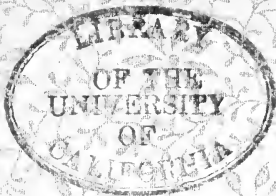


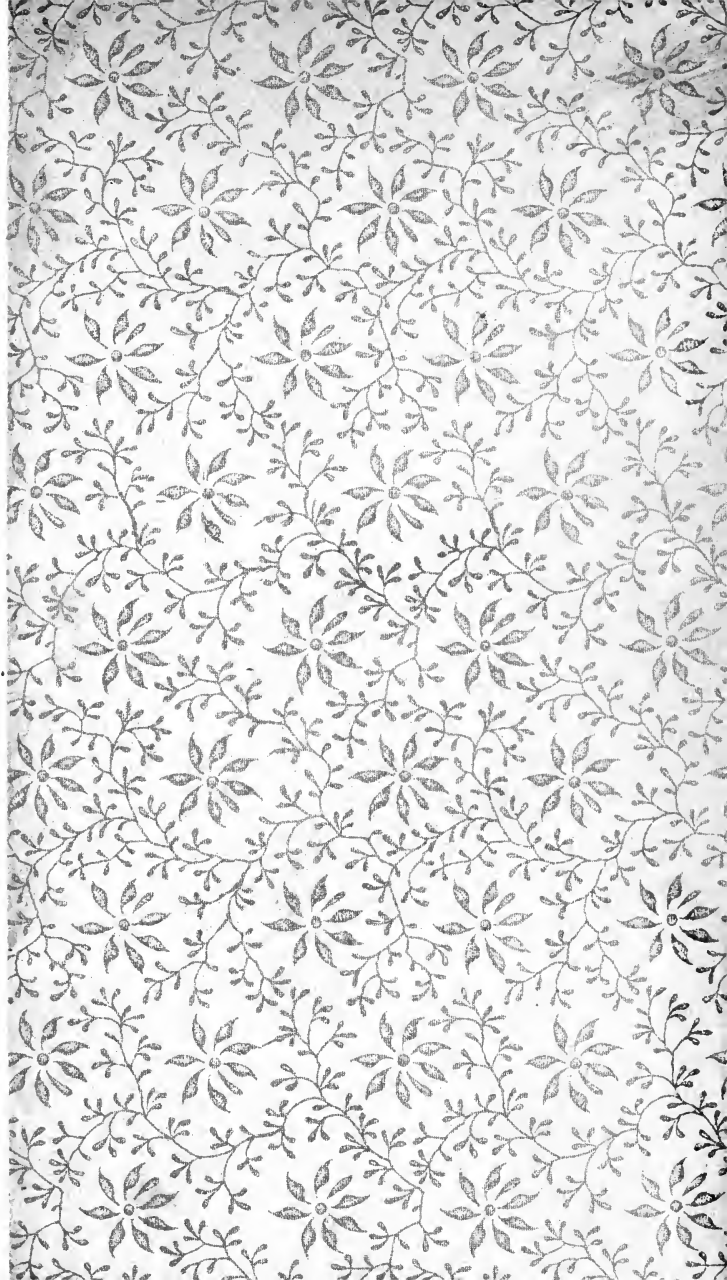
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THE ROMAN TRAITOR:

OR, THE DAYS OF

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CICERO, CATO AND CATALINE.

A TRUE TALE OF THE REPUBLIC.

BY HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT,

AUTHOR OF "CROMWELL," "MARMADUKE WYVIL," "BROTHERS," ETC.

Why not a Borgia or a Catiline?—POPE.

VOLUME I.

This is one of the most powerful Roman stories in the English language, and is of itself sufficient to stamp the writer as a powerful man. The dark intrigues of the days which Cæsar, Sallust and Cicero made illustrious; when Cataline defied and almost defeated the Senate; when the plots which ultimately overthrew the Roman Republic were being formed, are described in a masterly manner. The book deserves a permanent position by the side of the great *Bellum Catalinarium* of Sallust, and if we mistake not will not fail to occupy a prominent place among those produced in America.

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PREFACE.



A FEW words are perhaps needed as an introduction to a work of far more ambitious character, than any which I have before attempted. In venturing to select a subject from the history of Rome, during its earlier ages, undeterred by the failure or, at the best, partial success of writers far more eminent than I can ever hope to become, I have been actuated by reasons, which, in order to relieve myself from the possible charge of presumption, I will state briefly.

It has long been my opinion, then, that there lay a vast field, rich with a harvest of material almost virgin, for the romancer's use, in the history of classic ages. And this at a period when the annals of every century and nation since the Christian era have been ransacked, and reproduced, in endless variety, for the entertainment of the hourly increasing reading world, is no small advantage.

Again, I have fancied that I could discover a cause for the imperfect success of great writers when dealing with classic

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fiction, in the fact of their endeavoring to be too learned, of their aiming too much at portraying Greeks and Romans, and too little at depicting men, forgetful that under all changes of custom, and costume, in all countries, ages, and conditions, the human heart is still the human heart, convulsed by the same passions, chilled by the same griefs, burning with the same joys, and, in the main, actuated by the same hopes and fears.

With these views, I many years ago deliberately selected this subject, for a novel, which has advanced by slow steps to such a degree of completeness as it has now attained.

Having determined on trying my success in classical fiction, the conspiracy of Cataline appeared to me, a theme particularly well adapted for the purpose, as being an actual event of vast importance, and in many respects unparalleled in history; as being partially familiar to every one, thoroughly understood perhaps by no one, so slender are the authentic documents concerning it which have come down to us, and so dark and mysterious the motives of the actors.

It possessed, therefore, among other qualifications, as the ground-work of a historical Romance, one almost indispensable—that of indistinctness, which gives scope to the exercise of imagination, without the necessity of falsifying either the truths or the probabilities of history.

Of the execution, I have, of course, nothing to say; but

that I have sedulously avoided being overlearned; that few Latin words will be found in the work—none whatsoever in the conversational parts, and none but the names of articles which have no direct English appellation; and that it is sufficiently simple and direct for the most unclassical reader.

I hope that the costume, the manners of the people, and the antiquarian details will be found sufficiently correct; if they be not, it is not for want of pains or care; for I have diligently consulted all the authorities to which I could command access.

To the history of the strange events related in this tale, I have adhered most scrupulously; and I believe that the dates, facts, and characters of the individuals introduced, will not be found in any material respect, erroneous or untrue; and here I may perhaps venture to observe, that, on reading the most recently published lectures of Niebuhr, which never fell in my way until very lately, I had the great satisfaction of finding the view I have always taken of the character and motives of Cataline and his confederates, confirmed by the opinion of that profound and sagacious critic and historian.

I will only add, that it is hardly probable that “the Roman Traitor” would ever have been finished had it not been for the strenuous advice of a friend, in whose opinion I have the

utmost confidence, Mr. Benjamin, to whom some of the early chapters were casually shown, two or three years ago, and who almost insisted on my completing it.

It is most fitting, therefore, that it should be, as it is, introduced to the world under his auspices; since but for his favourable judgment, and for a feeling on my own part that to fail in such an attempt would be scarce a failure, while success would be success indeed, it would probably have never seen the light of day!

With these few remarks, I submit the Roman Traitor to the candid judgment of my friends and the public, somewhat emboldened by the uniform kindness and encouragement which I have hitherto met; and with some hope that I may be allowed at some future day, to lay another romance of the most famous, before the citizens of the youngest republic.

THE CEDARS

CONTENTS.



VOLUME I.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—THE MEN,	9
II.—THE MEASURES,	25
III.—THE LOVERS,	37
IV.—THE CONSUL,	51
V.—THE CAMPUS,	69
VI.—THE FALSE LOVE,	89
VII.—THE OATH,	108
VIII.—THE TRUE LOVE,	121
IX.—THE AMBUSH,	137
X.—THE WANTON,	146
XI.—THE RELEASE,	166
XII.—THE FORGE,	183
XIII.—THE DISCLOSURE,	197
XIV.—THE WARNINGS,	209
XV.—THE CONFESSION,	223
XVI.—THE SENATE,	235



VOLUME II.

I.—THE OLD PATRICIAN,	3
II.—THE CONSULAR COMITIA,	12
III.—THE PERIL,	21
IV.—THE CRISIS,	29

CHAPTER	PAGE
V.—THE ORATION,	38
VI.—THE FLIGHT,	54
VII.—THE AMBASSADORS,	65
VIII.—THE LATIN VILLA,	75
IX.—THE MULVIAN BRIDGE,	88
X.—THE ARREST,	101
XI.—THE YOUNG PATRICIAN,	113
XII.—THE ROMAN FATHER,	123
XIII.—THE DOOM,	136
XIV.—THE TULLIANUM,	150
XV.—THE CAMP IN THE APPENINES,	158
XVI.—THE WATCHTOWER OF USELLA,	168
XVII.—TIDINGS FROM ROME,	185
XVIII.—THE RESCUE,	192
XIX.—THE EVE OF BATTLE,	205
XX.—THE FIELD OF PISTORIA,	215
XXI.—THE BATTLE,	223
XXII.—A NIGHT OF HORROR,	233

THE ROMAN TRAITOR;

OR, THE DAYS OF

CICERO, CATO AND CATALINE.

A TRUE TALE OF THE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER I.

THE MEN.

But bring me to the knowledge of your chiefs.

MARINO FALIERO.

MIDNIGHT was over Rome. The skies were dark and lowering, and ominous of tempest; for it was a sirocco, and the welkin was overcast with sheets of vapory cloud, not very dense, indeed, or solid, but still sufficient to intercept the feeble twinkling of the stars, which alone held dominion in the firmament; since the young crescent of the moon had sunk long ago beneath the veiled horizon.

The air was thick and sultry, and so unspeakably oppressive, that for above three hours the streets had been entirely deserted. In a few houses of the higher class, lights might be seen dimly shining through the casements of the small chambers, hard beside the doorway; appropriated to the use of the Atriensis, or slave whose charge it was to guard the entrance of the court. But, for the most part, not a single ray cheered the dull murky streets, except that here and there, before the holy shrine, or vaster and more elaborate temple, of some one of Rome's hun

dred gods, the votive lanthorns, though shorn of half their beams by the dense fog-wreaths, burnt perennial.

The period was the latter time of the republic, a few years after the fell democratic persecutions of the plebeian Marius had drowned the mighty city oceans-deep in patrician gore; after the awful retribution of the avenger Sylla had rioted in the destruction of that guilty faction.

He who was destined one day to support the laurelled diadem of universal empire on his bald brows, stood even now among the noblest, the most ambitious, and the most famous of the state; though not as yet had he unfurled the eagle wings of conquest over the fierce barbarian hordes of Gaul and Germany, or launched his galleys on the untried waters of the great Western sea. A dissipated, spendthrift, and luxurious youth, devoted solely as it would seem to the pleasures of the table, or to intrigues with the most fair and noble of Rome's ladies, he had yet, amid those unworthy occupations, displayed such gleams of overmastering talent, such wondrous energy, such deep sagacity, and above all such uncurbed though ill-directed ambition, that the perpetual Dictator had already, years before, exclaimed with prescient wisdom,—“In you unzoned youth I perceive the germ of many a Marius.”

At the same time, the magnificent and princely leader, who was to be thereafter his great rival, was reaping that rich crop of glory, the seeds of which had been sown already by the wronged Lucullus, in the broad kingdoms of the effeminate East.

Meanwhile, as Rome had gradually rendered herself, by the exertion of indomitable valor, the supreme mistress of every foreign power that bordered on the Mediterranean, wealth, avarice, and luxury, like some contagious pestilence, had crept into the inmost vitals of the commonwealth, until the very features, which had once made her famous, no less for her virtues than her valor, were utterly obliterated and for ever.

Instead of a paternal, poor, brave, patriotic aristocracy, she had now a nobility, valiant indeed and capable, but dissolute beyond the reach of man's imagination, boundless in their expenditures, reckless as to the mode of gaining wherewithal to support them, oppressive and despotical to their inferiors, smooth-tongued and hypocritical toward

each other, destitute equally of justice and compassion toward men, and of respect and piety toward the Gods! Wealth had become the idol, the god of the whole people! Wealth—and no longer service, eloquence, daring, or integrity,—was held the requisite for office. Wealth now conferred upon its owner, all magistracies all guerdons—rank, power, command,—consulships, provinces, and armies.

The senate—once the most grave and stern and just assembly that the world had seen—was now, with but a few superb exceptions, a timid, faithless, and licentious oligarchy; while—name whilome so majestic and mighty!—the people, the great Roman people, was but a mob! a vile colluvion of the offscourings of all climes and regions—Greeks, Syrians, Africans, Barbarians from the chilly north, and eunuchs from the vanquished Orient, enfranchised slaves, and liberated gladiators—a factious, turbulent, fierce rabble!

Such was the state of Rome, when it would seem that the Gods, wearied with the guilt of her aggrandisement, sick of the slaughter by which she had won her way to empire almost universal, had judged her to destruction—had given her up to perish, not by the hands of any foreign foe, but by her own; not by the wisdom, conduct, bravery of others, but by her own insanity and crime.

But at this darkest season of the state one hope was left to Rome—one safeguard. The united worth of Cicero and Cato! The statesmanship, the eloquence, the splendid and unequalled parts of the former; the stern self-denying virtue, the unchanged constancy, the resolute and hard integrity of the latter; these, singular and severally, might have availed to prop a falling dynasty—united, might have preserved a world!

The night was such as has already been described: gloomy and lowering in its character, as was the aspect of the political horizon, and most congenial to the fearful plots, which were even now in progress against the lives of Rome's best citizens, against the sanctity of her most solemn temples, the safety of her domestic hearths, the majesty of her inviolable laws, the very existence of her institutions, of her empire, of herself as one among the nations of the earth.

Most suitable, indeed, was that dim murky night, most favorable the solitude of the deserted streets, to the measures of those parricides of the Republic, who lurked within her bosom, thirsty for blood, and panting to destroy. Nor had they overlooked the opportunity. But a few days remained before that on which the Consular elections, fixed for the eighteenth of October, were to take place in the Campus Martius—whereat, it was already understood that Sergius Cataline, frustrated the preceding year, by the election of the great orator of Arpinum to his discomfiture, was about once more to try the fortunes of himself and of the popular faction.

It was at this untimely hour, that a man might have been seen lurking beneath the shadows of an antique archway, decorated with half-obliterated sculptures of the old Etruscan school, in one of the narrow and winding streets which, lying parallel to the Suburra, ran up the hollow between the Viminal and Quirinal hills.

He was a tall and well-framed figure, though so lean as to seem almost emaciated. His forehead was unusually high and narrow, and channelled with deep horizontal lines of thought and passion, across which cut at right angles the sharp furrows of a continual scowl, drawing the corners of his heavy coal-black eyebrows into strange contiguity. Beneath these, situated far back in their cavernous recesses, a pair of keen restless eyes glared out with an expression fearful to behold—a jealous, and unquiet, ever-wandering glance—so sinister, and ominous, and above all so indicative of a perturbed and anguished spirit, that it could not be looked upon without suggesting those wild tales, which speak of fiends dwelling in the revived and untombed carcasses of those who die in unrepented sin. His nose was keenly Roman; with a deep wrinkle seared, as it would seem, into the sallow flesh from either nostril downward. His mouth, grimly compressed, and his jaws, for the most part, firmly clinched together, spoke volumes of immutable and iron resolution; while all his under lip was scarred, in many places, with the trace of wounds, inflicted beyond doubt, in some dread paroxysm, by the very teeth it covered.

The dress which this remarkable looking individual at that time wore, was the *penula*, as it was called; a

short, loose straight-cut overcoat, reaching a little way below the knees, not fitted to the shape, but looped by woolen frogs all down the front, with broad flaps to protect the arms, and a square cape or collar, which at the pleasure of the wearer could be drawn up so as to conceal all the lower part of the countenance, or suffered to fall down upon the shoulders.

This uncouth vestment, which was used only by men of the lowest order, or by others solely when engaged in long and toilsome journeys, or in cold wintry weather, was composed of a thick loose-napped frieze or serge, of a dark purplish brown, with loops and *fibulae*, or frogs, of a dull dingy red.

The wearer's legs were bare down to the very feet, which were protected by coarse shoes of heavy leather, fastened about the ancles by a thong, with a clasp of marvellously ill-cleaned brass. Upon his head he had a *petasus*, or broad-brimmed hat of gray felt, fitting close to the skull, with a long fall behind, not very unlike in form to the south-wester of a modern seaman. This article of dress was, like the penula, although peculiar to the inferior classes, oftentimes worn by men of superior rank, when journeying abroad. From these, therefore, little or no aid was given to conjecture, as to the station of the person, who now shrunk back into the deepest gloom of the old archway, now peered out stealthily into the night, grinding his teeth and muttering smothered imprecations against some one, who had failed to meet him.

The shoes, however, of rude, ill-tanned leather, of a form and manufacture which was peculiar to the lowest artisans or even slaves, were such as no man of ordinary standing would under any circumstances have adopted. Yet if these would have implied that the wearer was of low plebeian origin, this surmise was contradicted by several rings decked with gems of great price and splendor—one a large deeply-engraved signet—which were distinctly visible by their lustre on the fingers of both his hands.

His air and carriage too were evidently in accordance with the nobility of birth implied by these magnificent adornments, rather than with the humble station betokened by the rest of his attire.

His motions were quick, irritable, and incessant! His pace, as he stalked to and fro in the narrow area of the archway, was agitated, and uneven. Now he would stride off ten or twelve steps with strange velocity, then pause; and stand quite motionless for perhaps a minute's space, and then again resume his walk with slow and faltering gestures, to burst forth once again, as at the instigation of some goading spirit, to the same short-lived energy and speed.

Meantime, his color went and came; he bit his lip, till the blood trickled down his clean shorn chin; he clinched his hands, and smote them heavily together, and uttered in a harsh hissing whisper the most appalling imprecations---on his own head---on him who had deceived him---on Rome, and all her myriads of inhabitants---on earth, and sea, and heaven---on everything divine or human!

"The black plague 'light on the fat sleepy glutton!--- nay, rather all the fiends and furies of deep Erebus pursue *me!*---*me!*---*me!*, who was fool enough to fancy that aught of bold design or manly daring could rouse up the dull, adipose, luxurious loiterer from his wines---his concubines---his slumbers!--And now---the dire ones hunt him to perdition! Now, the seventh hour of night hath passed, and all await us at the house of Læca; and this foul sluggard sottishly snores at home!"

While he was cursing yet, and smiting his broad chest, and gnashing his teeth in impotent malignity, suddenly a quick step became audible at a distance. The sound fell on his ear sharpened by the stimulus of fiery passions and of conscious fear, long ere it could have been perceived by any ordinary listener.

"'Tis he," he said, "'tis he at last---but no?" he continued, after a pause of a second, during which he had stooped, and laid his ear close to the ground, "no! 'tis too quick and light for the gross Cassius. By all the gods! there are two! Can he, then, have betrayed me? No! no! By heavens! he dare not!"

At the same time he started back into the darkest corner of the arch, pulled up the cape of his cassock, and slouched the wide-brimmed hat over his anxious lineaments; then pressing his body flat against the dusky wall, to which the color of his garments was in some sort

assimilated, he awaited the arrival of the new-comers, perhaps hoping that if foreign to his purpose they might pass by him in the gloom.

As the footsteps now sounded nearer, he thrust his right hand into the bosom of his cassock, and drew out a long broad two-edged dagger, or stiletto; and as he unsheathed it, "Ready!" he muttered to himself, "ready for either fortune!"

Nearer and nearer came the footsteps, and the blent sounds of the two were now distinctly audible—one a slow, listless tread, as of one loitering along, as if irresolute whether to turn back or proceed; the other a firm, rapid, and decided step.

"Ha! it is well!" resumed the listener; "Cassius it is; and with him comes Cethegus, though where they have joined company I marvel."

And, as he spoke, he put his weapon back into his girdle, where it was perfectly concealed by the folds of the penula.

"Ho!—stand!" he whispered, as the two men whose steps he had heard, entered the archway, "Stand, Friends and Brethren."

"Hail, Sergius!" replied the foremost; a tall and splendidly formed man, with a dark quick eye, and regular features, nobly chiselled and in all respects such—had it not been for the bitter and ferocious sneer, which curled his haughty lip, at every word—as might be termed eminently handsome.

He wore his raven hair in long and flowing curls, which hung quite down upon his shoulders—a fashion that was held in Rome to the last degree effeminate, indeed almost infamous—while his trim whiskers and close curly beard reeked with the richest perfumes, impregnating the atmosphere through which he passed with odors so strong as to be almost overpowering.

His garb was that of a patrician of the highest order; though tintured, like the arrangement of his hair, with not a little of that soft luxurious taste which had, of latter years, begun so generally to pervade Rome's young nobility. His under dress or tunic, was not of that succinct and narrow cut, which had so well become the sturdy fathers of the new republic! but—beside being wrought

of the finest Spanish wool of snowy whiteness, with the broad crimson facings indicative of his senatorial rank, known as the *laticlave*—fell in loose folds half way between his knee and ankle.

It had sleeves, too, a thing esteemed unworthy of a man—and was fringed at the cuffs, and round the hem, with a deep passmenting of crimson to match the *laticlave*. His toga of the thinnest and most gauzy texture, and whiter even than his tunic, flowed in a series of classical and studied draperies quite to his heels, where like the tunic it was bordered by a broad crimson trimming. His feet were ornamented, rather than protected, by delicate buskins of black leather, decked with the silver *sigma*, in its old crescent shape, the proud initial of the high term senator. A golden bracelet, fashioned like a large serpent, exquisitely carved with horrent scales and forked tail, was twined about the wrist of his right arm, with a huge carbuncle set in the head, and two rare diamonds for eyes. A dozen rings gemmed with the clearest brilliants sparkled upon his white and tapering fingers; in which, to complete the picture, he bore a handkerchief of fine Egyptian cambric, or Byssus as the Romans styled it, embroidered at the edges in arabesques of golden thread.

His comrade was if possible more slovenly in his attire than his friend was luxurious and expensive. He wore no toga, and his tunic—which, without the upper robe, was the accustomed dress of gladiators, slaves, and such as were too poor to wear the full and characteristic attire of the Roman citizen—was of dark brownish woollen, threadbare, and soiled with spots of grease, and patched in many places. His shoes were of coarse clouted leather, and his legs were covered up to the knees by thongs of ill-tanned cowhide rolled round them and tied at the ankles with straps of the same material.

“A plague on both of you!” replied the person, who had been so long awaiting them, in answer to their salutation. “Two hours have ye detained me here; and now that ye have come, in pretty guise ye do come! Oh! by the gods! a well assorted pair. Cassius more filthy than the vilest and most base tatterdemalion of the stews, and with him rare Cethegus, a senator in all his bravery! Wise judgment! excellent disguises! I know not whe-

ther most to marvel at the insane and furious temerity of this one, or at the idiotic foolery of that! Well fitted are ye both for a great purpose. And now—may the dark furies hunt you to perdition!—what hath delayed you?”

“Why, what a coil is here”, replied the gay Cethegus, delighted evidently at the unsuppressed anger of his confederate in crime, and bent on goading to yet more fiery wrath his most ungovernable temper. “Methinks, O pleasant Sergius, the moisture of this delectable night should have quenched somewhat the quick flames of your most amiable and placid humor! Keep thy hard words, I prithee, Cataline, for those who either heed or dread them. I, thou well knowest, do neither.”

