?” said Ione, wonderingly.

“ But yonder,” said he, pointing to a small building which stood at the end of the vista. “ It is a temple consecrated to the Fates — our rites require such holy ground.”

They passed into a narrow hall, at the end of which hung a sable curtain. Arbaces lifted it, Ione entered, and found herself in total darkness.

“ Be not alarmed,” said the Egyptian, “ the light will rise instantly ;” while he so spoke, a soft and warm and gradual light diffused itself around ; as it spread over each object, Ione fancied that she was in an apartment of moderate size, hung everywhere with black ; a couch of the same hue was beside her. In the centre of the room was a small altar on which stood a tripod of bronze. At one side, upon a lofty column of granite, was a colossal head of the blackest marble, which she perceived, by the crown of wheatears that encircled the brow, represented the great Egyptian goddess. Arbaces stood before the altar ; he had laid his garland on the shrine, and seemed occupied with pouring into the tripod the contents of a brazen vase ; suddenly from that tripod leapt into life a blue, quick, darting, irregular flame ; the Egyptian drew back to

the side of Ione; and muttered some words in a language unfamiliar to her ear, the curtain at the back of the altar waved tremulously to and fro—it parted slowly, and in the aperture which was thus made, Ione beheld an indistinct and pale landscape, which gradually grew brighter and clearer as she gazed; at length, she discovered plainly trees, and rivers, and meadows, and all the beautiful diversity of the richest earth. At length before the landscape, a dim shadow glided; it rested opposite to Ione; slowly the same charm seemed to operate upon it as over the rest of the scene; it took form and shape, and lo!—in its feature and in its form Ione beheld herself!

Then the scene behind the spectre faded away, and was succeeded by the representation of a gorgeous palace; a throne was raised in the centre of its hall—the dim forms of slaves and guards were ranged around it, and a pale hand held over the throne the likeness of a diadem.

A new actor now appeared—he was clothed from head to foot in a dark robe—you saw neither his face, nor the outline of his figure—he knelt at the feet of the shadowy Ione—he clasped her hand—

he pointed to the throne, as if to invite her to ascend it.

The Neapolitan's heart beat violently—" Shall the shadow disclose itself?" whispered a voice beside her—the voice of Arbaces.

" Ah, yes!" answered Ione, softly.

Arbaces raised his hand—the spectre seemed to drop the mantle that concealed its form—and Ione shrieked—it was Arbaces himself that thus knelt before her.

" This is, indeed, thy fate!" whispered again the Egyptian's voice in her ear. " And thou art destined to be the bride of Arbaces."

Ione started—the black curtain closed over the phantasmagoria; and Arbaces himself, the real, the living Arbaces, was at her feet.

" Oh, Ione!" said he, passionately gazing upon her; " listen to one who has long struggled vainly with his love. I adore thee! The Fates do not lie—thou art destined to be mine—I have sought the world around, and found none like thee. From my youth upward, I have sighed for such as thou art. I have dreamed till I saw thee—I wake, and I behold thee. Turn not away from me, Ione;

think not of me as thou hast thought; I am not that being—cold—insensate, and morose, which I have seemed to thee. Never woman had lover, so devoted—so passionate as I will be to Ione. Do not struggle in my clasp—see—I release thy hand. Take it from me, if thou wilt—well, be it so! But do not reject me, Ione—do not rashly reject—judge of thy power over me, when thou canst thus transform. I who never knelt to mortal being, kneel to thee. I who have commanded fate, receive from thee my own. Ione, tremble not, thou art my queen—my goddess;—be my bride! All the wishes thou canst form shall be fulfilled. The ends of the earth shall minister to thee—pomp, power, luxury, shall be thy slaves. Arbaces shall have no ambition, save the pride of obeying thee. Ione, turn upon me those eyes—shed upon me thy smile. Dark is my soul, when thy face is hid from it—shine over me, my sun—my heaven—my daylight!—Ione, Ione—do not reject my love!”