“Peace, peace! Cethegus; plague him no farther,” interrupted Cassius, just as the fierce conspirator, exclaiming in a deep harsh whisper, the one word “Boy!” strode forth as if to strike him. “And thou, good Cataline, listen to reason—we have been dogged hitherward, and so came by circuitous byeways!”

“Dogged, said ye—dogged? and by whom?—doth the slave live, who dared it?”

“By a slave, as we reckon,” answered Cassius, “for he wore no toga; and his tunic”—

“Was filthy—very filthy, by the gods!—most like thine own, good Cassius,” interposed Cethegus. But, in good sooth, he *was* a slave, my Sergius. He passed us twice, before I thought much of it. Once as we crossed the sacred way after descending from the Palatine—and once again beside the shrine of Venus in the Cyprian street. The second time he gazed into my very eyes, until he caught my glance meeting his own, and then with a quick bounding pace he hurried onward.”

“Tush!” answered Cataline, “tush! was that all? the knave was a chance night-walker, and frightened ye! Ha! ha! by Hercules! it makes me laugh—frightened the rash and overbold Cethegus!”

“It was not all!” replied Cethegus very calmly, “it was not all, Cataline. And, but that we are joined here in a purpose so mighty that it overwhelms all private interests, all mere considerations of the individual, you, my good sir, should learn what it is to taunt a man with fear, who fears not anything—least of all thee! But it was

not all. For as we turned from a side lane into the Wicked* street that scales the summit of the Esquiline, my eye caught something lurking in the dark shadow cast over an angle of the wall by a large cypress. I seized the arm of Cassius, to check his speech"—

"Ha! did the fat idiot speak!—what said he?" interrupted Cataline.

"Nothing," replied the other, "nothing, at least, of any moment. Well, I caught Cassius by the arm, and was in the act of pointing, when from the shadows of the tree out sprang this self-same varlet, whereon I——".

"Rushed on him! dragged him into the light! and smote him, thus, and thus, and thus! didst thou not, excellent Cethegus?" Cataline exclaimed fiercely in a hard stern whisper, making three lounges, while he spoke, as if with a stiletto.

"I did not any of these things," answered the other.

"And why not, I say, why not? why not?" cried Cataline with rude impetuosity.

"That shall I answer, when you give me time," said Cethegus, coolly. "Because when I rushed forth, he fled with an exceeding rapid flight; leaped the low wall into the graveyard of the base Plebeians, and there among the cypresses and overthrown sepulchres escaped me for a while. I beat about most warily, and at length started him up again from the jaws of an obscene and broken catacomb. I gained on him at every step; heard the quick panting of his breath; stretched out my left to grasp him, while my right held unsheathed and ready the good stiletto that ne'er failed me. And now—now—by the great Jove! his tunic's hem was fluttering in my clutch, when my feet tripped over a prostrate column, that I was hurled five paces at the least in advance of the fugitive; and when I rose again, sore stunned, and bruised, and breathless, the slave had vanished."

"And where, I prithee, during this well-concerted chase, was valiant Cassius?" enquired Cataline, with a hoarse sneering laugh.

"During the chase, I know not," answered Cethegus, "but when it was over, and I did return, I found him

* *Vicus sceleratus*. So called because Tullia therein drove her chariot over her father's corpse.

leaning on the wall, even in the angle whence the slave fled on our approach."

"Asleep! I warrant me—by the great gods! asleep!" exclaimed the other; "but come!—come, let us onward,—I trow we have been waited for—and as we go, tell me, I do beseech thee, what was't that Cassius said, when the slave lay beside ye?—"

"Nay, but I have forgotten—some trivial thing or other—oh! now I do bethink me, he said it was a long walk to Marcus Læca's."

"Fool! fool! Double and treble fool! and dost thou call this nothing? Nothing to tell the loitering informer the very head and heart of our design? By Erebus! but I am sick—sick of the fools, with whom I am thus wretchedly assorted! Well! well! upon your own heads be it!" and instantly recovering his temper he walked on with his two confederates, now in deep silence, at a quick pace through the deserted streets towards their perilous rendezvous.

Noiseless, with stealthy steps, they hurried onward, threading the narrow pass between the dusky hills, until they reached a dark and filthy lane which turning at right angles led to the broad thoroughfare of the more showy, though by no means less ill-famed Suburra. Into this they struck instantly, walking in single file, and keeping as nearly as possible in the middle of the causeway. The lane, which was composed of dwellings of the lowest order, tenanted by the most abject profligates, was dark as midnight; for the tall dingy buildings absolutely intercepted every ray of light that proceeded from the murky sky, and there was not a spark in any of the sordid casements, nor any votive lamp in that foul alley. The only glimpse of casual illumination, and that too barely serving to render the darkness and the filth perceptible, was the faint streak of lustre where the Suburra crossed the far extremity of the bye-path.

Scarce had they made three paces down the alley, ere the quick eye of Cataline, for ever roving in search of aught suspicious, caught the dim outline of a human figure, stealing across this pallid gleam.

"Hist! hist!" he whispered in stern low tones, which though inaudible at three yards' distance completely filled the ears of him to whom they were addressed—"hist!"

hist! Cethegus; seest thou not—seest thou not there? If it be he, he 'scapes us not again!—out with thy weapon, man, and strike at once, if that thou have a chance; but if not, do thou go on with Cassius to the appointed place. Leave him to me! and say, I follow ye! See! he hath slunk into the darkness. Separate ye, and occupy the whole width of the street, while I dislodge him!”

And as he spoke, unsheathing his broad poignard, but holding it concealed beneath his cassock, he strode on boldly, affecting the most perfect indifference, and even insolence of bearing.

Meanwhile the half-seen figure had entirely disappeared amid the gloom; yet had the wary eye of the conspirator, in the one momentary glance he had obtained, been able to detect with something very near to certainty the spot wherein the spy, if such he were, lay hidden. As he approached the place—whereat a heap of rubbish, the relics of a building not long ago as it would seem consumed by fire, projected far into the street—seeing no sign whatever of the man who, he was well assured, was not far distant, he paused a little so as to suffer his companions to draw near. Then as they came up with him, skilled in all deep and desperate wiles, he instantly commenced a whispered conversation, a tissue of mere nonsense, with here and there a word of seeming import clearly and audibly pronounced. Nor was his dark manœuvre unsuccessful; for as he uttered the word “Cicero,” watching meanwhile the heap of ruins as jealously as ever tiger glared on its destined prey, he caught a tremulous outline; and in a second's space, a small round object, like a man's head, was protruded from the darkness, and brought into relief against the brighter back ground.

Then—then—with all the fury—all the lythe agile vigor, all the unrivalled speed, and concentrated fierceness of that tremendous beast of prey, he dashed upon his victim! But at the first slight movement of his sinewy form, the dimly seen shape vanished; impetuously he rushed on among the piles of scattered brick and rubbish, and, ere he saw the nature of the place, plunged down a deep descent into the cellar of the ruin.

Lucky was it for Cataline, and most unfortunate for Rome, that when the building fell, its fragments had choked three parts of the depth of that subterranean vault;

so that it was but from a height of three or four feet at the utmost, that the fierce desperado was precipitated !

Still, to a man less active, the accident might have been serious, but with instinctive promptitude, backed by a wonderful exertion of muscular agility, he writhed his body even in the act of falling so that he lighted on his feet ; and, ere a second had elapsed after his fall, was extricating himself from the broken masses of cement and brickwork, and soon stood unharmed, though somewhat stunned and shaken, on the very spot which had been occupied scarcely a minute past by the suspected spy.

At the same point of time in which the conspirator fell, the person, whosoever he was, in pursuit of whom he had plunged so heedlessly into the ruins, darted forth from his concealment close to the body and within arm's length of the fierce Cethegus, whose attention was for the moment distracted from his watch by the catastrophe which had befallen his companion. Dodging by a quick movement—so quick that it seemed almost the result of instinct—so to elude the swift attempt of his enemy to arrest his progress, the spy was forced to rush almost into the arms of Cassius.

Yet this appeared not to cause him any apprehension ; for he dashed boldly on, till they were almost front to front ; when, notwithstanding his unwieldy frame and inactivity of habit, spurred into something near to energy by the very imminence of peril, the worn-out debauchee bestirred himself as if to seize him.

If such, however, were his intention, widely had he miscalculated his own powers, and fatally underrated the agility and strength of the stranger—a tall, thin, wiry man, well nigh six feet in height, broad shouldered, and deep chested, and thin flanked, and limbed like a Greek Athlete.

On he dashed !—on—right on ! till they stood face to face ; and then with one quick blow, into which, as it seemed, he put but little of his strength, he hurled the burly Cassius to the earth, and fled with swift and noiseless steps into the deepest gloom. Perceiving on the instant the necessity of apprehending this now undoubted spy, the fiery Cethegus paused not one instant to look after his discomfited companions ; but rushed away on the traces of the fugitive, who had perhaps gained, at the very

utmost, a dozen paces' start of him, in that wild midnight race—that race for life and death.

The slave, for such from his dark tunic he appeared to be, was evidently both a swift and practised runner; and well aware how great a stake was on his speed he now strained every muscle to escape, while scarce less fleet, and straining likewise every sinew to the utmost, Cethegus panted at his very heels.

Before, however, they had run sixty yards, one swifter than Cethegus took up the race; and bruised although he was, and stunned, and almost breathless when he started, ere he had overtaken his staunch friend, which he did in a space wonderfully brief, he seemed to have shaken off every ailment, and to be in the completest and most firm possession of all his wonted energies. As he caught up Cethegus, he relaxed somewhat of his speed, and ran on by his side for some few yards at a sort of springy trot, speaking the while in a deep whisper,

"Hist!" he said, "hist!—I am more swift of foot than thou, and deeper winded. Leave me to deal with this dog! Back thou, to him thou knowest of; sore is he hurt, I warrant me. Comfort him as thou best mayest, and hurry whither we were now going. 'Tis late even now—too late, I fear me much, and doubtless we are waited for. I have the heels of this same gallowsbird, that can I see already! Leave me to deal with him, and an he tells tales on us, then call me liar!"

Already well nigh out of breath himself, while the endurance of the fugitive seemed in nowise affected, and aware of the vast superiority of his brother conspirator's powers to his own, Cethegus readily enough yielded to his positive and reiterated orders, and turning hastily backward, gathered up the bruised and groaning Cassius, and led him with all speed toward the well-known rendezvous in the house of Læca.

Meanwhile with desperate speed that headlong race continued; the gloomy alley was passed through; the wider street into which it debouched, vanished beneath their quick beating footsteps; the dark and shadowy arch, wherein the chief conspirator had lurked, was threaded at full speed; and still, although he toiled, till the sweat dripped from every pore like gouts of summer rain, al-

though he plied each limb, till every over-wrought sinew seemed to crack, the hapless fugitive could gain no ground on his inveterate pursuer; who, cool, collected and unwearied, without one drop of perspiration on his dark sallow brow, without one panting sob in his deep breath, followed on at an equable and steady pace, gaining not any thing, nor seeming to desire to gain any thing, while yet within the precincts of the populous and thickly-settled city.

But now they crossed the broad Virbian street. The slave, distinctly visible for such, as he glanced by a brightly decorated shrine girt by so many brilliant lamps as shewed its tenant idol to have no lack of worshippers, darted up a small street leading directly towards the Esquiline.

“Now! now!” lisped Cataline between his hard-set teeth, “now he is mine, past rescue!”

Up the dark filthy avenue they sped, the fierce pursuer now gaining on the fugitive at every bound; till, had he stretched his arm out, he might have seized him; till his breath, hot and strong, waved the disordered elf-locks that fell down upon the bare neck of his flying victim. And now the low wall of the Plebeian burying ground arose before them, shaded by mighty cypresses and overgrown with tangled ivy. At one wild bound the hunted slave leaped over it, into the trackless gloom. At one wild bound the fierce pursuer followed him. Scarcely a yard asunder they alighted on the rank grass of that charnel grove; and not three paces did they take more, ere Cataline had hurled his victim to the earth, and cast himself upon him; choking his cries for help by the compression of his sinewy fingers, which grasped with a tenacity little inferior to that of an iron vice the miserable wretch's gullet.

He snatched his poniard from his sheath, reared it on high with a well skilled and steady hand! Down it came, noiseless and unseen. For there was not a ray of light to flash along its polished blade. Down it came with almost the speed and force of the electric fluid. A deep, dull, heavy sound was heard, as it was plunged into the yielding flesh, and the hot gushing blood spirted forth in a quick jet into the very face and mouth of the fell mur-

derer. A terrible convulsion, a fierce writhing spasm followed—so strong, so muscularly powerful, that the stern gripe of Cataline was shaken from the throat of his victim, and from his dagger's hilt!

In the last agony the murdered man cast off his slayer from his breast; started erect upon his feet! tore out, from the deep wound, the fatal weapon which had made it; hurled it far—far as his remaining strength permitted—into the rayless night; burst forth into a wild and yelling cry, half laughter and half imprecation; fell headlong to the earth—which was no more insensible than he, what time he struck it, to any sense of mortal pain or sorrow—and perished there alone, unpitied and unaided.

“HABET!—he hath it!” muttered Cataline, quoting the well-known expression of the gladiatorial strife; “he hath it!—but all the plagues of Erebus, light on it—my good stiletto lies near to him in the swart darkness, to testify against me; nor by great Hecate! is there one chance to ten of finding it. Well! be it so!” he added, turning upon his heel, “be it so, for most like it hath fallen in the deep long grass, where none will ever find it; and if they do, I care not!”

And with a reckless and unmoved demeanor, well pleased with his success, and casting not one retrospective thought toward his murdered victim, not one repentant sigh upon his awful crime, he too hurried away to join his dread associates at their appointed meeting.

CHAPTER II.

THE MEASURES.

For what then do they pause?
An hour to strike.

MARINO FALIERO.

THE hours of darkness had already well nigh passed, and but for the thick storm-clouds and the drizzling rain, some streaks of early dawn might have been seen on the horizon, when at the door of Marcus Læca, in the low grovelling street of the Scythemakers—strange quarter for the residence of a patrician, one of the princely Porcii—the arch-conspirator stood still, and glared around with keen suspicious eyes, after his hurried walk.

It was, however, yet as black as midnight; nor in that wretched and base suburb, tenanted only by poor laborious artizans, was there a single artificial light to relieve the gloom of nature.

The house of Læca! How little would the passer-by who looked in those days on its walls, decayed and moss-grown even then, and mouldering—how little would he have imagined that its fame would go down to the latest ages, imperishable through its owner's infamy.

The house of Læca! The days had been, while Rome was yet but young, when it stood far aloof in the gay green fields, the suburban villa of the proud Porcian house. Time passed, and fashions changed. Low streets and squalid tenements supplanted the rich fields and fruitful orchards, which had once rendered it so pleasant an abode. Its haughty lords abandoned it for a more stately palace nigh the forum, and for long years it had

remained tenantless, voiceless, desolate. But dice, and wine, and women, mad luxury and boundless riot, had brought its owner down to indigence, and infamy and sin.

The palace passed away from its inheritor. The ruin welcomed its last lord.

And here, meet scene for orgies such as it beheld, Rome's parricides were wont to hold their murderous assemblies.

With a slow stealthy tread, that woke no echo, Cataline advanced to the door. There was no lamp in the cell of the atriensis; no sign of wakefulness in any of the casements; yet at the first slight tap upon the stout oak-*en* pannel, although it was scarce louder than the plash of the big raindrops from the eaves, another tap responded to it from within, so faint that it appeared an echo of the other. The rebel counted, as fast as possible, fifteen; and then tapped thrice as he had done before, meeting the same reply, a repetition of his own signal. After a moment's interval, a little wicket opened in the door, and a low voice asked "Who?" In the same guarded tone the answer was returned, "Cornelius." Again the voice asked, "Which?" and instantly, as Cataline replied, "the third," the door flew open, and he entered.

The Atrium, or wide hall in which he stood, was all in utter darkness; there was no light on the altar of the Penates, which was placed by the *impluvium*—a large shallow tank of water occupying the centre of the hall in all Roman houses—nor any gleam from the *tablinum*, or closed gallery beyond, parted by heavy curtains from the audience chamber.

There were no stars to glimmer through the opening in the roof above the central tank, yet the quick eye of the conspirator perceived, upon the instant, that two strong men with naked swords, their points within a hand's breadth of his bosom, stood on each side the doorway.

The gate was closed as silently as it had given him entrance; was barred and bolted; and till then no word was interchanged. When all, however, was secure, a deep rich voice, suppressed into a whisper, exclaimed "Sergius?" "Ay!" answered Cataline. "Come on!" and without farther parley they stole into the most secret

chambers of the house, fearful as it appeared of the sounds of their own footsteps, much more of their own voices.

Thus with extreme precaution, when they had traversed several chambers, among which were an indoor *triclinium*, or dining parlor, and a vast picture gallery, groping their way along in utter darkness, they reached a small square court, surrounded by a peristyle or colonnade, containing a dilapidated fountain. Passing through this, they reached a second dining room, where on the central table they found a small lamp burning, and by the aid of this, though still observing the most scrupulous silence, quickly attained their destination—a low and vaulted chamber entirely below the surface of the ground, accessible only by a stair defended by two doors of unusual thickness.

That was a fitting place for deeds of darkness, councils of desperation, such as they held, who met within its gloomy precincts. The moisture, which dripped constantly from its groined roof of stone, had formed stalactites of dingy spar, whence the large goutts plashed heavily on the damp pavement; the walls were covered with green slimy mould; the atmosphere was close and fœtid, and so heavy that the huge waxen torches, four of which stood in rusty iron candelabra, on a large slab of granite, burned dim and blue, casting a faint and ghastly light on lineaments so grim and truculent, or so unnaturally excited by the dominion of all hellish passions, that they had little need of anything extraneous to render them most hideous and appalling. There were some twenty-five men present, variously clad indeed, and of all ages, but evidently—though many had endeavoured to disguise the fact by poor and sordid garments—all of the higher ranks.

Six or eight were among them, who feared not, nor were ashamed to appear there in the full splendor of their distinctive garb as Senators, prominent among whom was the most rash and furious of them all, Cethegus.

He, at the moment when the arch-conspirator, accompanied by Læca and the rest of those who had admitted him, entered the vault, was speaking with much energy and even fierceness of manner to three or four who stood apart a little from the rest with their backs to the door, listening with knitted brows, clenched hands, and lips

compressed and bloodless, to his tremendous imprecations launched at the heads of all who were for any, even the least, delay in the accomplishment of their dread scheme of slaughter.

One among them was a large stately looking personage, somewhat inclined to corpulence, but showing many a sign of giant strength, and vigor unimpaired by years or habit. His head was large but well shaped, with a broad and massive forehead, and an eye keen as the eagle's when soaring in his pride of place. His nose was prominent, but rather aquiline than Roman. His mouth, wide and thick-lipped, with square and fleshy jaws, was the worst feature in his face, and indicative of indulged sensuality and fierceness, if not of cruelty combined with the excess of pride.

This man wore the plain toga and white tunic of a private citizen; but never did plebeian eye and lip flash with such concentrated haughtiness, curl with so fell a sneer, as those of that fallen consular, of that degraded senator, the haughtiest and most ambitious of a race never deficient in those qualities, he who, drunk with despairing pride, and deceived to his ruin by the double-tongued Sibylline prophecies, aspired to be that third Cornelius, who should be master of the world's mistress, Rome.

The others were much younger men, for Lentulus was at that period already past his prime, and these—two more especially who looked mere boys—had scarcely reached youth's threshold; though their pale withered faces, and brows seared deeply by the scorching brand of evil passions, showed that in vice at least, if not in years, they had lived long already.

Those two were senators in their full garniture, the sons of Servius Sylla, both beautiful almost as women, with soft and feminine features, and long curled hair, and lips of coral, from which in flippant and affected accents fell words, and breathed desires, that would have made the blood stop and turn stagnant at the heart of any one, not utterly polluted and devoid of every humane feeling.

This little knot seemed fierce for action, fiery and panting with that wolfish thirst, to quench which blood must flow. But all the rest seemed dumb, and tongue-tied, and crest-fallen. The sullenness of fear brooded on every other

face. The torpor of despairing crime, already in its own fancy baffled and detected, had fallen on every other heart. For, at the farther end of the room, whispering to his trembling hearers dubious and dark suspicions, with terror on his tongue, stood Cassius, exaggerating the adventures of the night.

Such was the scene, when Cataline stalked into that bad conclave. The fires of hell itself could send forth no more blasting glare, than shot from his dark eyes, as he beheld, and read at half a glance their consternation. Bitter and blighting was the sneer upon his lip, as he stood motionless, gazing upon them for a little space. Then flinging his arm on high and striding to the table he dashed his hand upon it, that it rang and quivered to the blow.

“What are ye?” he said slowly, in tones that thrilled to every heart, so piercing was their emphasis. “Men?—No, by the Gods! men rush on death for glory!—Women? They risk it, for their own, their children’s, or their lover’s safety!—Slaves?—Nay! even these things welcome it for freedom, or meet it with revenge! Less then, than men! than women, slaves, or beasts!—Perish like cattle, if ye will, unbound but unresisting, all armed but unavenged!—And ye—great Gods! I laugh to see your terror-blanced, blank visages. I laugh, but loathe in laughing! The destined dauntless sacrificers, who would imbue your knives in senatorial, consular gore! kindle your altars on the downfallen Capitol! and build your temples on the wreck of Empire! Ha! do you start? and does some touch of shame redden the sallow cheeks that courage had left bloodless? and do ye grasp your daggers, and rear your drooping heads? are ye men, once again? Why should ye not? what do ye see, what hear, whereat to falter? What oracle, what portent? Now, by the Gods! methought they spoke of victory and glory. Once more, what do ye fear, or wish? What, in the name of Hecate and Hades! What do ye wait for?”

“A leader!” answered the rash Cethegus, excited now even beyond the bounds of ordinary rashness. “A day, a place, a signal!”

“Have them, then, all,” replied the other, still half scornfully. “Lo! I am here to lead; the field of Mars will give a place; the consular elections an occasion; the blood of Cicero a signal!”

“Be it so!” instantly replied Cethegus; “be it so! thou hast spoken, as the times warrant, boldly; and upon my head be it, that our deeds shall respond to thy daring words, with equal daring!”

And a loud hum of general assent succeeded to his stirring accents; and a quick fluttering sound ran through the whole assemblage, as every man, released from the constraint of deep and silent expectation, altered his posture somewhat, and drew a long breath at the close. But the conspirator paused not. He saw immediately the effect which had been made upon the minds of all, by what had passed. He perceived the absolute necessity of following that impulse up to action, before, by a revulsion no less sudden than the late change from despondency to fierceness, their minds should again subside into the lethargy of doubt and dismay.

“But say thou, Sergius,” he continued, “how shall it be, and who shall strike the blow that is to seal Rome’s liberty, our vengeance?”

“First swear we!” answered Cataline. “Læca, the eagle, and the bowl!”

“Lo! they are here, my Sergius,” answered the master of the house, drawing aside a piece of crimson drapery, which covered a small niche or recess in the wall, and displaying by the movement a silver eagle, its pinions wide extended, and its talons grasping a thunderbolt, placed on a pedestal, under a small but exquisitely sculptured shrine of Parian marble. Before the image there stood a votive lamp, fed by the richest oils, a mighty bowl of silver half filled with the red Massic wine, and many *patera*, or sacrificial vessels of a yet richer metal.

“Hear, bird of Mars, and of Quirinus”—cried Cataline, without a pause, stretching his hands toward the glittering effigy—“Hear thou, and be propitious! Thou, who didst all-triumphant guide a yet greater than Quirinus to deeds of might and glory; thou, who wert worshipped by the charging shout of Marius, and consecrated by the gore of Cimbric myriads; thou, who wert erst enshrined on the Capitoline, what time the proud patricians veiled their haughty crests before the conquering plebeian; thou, who shalt sit again sublime upon those ramparts, meet aery for thine unvanquished pinion; shalt drink again liba-

tions, boundless libations of rich Roman life-blood, hot from patrician hearts, smoking from every kennel! Hear and receive our oaths—listen and be propitious!”

He spoke, and seizing from the pedestal a sacrificial knife, which lay beside the bowl, opened a small vein in his arm, and suffered the warm stream to gush into the wine. While the red current was yet flowing, he gave the weapon to Cethegus, and he did likewise, passing it in his turn to the conspirator who stood beside him, and he in like manner to the next, till each one in his turn had shed his blood into the bowl, which now mantled to the brim with a foul and sacrilegious mixture, the richest vintage of the Massic hills, curdled with human gore.

Then filling out a golden goblet for himself, “Hear, God of war,” cried Cataline, “unto whose minister and omen we offer daily worship; hear, mighty Mars, the homicide and the avenger; and thou, most ancient goddess, hear, Nemesis! and Hecate, and Hades! and all ye powers of darkness, Furies and Fates, hear ye! For unto ye we swear, never to quench the torch; never to sheath the brand; till all our foes be prostrate, till not one drop shall run in living veins of Rome’s patricians; till not one hearth shall warm; one roof shall shelter; till Rome shall be like Carthage, and we, like mighty Marius, lords and spectators of her desolation! We swear! we taste the consecrated cup! and thus may his blood flow, who shall, for pity or for fear, forgive or fail or falter—his own blood, and his wife’s, and that of all his race forever! May vultures tear their eyes, yet fluttering with quick vision; may wolves tug at their heart-strings, yet strong with vigorous life; may infamy be their inheritance, and Tartarus receive their spirits!”

And while he spoke, he sipped the cup of horror with unreluctant lips, and dashed the goblet with the residue over the pedestal and shrine. And there was not one there who shrank from that foul draught. With ashy cheeks indeed, but knitted brows, and their lips reeking red with the abomination, but fearless and unfaltering, they pledged in clear and solemn tones, each after each, that awful imprecation, and cast their goblets down, that the floor swam in blood; and grasped each others’ hands, sworn comrades from that hour even to the gates of hell.

A long and impressive silence followed. For every heart there, even of the boldest, recoiled as it were for a moment on itself, not altogether in regret or fear, much less in anything approaching to compunction or remorse; but in a sort of secret horror, that they were now involved beyond all hope of extrication, beyond all possibility of turning back or halting! And Cataline, endowed with almost superhuman shrewdness, and himself quite immovable of purpose, perceived the feelings that actuated all the others—which he felt not, nor cared for—and called on Læca to bring wine.

“Wine, comrades,” he exclaimed, “pure, generous, noble wine, to wash away the rank drops from our lips, that are more suited to our blades! to make our veins leap cheerily to the blythe inspiration of the God! and last, not least, to guard us from the damps of this sweet chamber, which alone of his bounteous hospitality our Porcius has vouchsafed to us!” And on the instant, the master—for they dared trust no slaves—bore in two earthen vases, one of strong Chian from the Greek Isle of the Egean, the other of Falernian, the fruitiest and richest of the Italian wines, not much unlike the modern sherry, but having still more body, and many cyathi, or drinking cups; but he brought in no water, wherewith the more temperate ancients were wont to mix their heady wines, even in so great a ratio as nine to one of the generous liquor.

“Fill now! fill all!” cried Cataline, and with the word he drained a brimming cup. “Rare liquor this, my Marcus,” he continued; “whence had’st thou this Falernian? ’tis of thine inmost brand, I doubt not. In whose consulship did it imbibe the smoke?”

“The first of Caius Marius.”

“Forty-four years, a ripe age,” said Cethegus, “but twill be better forty years hence. Strange, by the Gods! that of the two best things on earth, women and wine, the nature should so differ. The wine is crude still, when the girl is mellow; but it is ripe, long after she is ——”

“Rotten, by Venus!”—interposed Cæparius, swearing the harlot’s oath; “Rotten, and in the lap of Lamia!”

“But heard ye not,” asked Cataline, “or hearing, did ye not accept the omen!—in whose first Consulship this same Falernian jar was sealed?”

“Marius! By Hercules! an omen! oh, may it turn out well!” exclaimed the superstitious Lentulus.

“Sayest thou, my Sura? well! drink we to the omen, and may we to the valour and the principles of Marius unite the fortunes of his rival—of all-triumphant Sylla!”

A burst of acclamations replied to the happy hit, and seeing now his aim entirely accomplished, Cataline checked the revel; their blood was up; no fear of chilling counsels!

“Now then,” he said, “before we drink like boon companions, let us consult like men; there is need now of counsel; that once finished”——

“Fulvia awaits me,” interrupted Cassius, “Fulvia, worth fifty revels!”

“And me Semperonia,” lisped the younger and more beautiful of the twin Sylla.

“Meanwhile,” exclaimed Autronius, “let us comprehend, so shall we need no farther meetings—each of which risks the awakening of suspicion, and it may well be of discovery. Let us now comprehend, that, when the time comes, we may all perform our duty. Speak to us, therefore, Sergius.”

No farther exhortation was required; for coolly the conspirator arose to set before his desperate companions, the plans which he had laid so deeply, that it seemed scarcely possible that they should fail; and not a breath or whisper interrupted him as he proceeded.

“Were I not certain of the men,” he said, “to whom I speak, I could say many things that should arouse you, so that you should catch with fiery eagerness at aught that promised a more tolerable position. I could recount the luxuries of wealth which you once knew; the agonies of poverty beneath which, to no purpose, you lie groaning. I could point out your actual inability to live, however basely—deprived of character and credit—devoid of any relics of your fortunes! weighed to the very earth by debts, the interest alone of which has swallowed up your patrimonies, and gapes even yet for more! fettered by bail-bonds, to fly which is infamy, and to abide them ruin! shunned, scorned, despised, and hated, if not feared by all men. I could paint, to your very eyes, ourselves in rags or fetters! our enemies in robes of office, seated on curule

chairs, swaying the fate of nations, dispensing by a nod the wealth of plundered provinces! I could reverse the picture. But, as it is, your present miseries and your past deeds dissuade me. Your hopelessness and daring, your wrongs and valor, your injuries and thirst of vengeance, warn me, alike, that words are weak, and exhortation needless. Now understand with me, how matters stand. The stake for which we play, is fair before your eyes:—learn how our throw for it is certain. The consular elections, as you all well know, will be held, as proclaimed already, on the fifteenth day before the calends of November. My rivals are Sulpicius, Muræna, and Silanus. Antonius and Cicero will preside—the first, my friend! a bold and noble Roman! He waits but an occasion to declare for us. Now, mark me. Caius Manlius—you all do know the man, an old and practised soldier, a scar-seamed veteran of Sylla,—will on that very day display yon eagle to twenty thousand men, well armed, and brave, and desperate as ourselves, at Fiesolè. Septimius of Camerinum writes from the Picene district, that thirty thousand slaves will rise there at his bidding; while Caius Julius, sent to that end into Apulia, has given out arms and nominated leaders to twice five thousand there. Ere this, they have received my mandate to collect their forces, and to march on that same day toward Rome. Three several armies, to meet which there is not one legion on this side of Cisalpine Gaul! What, then, even if all were peace in Rome, what then could stand against us? But there shall be that done here, here in the very seat and heart, as I may say, of Empire, that shall dismay and paralyse all who would else oppose us. Cethegus, when the centuries are all assembled in the field of Mars, with fifteen hundred gladiators well armed and exercised even now, sets on the guard in the Janiculum, and beats their standard down. Then, while all is confusion, Statilius and Gabinius with their households,—whom, his work done, Cethegus will join straightway—will fire the city in twelve several places, break open the prison doors, and crying “Liberty to slaves!” and “Abolition of all debts!”—rush diverse throughout the streets, still gathering numbers as they go. Meanwhile, with Lentulus and Cassius, the clients of your houses being armed beneath their togas with swords and

breast-plates, and casques ready to be donned, I will make sure of Cicero and the rest. Havoc, and slaughter, and flames every where will make the city ours. Then ye, who have no duty set, hear, and mark this: always to kill is to do something! the more, and nobler, so much the better deed! Remembering this, that sons have ready access to their sires, who for the most part are their bitterest foes! and that to spare none we are sworn—how, and how deeply, it needs not to remind you. More words are bootless, since to all here it must be evident that these things, planned thus far with deep and prudent council, once executed with that dauntless daring, which alone stands for armor, and for weapons, and, by the Gods! for bulwarks of defence, must win us liberty and glory, more over wealth, and luxury, and power, in which names is embraced the sum of all felicity. Therefore, now, I exhort you not; for if the woes which you would shun, the prizes which you shall attain, exhort you not, all words of man, all portents of the Gods, are dumb, and voiceless, and in vain! Mark the day only, and remember, that if not ye, at least your sires were Romans and were men!”

“Bravely, my Sergius, hast thou spoken, and well done!” cried at once several voices of the more prominent partisans.

“By the Gods! what a leader!” whispered Longinus Cassius to his neighbor.

“Fabius in council,” cried Cethegus, “Marcellus in the field!”

“Moreover, fellow-soldiers,” exclaimed Lentulus, “hear this: although he join not with us now, through policy, Antonius, the Consul, is in heart ours, and waits but for the first success to declare himself for the cause in arms. Crassus, the rich—Cæsar, the people’s idol—have heard our counsels, and approve them. The first blow struck, their influence, their names, their riches, and their popularity, strike with us—trustier friends, by Pollux! and more potent, than fifty thousand swordsmen!”

A louder and more general burst of acclamation and applause than that which had succeeded Cataline’s address, burst from the lips of all, as those great names dropped from the tongue of Lentulus; and one voice cried aloud—it was the voice of Curius, intoxicated as it were with present triumph—

“By all the Gods! Rome is our own! our own, even now, to portion out among our friends, our mistresses, our slaves!”

“Not Rome—but Rome’s inheritance, the world!” exclaimed another. “If we win, all the universe is ours—and see how small the stake; when, if we fail”—

“By Hades, we’ll not fail!” Cataline interrupted him, in his deep penetrating tones. “We cannot, and we will not! and now, for I wax somewhat weary, we will break up this conclave. We meet at the comitia!”

“And the Slave?” whispered Cethegus, with an inquiring accent, in his ear—“the Slave, my Sergius?”

“Will tell no tales of us,” replied the other, with a hoarse laugh, “unless it be to Lamia.”

Thus they spoke as they left the house; and ere the day had yet begun to glimmer with the first morning twilight—so darkly did the clouds still muster over the mighty city—went on their different ways toward their several homes, unseen, and, as they fondly fancied, unsuspected.

CHAPTER III.

THE LOVERS.

Fair lovers, ye are fortunately met.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

ON the same night, and almost at the same hour of the night, wherein that dreadful conclave was assembled at the house of Læca, a small domestic group, consisting indeed only of three individuals, was gathered in the tablinum, or saloon, of an elegant though modest villa, situate in the outskirts of the city, fronting the street that led over the Mulvian bridge to the Æmilian way, and having a large garden communicating in the rear with the plebeian cemetery on the Esquiline.

It was a gay and beautiful apartment, of small dimensions, but replete with all those graceful objects, those manifold appliances of refined taste and pleasure, for which the Romans, austere and poor no longer, had, since their late acquaintance with Athenian polish and Oriental luxury, acquired a predilection—ominous, as their sterner patriots fancied, of personal degeneracy and national decay.

Divided from the hall of reception by thick soft curtains, woven from the choice wool of Calabria, and glowing with the richest hues of the Tyrian crimson; and curtained with hangings of the same costly fabric around the windows, both of which with the doorway opened upon a peristyle: that little chamber wore an air of comfort, that charmed the eye more even than its decorations. Yet these were of no common order; for the floor was tessellated in rare patterns of mosaic work, showing its exquisite devices and bright colors, where they were not concealed by a footstool of embroidered tapestry. The walls were portioned

out into compartments, each framed by a broad border of gilded scroll-work on a crimson ground, and containing an elaborately finished fresco painting; which, could they have been seen by any critical eye of modern days, would have set at rest for ever the question as to the state of this art among the ancients. The subject was a favorite one with all artists of all ages,—from the world-famous Iliad: the story of the goddess-born Achilles. Here tutored by the wise Centaur, Chiron, in horsemanship and archery, and all that makes a hero; here tearing off the virgin mitre, to don the glittering casque proffered, with sword and buckler, among effeminate wares, by the disguised Ulysses; there wandering in the despondent gloom of injured pride along the stormy sea, meet listener to his haughty sorrows, while in the distance, turning her tearful eyes back to her lord, Briseis went unwilling at the behest of the unwilling heralds. Again he was presented, mourning with frantic grief over the corpse of his beloved Patroclus—grief that called up his Nereid mother from the blue depths of her native element; and, in the last, chasing with unexampled speed the flying Hector, who, stunned and destined by the Gods to ruin, dared not await his onset, while Priam veiled his face upon the ramparts, and Hecuba already tore her hair, presaging the destruction of Troy's invincible unshaken column.*

A small wood fire blazed cheerfully upon the hearth, round which were clustered, in uncouth attitudes of old Etruscan sculpture, the grim and grotesque figures of the household Gods. Two lamps of bronze, each with four burners, placed on tall candelabra exquisitely carved in the same metal, diffused a soft calm radiance through the room, accompanied by an aromatic odor from the perfumed vegetable oil which fed their light. Upon a circular table of dark-grained citrean wood, inlaid with ivory and silver, were several rolls of parchment and papyrus, the books of the day, some of them splendidly emblazoned and illuminated; a lyre of tortoiseshell, and near to it the slender plectrum by which its cords were wakened to melody. Two or three little flasks of agate and of onyx containing some choice perfumes, a Tuscan vase full of fresh-gathered flowers, and several articles yet more decidedly feminine,

* *Τροίης αμακον αθιραβη κιορα*.—PINDAR

were scattered on the board ; needles, and thread of various hues, and twine of gold and silver, and some embroidery, half finished, and as it would seem but that instant laid aside. Such was the aspect of the saloon wherein three persons were sitting on that night ; who, though they were unconscious, nay, even unsuspecting of the existence of conspiracy and treason, were destined, ere many days should elapse, to be involved in its desperate mazes ; to act conspicuous parts and undergo strange perils, in the dread drama of the times.

They were of different years and sex—one, a magnificent and stately matron, such as Rome's matrons were when Rome was at the proudest, already well advanced in years, yet still possessing not merely the remains of former charms, but much of real beauty, and that too of the noblest and most exalted order. Her hair, which had been black in her youth as the raven's wing, was still, though mixed with many a line of silver, luxuriant and profuse as ever. Simply and closely braided over her broad and intellectual temples, and gathered into a thick knot behind, it displayed admirably the contour of her head, and suited the severe and classic style of her strictly Roman features. The straight-cut eye-brows, the clear and piercing eye, the aquiline nose, and the firm thin lips, spoke worlds of character and decision ; yet that which might have otherwise seemed stern and even harsh, was softened by a smile of singular sweetness, and by a lighting up of the whole countenance, which at times imparted to those high features an expression of benevolence, gentle and feminine in the extreme.

Her stature was well suited to the style of her lineaments ; majestically tall and stately, and though attenuated something by the near approach of old age, preserving still the soft and flowing outlines of a form, which had in youth been noted for roundness and voluptuous symmetry.

She wore the plain white robes, bordered and zoned with crimson, of a patrician lady, but save one massive signet on the third finger of her right hand she had no gem or ornament whatever ; and as she sat a little way aloof from her younger companions, drawing the slender threads with many a graceful motion from the revolving distaff into the basket by her side, she might have passed for her, whose

proud prayer, that she might be known not as the daughter of the Scipios but as the mother of the Gracchi, was but too fatally fulfilled in the death-earned celebrity of those her boasted jewels.

The other lady was smaller, slighter, fairer, and altogether so different in mien, complexion, stature, and expression, that it was difficult even for those who knew them well to believe that they were a mother and her only child. For even in her flush of beauty, the elder lady, while in the full splendor of Italian womanhood, must ever have been calculated to inspire admiration, not all unmixed with awe, rather than tenderness or love. The daughter, on the other hand, was one whose every gesture, smile, word, glance, bespoke that passion latent in itself, which it awakened in the bosom of all beholders.

Slightly above the middle stature, and with a waist of scarce a span's circumference, her form was exquisitely full and rounded; the sweeping outlines of her snow-white and dimpled arms, bare to the shoulders, and set off by many strings of pearl, which were themselves scarcely whiter than the skin on which they rested; the swan-like curvature of the dazzling neck; the wavy and voluptuous development of her bust, shrouded but not concealed by the plaits of her white linen *stola*, fastened on either shoulder by a clasp of golden fillagree, and gathered just above her hips by a gilt zone of the Grecian fashion; the small and shapely foot, which peered out with its jewelled sandal under her gold-fringed draperies; combined to present to the eye a very incarnation of that ideal loveliness, which haunts enamored poets in their dreams, the girl just bursting out of girlhood, the glowing Hebe of the soft and sunny-south. But if her form was lovely, how shall the pen of mortal describe the wild romantic beauty of her soul-speaking features. The rich redundancy of her dark auburn hair, black where the shadows rested on it as the sable locks of night, but glittering out wherever a wandering ray glanced on its glossy surface like the bright tresses of Aurora. The broad and marble forehead; the pencilled brows, and the large liquid eyes fraught with a mild and lustrous languor; the cheeks, pale in their wonted mood as alabaster, yet eloquent at times with warm and passionate blushes. The lips, redder than aught on earth which

shares both hue and softness ; and, more than all, the deep and indescribable expression which genius prints on every lineament of those, who claim that rarest and most godlike of endowments.

She was a thing to dream of, not describe ; to dream of in some faint and breathless eve of early summer, beside the margin of some haunted streamlet, beneath the shade of twilight boughs in which the fitful breeze awakes that whispering melody, believed by the poetic ancients to be the chorus of the wood-nymph ; to dream of and adore—even as she was adored by him who sat beside her, and watched each varying expression, that swept across her speaking features ; and hung upon each accent of the low silvery voice, as if he feared it were the last to which his soul should thrill responsive.

He was a tall and powerful youth of twenty-four or five years ; yet, though his limbs were sinewy and lithe, and though his deep round chest, thin flanks, and muscular shoulders gave token of much growing strength, it was still evident that, his stature having been prematurely gained, he lacked much of that degree of power of which his frame gave promise. For though his limbs were well formed they were scarcely set, or furnished, as we should say in speaking of an animal ; and the strength, which he in truth possessed, was that of elasticity and youthful vigor, capable rather of violent though brief exertion, than that severe and trained robustness, which can for long continuous periods sustain the strongest and most trying labor.

His hair was dark and curling—his eye bright, clear, and penetrating ; yet was its glance at times wavering and undetermined, such as would indicate perhaps a want of steadiness of purpose, not of corporeal resolution, for that was disproved by one glance at the decided curve of his bold clean-cut mouth, and the square outlines of his massive jaw, which seemed almost to betoken fierceness. There was a quick short flash at times, keen as the falcon's, in the unsteady eye, that told of energy enough within and stirring spirit to prompt daring deeds, the momentary irresolution conquered. There was a frank and cheery smile that oftentimes belied the auguries drawn from the other features ; and, more than all, there was a tranquil sweet expression, which now and then pervaded the whole

countenance, altering for the better its entire character, and betokening more mind and deeper feelings, than would at first have been suspected from his aspect.

His dress was the ordinary tunic of the day, of plain white woollen stuff, belted about the middle by a girdle, which contained his ivory tablets, and the metallic pencil used for writing on their waxed surface, together with his handkerchief and purse; but nothing bearing the semblance of a weapon, not so much even as a common knife. His legs and arms were bare, his feet being protected merely by sandals of fine leather having the clasps or fibulæ of gold; as was the buckle of his girdle, and one huge signet ring, which was his only ornament.

His toga, which had been laid aside on entering the saloon, as was the custom of the Romans in their own families, or among private friends, hung on the back of an armed chair; of ample size and fine material, but undistinguished by the marks of senatorial or equestrian rank. Such was the aspect, such the bearing of the youth, who might be safely deemed the girl's permitted suitor, from his whole air and manner, as he listened to the soft voice of his beautiful mistress. For as they sat there side by side, perusing from an illuminated scroll the elegies of some long-perished, long-forgotten poet, now reading audibly the smooth and honeyed lines, now commenting with playful criticism on the style, or carrying out with all the fervor and romance of young poetical temperament the half-obscure allusions of the bard, no one could doubt that they were lovers; especially if he marked the calm and well-pleased smile that stole from time to time across the proud features of that patrician lady; who, sitting but a little way apart, watched—while she reeled off skein after skein of the fine Byssine flax in silence—the quiet happiness of the young pair.

Thus had the evening passed, not long nor tediously to any of the party; and midnight was at hand; when there entered from the atrium a grey-headed slave bearing a tray covered with light refreshments—fresh herbs, endive and mallows sprinkled with snow, ripe figs, eggs and anchovies, dried grapes, and cakes of candied honey; while two boys of rare beauty followed, one carrying a flagon of Chian wine diluted with snow water, the other a platter

richly chased in gold covered with cyathi, or drinking cups, some of plain chrysal, some of that unknown myrrhine fabric,* which is believed by many scholars to have been highly vitrified and half-transparent porcelain.

A second slave brought in a folded stand, like a camp stool in shape, on which the tray was speedily deposited, while on a slab of Parian marble, near which the two boys took their stand, the wine and goblets were arranged in glittering order.

So silently, however, was all this done, that, their preparations made, the elder slaves had retired with a deep genuflexion, leaving the boys only to administer at that unceremonious banquet, ere the young couple, whose backs were turned towards the table, perceived the interruption.

The brilliant smile, which has been mentioned, beamed from the features of the elder lady, as she perceived how thoroughly engrossed, even to the unconsciousness of any passing sound, they were, whom, rising for the purpose, and laying by her work, she now proceeded to recall to sublunary matters.

“Paullus,” she said, “and you, my Julia, ye are unconscious how the fleeting hours have slipped away. The night hath far advanced into the third watch. I would not part ye needlessly, nor over soon, especially when you must so soon perforce be severed; but we must not forget how long a homeward walk awaits our dear Arvina. Come, then, and partake some slight refreshment, before you say farewell.

“How thoughtless in me, to have detained you thus, and with a mile to walk this murky and unpleasant night. They say, too, that the streets are dangerous of late, haunted by dissolute night-revellers—that villain Clodius and his infamous co-mates. I tremble like a leaf if I but meet them in broad day—and what if you should fall in with them, when flushed with wine, and ripe for any outrage?”

“Fie! dear one, fie!” answered the young man with a smile—“a sorry soldier wouldst thou make of me, who am within so short a space to meet the savages of Pontus, under our mighty Pompey! There is no danger, Julia, here in the heart of Rome; and my stout freedman Thræsea

* That it was such, can scarce be doubted, from the line of Martial—
“Myrrheaque in Parthis pocula cœcta focis.”

awaits me with his torch. Nor is it so far either to my house, for those who cross, as I shall do, the cemetery on the Esquiline. 'Tis but a step across the sumptuous Carinæ to the Cælian."