Alone, and in the power of this singular and fearful man, Ione was not yet terrified; the respect of his language, the softness of his voice,

reassured her ; and in her own purity, she felt protection. But she was confused — astonished ; it was some moments before she could recover the power of reply.

“ Rise, Arbaces !” said she, at length ; and she resigned to him once more her hand, which she as quickly withdrew again, when she felt upon it the burning pressure of his lips. “ Rise ! and if thou art serious, if thy language be in earnest—”

“ *If!*” said he, tenderly.

“ Well, then, listen to me ; you have been my guardian—my friend—my monitor ; for this new character I was not prepared — think not,” she added quickly, as she saw his dark eyes glitter with the fierceness of his passion — “ think not, that I scorn—that I am not touched—that I am not honoured by—this homage ; but, say—canst thou hear me calmly ?”

“ Ay, though thy words were lightning, and could blast me !”

“ *I love another!*” said Ione, blushing, but in a firm voice.

“ By the gods — by hell !” shouted Arbaces, rising to his fullest height ; “ dare not tell me

that—dare not mock me:—it is impossible!—whom hast thou seen—whom known? Oh, Ione! it is thy woman's invention; thy woman's art that speaks—thou wouldst gain time: I have surprised—I have terrified thee. Do with me as thou wilt—say, that thou lovest not me; but, say not, that thou lovest another!”

“Alas!” began Ione; and then, appalled before his sudden and unlooked-for violence, she burst into tears.

Arbaces came nearer to her—his breath glowed fiercely on her cheek; he wound his arms round her—she sprang from his embrace. In the struggle a tablet fell from her bosom on the ground; Arbaces perceived, and seized it—it was the letter that morning received from Glaucus. Ione sank upon the couch, half dead with terror.

Rapidly the eyes of Arbaces ran over the writing; the Neapolitan did not dare to gaze upon him; she did not see the deadly paleness that came over his countenance—she marked not his writhing frown, nor the quivering of his lip, nor the convulsions that heaved his breast. He read it to the end, and then, as the letter fell from his hand, he said, in a voice of deceitful calmness —

“ Is the writer of this the man thou lovest ? ”

Ione sobbed, but answered not.

“ Speak ! ” he rather shrieked than said.

“ It is—it is ! ”

“ And his name—it is written here—his name is Glaucus ! ”

Ione, clasping her hands, looked round as for succour or escape.

“ Then hear me,” said Arbaces, sinking his voice into a whisper ; “ thou shalt go to thy tomb, rather than to his arms. What ! thinkest thou Arbaces will brook a rival such as this puny Greek ? What ! thinkest thou that he has watched the fruit ripen, to yield it to another. Pretty fool, no ! Thou art mine—all—only mine—and thus—thus I seize and claim thee.” As he spoke, he caught Ione in his arms ; and, in that ferocious grasp, was all the energy—less of love than of revenge.

But to Ione, despair gave supernatural strength ; she again tore herself from him—she rushed to that part of the room by which she had entered—she half withdrew the curtain—he seized her—again she broke away from him—and fell, ex-

hausted, and with a loud shriek, at the base of the column which supported the head of the Egyptian goddess. Arbaces paused for a moment, as to regain his breath; and then once more darted upon his prey.

At that instant the curtain was rudely torn aside, the Egyptian felt a fierce and strong grasp upon his shoulder. He turned—he beheld before him the flashing eyes of Glaucus, and the pale—worn—but menacing—countenance of Apæcides. “Ha!” he muttered, as he glared from one to the other, “what fury hath sent ye hither?”

“Até,” answered Glaucus; and he closed at once with the Egyptian. Meanwhile, Apæcides raised his sister, now lifeless, from the ground; his strength exhausted by his long overwrought mind, did not suffice to bear her away, light and delicate though her shape: he placed her therefore on the couch, and stood over her with a brandished knife, watching the contest between Glaucus and the Egyptian, and ready to plunge his weapon in the bosom of Arbaces should he be victorious in the struggle. There is, perhaps, nothing on earth so terrible as the naked and unarmed contest of animal strength, no

weapon but those which nature supplies to rage. Both the antagonists were now locked in each other's grasp—the hand of each seeking the throat of the other—the face drawn back—the fierce eyes flashing—the muscles strained—the veins swelled—the lips apart—the teeth set;—both were strong beyond the ordinary power of men, both animated by relentless wrath; they coiled, they wound, around each other; they rocked to and fro—they swayed from end to end of their confined arena;—they uttered cries of ire and revenge;—they were now before the altar—now at the base of the column where the struggle had commenced: they drew back for breath—Arbaces leaning against the column—Glaucus a few paces apart.