"But surely, surely, Paul," exclaimed the lovely girl, laying her hand upon his arm, "thou wouldst not cross that fearful burying-ground, haunted by all things awful and obscene, thus at the dead of night. Oh! do not, dearest," she continued, "thou knowest not what wild terrible tales are rife, of sounds and sights unnatural and superhuman, encountered in those loathsome precincts. 'Tis a mere tempting of the Dark Ones, to brave the horrors of that place!"

"The Gods, my Julia," replied the youth unmoved by her alarm, "the Gods are never absent from their votaries, so they be innocent and pure of spirit. For me! I am unconscious of a wilful fault, and fear not anything."

"Well said, Paullus Arvina," exclaimed the elder lady, "and worthily of your descent from the Cæcili!"—for from that noble house his family indeed derived its origin. "But, although I," she added, "counsel you not to heed our Julia's girlish terrors, I love you not to walk by night so slenderly accompanied. Ho! boy, go summon me the steward, and bid him straightway arm four of the Thracian slaves."

"No! by the Gods, Hortensia!" the young man interrupted her, his whole face flushing with excitement, "you do shame to my manhood, by your caution. There is in truth no shadow of danger. Besides," he added, laughing at his own impetuosity, "I shall be far beyond the Esquiline ere excellent old Davus could rouse those sturdy knaves of yours, or find the armory key; for lo! I will but tarry to taste one cup of your choice of Chian to my Julia's health, and then straight homeward. Have a care, my fair boy, that flagon is too heavy to be lifted safely by such small hands as thine, and its contents too precious to be wasted. Soh! that's well done; thou'lt prove a second Ganymede! Health, Julia, and good dreams—may all fair things attend thee, until we meet again."

"And when shall that be, Paul," whispered his mistress, a momentary flush shooting across brow, neck, and bosom, as she spoke, and leaving her, a second afterward,

even paler than her wont, between anxiety and fear, and the pain even of this temporary parting—"when shall that be? to-morrow?"

"Surely, to-morrow! fairest," he replied, clasping her little hand with a fond pressure, "unless, which may the Gods avert! anything unforeseen prevent me. Give me my toga, boy," he added, "and see if Thræsea waits, and if his torch be lighted."

"Bid him come hither, Geta," Hortensia interposed, addressing the boy as he left the room, "and tell old Davus to accompany him, bringing the keys of the peristyle and of the garden gate. So shalt thou gain the Esquiline more easily."

Her orders were obeyed as soon as they were spoken, and but few moments intervened before the aged steward, and the freedman with his staff and torch, the latter so prepared by an art common to the ancients as to set almost any violence of wind or rain at defiance, stood waiting their commands.

Familiar and kind words were interchanged between those high-born ladies and the trustworthy follower of young Arvina. For those were days, when no cold etiquette fettered the freedom of the tongue, and when no rank, how stately or how proud soever, induced austerity of bearing or haughtiness toward inferiors; and these concluded, greetings, briefer but far more warm, followed between the master and his intended bride.

"Sweet slumbers, Julia, and a happy wakening attend you! Farewell, Hortensia; both of ye farewell!" and passing into the colonnade through the door which Davus had unlocked, he drew the lappet of his toga over his head after the fashion of a hood to shield it from the drizzling rain—for, except on a journey, the hardy Romans never wore any hat or headgear—and hastened with a firm and regular step along the marble peristyle. This portico, or rather piazza, enclosed, by a double row of Tuscan columns, a few small flower beds, and a fountain springing high in the air from the conch of a Triton, and falling back into a large shell of white marble, which it was so contrived as to keep ever full without at any time overflowing.

Beyond this was a summer triclinium or dining room facing the north, and provided with the three-sided couch,

from which it took its name, embracing a circular table. Through this they passed into a smaller court adorned like the other by a jet d'eau, surrounded by several small boudoirs and bed chambers luxuriously decorated, which were set apart to the use of the females of the family, and guarded night and day by the most trusty of the slaves.

Hence a strong door gave access to a walled space, throughout the length of which on either hand ran a long range of offices, and above them the dormitories of the slaves, with a small porter's lodge or guard room by the gate, opening on the orchard in the rear.

Therein were stationed the four Thracians, mentioned by Hortensia, whose duty it was to keep watch alternately over the safety of the postern, although the key was not entrusted to their charge ; and he, whose watch it was, started up from a bench on which he had been stretched, and looked forth torch in hand at the sound of approaching footsteps. Seeing, however, who it was, and that the steward attended him, he lent his aid in opening the postern, and reverently bowed the knee to Arvina, as he departed from the hospitable villa.

The orchard through which lay his onward progress, occupied a considerable extent of ground, laid out in terraces adorned with marble urns and statues, long bowery walks sheltered by vine-clad trellices, and rows of fruit trees interspersed with many a shadowy clump of the rich evergreen holm-oak, the tufted stone-pine, the clustering arbutus, and smooth-leaved laurestinus. This lovely spot was separated from the plebeian cemetery only—as has been said already—by a low wall ; and therefore in those days of universal superstition, the lower orders and the slaves, and many too of their employers, would have eschewed it as a place ominous of evil, if not unsafe and perilous.

The mind of Paul, however, if not entirely free from any touch of superstitious awe, which at that period of the world would have been a thing altogether unnatural and impossible, was at least of too firm a mould to shake at mere imaginary terrors ; and he strode on, lighted by his torch-bearer, through the dark mazes of the orchard, with all his thoughts engrossed by the pleasant reminiscences of the past evening. Thoughtless, however, as he was,

and bold, he yet recoiled a step, and the blood rushed tumultuously to his heart, as a loud yelling cry, protracted strangely, and ending in a sound midway between a groan and a burst of horrid laughter, rose awfully upon the silent night; and it required an effort to man his heart against a feeling, which crept through him, nearly akin to fear.

But with the freedman Thrasea it was a very different matter, for he shook so much with absolute terror, that he had well nigh dropped the torch; while, drawing nearer to his master's side, with teeth that chattered as if in an ague fit, and a face deserted by every particle of color, he besought him in faltering accents, "by all the Gods! to turn back instantly, lest evil might come of it!"

His entreaties were, however, of no avail with the brave youth, who in a moment had shaken off his transitory terror, and was now resolute, not only to proceed on his homeward route, but to investigate the cause and meaning of the outcry.

"Silence!" he said, somewhat sternly, in answer to the reiterated prayers of the trembling servitor, "Silence! and follow, idiot! That was no superhuman voice—no yell of nightly lemures, but the death-cry, if I err not more widely, of some frail mortal like ourselves. There may be time, however, yet to save him, and I so truly marked the quarter whence it rose, that I doubt not we may discover him. Advance the light; lo! we are at the wall. Lower thy torch now, that I may undo the wicket. Give me thy club and keep close at my heels bearing the flambeau high!"

And with the words he strode out rapidly into the wide desolate expanse of the plebeian grave yard. It was a broad bleak space, comprising the whole table land and southern slope of the Esquiline hill, broken with many deep ravines and gulleys, worn by the wintry rains, covered with deep rank grass and stunted bushes, with here and there a grove of towering cypresses, or dark funereal yews, casting a deeper shadow over the gloomy solitude. So rough and broken was the surface of the ground, so numerous the low mounds which alone covered the ashes of the humbler dead, that they were long in reaching the vicinity of the spot where that fell deed

had been done so recently. When they had come, however, to the foot of the descent, where it swept gently downward to the boundary wall, the young man took the torch from his attendant, and waving it with a slow movement to and fro, surveyed the ground with close and narrow scrutiny. He had not moved in this manner above a dozen paces, before a bright quick flash seemed to shoot up from the long thick herbage as the glare of the torch passed over it. Another step revealed the nature and the cause of that brief gleam; a ray had fallen full on the polished blade of Cataline's stiletto, which lay, where it had been cast by the expiring effort of the victim, hilt downward in the tangled weeds.

He seized it eagerly, but shuddered, as he beheld the fresh dark gore curdling on the broad steel, and clotted round the golden guard of the rich weapon.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "I am right, Thræsea. Foul murder hath been done here! Let us look farther."

Several minutes now were spent in searching every foot of ground, and prying even into the open vaults of several broken graves; for at first they had taken a wrong direction in the gloom. Quickly, however, seeing that he was in error, Arvina turned upon his traces, and was almost immediately successful; for there, scarce twenty feet from the spot where he had found the dagger, with his grim gory face turned upward as if reproachfully to the dark quiet skies, the black death-sweat still beaded on his frowning brow, and a sardonic grin distorting his pale lips, lay the dead slave. Flat on his back, with his arms stretched out right and left, his legs extended close together to their full length, he lay even as he had fallen; for not a struggle had convulsed his limbs after he struck the earth; life having actually fled while he yet stood erect, battling with all the energies of soul and body against man's latest enemy. The bosom of his gray tunic, rent asunder, displayed the deep gash which had let out the spirit, whence the last drops of the thick crimson life-blood were ebbing with a slow half-stagnant motion.

On this dread sight Paul was still gazing in that motionless and painful silence, with which the boldest cannot fail to look upon the body of a fellow creature from which the immortal soul has been reluctantly and forcefully ex-

pelled, when a loud cry from Thræsea, who, having lagged a step or two behind, was later in discovering the corpse, aroused him from his melancholy stupor.

“Alas! alas! ah me!” cried the half-sobbing freedman, “my friend, my more than friend, my countryman, my kinsman, Medon!”

“Ha! dost thou recognize the features? didst thou know him who lies so coldly and inanimately here before us?” cried the excited youth, “whose slave was he? speak, Thræsea, on thy life! this shall be looked to straightway; and, by the Gods! avenged.”

“As I would recognize mine own in the polished brass, as I do know my father’s sister’s son! for such was he, who lies thus foully slaughtered. Alas! alas! my countryman! wo! wo! for thee, my Medon! Many a day, alas! many a happy day have we two chased the elk and urus by the dark-wooded Danube; the same roof covered us; the same board fed; the same fire warmed us; nay! the same fatal battle-field robbed both of liberty and country. Yet were the great Gods merciful to the poor captives. Thy father did buy me, Arvina, and a few years of light and pleasant servitude restored the slave to freedom. Medon was purchased by the wise consul, Cicero, and was to have received his freedom at the next Saturnalia. Alas! and wo is me, he is now free forever from any toils on earth, from any mortal master.”

“Nay! weep not so, my Thræsea,” exclaimed the generous youth, laying his left hand with a friendly pressure on the freedman’s shoulder, “thou shalt have all means to do all honor to his name; all that can now be done by mortals for the revered and sacred dead. Aid me now to remove the body, lest those who slew him may return, and carry off the evidences of their crime.”

Thus speaking, he thrust the unlighted end of the torch into the ground, and lifting up the shoulders of the carcase, while Thræsea raised the feet, bore it away a hundred yards or better, and laying it within the open arch-way of an old tomb, covered the mouth with several boughs torn from a neighboring cypress.

Then satisfied that it would thus escape a nearer search than it was likely would be made by the murderers, when

they should find that it had been removed, he walked away very rapidly toward his home.

Before he left the burial ground, however, he wiped the dagger carefully in the long grass, and hid it in the bosom of his tunic.

No more words were exchanged—the master buried in deep thought, the servant stupified with grief and terror—until they reached the house of Paullus, in a fair quarter of the town, near to the street of Carinæ, the noblest and most sumptuous in Rome.

A dozen slaves appeared within the hall, awaiting the return of their young lord, but he dismissed them all; and when they had departed, taking a small night lamp, and ordering Thræsea to waken him betimes to-morrow, that he might see the consul, he bade him be of good cheer, for that Medon's death should surely be avenged, since the gay dagger would prove a clue to the detection of his slayer. Then, passing into his own chamber, he soon lost all recollection of his hopes, joys, cares, in the sound sleep of innocence and youth.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONSUL.

Therefore let him be Consul ; The Gods give
Him joy, and make him good friend to the people.

CORIOLANUS.

THE morning was yet young, when Paullus Arvina, leaving his mansion on the Cælian hill by a postern door, so to avoid the crowd of clients who even at that early hour awaited his forth-coming in the hall, descended the gentle hill toward the splendid street called Carinæ, from some fanciful resemblance in its shape, lying in a curved hollow between the bases of the Esquiline, Cælian, and Palatine mounts, to the keel of a galley.

This quarter of the city was at that time unquestionably the most beautiful in Rome, although it still fell far short of the magnificence it afterward attained, when the favourite Mæcenas had built his splendid palace, and laid out his unrivalled gardens, on the now woody Esquiline ; and it would have been difficult indeed to conceive a view more sublime, than that which lay before the eyes of the young patrician, as he paused for a moment on the highest terrace of the hill, to inhale the breath of the pure autumnal morning.

The sun already risen, though not yet high in the east, was pouring a flood of mellow golden light, through the soft medium of the half misty atmosphere, over the varied surface of the great city, broken and diversified by many hills and hollows ; and bringing out the innumerable columns, arches, and aqueducts, that adorned almost every street and square, in beautiful relief.

The point at which the young man stood, looking directly northward, was one which could not be excelled, if it

indeed could be equalled for the view it commanded, embracing nearly the whole of Rome, which from its commanding height, inferior only to the capitol, and the Quirinal hill, it was enabled to overlook.

Before him, in the hollow at his feet, on which the morning rays dwelt lovingly, streaming in through the deep valley to the right over the city walls, lay the long street of the Carinæ, the noblest and most sumptuous of Rome, adorned with many residences of the patrician order, and among others, those of Pompey, Cæsar, and the great Latin orator. This broad and noble thoroughfare, from its great width, and the long rows of marble columns, which decked its palaces, all glittering in the misty sunbeams, shewed like a waving line of light among the crowded buildings of the narrower ways, that ran parallel to it along the valley and up the easy slope of the Cælian mount, with the Minervium, in which Arvina stood, leading directly downward to its centre. Beyond this sparkling line, rose the twin summits Oppius and Cispius, of the Esquiline hill, still decked with the dark foliage of the ancestral groves of oak and sweet-chesnut, said to derive their origin from Servius Tullius, the sixth king of Rome, and green with the long grass and towering cypresses of the plebeian cemetery, across which the young man had come home, from the villa of his lady-love, but a few hours before.

Beyond the double hill-tops, a heavy purple shadow indicated the deep basin through which ran the ill-famed Suburra, and the "Wicked-Street", so named from the tradition, that therein Tullia compelled her trembling charioteer to lash his reluctant steeds over the yet warm body of her murdered father. And beyond this again the lofty ridge of the Quirinal mount stood out in fair relief with all its gorgeous load of palaces and columns; and the great temple of the city's founder, the god Romulus Quirinus; and the stupendous range of walls and turrets, along its northern verge, flashing out splendidly to the new-risen sun.

So lofty was the post from which Paullus gazed, as he overlooked the mighty town, that his eye reached even beyond the city-walls on the Quirinal, and passing over the broad valley at its northern base, all glimmering with uncertain lights and misty shadows, rested upon the Collis Hortulorum, or mount of gardens, now called Monte Pincio,

which was at that time covered, as its name indicates, with rich and fertile shrubberies. The glowing hues of these could be distinctly made out, even at this great distance, by the naked eye. For it must be remembered that there was in those days no sea-coal to send up its murky smoke-wreaths, blurring the bright skies with its inky pall; no factories with tall chimnies, vomiting forth, like mimic Etnas, their pestilential breath, fatal to vegetable life. Not a cloud hung over the great city; and the charcoal, sparingly used for cookery, sent forth no visible fumes to shroud the daylight. So that, as the thin purplish haze was dispersed by the growing influence of the sunbeams, every line of the far architecture, even to the carved friezes of the thousand temples, and the rich foliage of the marble capitals could be observed, distinct and sharp as in a painted picture.

Nor was this all the charm of the delicious atmosphere; for so pure was it, that the odours of that flowery hill, wafted upon the wings of the light northern breeze, blent with the coolness which they caught from the hundreds of clear fountains, plashing and glittering in every public place, came to the brow of the young noble, more like the breath of some enchanted garden in the far-famed Hesperides, than the steam from the abodes of above a million of busy mortals.

Before him still, though inclining a little to the left hand, lay a broader hollow, presenting the long vista of the sacred way, leading directly to the capitol, and thence to the Campus Martius, the green expanse of which, bedecked with many a marble monument and brazen column, and already studded with quick moving groups, hurling the disc and javelin, or reining the fierce war-horse with strong Gaulish curbs, lay soft and level for half a league in length, till it was bounded far away by a gleaming reach of the blue Tiber.

Still to the left of this, uprose the Palatine, the earliest settled of the hills of Rome, with the old walls of Romulus, and the low straw-built shed, wherein that mighty son of Mars dwelt when he governed his wild robber-clan; and the bidental marking the spot where lightning from the monarch of Olympus, called on by undue rites, consumed Hostilius and his house; were still preserved with reverential worship, and on its eastern peak, the time-honoured shrine of Stator Jove.

The ragged crest of this antique elevation concealed, it is true, from sight the immortal space below, once occupied by the marsh of the Velabrum, but now filled by the grand basilicæ and halls of Justice surrounding the great Roman forum, with all their pomp of golden shields, and monuments of mighty deeds performed in the earliest ages; but it was far too low to intercept the view of the grand Capitol, and the Tarpeian Rock.

The gilded gates of bronze and the gold-plated roof of the vast national temple—gold-plated at the enormous cost of twenty-one thousand talents, the rich spoil of Carthage—the shrine of Jupiter Capitoline, and Juno, and Minerva, sent back the sun-beams in lines too dazzling to be borne by any human eye; and all the pomp of statues grouped on the marble terraces, and guarding the ascent of the celebrated hundred steps, glittered like forms of indurated snow.

Such was the wondrous spectacle, more like a fairy show than a real scene of earthly splendour, to look on which Arvina paused for one moment with exulting gladness, before descending toward the mansion of the consul. Nor was that mighty panorama wanting in moving crowds, and figures suitable to the romantic glory of its scenery.

Here, through the larger streets, vast herds of cattle were driven in by mounted herdsmen, lowing and trampling toward the forum; here a concourse of men, clad in the graceful toga, the clients of some noble house, were hastening along to salute their patron at his morning levee; there again, danced and sang, with saffron colored veils and flowery garlands, a band of virgins passing in sacred pomp toward some favourite shrine; there in sad order swept along, with mourners and musicians, with women wildly shrieking and tearing their long hair, and players and buffoons, and liberated slaves wearing the cap of freedom, a funeral procession, bearing the body of some *young* victim, as indicated by the morning hour, to the funereal pile beyond the city walls; and far off, filing in, with the spear heads and eagles of a cohort glittering above the dust wreaths, by the Flaminian way, the train of some ambassador or envoy, sent by submissive monarchs or dependent states, to sue the favour and protection of the great Roman people.

The blended sounds swept up, in a confused sonorous murmur, like the sea; the shrill cry of the water-carriers, and the wild chant of the choral songs, and the keen clangour of the distant trumpets ringing above the din, until the ears of the youth, as well as his eyes, were filled with present proofs of his native city's grandeur; and his whole soul was lapped in the proud conscious joy, arising from the thought that he too was entitled to that boastful name, higher than any monarch's style, of Roman citizen.

"Fairest and noblest city of the universe," cried the enthusiastic boy, spreading his arms abroad over the glorious view, which, kindling all the powers of his imaginative mind, had awakened something of awe and veneration, "long may the everliving gods watch over thee; long may they guard thy liberties intact, thy hosts unconquered! long may thy name throughout the world be synonymous with all that is great, and good, and glorious! Long may the Roman fortune and the Roman virtue tread, side by side, upon the neck of tyrants; and the whole universe stand mute and daunted before the presence of the sovereign people."

"The sovereign slaves!" said a deep voice, with a strangely sneering accent, in his ear; and as he started in amazement, for he had not imagined that any one was near him, Cataline stood at his elbow.

Under the mingled influence of surprise, and bashfulness at being overheard, and something not very far removed from alarm at the unexpected presence of one so famed for evil deeds as the man beside him, Arvina recoiled a pace or two, and thrust his hand into the bosom of his toga, disarranging its folds for a moment, and suffering the eye of the conspirator to dwell on the hilt of a weapon, which he recognized instantly as the stiletto he had lost in the struggle with the miserable slave on the Esquiline.

No gleam in the eye of the wily plotter betrayed his intelligence; no show of emotion was discoverable in his dark paleness; but a grim smile played over his lips for a moment, as he noted, not altogether without a sort of secret satisfaction, the dismay caused by his unexpected presence.

"How now," he said jeeringly, before the smile had yet vanished from his ill-omened face—"what aileth the bold

Paullus, that he should start, like an unruly colt scared by a shadow, from the approach of a friend?"

"A friend," answered the young man in a half doubtful tone, but instantly recovering himself, "Ha! Cataline, I was surprised, and scarce saw who it was. Thou art abroad betimes this morning. Whither so early? but what saidst thou about slaves?"

"I thought thou didst not know me," replied the other, "and for the rest, I am abroad no earlier than thou, and am perhaps bound to the same place with thee!"

"By Hercules! I fancy not," said Paullus.

"Wherefore, I pray thee, not?" Who knoweth? Perchance I go to pay my vows to Jupiter upon the capitol! perchance," he added with a deep sneer, "to salute our most eloquent and noble consul!"

A crimson flush shot instantly across the face and temples of Arvina, perceiving that he was tampered with, and sounded only; yet he replied calmly and with dignity, "Thither indeed, go I; but I knew not that thou wert in so much a friend of Cicero, as to go visit him."

"Men sometimes visit those who be not their friends," answered the other. "I never said he was a friend to me, or I to him. By the gods, no! I had lied else."

"But what was that," asked the youth, moved, by an inexplicable curiosity and excitement, to learn something more of the singular being with whom chance had brought him into contact, "which thou didst say but now concerning slaves?"

"That all these whom we see before us, and around us, and beneath us, are but a herd of slaves; gulled and vain-glorious slaves!"

"The Roman people?" exclaimed Paullus, every tone of his voice, every feature of his fine countenance, expressing his unmitigated horror and astonishment. "The great, unconquered Roman people; the lords of earth and sea, from frosty Caucasus to the twin rocks of Hercules; the trampers on the necks of kings; the arbiters of the whole world! The Roman people, slaves?"

"Most abject and most wretched!"

"To whom then?" cried the young man, much excited, "to whom am I, art thou, a slave? For we are also of the Roman people?"

“The Roman people, and thou, as one of them, and I, Paullus Cæcilius, are slaves one and all; abject and base and spirit-fallen slaves, lacking the courage even to spurn against our fetters, to the proud tyrannous rich aristocracy.”

“By the Gods! we are of it.”

“But not the less, for that, slaves to it!” answered Cataline! See! from the lowest to the highest, each petty pelting officer lords it above the next below him; and if the tribunes for a while, at rare and singular moments, uplift a warning cry against the corrupt insolence of the patrician houses, gold buys them back into vile treasonable silence! Patricians be we, and not slaves, sayest thou? Come tell me then, did the patrician blood of the grand Gracchi preserve them from a shameful doom, because they dared to speak, as free-born men, aloud and freely? Did his patrician blood save Fulvius Flaccus? Were Publius Antonius, and Cornelius Sylla, the less ejected from their offices, that they were of the highest blood in Rome; the lawful consuls by the suffrage of the people? Was I, the heir of Sergius Silo’s glory, the less forbidden even to canvass for the consulship, that my great grand-sire’s blood was poured out, like water, upon those fields that witnessed Rome’s extremest peril, Trebia, and the Ticinus, and Thrasymene and Cannæ? Was Lentulus, the noblest of the noble, patrician of the eldest houses, a consular himself, expelled the less and stricken from the rolls of the degenerate senate, for the mere whining of a mawkish wench, because his name is Cornelius? Tush, Tush! these be but dreams of poets, or imaginings of children!—the commons be but slaves to the nobles; the nobles to the senate; the senate to their creditors, their purchasers, their consuls; the last at once their tools, and their tyrants! Go, young man, go. Salute, cringe, fawn upon your consul! Nathless, for thou hast mind enough to mark and note the truth of what I tell thee; thou wilt think upon this, and perchance one day, when the time shall have come, wilt speak, act, strike, for freedom!”

And as he finished speaking, he turned aside with a haughty gesture of farewell; and wrapping his toga closely about his tall person, stalked away slowly in the direction neither of the capitol nor of the consul’s house; turn-

ing his head neither to the right hand nor to the left ; and taking no more notice of the person to whom he had been speaking, than if he had not known him to be there, and gazing toward him half-bewildered in anxiety and wonder!

“Wonderful! by the Gods!” he said at last. “Truly he is a wonderful man, and wise withal! I fain would know if all that be true, which they say of him—his bitterness, his impiety, his blood-thirstiness! By Hercules! he speaks well! and it is *true* likewise. Yea! true it is, that we, patricians, and free, as we style ourselves, may not speak any thing, or act, against our order; no! nor indulge our private pleasures, for fear of the proud censors! Is this, then, freedom? True, we are lords abroad; our fleets, our hosts, everywhere victorious; and not one land, wherein the eagle has unfurled her pinion, but bows before the majesty of Rome—but yet—is it, is it, indeed, true, that we are but slaves, sovereign slaves, at home?”

The whole tenor of the young man’s thoughts was altered by the few words, let fall for that very purpose by the arch traitor. Ever espying whom he might attach to his party by operating on his passions, his prejudices, his weakness, or his pride; a most sagacious judge of human nature, reading the character of every man as it were in a written book, Cataline had long before remarked young Arvina. He had noted several points of his mental constitution, which he considered liable to receive such impressions as he would—his proneness to defer to the thoughts of others, his want of energetic resolution, and not least his generous indignation against every thing that savored of cruelty or oppression. He had resolved to operate on these, whenever he might find occasion; and should he meet success in his first efforts, to stimulate his passions, minister to his voluptuous pleasures, corrupt his heart, and make him in the end, body and soul, his own.

Such were the intentions of the conspirator, when he first addressed Paullus. His desire to increase the strength of his party, to whom the accession of any member however humble of the great house of Cæcilius could not fail to be useful, alone prompting him in the first instance. But, when he saw by the young man’s startled aspect that he was prepossessed against him, and had listened probably to the damning rumors which were

rife everywhere concerning him, a second motive was added, in his pride of seduction and sophistry, by which he was wont to boast, that he could bewilder the strongest minds, and work them to his will. When by the accidental disarrangement of Arvina's gown, and the discovery of his own dagger, he perceived that the intended victim of his specious arts was probably cognizant in some degree of his last night's crime, a third and stronger cause was added, in the instinct of self-preservation. And as soon as he found out that Paullus was bound for the house of Cicero, he considered his life, in some sort, staked upon the issue of his attempt on Arvina's principles.

No part could have been played with more skill, or with greater knowledge of his character whom he addressed. He said just enough to set him thinking, and to give a bias and a colour to his thoughts, without giving him reason to suspect that he had any interest in the matter; and he had withdrawn himself in that careless and half contemptuous manner, which naturally led the young man to wish for a renewal of the subject.

And in fact Paul, while walking down the hill, toward the house of the Consul, was busied in wondering why Cataline had left so much unsaid, departing so abruptly; and in debating with himself upon the strange doctrines which he had then for the first time heard broached.

It was about the second hour of the Roman day, corresponding nearly to eight o'clock before noon—as the winter solstice was now passed—when Arvina reached the magnificent dwelling of the Consul in the Carinæ at the angle of the Cærolian place, hard by the foot of the Sacred Way.

This splendid building occupied a whole *insula*, as it was called, or space between four streets, intersecting each other at right angles; and was three stories in height, the two upper supported by columns of marble, with a long range of glass windows, at that period an unusual and expensive luxury. The doors stood wide open; and on either hand the vestibule were arranged the lictors leaning upon their fasces, while the whole space of the great Corinthian hall within, lighted from above, and adorned with vast black pillars of Lucullean marble, was

crowded with the white robes of the consul's plebeian clients tendering their morning salutations; not unmixed with the crimson fringes and broad crimson facings of senatorial visitors.

Many were there with gifts of all kinds; countrymen from his Sabine farm and his Tusculan retreat, some bringing lambs; some cages full of doves; cheeses, and bowls of fragrant honey; and robes of fine white linen the produce of their daughters' looms; for whom perchance they were seeking dowers at the munificence of their noble patron; artizans of the city, with toys or pieces of furniture, lamps, writing cases, cups or vases of rich workmanship; courtiers with manuscripts rarely illuminated, the work of their most valuable slaves; travellers with gems, and bronzes, offerings known to be esteemed beyond all others by the high-minded lover of the arts, and unrivalled scholar, to whom they were presented.

These presents, after being duly exhibited to the patron himself, who was seated at the farther end of the hall, concealed from the eyes of Paullus by the intervening crowd, were consigned to the care of the various slaves, or freedmen, who stood round their master, and borne away according to their nature, to the storerooms and offices, or to the library and gallery of the consul; while kind words and a courteous greeting, and a consideration most ample and attentive even of the smallest matters brought before him, awaited all who approached the orator; whether he came empty handed, or full of gifts, to require an audience.

After a little while, Arvina penetrated far enough through the crowd to command a view of the consul's seat; and for a time he amused himself by watching his movements and manner toward each of his visitors, perhaps not altogether without reference to the conversation he had recently held with Catiline; and certainly not without a desire to observe if the tales he had heard of shameless bribery and corruption, as practiced by many of the great officers of the republic, had any confirmation in the conduct of Cicero.

But he soon saw that the courtesies of that great and virtuous man were regulated neither by the value of the gifts offered, nor by the rank of the visitors; and that his

personal predilections even were not allowed to interfere with the division of his time among all worthy of his notice.

Thus he remarked that a young noble, famed for his dissoluteness and evil courses, although he brought an exquisite sculpture of Praxiteles, was received with the most marked and formal coldness, and his gift, which could not be declined, consigned almost without eliciting a glance of approbation, to the hand of a freedman; while, the next moment, as an old white-headed countryman, plainly and almost meanly clad, although with scrupulous cleanliness, approached his presence, the consul rose to meet him; and advancing a step or two took him affectionately by the hand, and asked after his family by name, and listened with profound consideration to the garrulous narrative of the good farmer, who, involved in some petty litigation, had come to seek the advice of his patron; until he sent him away happy and satisfied with the promise of his protection.

By and by his own turn arrived; and, although he was personally unknown to the orator, and the assistance of the nomenclator, who stood behind the curule chair, was required before he was addressed by name, he was received with the utmost attention; the noble house to which the young man belonged being as famous for its devotion to the common weal, as for the ability and virtue of its sons.

After a few words of ordinary compliment, Paullus proceeded to intimate to his attentive hearer that his object in waiting at his levee that morning was to communicate momentous information. The thoughtful eye of the great orator brightened, and a keen animated expression came over the features, which had before worn an air almost of lassitude; and he asked eagerly—

“Momentous to the Republic—to Rome, my good friend?”—for all his mind was bent on discovering the plots, which he suspected even now to be in process against the state.

“Momentous to yourself, Consul,” answered Arvina.

“Then will it wait,” returned the other, with a slight look of disappointment, “and I will pray you to remain, until I have spoken with all my friends here. It will not

be very long, for I have seen nearly all the known faces. If you are, in the mean time, addicted to the humane arts, Davus here will conduct you to my library, where you shall find food for the mind; or if you have not breakfasted, my Syrian will shew you where some of my youthful friends are even now partaking a slight meal."

Accepting the first offer, partly perhaps from a sort of pardonable hypocrisy, desiring to make a favourable impression on the great man, with whom he had for the first time spoken, Arvina followed the intelligent and civil freedman to the library, which was indeed the favourite apartment of the studious magistrate. And, if he half repented, as he went by the chamber wherein several youths of patrician birth, one or two of whom nodded to him as he passed, were assembled, conversing merrily and jesting around a well spread board, he ceased immediately to regret the choice he had made, when the door was thrown open, and he was ushered into the shrine of Cicero's literary leisure.

The library was a small square apartment; for it must be remembered that books at this time being multiplied by manual labor only, and the art being comparatively rare and very costly, the vast collections of modern times were utterly beyond the reach of individuals; and a few scores of volumes were more esteemed than would be as many thousands now, in these days of multiplying presses and steam power. But although inconsiderable in size, not being above sixteen feet square, the decorations of the apartment were not to be surpassed or indeed equalled by anything of modern splendor; for the walls,* divided into compartments by mouldings, exquisitely carved and overlaid with burnished gilding, were set with panels of thick plate glass glowing in all the richest hues of purple, ruby, emerald, and azure, through several squares of which the light stole in, gorgeously tinted, from the peristyle, there being no distinction except in this between the windows and the other compartments of the wainscot, if it

* It must not be imagined that this is fanciful. Rooms were fitted up in this manner, and termed *camera vitrea*, and the panels *vitrea quadratura*. But a few years later than the period of the text, B. C. 58, M. Æmilius Scaurus built a theatre capable of containing 80,000 persons, the scena of which, composed of three stories, had one, the central, made entirely of colored glass in this fashion.

may be so styled; and of the ceiling, which was finished in like manner with slabs of stained glass, between the intersecting beams of gilded scroll work.

The floor was of beautiful mosaic, partially covered by a foot-cloth woven from the finest wool, and dyed purple with the juice of the cuttle-fish; and all the furniture corresponded, both in taste and magnificence, to the other decorations of the room. A circular table of cedar wood, inlaid with ivory and brass, so that its value could not have fallen far short of ten thousand sesterces*, stood in the centre of the floor-cloth; with a *bisellium*, or double settle, wrought in bronze, and two beautiful chairs of the same material not much dissimilar in form to those now used. And, to conclude, a bookcase of polished maple wood, one of the doors of which stood open, displayed a rare collection of about three hundred volumes, each in its circular case of purple parchment, having the name inscribed in letters of gold, silver, or vermilion.

A noble bust in bronze of the Phidian Jupiter, with the sublime expanse of brow, the ambrosian curls and the beard loosely waving, as when he shook Olympus by his nod, and the earth trembled and the depth of Tartarus, stood on a marble pedestal facing the bookcase; and on the table, beside writing materials, leaves of parchment, an ornamental letter-case, a double inkstand and several reed pens, were scattered many gems and trinkets; signets and rings engraved in a style far surpassing any effort of the modern graver, vases of onyx and cut glass, and above all, the statue of a beautiful boy, holding a lamp of bronze suspended by a chain from his left hand, and in his right the needle used to refresh the wick.

Nurtured as he had been from his youth upward among the magnates of the land, accustomed to magnificence and luxury till he had almost fancied that the world had nothing left of beautiful or new that he had not witnessed, Paul stood awhile, after the freedman had departed, gazing with mute admiration on the richness and taste displayed in all the details of this the scholar's sanctum. The very atmosphere of the chamber, filled with the perfume of the

* About £90 sterling. See Pliny Hist. Nat. 13, 16, for a notice of this very table, which was preserved to his time.

cedar wood employed as a specific against the ravages of the moth and bookworm, seemed to the young man redolent of midnight learning; and the superb front of the presiding god, calm in the grandeur of its ineffable benignity, who appeared to his excited fancy to smile serene protection on the pursuits of the blameless consul, inspired him with a sense of awful veneration, that did not easily or quickly pass away.

For some moments, as he gradually recovered the elasticity of his spirits, he amused himself by examining the exquisitely wrought gems on the table; but after a little while, when Cicero came not, he crossed the room quietly to the bookshelves, and selecting a volume of Homer, drew it forth from its richly embossed case, and seating himself on the bronze settle with his back toward the door, had soon forgotten where he was, and the grave business which brought him thither, in the sublime simplicity of the blind rhapsodist.

An hour or more elapsed thus; yet Paul took no note of time, nor moved at all except to unroll with his right hand the lower margin of the parchment as he read, while with the left he rolled up the top; so that nearly the same space of the manuscript remained constantly before his eyes, although the reader was continually advancing in the poem.

At length the door opened noiselessly, and with a silent foot, shod in the light slippers which the Romans always wore when in the house, Cicero entered the apartment.

The consul was at this time in the very prime of intellectual manhood, it having been decreed* about a century before, that no person should be elected to that highest office of the state, who should not have attained his forty-third year. He was a tall and elegantly formed man, with nothing especially worthy of remark in his figure, if it were not that his neck was unusually long and slender, though not so much so as to constitute any drawback to his personal appearance, which, without being what would exactly be termed handsome, was both elegant and graceful.

* By the *Lex annalis*, B. C. 180, passed at the instance of the tribune L. V. Tappulus.

His features were not, indeed, very bold or striking; but intellect was strongly and singularly marked in every line of the face; and the expression,—calm, thoughtful, and serene,—though it had not the quick and restless play of ever-varying lights and shadows which belongs to the quicker and more imaginative temperaments among men of the highest genius,—could not fail to impress any one with the conviction, that the mind which informed it must be of eminent capacity, and depth, and power.

He entered, as I have said, silently; and although there was nothing of stealthiness in his gait, which being very light and slow was yet both firm and springy, nor any of that cunning in his manner which is so often coupled to a prowling footstep, he yet advanced so noiselessly over the soft floor-cloth, that he stood at Arvina's elbow, and overlooked the page in which he was reading, before the young man was aware of his vicinity.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, after standing a moment, and observing with a soft pleasant smile the abstraction of his visitor, "so thou readest Greek, and art thyself a poet."

"A little of the first, my consul," replied Arvina, arising quickly to his feet, with the ingenuous blood rushing to his brow at the detection. "But wherefore shouldst thou believe me the second?"

"We statesmen," answered the consul, "are wont to study other men's characters, as other men are wont to study books; and I have learned by practice to draw quick conclusions from small signs. But in this instance, the light in your eye, the curl of your expanded nostril, the half frown on your brow, and the flush on your cheek, told me beyond a doubt that you are a poet. And you are so, young man. I care not whether you have penned as yet an elegy, or no—nevertheless, you are in soul, in temperament, in fantasy, a poet. Do you love Homer?"

"Beyond all other writers I have ever met, in my small course of reading. There is a majesty, a truth, an ever-burning fire, lustrous, yet natural and most beneficent, like the sun's glory on a summer day, in his immortal words, that kindles and irradiates, yet consumes not the soul; a grand simplicity, that never strains for effect; a sweet pathos, that elicits tears without evoking them; a melody that flows on, like the harmony of the eternal sea,

or, if we may call fancy to our aid, the music of the spheres, telling us that like these the blind bard sang, because song was his nature—was within, and must out—not bound by laws, or measured by pedantic rules, but free, unfettered, and spontaneous as the billows, which in its wild and many-cadenced sweep it most resembles.”

“Ah! said I not,” replied Cicero, “that you were a poet? And you have been discoursing me most eloquent poetry; though not attuned to metre, rythmical withal, and full of fancy. Ay! and you judge aright. He is the greatest, as the first of poets; and surpassed all his followers as much in the knowledge of the human heart with its ten thousands of conflicting passions, as in the structure of the kingly verse, wherein he delineated character as never man did, saving only he. But hold, Arvina. Though I could willingly spend hours with thee in converse on this topic, the state has calls on me, which must be obeyed. Tell me, therefore, I pray you, as shortly as may be, what is the matter you would have me know. Shortly, I pray you, for my time is short, and my duties onerous and manifold.”

Laying aside the roll, which he had still held open during that brief conversation, and laying aside with it his enthusiastic and passionate manner, the young man now stated, simply and briefly, the events of the past night, the discovery of the murdered slave, and the accident by which he had learned that he was the consul's property; and in conclusion, laid the magnificently ornamented dagger which he had found, on the board before Cicero; observing, that the weapon might give a clue to poor Medon's death.

Cicero was moved deeply—moved, not simply, as Arvina fancied, by sorrow for the dead, but by something approaching nearly to remorse. He started up from the chair, which he had taken when the youth began his tale, and clasping his hands together violently, strode rapidly to and fro the small apartment.

“Alas, and wo is me, poor Medon! Faithful wert thou, and true, and very pleasant to mine eyes! Alas! that thou art gone, and gone too so wretchedly! And wo is me, that I listened not to my own apprehensions, rather than to thy trusty boldness. Alas! that I suffered thee to

go, for they have murdered thee! ay, thine own zeal betrayed thee; but by the Gods that govern in Olympus, they shall rue it!"

After this burst of passion he became more cool, and, resuming his seat, asked Paullus a few shrewd and pertinent questions concerning the nature of the ground whereon he had found the corpse, the traces left by the mortal struggle, the hour at which the discovery was made, and many other minute points of the same nature; the answers to which he noted carefully on his waxed tablets. When he had made all the inquiries that occurred to him, he read aloud the answers as he had set them down, and asked if he would be willing at any moment to attest the truth of those things.

"At any moment, and most willingly, my consul," the youth replied. "I would do much myself to find out the murderers and bring them to justice, were it only for my poor freedman Thræsea's sake, who is his cousin-german."

"Fear not, young man, they *shall* be brought to justice," answered Cicero. "In the meantime do thou keep silence, nor say one word touching this to any one that lives. Carry the dagger with thee; wear it as ostentatiously as may be—perchance it shall turn out that some one may claim or recognise it. Whatever happeneth, let me know privately. Thus far hast thou done well, and very wisely: go on as thou hast commenced, and, hap what hap, count Cicero thy friend. But above all, doubt not—I say, doubt not one moment,—that as there is One eye that seeth all things in all places, that slumbereth not by day nor sleepeth in the watches of night, that never waxeth weak at any time or weary—as there is One hand against which no panoply can arm the guilty, from which no distance can protect, nor space of time secure him, so surely shall they perish miserable who did this miserable murder, and their souls rue it everlastingly beyond the portals of the grave, which are but the portals of eternal life, and admit all men to wo or bliss, for ever and for ever!"

He spoke solemnly and sadly; and on his earnest face there was a deep and almost awful expression, that held Arvina mute and abashed, he knew not wherefore; and when the great man had ceased from speaking, he made a silent gesture of salutation and withdrew, thus gravely

warned, scarce conscious if the statesman noted his departure; for he had fallen into a deep reverie, and was perhaps musing on the mysteries yet unrevealed of the immortal soul, so totally careless did he now appear of all sublunary matters.

CHAPTER V.

THE CAMPUS.

Eques ipso melior Bellerophonte,
Neque pugno neque segni pede victus,
Simul unctos Tiberinis humeros lavit in undis.

HORACE. OD. III. 12.

“WHAT ho! my noble Paullus,” exclaimed a loud and cheerful voice, “whither afoot so early, and with so grave a face?”

Arvina started; for so deep was the impression made on his mind by the last words of Cicero, that he had passed out into the Sacred Way, and walked some distance down it, toward the Forum, in deep meditation, from which he was aroused by the clear accents of the merry speaker.

Looking up with a smile as he recognised the voice, he saw two young men of senatorial rank—for both wore the crimson laticlave on the breast of their tunics—on horseback, followed by several slaves on foot, who had overtaken him unnoticed amid the din and bustle which had drowned the clang of their horses’ feet on the pavement.

“Nay, I scarce know, Aurelius!” replied the young man, laughing; “I thought I was going home, but it seems that my back is turned to my own house, and I am going toward the market-place, although the Gods know that I have no business with the brawling lawyers, with whom it is alive by this time.”

“Come with us, then,” replied the other; “Aristius here, and I, have made a bet upon our coursers’ speed.

He fancies his Numidian can outrun my Gallic beauty. Come with us to the Campus; and after we have settled this grave matter, we will try the *quinqvertium*,* or a foot race in armor, if you like it better, or a swim in the Tiber, until it shall be time to go to dinner."

"How can I go with you, seeing that you are well mounted, and I afoot, and encumbered with my gown? You must consider me a second Achilles to keep up with your fleet coursers, clad in this heavy toga, which is a worse garb for running than any panoply that Vulcan ever wrought."

"We will alight," cried the other youth, who had not yet spoken, "and give our horses to the boys to lead behind us; or, hark you, why not send Geta back to your house, and let your slaves bring down your horse too? If they make tolerable speed, coming down by the back of the Cœlian, and thence beside the *Aqua Crabra*† to the Carmental gate, they may overtake us easily before we reach the Campus. Aurelius has some errand to perform near the Forum, which will detain us a few moments longer. What say you?"

"He will come, he will come, certainly," cried the other, springing down lightly from the back of his beautiful courser, which indeed merited the eulogium, as well as the caresses which he now lavished on it, patting his favorite's high-arched neck, and stroking the soft velvet muzzle, which was thrust into his hand, with a low whinnying neigh of recognition, as he stood on the raised foot path, holding the embroidered rein carelessly in his hand.

"I will," said Arvina, "gladly; I have nothing to hinder me this morning; and for some days past I have been detained with business, so that I have not visited the campus, or backed a horse, or cast a javelin—by Hercules! not since the Ides, I fancy. You will all beat me in the field, that is certain, and in the river likewise. But come,

* The *Quinqvertium*, the same as the Greek Pentathlon, was a conflict in five successive exercises—leaping, the discus, the foot race, throwing the spear, and wrestling.

† The *Aqua Crabra* was a small stream flowing into the Tiber from the south-eastward, now called *Maranna*. It entered the walls near the Capuan gate, and passing through the *vallis Murcia* between the Aventine and Palatine hills, where it supplied the Circus Maximus with water for the *naumachia*, fell into the river above the Palatine bridge.

Fuscus Aristius, if it is to be as you have planned it, jump down from your Numidian, and let your Geta ride him up the hill to my house. I would have asked Aurelius, but he will let no slave back his white Notus."

"Not I, by the twin horsemen! nor any free man either—plebeian, knight, or noble. Since first I bought him of the blue-eyed Celt, who wept in his barbarian fondness for the colt, no leg save only mine has crossed his back, nor ever shall, while the light of day smiles on Aurelius Victor."

Without a word Fuscus leaped from the back of the fine blood-bay barb he bestrode, and beckoning to a confidential slave who followed him, "Here," he said, "Geta, take Xanthus, and ride straightway up the Minervium to the house of Arvina; thou knowest it, beside the Alban Mansions, and do as he shall command you. Tell him, my Paullus."

"Carry this signet, my good Geta," said the young man, drawing off the large seal-ring which adorned his right hand, and giving it to him, "to Thræsea, my trusty freedman, and let him see that they put the housings and gallic wolf-bit on the black horse Aufidus, and bring him thou, with one of my slaves, down the slope of Scaurus, and past the Great Circus, to the Carmental Gate, where thou wilt find us. Make good speed, Geta."

"Ay, do so," interposed his master, "but see that thou dost not blow Xanthus; thou wert better be a dead slave, Geta, than let me find one drop of sweat on his flank. Nay! never grin, thou hang-dog, or I will have thee given to my Congers*; the last which came out of the fish pond were but ill fed; and a fat German, such as thou, would be a rare meal for them."

The slave laughed, knowing well that his master was but jesting, mounted the horse, and rode him at a gentle trot, up the slope of the Cælian hill, from which Arvina had but a little while before descended. In the mean time, Aristius gave the rein of his dappled grey to one of

* The *Muræna Helena*, which we commonly translate Lamprey, was a sub-genus of the Conger; it was the most prized of all the Roman fish, and grew to the weight of twenty-five or thirty pounds. The value set upon them was enormous; and it is said that guilty slaves were occasionally thrown into their stews, to fatten these voracious dainties.

his followers, desiring him to be very gentle with him, and the three young men sauntered slowly on along the Sacred Way toward the Forum, conversing merrily and interchanging many a smile and salutation with those whom they met on their road.