“O ancient goddess,” exclaimed Arbaces, clasping the column, and raising his eyes towards the sacred image it supported; “protect thy chosen, proclaim thy vengeance against this thing of an upstart creed, who with sacrilegious violence profanes thy resting-place and assails thy servant.”

As he spoke, the still and vast features of the goddess seemed suddenly to glow with life; through the black marble, as through a transparent veil,

flushed luminously a crimson and burning hue—around the head played and darted coruscations of livid lightning—the eyes became like balls of lurid fire, and seemed fixed in withering and intolerable wrath upon the countenance of the Greek. Awed and appalled by this sudden and mystic answer to the prayer of his foe—and not free from the hereditary superstitions of his race—the cheeks of Glaucus paled before that strange and ghastly animation of the marble—his knees knocked together, he stood, seized with a divine panic, dismayed, aghast, half unmanned before his foe! Arbaces gave him not breathing time to recover his stupor; “Die, wretch!” he shouted in a voice of thunder, as he sprang upon the Greek; “the Mighty Mother claims thee as a living sacrifice.” Taken thus by surprise in the first consternation of his superstitious fears, the Greek lost his footing—the marble floor was as smooth as glass—he slid—he fell. Arbaces planted his foot on the breast of his fallen foe. Apæcides, taught by his sacred profession, as well as by his knowledge of Arbaces, to distrust all miraculous interpositions, had not shared the dismay of his companion, — he rushed

forward, his knife gleamed in the air; the watchful Egyptian caught his arm as it descended; one wrench of his powerful hand tore the weapon from the weak grasp of the priest; one sweeping blow stretched him to the earth:—with a loud and exulting yell Arbaces brandished the knife on high. Glaucus gazed upon his impending fate with unwinking eyes, and in the stern and scornful resignation of a fallen gladiator;—when at that awful instant the floor shook under them with a rapid and convulsive throes—a mightier spirit than that of the Egyptian was abroad!—a giant and crushing power before which sunk into sudden impotence his passion and his arts. It woke—it stirred—that Dread Dæmon of the Earthquake—laughing to scorn alike the magic of human guile and the malice of human wrath. As a Titan, on whom the mountains are piled, it roused itself from the sleep of years—it moved on its dædal couch—the caverns below groaned and trembled beneath the motion of its limbs. In the moment of his vengeance and his power—the self-prized demigod was humbled to his real clay. Far and wide, along the soil, went a hoarse and rumbling sound—the curtains of the chamber shook as

at the blast of a storm—the altar rocked—the tripod reeled,—and, high over the place of contest, the column trembled and waved from side to side; the sable head of the goddess tottered and fell from its pedestal;—and as the Egyptian stooped above his intended victim, right upon his bended form, right between the shoulder and the neck, struck the marble mass!—the shock stretched him like the blow of death, at once, suddenly, without sound or motion or semblance of life, upon the floor; apparently crushed by the very divinity he had impiously animated and invoked!