Skirting the base of the Palatine hill, they passed the old circular temple of Remus to the right hand, and the most venerable relic of Rome's infancy, the Ruminal Fig tree, beneath which the she-wolf was believed to have given suck to the twin progeny of Mars and the hapless Ilia. A little farther on, the mouth of the sacred grotto called Lupercal, surrounded with its shadowy grove, the favourite haunt of Pan, lay to their left; and fronting them, the splendid arch of Fabius, surnamed Allobrox for his victorious prowess against that savage tribe, gave entrance to the great Roman Forum.

Immediately at their left hand as they entered the archway, was the superb Comitium, wherein the Senate were wont to give audience to foreign embassies of suppliant nations, with the gigantic portico, three columns of which may still be seen to testify to the splendor of the old city, in the far days of the republic. Facing them were the steps of the Asylum, with the Mamertine prison and the grand façade of the temple of Concord to the right and left; and higher above these the portico of the gallery of records, and higher yet the temple of the thundering Jupiter, and glittering above all, against the dark blue sky, the golden dome, and white marble columns of the great capitol itself. Around in all directions were basilicæ, or halls of justice; porticoes filled with busy lawyers; bankers' shops glittering with their splendid wares, and bedecked with the golden shields taken from the Samnites; statues of the renowned of ages, Accius Nævius, who cut the whetstone with the razor; Horatius Cocles on his thunderstricken pedestal, halting on one knee from the wound which had not hindered him from swimming the swollen Tiber; Clælia the hostage on her brazen steed; and many another, handed down inviolate from the days of the ancient kings. Here was the rostrum, beaked with the prows of ships, a fluent orator already haranguing the assembled people from its platform—there, the seat of the city Prætor, better known as the *Puteal Libonis*,

with that officer in session on his curule chair, his six lictors leaning on their fasces at his back, as he promulgated his irrevocable edicts.

It was a grand sight, surely, and one to gaze on which men of the present day would do and suffer much; and judge themselves most happy if blessed with one momentary glance of the heart, as it were, of the old world's mistress. But these young men, proud as they were, and boastful of the glories of their native Rome, had looked too often on that busy scene to be attracted by the gorgeousness of the place, crowded with buildings, the like of which the modern world knows not, and thronged with nations of every region of the earth, each in his proper dress, each seeking justice, pleasure, profit, fame, as it pleased him, free, and fearless, and secure of property and person. Casting a brief glance over it, they turned short to the left, by a branch of the Sacred Way, which led, skirting the market place, between the Comitium, or hall of the ambassadors, and the abrupt declivity of the Palatine, past the end of the Atrium of Liberty, and the cattle mart, toward the Carmental gate.

"Methought you said, my Fuscus, that our Aurelius had some errand to perform in the Forum; how is this, is it a secret?" inquired Paullus, laughing.

"No secret, by the Gods!" said Aurelius, "it is but to buy a pair of spurs in Volero's shop, hard by Vesta's shrine."

"He will need them," cried Fuscus, "he will need them, I will swear, in the race."

"Not to beat Xanthus," said Aurelius; "but oh! Jove! walk quickly, I beseech you; how hot a steam of cooked meats and sodden cabbage, reeks from the door of yon cook-shop. Now, by the Gods! it well nigh sickened me! Ha! Volero," he exclaimed, as they reached the door of a booth, or little shop, with neat leathern curtains festooned up in front, glittering with polished cutlery and wares of steel and silver, to a middle aged man, who was busy burnishing a knife within, "what ho! my Volero, some spurs—I want some spurs; show me some of your sharpest and brightest."

"I have a pair, noble Aurelius, which I got only yesterday in trade with a turbaned Moor from the deserts

beyond Cyrenaica. By Mulciber, my patron god! the fairest pair my eyes ever looked upon. Right loath was the swart barbarian to let me have them, but hunger, hunger is a great tamer of your savage; and the steam of good Furbo's cook-shop yonder was suggestive of savory chops and greasy sausages—and—and—in short, Aurelius, I got them at a bargain."

While he was speaking, he produced the articles in question, from a strong brass-bound chest, and rubbing them on his leather apron held them up for the inspection of the youthful noble.

"Truly," cried Victor, catching them out of his hand, "truly, they are good spurs."

"Good spurs! good spurs!" cried the merchant, half indignantly, "I call them splendid, glorious, inimitable! Only look you here, it is all virgin silver; and observe, I beseech you, this dragon's neck and the sibilant head that holds the rowels; they are wrought to the very life with horrent scales, and erected crest; beautiful! beautiful!—and the rowels too of the best Spanish steel that was ever tempered in the cold Bilbilis. Good spurs indeed! they are well worth three *aurei*.* But I will keep them, as I meant to do at first, for Caius Cæsar; he will know what they are worth, and give it too."

"Didst ever hear so pestilent a knave?" said Victor, laughing; "one would suppose I had disparaged the accursed things! But, as I said before, they are good spurs, and I will have them; but I will not give thee three aurei, master Volero; two is enough, in all conscience; or sixty denarii at the most. Ho! Davus, Davus! bring my purse, hither, Davus," he called to his slaves without; and, as the purse-bearer entered, he continued without waiting for an answer, "Give Volero two aurei, and ten denarii, and take these spurs."

"No! no!" exclaimed Volero, "you shall not—no! by the Gods! they cost me more than that!"

"Ye Gods! what a lie! cost thee—and to a barbarian! I dare be sworn thou didst not pay him the ten denarii alone."

* The aureus was a gold coin, as the name implies, worth twenty-five denarii, or about seventeen shillings and nine pence sterling.

“By Hercules! I did, though,” said the other, “and thou shouldst not have them for three *aurei* either, but that it is drawing near the Calends of November, and I have moneys to pay then.”

“Sixty-five I will give thee—sixty-five denarii!”

“Give me my spurs; what, art thou turning miser in thy youth, Aurelius?”

“There, give him the gold, Davus; he is a regular usurer. Give him three *aurei*, and then buckle these to my heel. Ha! that is well, my Paullus, here come your fellows with black Aufidus, and our friend Geta on the Numidian. They have made haste, yet not sweated Xanthus either. Aristius, your groom is a good one; I never saw a horse that shewed his keeping or condition better. Now then, Arvina, doff your toga, you will not surely ride in that.”

“Indeed I will not,” replied Paullus, “if master Volero will suffer me to leave it here till my return.”

“Willingly, willingly; but what is this?” exclaimed the cutler, as Arvina unbuckling his toga and suffering it to drop on the ground, stood clad in his succinct and snow-white tunic only, girded about him with a zone of purple leather, in which was stuck the sheathless dirk of Cataline. “What is this, noble Paullus, that you carry at your belt, with no scabbard? If you go armed, you should at least go safely. See, if you were to bend your body somewhat quickly, it might well be that the keen point would rend your groin. Give it me, I can fit it with a sheath in a moment.”

“I do not know but it were as well to do so,” answered Paullus, extricating the dagger from his belt, “if you will not detain us a long time.”

“Not even a short time!” said the cutler, “give it to me, I can fit it immediately.” And he stretched out his hand and took it; but hardly had his eye dwelt on it, for a moment, when he cried, “but this is not yours—this is—where got you this, Arvina?”

“Nay, it is nought to thee; perhaps I bought it, perhaps it was given to me; do thou only fit it with a scabbard.”

“Buy it thou didst not, Paullus, I’ll be sworn; and I

think it was never given thee; and, see, see here, what is this?—there has been blood on the blade!”

“Folly!” exclaimed the young man, turning first very red and then pale, so that his comrades gazed on him with wonder, “folly, I say. It is not blood, but water that has dimmed its shine;—and how knowest thou that I did not buy it?”

“How do I know it?—thus,” answered the artizan, drawing from a cupboard under his counter, a weapon precisely the facsimile in every respect of that in his hand: “There never were but two of these made, and I made them; the scabbard of this will fit that; see how the very chased work fits!” I sold this, but not to you, Arvina; and I do not believe that it was given to you.”

“Filth that thou art, and carrion!” exclaimed the young man fiercely, striking his hand with violence upon the counter, “darest thou brave a nobleman? I tell thee, I doubt not at all that there be twenty such in every cutler’s shop in Rome!—but to whom did’st thou sell this, that thou art so certain?”

“Paullus Cæcilius,” replied the mechanic gravely but respectfully, “I brave no man, least of all a patrician; but mark my words—I did sell this dagger; here is my own mark on its back; if it was given to thee, thou must needs know the giver; for the rest, this *is* blood that has dimmed it, and not water; you cannot deceive me in the matter; and I would warn you, youth,—noble as you are, and plebeian I,—that there are laws in Rome, one of them called CORNELIA DE SICARIIS, which you were best take care that you know not more nearly. Meantime, you can take this scabbard if you will,” handing to him, as he spoke, the sheath of the second weapon; “the price is one sestertium; it is the finest silver, chased as you see, and overlaid with pure gold.”

“Thou hast the money,” returned Paullus, casting down on the counter several golden coins, stamped with a helmed head of Mars, and an eagle on the reverse, grasping a thunderbolt in its talons—“and the sheath is mine. Then thou wilt not disclose to whom it was sold?”

“Why should I, since thou knowest without telling?”

“Wilt thou, or not?”

“Not to thee, Paullus.”

“Then will I find some one, to whom thou wilt fain disclose it!” he answered haughtily.

“And who may that be, I beseech you?” asked the mechanic, half sneeringly. “For my part, I fancy you will let it rest altogether; some one was hurt with it last night, as you and *he*, we both know, can tell if you will! But I knew not that you were one of his men.”

There was an insolent sneer on the cutler’s face that galled the young nobleman to the quick; and what was yet more annoying, there was an assumption of mutual intelligence and equality about him, that almost goaded the patrician’s blood to fury. But by a mighty effort he subdued his passion to his will; and snatching up the weapon returned it to his belt, left the shop, and springing to the saddle of his beautiful black horse, rode furiously away. It was not till he reached the Carmental Gate, giving egress from the city through the vast walls of Cyclopean architecture, immediately at the base of the dread Tarpeian rock, overlooked and commanded by the outworks and turrets of the capitol, that he drew in his eager horse, and looked behind him for his friends. But they were not in sight; and a moment’s reflection told him that, being about to start their coursers on a trial of speed, they would doubtless ride gently over the rugged pavement of the crowded streets.

He doubted for a minute, whether he should turn back to meet them, or wait for their arrival at the gate, by which they must pass to gain the campus; but the fear of missing them, instantly induced him to adopt the latter course, and he sat for a little space motionless on his well-bitted and obedient horse beneath the shadow of the deep gate-way.

Here his eye wandered around him for awhile, taking note indeed of the surrounding objects, the great temple of Jupiter Stator on the Palatine; the splendid portico of Catulus, adorned with the uncouth and grisly spoils of the Cimbric hordes slaughtered on the plains of Vercellæ; the house of Scaurus, toward which a slow wain tugged by twelve powerful oxen was even then dragging one of the pondrous columns which rendered his hall for many years the boast of Roman luxury; and on the other tall buildings that stood every where about him; although in truth he scarce observed what for the time his eye dwelt upon.

At length an impatient motion of his horse caused him to turn his face toward the black precipice of the huge rock at whose base he sat, and in a moment it fastened upon his mind with singular vividness—singular, for he had paused fifty times upon that spot before, without experiencing such feelings—that he was on the very pavement, which had so often been bespattered with the blood of despairing traitors. The noble Manlius, tumbled from the very rock, which his single arm had but a little while before defended, seemed to lie there, even at his feet, mortally maimed and in the agony of death, yet even so too proud to mix one groan with the curses he poured forth against Rome's democratic rabble. Then, by a not inapt transition, the scene changed, and Caius Marcius was at hand, with the sword drawn in his right, that won him the proud name of Coriolanus, and the same rabble that had hurled Caius Manlius down, yelling and hooting "to the rock with him! to the rock!" but at a safe and respectful distance; their factious tribunes goading them to outrage and new riot.

It was strange that these thoughts should have occurred so clearly at this moment to the excited mind of the young noble; and he felt that it was strange himself; and would have banished the ideas, but they would not away; and he continued musing on the inconstant turbulence of the plebeians, and the unerring doom which had overtaken every one of their idols, from the hands of their own partizans, until his companions at length rode slowly up the street to join him.

There was some coldness in the manner of Aristius Fuscus, as they met again, and even Aurelius seemed surprised and not well pleased; for they had in truth been conversing earnestly about the perturbation of their friend at the remarks of the artizan, and the singularity of his conduct in wearing arms at all; and he heard Victor say just before they joined company—

"No! that is not so odd, Fuscus, in these times. It was but two nights since, as I was coming home something later than my wont from Terentia's, that I fell in with Clodius reeling along, frantically drunk and furious, with half a dozen torch-bearers before, and half a score wolfish looking gladiators all armed with blade and buck-

ler, and all half-drunk, behind him. I do assure you that I almost swore I would go out no more without weapons."

"They would have done you no good, man," said Aristius, "if some nineteen or twenty had set upon you. But an they would, I care not; it is against the law, and no good citizen should carry them at all."

"Carry arms, I suppose you mean, Aristius," interrupted Paullus boldly. "Ye are talking about me, I fancy—is it not so?"

"Ay, it is," replied the other gravely. "You were disturbed not a little at what stout Volero said."

"I was, I was," answered Arvina very quickly, "because I could not tell him; and it is not pleasant to be suspected. The truth is that the dagger is not mine at all, and that it is blood that was on it; for last night—but lo!" he added, interrupting himself, "I was about to speak out, and tell you all; and yet my lips are sealed."

"I am sorry to hear it," said Aristius, "I do not like mysteries; and this seems to me a dark one!"

"It is—as dark as Erebus," said Paullus eagerly, "and as guilty too; but it is not my mystery, so help me the god of good faith and honour!"

"That is enough said; surely that is enough for you, Aristius," exclaimed the warmer and more excitable Aurelius.

"For you it may be," replied the noble youth, with a melancholy smile. "You are a boy in heart, my Aurelius, and overflow so much with generosity and truth that you believe all others to be as frank and candid. I alas! have grown old untimely, and, having seen what I have seen, hold men's assertions little worth."

The hot blood mounted fiercely into the cheek of Paulus; and, striking his horse's flank suddenly with his heel, he made him passage half across the street, and would have seized Aristius by the throat, had not their comrade interposed to hinder him.

"You are both mad, I believe; so mad that all the hellebore in both the Anticyras could not cure you. Thou, Fuscus, for insulting him with needless doubts. Thou, Paullus, for mentioning the thing, or shewing the dagger at all, if you did not choose to explain."

"I do *choose* to explain," replied Cæcilius, "but I cannot; I have explained it all to Marcus Tullius."

"To Cicero," exclaimed Aristius. "Why did you not say so before? I was wrong, then, I confess my error; if Cicero be satisfied, it must needs be all well."

"That name of Cicero is like the voice of an oracle to Fuscus ever!" said Aurelius Victor, laughing. "I believe he thinks the new man from Arpinum a very god, descended from Olympus!"

"No! not a God," replied Aristius Fuscus, "only the greatest work of God, a wise and virtuous man, in an age which has few such to boast. But come, let us ride on and conclude our race; and thou, Arvina, forget what I said; I meant not to wrong thee."

"I have forgotten," answered Paullus; and, with the word, they gave their horses head, and cantered onward for the field of Mars.

The way for some distance was narrow, lying between the fortified rock of the Capitol, with its stern lines of immemorial ramparts on the right hand, and on the left the long arcades and stately buildings of the vegetable mart, on the river bank, now filled with sturdy peasants, from the Sabine country, eager to sell their fresh green herbs; and blooming girls, from Tibur and the banks of Anio, with garlands of flowers, and cheeks that outvied their own brightest roses.

Beyond these, still concealing the green expanse of the level plain, and the famous river, stood side by side three temples, sacred to Juno Matuta, Piety, and Hope; each with its massy colonnade of Doric or Corinthian, or Ionic pillars; the latter boasting its frieze wrought in bronze; and that of Piety, its tall equestrian statue, so richly gilt and burnished that it gleamed in the sunlight as if it were of solid gold.

Onward they went, still at a merry canter, their generous and high mettled coursers fretting against the bits which restrained their speed, and their young hearts elated and bounding quickly in their bosoms, with the excitement of the gallant exercise; and now they cleared the last winding of the suburban street, and clothed in its perennial verdure, the wide field lay outspread, like one sheet of emerald verdure, before them, with the bright Tiber flash-

ing to the sun in many a reach and ripple, and the gay slope of the Collis Hortulorum, glowing with all its terraced gardens in the distance.

A few minutes more brought them to the Flaminian way, whereon, nearly midway the plain, stood the *diribitorium*, or pay-office of the troops; the porticoes of which were filled with the soldiers of Metellus Creticus, and Quintus Marcius Rex, who lay with their armies encamped on the low hills beyond the river, waiting their triumphs, and forbidden by the laws to come into the city so long as they remained invested with their military rank. Around this stately building were many colonnades, and open buildings adapted to the exercises of the day, when winter or bad weather should prevent their performance in the open mead, and stored with all appliances, and instruments required for the purpose; and to these Paullus and his friends proceeded, answering merely with a nod or passing jest the salutations of many a helmed centurion and gorgeous tribune of the soldiery.

A grand Ionic gateway gave them admittance to the hippodrome, a vast oval space, adorned with groups of sculpture and obelisks and columns in the midst; on some of which were affixed inscriptions commemorative of great feats of skill or strength or daring; while others displayed placards announcing games or contests to take place in future, and challenges of celebrated gymnasts for the cestus fight, the wrestling match, or the foot-race.

Around the outer circumference were rows of seats, shaded by plane trees overrun with ivy, and there were already seated many young men of noble birth, chatting together, or betting, with their waxed tablets and their *styli** in their hands, some waiting the commencement of the race between Fuscus and Victor, others watching with interest the progress of a sham fight on horseback between two young men of the equestrian order, denoted by the narrow crimson stripes on their tunics, who were careering to and fro, armed with long staves and circular bucklers, in all the swift and beautiful movements of the mimic combat.

* The stylus was a pointed metallic pencil used for tracing letters on the waxen surface of the tablet.

Among those most interested in this spectacle, the eye of Arvina fell instantly on the tall and gaunt form of Catiline, who stood erect on one of the marble benches, applauding with his hands, and now and then shouting a word of encouragement to the combatants, as they wheeled by him in the mazes of their half angry sport. It was not long, however, before their strife was brought to a conclusion; for, almost as the friends entered, the hindmost horseman of the two made a thrust at the other, which taking effect merely on the lower rim of his antagonist's *parma*, glanced off under his outstretched arm, and made the striker, in a great measure, lose his balance. As quick as light, the other wheeled upon him, feinted a pass at his breast with the point of the staff; and then, as he lowered his shield to guard himself, reversed the weapon with a swift turn of the wrist, dealt him a heavy blow with the trunchon on the head; and then, while the whole place rang with tumultuous plaudits, circled entirely round him to the left, and delivered his thrust with such effect in the side, that it bore his competitor clear out of the saddle.

"Euge! Euge! well done," shouted Catiline in ecstasy; "by Hercules! I never saw in all my life better skirmishing. It is all over with Titus Varus!"

And in truth it was all over with him; but not in the sense which the speaker meant: for, as he fell, the horses came into collision, and it so happened that the charger of the conqueror, excited by the fury of the contest, laid hold of the other's neck with his teeth, and almost tore away a piece of the muscular flesh at the very moment when the rider's spur, as he fell, cut a long-gash in his flank.

With a wild yelling neigh, the tortured brute yerked out his heels viciously; and, as ill luck would have it, both took effect on the person of his fallen master, one striking him a terrible blow on the chest, the other shattering his collar bone and shoulder.

A dozen of the spectators sprang down from the seats and took him up before Paullus could dismount to aid him; but, as they raised him from the ground, his eyes were already glazing.

"Marcius has conquered me," he muttered in tones of

deep mortification, unconscious, as it would seem, of his agony, and wounded only by the indomitable Roman pride; and with the words his jaw dropped, and his last strife was ended.

"The fool!" exclaimed Cataline, with a bitter sneer; "what had he got to do, that he should ride against Caius Marcius, when he could not so much as keep his saddle, the fool!"

"He is gone!" cried another; "game to the last, brave Varus!"

"He came of a brave race," said a third; "but he rode badly!"

"At least not so well as Marcius," replied yet a fourth; "but who does? To be foiled by him does not argue bad riding."

"Who does? why Paullus, here," cried Aurelius Victor; "I'll match him, if he will ride, for a thousand sesterces—ten thousand, if you will."

"No! I'll not bet about it. I lost by this cursed chance," answered the former speaker; "but Varus did not ride badly, I maintain it!" he added, with the steadiness of a discomfited partisan.

"Ay! but he did, most pestilently," interposed Cataline, almost fiercely; "but come, come, why don't they carry him away? we are losing all the morning."

"I thought he was a friend of yours, Sergius," said another of the bystanders, apparently vexed at the heartlessness of his manner.

"Why, ay! so he was," replied the conspirator; "but he is nothing now: nor can my friendship aught avail him. It was his time and his fate! ours, it may be, will come to-morrow. Nor do I see at all wherefore our sports should not proceed, because a man has gone hence. Fifty men every day die somewhere, while we are dining, drinking, kissing our mistresses or wives; but do we stop for that? Ho! bear him hence, we will attend his funeral, when it shall be soever; and we will drink to his memory to-day. What comes next, comrades?"

Arvina, it is true, was for a moment both shocked and disgusted at the heartless and unfeeling tone; but few if any of the others evinced the like tenderness; for it must be remembered, in the first place, that the Romans, inured

to sights of blood and torture daily in the gladiatorial fights of the arena, were callous to human suffering, and careless of human life at all times; and, in the second, that Stoicism was the predominant affectation of the day, not only among the rude and coarse, but among the best and most virtuous citizens of the republic. Few, therefore, left the ground, when the corpse, decently enveloped in the toga he had worn when living, was borne homewards; except the involuntary homicide, who could not even at that day in decency remain, and a few of his most intimate associates, who covering their faces in the lappets of their gowns, followed the bearers in stern and silent sorrow.

Scarcely then had the sad procession threaded the marble archway, before Catiline again asked loudly and imperiously,

“What is to be the next, I pray you? are we to sit here like old women by their firesides, croaking and whimpering till dinner time?”

“No! by the gods,” cried Aurelius, “we have a race to come off, which I propose to win. Fuscus Aristius here, and I—we will start instantly, if no one else has the ground.”

“Away with you then,” answered the other; “come sit by me, Arvina, I would say a word with you.”

Giving his horse to one of his grooms, the young man followed him without answer; for although it is true that Catiline was at this time a marked man and of no favorable reputation, yet squeamishness in the choice of associates was never a characteristic of the Romans; and persons, the known perpetrators of the most atrocious crimes, so long as they were unconvicted, mingled on terms of equality, unshunned by any, except the gravest and most rigid censors. Arvina, too, was very young; and very young men are often fascinated, as it were, by great reputations, even of great criminals, with a passionate desire to see them more closely, and observe the stuff they are made of. So that, in fact, Catiline being looked upon in those days much as a desperate gambler, a celebrated duellist, or a famous seducer of our own time, whom no one shuns though every one abuses, it was not perhaps very wonderful if this rash, ardent, and inexperienced youth should have conceived himself flattered by such

notice, from one of whom all the world was talking; and should have followed him to a seat with a sense of gratified vanity, blended with eager curiosity.

The race, which followed, differed not much from any other race; except that the riders having no stirrups, that being a yet undiscovered luxury, much less depended upon jockeyship—the skill of the riders being limited to keeping their seats steadily and guiding the animals they bestrode—and much more upon the native powers, the speed and endurance of the coursers.

So much, however, was Arvina interested by the manner and conversation of the singular man by whose side he sat, and who was indeed laying himself out with deep art to captivate him, and take his mind, as it were, by storm, now with the boldest and most daring paradoxes; now with bursts of eloquent invective against the oppression and aristocratic insolence of the cabal, which by his shewing governed Rome; and now with sarcasm and pungent wit, that he saw but little of the course, which he had come especially to look at.

“Do you indeed ride so well, my Paullus?” asked his companion suddenly, as if the thought had been suggested by some observation he had just made on the competitors, as they passed in the second circuit. “So well, I mean, as Aurelius Victor said; and would you undertake the combat of the horse and spear with Caius Marcius?”

“Truly I would,” said Arvina, blushing slightly; “I have interchanged many a blow and thrust with young Varro, whom our master-at-arms holds better with the spear than Marcius; and I feel myself his equal. I have been practising a good deal of late,” he added modestly; “for, though perhaps you know it not, I have been elected *decurio*.* and, as first chosen, leader of a troop, and am to take the field with the next reinforcements that go out to Pontus to our great Pompey.”

“The next reinforcements,” replied Catiline with a meditative air: “ha! that may be some time distant.”

“Not so, by Jupiter!—my Sergius; we are already

* The cavalry attached to every legion, consisting of three hundred men, was divided into ten troops, *turmæ* of thirty each, which were subdivided into *decuriæ* of ten, commanded by a *decurio*, the first elected of whom was called *dux turmæ*, and led the troop.

ordered to hold ourselves in readiness to march for Brundisium, where we shall ship for Pontus. I fancy we shall set forth as soon as the consular comitia have been held."

"It may be so," said the other; "but I do not think it. There may fall out that which shall rather summon Pompey homeward, than send more men to join him. That is a very handsome dagger," he broke off, interrupting himself suddenly—"where did you get it? I should like much to get me such an one to give to my friend Cethegus, who has a taste for such things. I wonder, however, at your wearing it so openly."

Taken completely by surprise, Arvina answered hastily, "I found it last night; and I wear it, hoping to find the owner."

"By Hercules!" said the conspirator laughing; "I would not take so much pains, were I you. But, do you hear, I have partly a mind myself to claim it."

"No! you were better not," said Paullus, gravely; "besides, you can get one just like this, without risking any thing. Volero, the cutler, in the Sacred Way, near Vesta's temple, has one precisely like to this for sale. He made this too, he tells me; though he will not tell me to whom he sold it; but that shall soon be got out of him, notwithstanding."

"Ha! are you so anxious in the matter? it would oblige you, then, if I should confess myself the loser! Well, I don't want to buy another; I want this very one. I believe I must claim it."

He spoke with an emphasis so singular; impressive, and at the same time half-derisive, and with so strangely-meaning an expression, that Paullus indeed scarcely knew what to think; but, in the mean time, he had recovered his own self-possession, and merely answered—

"I think you had better not; it would perhaps be dangerous!"

"Dangerous? Ha! that is another motive. I love danger! verily, I believe I must; yes! I must claim it."

"What!" exclaimed Paullus, turning pale from excitement; "Is it yours? Do you say that it is yours?"

"Look! look!" exclaimed Catiline, springing to his feet; "here they come, here they come now; this is the last

round. By the gods! but they are gallant horses, and well matched! See how the bay courser stretches himself, and how quickly he gathers! The bay! the bay has it for five hundred sesterces!"

"I wager you," said a dissolute-looking long-haired youth; "I wager you five hundred, Catiline. I say the gray horse wins."

"Be it so, then," shouted Catiline; "the bay, the bay! spur, spur, Aristius Fuscus, Aurelius gains on you; spur, spur!"

"The gray, the gray! There is not a horse in Rome can touch Aurelius Victor's gray South-wind!" replied the other.

And in truth, Victor's Gallic courser repaid his master's vaunts; for he made, though he had seemed beat, so desperate a rally, that he rushed past the bay Arab almost at the goal, and won by a clear length amidst the roars of the glad spectators.

"I have lost, plague on it!" exclaimed Catiline; "and here is Clodius expects to be paid on the instant, I'll be sworn."

And as he spoke, the debauchee with whom he had betted came up, holding his left hand extended, tapping its palm with the forefinger of the right.

"I told you so," he said, "I told you so; where be the sesterces?"

"You must needs wait a while; I have not my purse with me," Catiline began. But Paullus interrupted him—

"I have, I have, my Sergius; permit me to accommodate you." And suiting the action to the word, he gave the conspirator several large gold coins, adding, "you can repay me when it suits you."

"That will be never," said Clodius with a sneer; "you don't know Lucius Catiline; I see, young man."

"Ay, but he does!" replied the other, with a sarcastic grin; "for Catiline never forgets a friend, or forgives a foe. Can Clodius say the same?"

But Clodius merely smiled, and walked off, clinking the money he had won tauntingly in his hand.

"What now, I wonder, is the day destined to bring forth?" said the conspirator, making no more allusion to the dagger.

“A contest now between myself, Aristius, and Aurelius, in the five games of the *quinquertium*, and then a foot race in the heaviest panoply.”

“Ha! can you beat them?” asked Catiline, regarding Arvina with an interest that grew every moment keener, as he saw more of his strength and daring spirit.

“I can try.”

“Shall I bet on you?”

“If you please. I can beat them in some, I think; and, as I said, I will try in all.”

More words followed, for Paullus hastened away to strip and anoint himself for the coming struggle; and in a little while the strife itself succeeded.

To describe this would be tedious; but suffice it, that while he won decidedly three games of the five, Paullus was beat in none; and that in the armed foot race, the most toilsome and arduous exercise of the Campus, he not only beat his competitors with ease; but ran the longest course, carrying the most ponderous armature and shield, in shorter time than had been performed within many years on the Field of Mars.

Catiline watched him eagerly all the while, inspecting him as a purchaser would a horse he was about to buy; and then, muttering to himself, “We must have him!” walked up to join him as he finished the last exploit.

“Will you dine with me, Paullus,” he said, “to-day, and meet the loveliest women you can see in Rome, and no prudes either?”

“Willingly,” he replied; “but I must swim first in the Tiber!”

“Be it so, there is time enough; I will swim also.” And they moved down in company toward the river.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FALSE LOVE.

Fie, fie, upon her;
 There's a language in her eye, her cheek, her lip;
 Nay, her foot speaks, her wanton spirits look out
 At every joint and motive of her body.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

ABOUT three hours later than the scene in the Campus Martius, which had occurred a little after noon, Catiline was standing richly dressed in a bright saffron* robe, something longer than the ordinary tunic, flowered with sprigs of purple, in the inmost chamber of the woman's apartments, in his own heavily mortgaged mansion. His wife, Aurelia Orestilla, sat beside him on a low stool, a woman of the most superb and queenly beauty—for whom it was believed that he had plunged himself into the deepest guilt—and still, although past the prime of Italian womanhood, possessing charms that might well account for the most insane passion.

A slave was listening with watchful and half terrified attention to the injunctions of his lord—for Catiline was an unscrupulous and severe master—and, as he ceased speaking, he made a deep genuflexion and retired.

No sooner had he gone than Catiline turned quickly to the lady, whose lovely face wore some marks of displeasure, and said rather shortly,

“You have not gone to her, my Aurelia. There is no time to lose; the young man will be here soon, and if they meet, ere you have given her the cue, all will be lost.”

* The guests at Roman banquets usually brought their own napkins, *mappæ*, and wore robes of bright colors, usually flowered, called *canathria* or *cubitoria*.

"I do not like it, my Sergius," said the woman, rising, but making no movement to leave the chamber.

"And why not, I beseech you, madam?" he replied angrily; "or what is there in that which I desire you to tell the girl to do, that you have not done twenty times yourself, and Fulvia, and Sempronia, and half Rome's noblest ladies? Tush! I say, tush! go do it."

"She is my daughter, Sergius," answered Aurelia, in a tone of deep tenderness; "a daughter's honor must be something to every mother!"

"And a son's life to every father!" said Catiline with a fierce sneer. "I had a son once, I remember. You wished to enter an **empty* house on the day of your marriage feast. I do not think you found him in your way! Besides, for honor—if I read Lucia's eyes rightly, there is not much of that to emperil."

When he spoke of his son, she covered her face in her richly jewelled hands, and a slight shudder shook her whole frame. When she looked up again, she was pale as death, and her lips quivered as she asked—

"Must I, then? Oh! be merciful, my Sergius."

"You must, Aurelia!" he replied sternly, "and that now. Our fortunes, nay, our lives, depend on it!"

"*All*—must she give all, Lucius?"

"All that he asks! But fear not, he shall wed her, when our plans shall be crowned with triumph?"

"Will you swear it?"

"By all the Gods! he shall! by all the Furies, if you will, by Earth, and Heaven, and Hades!"

"I will go," she replied, something reassured, "and prepare her for the task!"

"The task!" he muttered with his habitual sneer. "Daintily worded, fair one; but it will not, I fancy, prove a hard one; Paullus is young and handsome; and our soft Lucia has, methinks, something of her mother's yielding tenderness."

"Do you reproach me with it, Sergius?"

"Nay! rather I adore thee for it, loveliest one; but go and prepare our Lucia." Then, as she left the room, the dark scowl settled down on his black brow, and he clinched his hand as he said—

* Pro certo creditur, necato filio, *vacuam* domum scelestis nuptils fecisse.

“ She waxes stubborn—let her beware! She is not half so young as she was; and her beauty wanes as fast as my passion for it; let her beware how she crosses me!”

While he was speaking yet a slave entered, and announced that Paullus Cæcilius Arvina had arrived, and Curius, and the noble Fulvia; and as he received the tidings the frown passed away from the brow of the conspirator, and putting on his mask of smooth, smiling dissimulation, he went forth to meet his guests.

They were assembled in the tablinum, or saloon, Arvina clad in a violet colored tunic, sprinkled with flowers in their natural hues, and Curius—a slight keen-looking man, with a wild, proud expression, giving a sort of interest to a countenance haggard from the excitement of passion, in one of rich crimson, fringed at the wrists and neck with gold. Fulvia, his paramour, a woman famed throughout Rome alike for her licentiousness and beauty, was hanging on his arm, glittering with chains and carcanets, and bracelets of the costliest gems, in her fair bosom all too much displayed for a matron's modesty; on her round dazzling arms; about her swan-like neck; wreathed in the profuse tresses of her golden hair—for she was that unusual and much admired being, an Italian blonde—and, spanning the circumference of her slight waist. She was, indeed, a creature exquisitely bright and lovely, with such an air of mild and angelic caudor pervading her whole face, that you would have sworn her the most innocent, the purest of her sex. Alas! that she was indeed almost the vilest! that she was that rare monster, a woman, who, linked with every crime and baseness that can almost unsex a woman, preserves yet in its height, one eminent and noble virtue, one half-redeeming trait amidst all her infamy, in her proud love or country! Name, honor, virtue, conscience, womanhood, truth, piety, all, all, were sacrificed to her rebellious passions. But to her love of country she could have sacrificed those very passions! That frail abandoned wretch was still a Roman—might have been in a purer age a heroine of Rome's most glorious.

“ Welcome, most lovely Fulvia,” exclaimed the host, gliding softly into the room. “ By Mars! the most favored of immortals! You must have stolen Aphrodite's cestus! Saw you her ever look so beautiful, my Paullus? You do well to put those sapphires in your hair, for they wax

pale and dim besides the richer azure of your eyes; and the dull gold in which they are enchased sets off the sparkling splendor of your tresses. What, Fulvia, know you not young Arvina—one of the great Cæciliæ? By Hercules! my Curius, he won the best of the quinquertium from such competitors as Victor and Aristius Fuscus, and ran twelve stadii, with the heaviest breast-plate and shield in the armory, quicker than it has been performed since the days of Licinius Celer. I prithee, know, and cherish him, my friends, for I would have him one of us. In truth I would, my Paullus.”

The flattering words of the tempter, and the more fascinating smiles and glances of the bewitching siren, were not thrown away on the young noble; and these, with the soft perfumed atmosphere, the splendidly voluptuous furniture of the saloon, and the delicious music, which was floating all the while upon his ears from the blended instruments and voices of unseen minstrels, conspired to plunge his senses into a species of effeminate and luxurious languor, which suited well the ulterior views of Catiline.

“One thing alone has occurred,” resumed the host, after some moments spent in light jests and trivial conversation, “to decrease our pleasure: Cethegus was to have dined with us to-day, and Decius Brutus, with his inimitable wife Sempronia. But they have disappointed us; and, save Aurelia only, and our poor little Lucia, there will be none but ourselves to eat my Umbrian boar.”

“Have you a boar, my Sergius?” exclaimed Curius, eagerly, who was addicted to the pleasures of the table, almost as much as the charms of women. “By Pan, the God of Hunters! we are in luck to-day!”

“But wherefore comes not Sempronia?” inquired Fulvia, not very much displeased by the absence of a rival beauty.

“Brutus is called away, it appears, suddenly to Tarentum upon business; and she”—

“Prefers entertaining our Cethegus, alone in her own house, I fancy,” interrupted Fulvia.

“Exactly so,” replied Catiline, with a smile of meaning.

“Happy Cethegus,” said Arvina.

“Do you think her so handsome?” asked Fulvia, favoring him with one of her most melting glances.

“The handsomest woman,” he replied, “with-but one exception, I ever had the luck to look upon.”

“Indeed!—and pray, who is the exception?” asked the lady, very tartly.

There happened to be lying on a marble slab, near to the place where they were standing, a small round mirror of highly polished steel, set in a frame of tortoiseshell and gold. Paullus had noticed it before she spoke; and taking it up without a moment’s pause, he raised it to her face.

“Look!” he said, “look into that, and blush at your question.”

“Prettily said, my Paullus; thy wit is as fleet as thy foot is speedy,” said the conspirator.

“Flatterer!” whispered the lady, evidently much delighted; and then, in a lower voice she added, “Do you indeed think so?”

“Else may I never hope.”

But at this moment the curtains were drawn aside, and Orestilla entered from the gallery of the peristyle, accompanied by her daughter Lucia.

The latter was a girl of about eighteen years old, and of appearance so remarkable, that she must not be passed unnoticed. In person she was extremely tall and slender, and at first sight you would have supposed her thin; until the wavy outlines of the loose robe of plain white linen which she wore, undulating at every movement of her form, displayed the exquisite fulness of her swelling bust, and the voluptuous roundness of all her lower limbs. Her arms, which were bare to the shoulders, where her gown was fastened by two studs of gold, were quite unadorned, by any gem or bracelet, and although beautifully moulded, were rather slender than full.

Her face did not at first sight strike you more than her person, as being beautiful; for it was singularly still and inexpressive when at rest—although all the features were fine and classically regular—and was almost unnaturally pale and hueless. The mouth only, had any thing of warmth, or color, or expression; and what expression there was, was not pleasing, for although soft and winning, it was sensual to the last degree.

Her manner, however, contradicted this; for she slid into the circle, with downcast eyes, the long dark silky lashes only visible in relief against the marble paleness of her cheek, as if she were ashamed to raise them from the ground; her whole air being that of a girl oppressed with verwhelming bashfulness, to an extent almost painful.

“Why, what is this, Aurelia,” exclaimed Catiline, as if he were angry, although in truth the whole thing was carefully preconcerted. “Wherefore is Lucia thus strangely clad? Is it, I pray you, in scorn of our noble guests, that she wears only this plain morning stola?”

“Pardon her, I beseech you, good my Sergius,” answered his wife, with a painfully simulated smile; “you know how over-timid she is and bashful; she had determined not to appear at dinner, had I not laid my commands on her. Her very hair, you see, is not braided.”

“Ha! this is ill done, my girl Lucia,” answered Catiline. “What will my young friend, Arvina, think of you, who comes hither to-day, for the first time? For Curius and our lovely Fulvia, I care not so much, seeing they know your whims; but I am vexed, indeed, that Paullus should behold you thus in disarray, with your hair thus knotted like a slave girl’s, on your neck.”

“Like a Dryad’s, rather, or shy Oread’s of Diana’s train—beautiful hair!” replied the youth, whose attention had been called to the girl by this conversation; and who, having thought her at first unattractive rather than otherwise, had now discovered the rare beauties of her lythe and slender figure, and detected, as he thought, a world of passion in her serpent-like and sinuous motions.

She raised her eyes to meet his slowly, as he spoke; gazed into them for one moment, and then, as if ashamed of what she had done, dropped them again instantly; while a bright crimson flush shot like a stream of lava over her pallid face, and neck, and arms; yes, her arms blushed, and her hands to the finger ends! It was but one moment, that those large lustrous orbs looked full into his, swimming in liquid Oriental languor, yet flashing out beams of consuming fire.

Yet Paullus Arvina felt the glance, like an electrical influence, through every nerve and artery of his body, and trembled at its power.

It was a minute before he could collect himself enough to speak to her, for all the rest had moved away a little, and left them standing together; and when he did so, his voice faltered, and his manner was so much agitated, that she must have been blind, indeed, and stupid, not to perceive it.

And Lucia was not blind nor stupid. No! by the God of Love! an universe of wild imaginative intellect, an ocean of strange whirling thoughts, an Etna of fierce and fiery passions, lay buried beneath that calm, bashful, almost awkward manner. Many bad thoughts were there, many unmaidenly imaginings, many ungoverned and most evil passions; but there was also much that was partly good; much that might have been all good, and high and noble, had it been properly directed; but alas! as much pains had been taken to corrupt and deprave that youthful understanding, and to inflame those nascent passions, as are devoted by good parents to developing the former, and repressing the growth of the latter.

As it was, self indulged, and indulged by others, she was a creature of impulse entirely, ill regulated and ungovernable.

Intended from the first to be a tool in his own hands, whenever he might think fit to use her, she had in no case hitherto run counter to the views of Catiline; because, so long as his schemes were agreeable to her inclinations, and favorable to her pleasures, she was quite willing to be his tool; though by no means unconscious of the fact that he meant her to be such.

What might be the result should his wishes cross her own, the arch conspirator had never given himself the pains to enquire; for, like the greater part of voluptuaries, regarding women as mere animals, vastly inferior in mind and intellect to men, he had entirely overlooked her mental qualifications, and fancied her a being of as small moral capacity, as he knew her to be of strong physical organization.

He was mistaken; as wise men often are, and deeply, perhaps fatally.

There was not probably a girl in all Italy, in all the world, who would so implicitly have followed his directions, as long as to do so gratified her passions, and clash-

ed not with her indomitable will, to the sacrifice of all principle, and with the most total disregard of right or wrong, as Lucia Orestilla; but certainly there was not one, who would have resisted commands, threats, violence, more pertinaciously or dauntlessly, than the same Lucia, should her will and his councils ever be set at twain.

While Paullus was yet conversing in an under tone with this strange girl, and becoming every moment more and more fascinated by the whole tone of her remarks, which were free, and even bold, as contrasted with the bashful air and timid glances which accompanied them, the curtains of the Tablinum were drawn apart, and a soft symphony of flutes stealing in from the atrium, announced that the dinner was prepared.

“My Curius,” exclaimed Catiline, “I must entreat you to take charge of Fulvia; I had proposed myself that pleasure, intending that you should escort Sempronia, and Decius my own Orestilla; but, as it is, we will each abide by his own lady; and Paullus here will pardon the youth and rawness of my Lucia.”

“By heaven! I would wish nothing better,” said Curius, taking Fulvia by the hand, and leading her forward. “Should you Arvina?”

“Not I, indeed,” replied Paullus, “if Lucia be content.” And he looked to catch her eye, as he took her soft hand in his own, but her face remained cold and pale as marble, and her eye downcast.

As they passed out, however, into the fauces, or passage leading to the dining-room, Catiline added,

“As we are all, I may say, one family and party, I have desired the slaves to spread couches only; the ladies will recline with us, instead of sitting at the board.”

At this moment, did Paullus fancy it? or did that beautiful pale girl indeed press his fingers in her own? he could not be mistaken; and yet there was the downcast eye, the immoveable cheek, and the unsmiling aspect of the rosy mouth. But he returned the pressure, and that so significantly, that she at least could not be mistaken; nor was she, for her eye again met his, with that deep amorous languid glance; was bashfully withdrawn; and then met his again, glancing askance through the dark fringed lids, and a quick flashing smile, and a burning blush follow-

ed; and in a second's space she was again as cold, as impassive as a marble statue.

They reached the triclinium, a beautiful oblong apartment, gorgeously painted with arabesques of gold and scarlet upon a deep azure ground work. A circular table, covered with a white cloth, bordered with a deep edge of purple and deeper fringe of gold, stood in the centre, and around it three couches, nearly of the same height with the board, each the segment of a circle, the three forming a horse-shoe.

The couches were of the finest rosewood, inlaid with tortoiseshell and ivory and brass, strewed with the richest tapestries, and piled with cushions glowing with splendid needlework. And over all, upheld by richly moulded shafts of Corinthian bronze, was a canopy of Tyrian purple, tasselled and fringed with gold.

The method of reclining at the table was, that the guests should place themselves on the left side, propped partly by the left elbow and partly by a pile of cushions; each couch being made to contain in general three persons, the head of the second coming immediately below the right arm of the first, and the third in like manner; the body of each being placed transversely, so as to allow space for the limbs of the next below in front of him.

The middle place on each couch was esteemed the most honorable; and the middle couch of the three was that assigned to guests of the highest rank, the master of the feast, for the most, occupying the central position on the third or left hand sofa. The slaves stood round the outer circuit of the whole, with the cupbearers; but the carver, and steward, if he might so be termed, occupied that side of the table which was left open to their attendance.

On this occasion, there being but six guests in all, each gentleman assisted the lady under his charge to recline, with her head comfortably elevated, near the centre of the couch; and then took his station behind her, so that, if she leaned back, her head would rest on his bosom, while he was enabled himself to reach the table, and help himself or his fair partner, as need might be, to the delicacies offered in succession.

Curius and Fulvia, he as of senatorial rank, and she as a noble matron, occupied the highest places; Paullus and

Lucia reclined on the right hand couch, and Catiline with Orestilla in his bosom, as the phrase ran, on the left.

No sooner were they all placed, and the due libation made of wine, with an offering of salt, to the domestic Gods—a silver group of statues occupying the centre of the board, where we should now place the *plateau* and *epergne*, than a louder burst of music ushered in three beautiful female slaves, in succinct tunics, like that seen in the sculptures of Diana, with half the bosom bare, dancing and singing, and carrying garlands in their hands of roses and myrtle, woven with strips of the philyra, or inner bark of the linden tree, which was believed to be a specific against intoxication. Circling around the board, in time to the soft music, they crowned each of the guests, and sprinkled with rich perfumes the garments and the hair of each; and then with more animated and eccentric gestures, as the note of the flute waxed shriller and more piercing, they bounded from the banquet hall, and were succeeded by six boys with silver basins, full of tepid water perfumed with costly essences, and soft embroidered napkins, which they handed to every banqueter to wash the hands before eating.