“The Earth has preserved her children,” said Glaucus, staggering to his feet. “Blessed be the dread convulsion! Let us worship the providence of the gods!” He assisted Apæcides to rise, and then turned upward the face of Arbaces; it seemed locked as in death, blood gushed from the Egyptian’s lips over his glittering robes,—he fell heavily from the arms of Glaucus, and the red stream trickled slowly along the marble. Again the earth shook beneath their feet, they were forced to cling to each other; the convulsion ceased as suddenly as it came; they tarried no longer; Glaucus bore

Ione lightly in his arms, and they fled from the unhallowed spot. But scarce had they entered the garden, than they were met on all sides by flying and disordered groups of women and slaves, whose festive and glittering garments contrasted in mockery the solemn terror of the hour;—they did not appear to heed the strangers—they were occupied only with their own fears. After the tranquillity of sixteen years, that burning and treacherous soil again menaced destruction; they uttered but one cry, “THE EARTHQUAKE!—THE EARTHQUAKE!”—And, passing unmolested from the midst of them, Apæcides and his companions, without entering the house, hastened down one of the alleys, passed a small open gate, and there sitting on a little mound, over which gloomed the dark green aloes, the moonlight fell on the bended figure of the blind girl,—she was weeping bitterly.

NOTE TO BOOK II.

(a) Page 285. "The marvels of Faustus are not comparable to those of Apollonius."

During the earlier ages of the Christian epoch, the Heathen Philosophy, especially of Pythagoras and of Plato, had become debased and adulterated, not only by the wildest mysticism, but the most chimerical dreams of magic. Pythagoras, indeed, scarcely merited a nobler destiny; for though he was an exceedingly clever man, he was a most prodigious mountebank, and was exactly formed to be the great father of a school of magicians. Pythagoras himself either cultivated magic or arrogated its attributes, and his followers told marvellous tales of his writing on the moon's disc, and appearing in several places at once. His golden rules and his golden thigh were in especial veneration in Magna Grecia, and out of his doctrines of occult numbers, his followers extracted numbers of occult doctrines. The most remarkable of the later impostors who succeeded him, was Apollonius of Tyana, referred to in the text. All sorts of prodigies accompanied the birth of this gentleman. Proteus, the Egyptian god, foretold to his mother yet pregnant, that it was he himself (Proteus) who was about to re-appear in the world through her agency. After this, Proteus might well be considered to possess the power of transformation! Apollonius knew the language of birds, read men's thoughts in their bosoms, and walk-

ed about with a familiar spirit. He was a devil of a fellow with a devil, and induced a mob to stone a poor demon of venerable and mendicant appearance, who, after the lapidary operation, changed into a huge dog. He raised the dead, passed a night with Achilles, and when Domitian was murdered, he called out aloud, (though at Ephesus at the moment,) "Strike the tyrant!" The end of so honest and great a man was worthy his life. It would seem that he ascended into heaven. What less could be expected of one who had stoned the devil! Should any English writer meditate a new Faust, I recommend to him Apollonius.

But the magicians of *this* sort were Philosophers?—excellent men and pious; there were others of a far darker and deadlier knowledge, the followers of the Goetic Magic, in other words the Black Art. Both of these, the Goetic and the Theurgic, appear to be of Egyptian origin; and it is evident, at least, that their practitioners appeared to pride themselves on drawing their chief secrets from that ancient source;—and both are intimately connected with astrology. In attributing to Arbaces the knowledge and the repute of magic, as well as that of the science of the stars, I am therefore perfectly in accordance with the spirit of his time, and the circumstances of his birth. He is a characteristic of that age. At one time, I purposed to have developed and detailed more than I have done the pretensions of Arbaces to the mastery of his art, and to have initiated the reader into the various sorceries of the period. But as the character of the Egyptian grew upon me, I felt that it was necessary to be sparing of that machinery which, thanks to this five-shillings march of knowledge, every one now may fancy he can detect. Such as he is—Arbaces is become too much of an intellectual creation to demand a frequent repetition of the coarser and more physical materia of terror. I suffered him, then, merely to demonstrate his capacities in the elementary and obvious secrets of his craft, and leave the subtler magic he possesses to rest in mystery and shadow.

As to the Witch of Vesuvius, (who will be introduced in the second volume,) her spells and her philters, her cavern and its appliances, however familiar to us of the North, are faithful also to her time and nation. A witch of a lighter character, and manners less ascetic, the learned reader will remember with delight in the "Golden Ass" of Apuleius; and the reader who is *not* learned is recommended to the spirited translation of that enchanting romance by Taylor.

END OF BOOK II.

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