This done, the music died away into a low faint close, and was silent; and in the hush that followed, an aged slave bore round a mighty flask of Chian wine, diluted with snow water, and replenished the goblets of stained glass, which stood beside each guest; while another dispensed bread from a lordly basket of wrought gilded scroll work.

And now the feast commenced, in earnest; as the first course, consisting of fresh eggs boiled hard, with lettuce, radishes, endive and rockets, olives of Venafrum, anchovies and sardines, and the choicest luxury of the day—hot sausages served upon gridirons of silver, with the rich gravy dripping through the bars upon a sauce of Syrian prunes and pomegranate berries—was placed upon the board.

For a time there was little conversation beyond the ordinary courtesies of the table, and such trifling jests as were suggested by occurrences of the moment. Yet still in the few words that passed from time to time, Paullus continued often to convey his sentiments to Lucia in words.

of double meaning ; keenly marked, it is true, but seemingly unobserved by the wily plotter opposite ; and more than once in handing her the goblet, or loading her plate with dainties, he took an opportunity again and again of pressing her not unwilling hand. And still at every pressure he caught that soft momentary glance, was it of love and passion, or of mere coquetry and girlish wantonness, succeeded by the fleeting blush pervading face, neck, arms, and bosom.

Never had Paullus been so wildly fascinated ; his heart throbbed and bounded as if it would have burst his breast ; his head swam with a sort of pleasurable dizziness ; his eyes were dim and suffused ; and he scarce knew that he was talking, though he was indeed the life of the whole company, voluble, witty, versatile, and at times eloquent, so far as the topics of the day gave room for eloquence.

And now, to the melody of Lydian lutes, two slaves introduced a huge silver dish, loaded by the vast brawn of the Umbrian boar, garnished with leaves of chervil, and floating in a rich sauce of anchovies, the dregs of Coan wine, white pepper, vinegar, and olives. The carver brandished his knife in graceful and fantastic gestures, proud of his honorable task ; and as he plunged it into the savory meat, and the delicious savor rushed up to his nostrils, he laid down the blade, spread out his hands in an ecstasy, and cried aloud, " ye Gods, how glorious !"

"Excellent well, my Glycon," cried Curius, delighted with the expressive pantomime of the well skilled Greek ; " smells it so savory ?"

" I have carved many a boar from Lucania and from Umbria also ; to say nothing of those from the Laurentian marshes, which are bad, seeing that they are fed on reeds only and marsh grass ; most noble Curius ; and never put I knife into such an one as this. There are two inches on it of pure fat, softer than marrow. He was fed upon holm acorns, I'll be sworn, and sweet chesnuts, and caught in a mild south wind !"

" Fewer words, you scoundrel," exclaimed Catiline, laughing at the fellow's volubility, " and quicker carving, if you wish not to visit the pistrinum. You have set Curius' mouth watering, so that he will be sped with longing, be-

fore you have helped Fulvia and your mistress. Fill up, you knaves, fill up; nay! not the Chian now; the Falernian from the Faustian hills, or the Cæcuban? Which shall it be, my Curius?"

"The Cæcuban, by all the Gods! I hold it the best vintage ever, and yours is curious. Besides, the Falernian is too dry to drink before the meat. Afterward, if, as Glycon says, the boar hath a flavor of the south, it will be excellent, indeed."

"Are as you as constant, Paullus, in your love for the boar, as these other epicures?" cried Fulvia, who, despite the depreciating tone in which she spoke, had sent her own plate for a second slice.

"No! by the Gods! Fulvia," he replied, "I am but a sorry epicure, and I love the boar better in his reedy fen, or his wild thicket on the Umbrian hills, with his eye glaring red in rage, and his tusks white with foam, than girt with condiments and spices upon a golden dish."

"A strange taste," said Curius, "I had for my part rather meet ten on the dining table, than one in the oak woods."

"Commend me to the boar upon the table likewise," said Catiline; "still, with my friend Arvina at my side, and a good boarspear in my hand, I would like well to bide the charge of a tusker! It is rare sport, by Hercules!"

"Wonderful beings you men are," said Fulvia, mincing her words affectedly, "ever in search of danger; ever on the alert to kill; to shed blood, even if it be your own! by Juno, I cannot comprehend it."

"I can, I can," cried Lucia, raising her voice for the first time, so that it could be heard by any others than her nearest neighbor; "right well can I comprehend it; were I a man myself, I feel that I should pant for the battle. The triumph would be more than rapture; and strife, for its own sake, maddening bliss! Heavens! to see the gladiators wheel and charge; to see their swords flash in the sun; and the red blood gush out unheeded; and the grim faces flushed and furious; and the eyes greedily devouring the wounds of the foeman, but all unconscious of their own; and the play of the muscular strong limbs; and the terrible death grapple! And then the dull hissing sound of the death stroke; and the voiceless parting of the bold

spirit! Ye Gods! ye Gods! it is a joy, to live, and almost to die for!"

Paullus Arvina looked at her in speechless wonder. The eyes so wavering and downcast were now fixed, and steady, and burning with a passionate clear light; there was a fiery flush on her cheek, not brief and evanescent; her ripe red mouth was half open, shewing the snow white teeth biting the lower lip in the excitement of her feelings. Her whole form seemed to be dilated and more majestic than its wont.

"Bravo! my girl; well said, my quiet Lucia!" exclaimed Catiline. "I knew not that she had so much of mettle in her."

"You must have thought, then, that I belied my race," replied the girl, unblushingly; "for it is whispered that you are my father, and I think *you* have looked on blood, and shed it before now!"

"Boar's blood, ha! Lucia; but you are blunt and brave to-night. Is it that Paullus has inspired you?"

"Nay! I know not," she replied, half apathetically; "but I do know, that if I ever love, it shall be a hero; a man that would rather lie in wait until dawn to receive the fierce boar rushing from the brake upon his spear, than until midnight to enfold a silly girl in his embrace."

"Then will you never love me, Lucia," answered Curius.

"Never, indeed!" said she; "it must be a man whom I will love; and there is nothing manly about thee, save thy vices!"

"It is for those that most people love me," replied Curius, nothing disconcerted. "Now Cato has nothing of the man about him but the virtues; and I should like to know who ever thought of loving Cato."

"I never heard of any body loving Cato," said Fulvia, quietly.

"But I have," answered the girl, almost fiercely; "none of *you* love him; nor do I love him; because he is too high and noble, to be dishonored by the love of such as I am; but all the good, and great, and generous, do love him, and will love his memory for countless ages! I would to God, I could love him!"

"What fury has possessed her?" whispered Catiline

to Orestilla; "what ails her to talk thus? first to proclaim herself my daughter, and now to praise Cato?"

"Do not ask me!" replied Aurelia in the same tone; "she was a strange girl ever; and I cannot say, if she likes this task that you have put upon her."

"More wine, ho! bring more wine! Drink we each man to his mistress, each lady to her lover in secrecy and silence!" cried the master of the revel. "Fill up! fill up! let it be pure, and sparkling to the brim."

But Fulvia, irritated a little by what had passed, would not be silent; although she saw that Catiline was annoyed at the character the conversation had assumed, and ere the slave had filled up the beakers she addressed Lucia—

"And wherefore, dearest, would you love Cato? I could as soon love the statue of Accius Nævius, with his long beard, on the steps of the Comitium; he were scarce colder, or less comely than your Cato."

"Because to love virtue is still something, if we be vicious even; and, if I am not virtuous myself, at least I have not lost the sense that it were good to be so!"

"I never knew that you were not virtuous, my Lucia," interposed her mother; "affectionate and pious you have ever been."

"And obedient!" added Catiline, with strong emphasis. "Your mother, my Lucia, and myself, return thanks to the Gods daily for giving us so good a child."

"Do you?" replied the girl, scornfully; "the Gods must have merry times, then, for that must needs make them laugh! But good or bad, I respect the great; and, if I ever love, it will be, as I said, a great and a good man."

"I fear you will never love me, Lucia," whispered Paulus in her ear, unheard amid the clash of knives and flagons, and the pealing of a fresh strain of music, which ushered in the king of fish, the grand conger, garnished with prawns and soused in pungent sauce.

"Wherefore not?" she replied, meeting his eye with a furtive sidelong glance.

"Because I, for one, had rather watch till midnight fifty times, in the hope only of clasping Lucia, once, in my embrace; than once until dawn, to kill fifty boars of Umbria."

She made no answer; but looked up into his face as if

to see whether he was in earnest, with an affectionate and pleading glance; and then pressed her unsandalled foot against his. A moment or two afterward, he perceived the embroidered table cover had been drawn up, with the intent of protecting her dress from the sauces of the fish which she was eating, in such a manner as to conceal the greater part of her person.

Observing this, and excited beyond all restraint of ordinary prudence, by the consciousness of her manner, he profited by the chance to steal his arm about her waist; and to his surprise, almost as much as his delight, he felt his hand clasped instantly in hers, and pressed upon her throbbing heart.

The blood gushed like molten fire through his veins. The fascinations of the siren had prevailed. The voice of the charmer had been heard, charming him but too wisely. And for the moment, fool that he was, he fancied he loved Lucia, and his own pure and innocent and lovely Julia was forgotten! Forgotten, and for whom!

Catiline had not lost one word, one movement of the young couple; and he perceived, that, although there was clearly something at work in the girl's bosom which he did not comprehend, she had at least obeyed his commands in captivating Paullus; and he now doubted not but she would persevere, from vanity or passion, and bind him down a fettered captive to her will.

Determined to lose nothing by want of exertion, the traitor circulated now the fiery goblet as fast as possible, till every brain was heated more or less, and every cheek flushed, even of the women, by the inspiring influence of the wine cup.

All dainties that were known in those days ministered to his feast; oysters from Baïæ; pheasants—a rarity but lately introduced, since Pompey's conquests in the east—had been brought all the way from Phasis upon the southern shores of the Black Sea; and woodcock from the valleys of Ionia, and the watery plains of Troas, to load the tables of the luxurious masters of the world. Livers of geese, forced to an unnatural size by cramming the unhappy bird with figs; and turbot fricasseed in cream, and peacocks stuffed with truffles, were on the board of Catiline that day, as on the boards of many another noble

Roman ; and the wines by which these rare dainties were diluted, differed but little, as wisest critics say, from the madeiras and the sherries of the nineteenth century. For so true is it, that under the sun there is nothing new, that in the *foix gras* of Strasburg, in the *turbot à la crème*, and in the *dindons aux truffes* of the French metropolis, the gastronomes of modern days have only reproduced the dishes, whereon Lucullus and Hortensius feasted before the Christian era.

The day passed pleasantly to all, but to Paullus Arvina it flew like a dream, like a delirious trance, from which, could he have consulted his own will, he would never have awakened.

With the dessert, and the wine cup, the myrtle branch and the lute went round, and songs were warbled by sweet voices, full of seductive thoughts and words of passion. At length the lamps were lighted, and the women arose to quit the hall, leaving the ruder sex to prolong the revel ; but as Lucia rose, she again pressed the fingers of Arvina, and whispered a request that he would see her once more ere he left the house.

He promised ; but as he did so, his heart sank within him ; for dearly as he wished it, he believed he had promised that which would prove impossible.

But in a little while, chance, as he thought it, favored him ; for seeing that he refused the wine cup, Catiline, after rallying him some time, good humoredly said with a laugh, "Come, my Arvina, we must not be too hard on you. You have but a young head, though a stout one. Curius and I are old veterans of the camp, old revellers, and love the wine cup better than the bright eyes of beauty, or the minstrel's lute. Thou, I will swear it, wouldst rather now be listening to Lucia's lyre, and may be fingering it thyself, than drinking with us roisterers ! Come, never blush, boy, we were all young once ! Confess, if I am right ! The women you will find, if you choose to seek them, in the third chamber on the left, beyond the inner peristyle. We all love freedom here ; nor are we rigid censors. Curius and I will drain a flagon or two more, and then join you."

Muttering something not very comprehensible about his exertions in the morning, and his inability to drink any

more, Paullus arose, delighted to effect his escape on terms so easy, and left the triclinium immediately in quest of his mistress.

As he went out, Catiline burst into one of his sneering laughs, and exclaimed, "He is in; by Pan, the hunter's God! he is in the death-toil already! May I perish ill, if he escape it."

"Why, in the name of all the Gods, do you take so much pains with him," said Curius; "he is a stout fellow, and I dare say a brave one; and will make a good legionary, or an officer perhaps; but he is raw, and a fool to boot!"

"Raw, but no fool! I can assure you," answered Catiline; "no more a fool than I am. And we must have him, he is necessary!"

"He will be necessary soon to that girl of yours; she has gone mad, I think, for love of him. I never did believe in philtres; but this is well nigh enough to make one do so."

"Pshaw!" answered Catiline; "it is thou that art raw now, and a fool, Curius. She is no more in love with him than thou art; it was all acting—right good acting: for it did once well nigh deceive me who devised it; but still, only acting. I ordered her to win him at all hazards."

"At all hazards?"

"Aye! at *all*."

"I wish you would give her the like orders touching me, if she obey so readily."

"I would, if it were necessary; which it is not. First, because I have you as firmly mine, as need be; and secondly, because Fulvia would have her heart's blood ere two days had gone, and that would ill suit me; for the sly jade is useful."

"Take care she prove not too sly for you, Sergius. She may obey your orders in this thing; but she does so right willingly. She loves the boy, I tell you, as madly as Venus loved Adonis, or Phædra Hyppolitus; she would pursue him if he fled from her."

"She loves him no more than she loves the musty statue of my stout grandsire, Sergius Silo."

"You will see one day. Meanwhile, look that she fool you not."

While they were speaking, Paullus had reached the entrance of the chamber indicated; and, opening the door, had entered, expecting to find the three women assembled at some feminine sport or occupation. But fortune again favored him—opportune fortune!

For Lucia was alone, expecting him, prepared for his entrance at any moment; yet, when he came, how unprepared, how shocked, how terrified!

For she had unclasped her stola upon both her shoulders, and suffered it to fall down to her girdle which kept it in its place about her hips. But above those she was dressed only in a tunic of that loose fabric, a sort of silken gauze, which was called woven air, and was beginning to be worn very much by women of licentious character; this dress—if that indeed could be called a dress, which displayed all the outlines of the shape, all the hues of the glowing skin every minute blue vein that meandered over the lovely bosom—was wrought in alternate stripes of white and silver; and nothing can be imagined more beautiful than the effect of its semi-transparent veil concealing just enough to leave some scope for the imagination, displaying more than enough for the most prodigal of beauty.

She was employed in dividing her long jet-black hair with a comb of mother-of-pearl as he entered; but she dropped both the hair and comb, and started to her feet with a simulated scream, covering her beautiful bust with her two hands, as if she had been taken absolutely by surprise.

But Paullus had been drinking freely, and Paullus saw, moreover, that she was not offended; and, if surprised, surprised not unpleasantly by his coming.

He sprang forward, caught her in his arms, and clasping her to his bosom almost smothered her with kisses. But shame on her, fast and furiously as he kissed, she kissed as closely back.

“ Lucia, sweet Lucia, do you then love me ?”

“ More than my life—more than my country—more than the Gods! my brave, my noble Paullus.”

“ And will you then be mine—all mine, my Lucia ?”

“ Yours, Paul ?” she faltered, panting as if with agitation upon his bosom; “ am I not yours already ? but no, no, no !” she exclaimed, tearing herself from his embrace. “ No

no! I had forgotten. My father! no; I cannot, my father!"

"What mean you, Lucia? your father? What of your father?"

"You are his enemy. You have discovered, will betray him."

"No, by the great Gods! you are mad, Lucia. I have discovered nothing; nor if I knew him to be the slayer of my father, would I betray him! never, never!"

"Will you swear *that*?"

"Swear what?"

"Never, whatever you may learn, to betray him to any living man: never to carry arms, or give evidence against him; but faithfully and stedfastly to follow him through virtue and through vice, in life and unto death; to live for him, and die with him, unless I release you of your oath and restore you to freedom, which I will never do!"

"By all the powers of light and darkness! by Jupiter Omnipotent, and Pluto the Avenger, I swear, Lucia! May I and all my house, and all whom I love or cherish, wretchedly perish if I fail you."

"Then I am yours," she sighed; "all, and for ever!" and sank into his arms, half fainting with the violence of that prolonged excitement.

Fool

CHAPTER VII.

THE OATH.

Into what dangers
Would you lead me, Cassius?

JULIUS CÆSAR.

THE evening had worn on to a late hour, and darkness had already fallen over the earth, when Paullus issued stealthily, like a guilty thing, from Lucia's chamber. No step or sound had come near the door, no voice had called on either, though they had lingered there for hours in endearments, which, as he judged the spirit of his host, would have cost him his life, if suspected; and though he never dreamed of connivance, he did think it strange that a man so wary and suspicious as Catiline was held to be, should have so fallen from his wonted prudence, as to betray his adopted daughter's honor by granting this most fatal opportunity.

He met no member of the family in the dim-lighted peristyle; the passages were silent and deserted; no gay domestic circle was collected in the tablinum, no slaves were waiting in the atrium; and, as he stole forth cautiously with guarded footsteps, Arvina almost fancied that he had been forgotten; and that the master of the house believed him to have retired when he left the dining hall.

It was not long, however, before he was undeceived; for as he entered the vestibule, and was about to lay his

hand on the lock of the outer door, a tall dark figure, which he recognized instantly to be that of his host, stepped forward from a side-passage, and stretched out his arm in silence, forbidding him, by that imperious gesture, to proceed.

"Ha! you have tarried long," he said in a deep guarded whisper, "our Lucia truly is a most soft and fascinating creature; you found her so, is it not true, my Paullus?"

There was something singular in the manner in which these words were uttered, half mocking, and half serious; something between a taunting and triumphant assertion of a fact, and a bitter question; but nothing that betokened anger or hostility, or offended pride in the speaker.

Still Paullus was so much taken by surprise, and so doubtful of his entertainer's meaning, and the extent of his knowledge, that he remained speechless in agitated and embarrassed silence.

"What, have the girl's kisses clogged your lips, so that they can give out no sound? By the gods! they were close enough to do so."

"Catiline!" he exclaimed, starting back in astonishment, and half expecting to feel a dagger in his bosom.

"Tush! tush! young man—think you the walls in the house of Catiline have no ears, nor eyes? Paullus Arvina, I know all!"

"All?" faltered the youth, now utterly aghast.

"Ay, all!" replied the conspirator, with a harsh triumphant laugh. "Lucia has given herself to you; and you have sold yourself to Catiline! By all the fiends of Hades, better it were for you, rash boy, that you had ne'er been born, than now to fail me!"

Arvina, trembling with the deep consciousness of hospitality betrayed, and feeling the first stings of remorse already, stood thunderstricken, and unable to articulate.

"Speak!" thundered Catiline; "speak! art thou not mine—mine soul and body—sworn to be mine forever?"

Alas! the fatal oath, sworn in the heat of passion, flashed on his soul, and he answered humbly, and in a faint low voice, how different from his wonted tones of high and manly confidence—

"I am sworn, Catiline!"

"See then that thou be not forsworn. Little thou

dream'st yet, unto what thou art sworn, or unto whom; but know this, that hell itself, with all its furies, would fall short of the tortures that await the traitor!"

"I am, at least, no traitor!"

"No! traitor! Ha!" cried Catiline, "is it an honest deed to creep into the bosom of a daughter of the house which entertained thee as a friend!—No! Traitor—ha! ha! ha! thou shalt ere long learn better—ha! ha! ha!"

And he laughed with the fearful sneering mirth, which was never excited in his breast, but by things perilous and terrible and hateful. In a moment, however, he repressed his merriment, and added—

"Give me that poniard thou didst wear this morning. It is mine."

"Thine!" cried the unhappy youth, starting back, as if he had received a blow; "thine, Catiline!"

"Aye!" he replied, in a hoarse voice, looking into the very eyes of Paul. "I am the slayer of the slave, and regret only that I slew him without torture. Know you whose slave he was, by any chance?"

"He was the Consul's slave," answered Arvina, almost mechanically—for he was utterly bewildered by all that had passed—"Medon, my freedman Thrasea's cousin."

"The Consul's, ha!—which Consul's? speak! fool! speak, ere I tear it from your throat; Cicero's, ha?"

"Cicero's, Catiline!"

"Here is a coil; and knows he of this matter? I mean Cicero."

"He knows it."

"That is to say, you told him. Aye! this morning, after I spoke with you. I comprehend; and you shewed him the poniard. So! so! so! Well, give it to me; I will tell you what to do, hereafter."

"I have it not with me, Sergius," he replied, thoroughly daunted and dismayed.

"See that you meet me then, bringing it with you, at Egeria's cave, as fools call it, in the valley of Muses, at the fourth hour of night to-morrow. In the meantime, beware that you tell no man aught of this, nor that the instrument was bought of Volero. Ha! dost thou hear me?"

"I hear, Catiline."

"And wilt obey?"

“And will obey.”

“So shall it go well with thee, and we shall be fast friends forever. Good repose to thee, good my Paullus.”

“And Lucia?” he replied, but in a voice of inquiry; for all that he had heard of the tremendous passions and vindictive fury of the conspirator, flashed on his mind, and he fancied that he knew not what of vengeance would fall on the head of the soft beauty.

“Hath played her part rarely!” answered the monster, as he dismissed him from the door, which he opened with his own hand. “Be true, and you shall see her when you will; betray us, and both you and she shall live in agonies, that shall make you call upon death fifty times, ere he relieve you.”

And with a menacing gesture, he closed and barred the door behind him.

“Played her part rarely!” The words sank down into his soul with a chilling weight, that seemed to crush every energy and hope. Played her part! Then he was a dupe—the very dupe of the fiend’s arch mock, to lip a wanton, and believe her chaste—the dupe of a designing harlot; the sworn tool and slave of a murderer—a monster, who had literally sold his own child’s honor. For all the world well knew, that, although Lucia passed for his adopted daughter only, she was his natural offspring by Aurelia Orestilla, before their impious marriage.

Well might he gnash his teeth, and beat his breast, and tear his dark hair by handfulls from his head; well might he groan and curse.

But oh! the inconsistency of man! While he gave vent to all the anguish of his rage in curses against her, the soft partner of his guilt, and at the same time, its avenger; against the murderer and the traitor, now his tyrant; he utterly forgot that his own dereliction, from the paths of rectitude and honor, had led him into the dark toils, in which he now seemed involved beyond any hope of extrication.

He forgot, that to satisfy an insane and unjustifiable love of adventure, and a false curiosity, he had associated himself with a man whom he believed, if he did not actually know, to be infamous and capable of any crime.

He forgot, that, admitted into that man’s house in friend-

ship, he had attempted to undermine his daughter's honor; and had felt no remorse, till he learned that his success was owing to connivance—that his own treason had been met and repaid by deeper treason.

He forgot, that for a wanton's love, he had betrayed the brightest, and the purest being that drew the breath of life, from the far Alps, to the blue waters of the far Tarentum—that he had broken his soul's plighted faith—that he was himself, first, a liar, perjurer, and villain.

Alas! it is the inevitable consequence, the first fruit, as it were, of crime, that guilt is still prolific; that the commission of the first ill deed, leads almost surely to the commission of a second, of a third, until the soul is filed and the heart utterly corrupted, and the wretch given wholly up to the dominion of foul sin, and plunged into thorough degradation.

Arvina had thought lightly, if at all, of his first luxurious sin, but now to the depth of his secret soul he felt that he was emmeshed and entangled in the deepest villainy.

All that he ever had yet heard hinted darkly or surmised of Catiline's gigantic schemes of wickedness, rushed on him, all at once! He doubted nothing any longer; it was clear to him as noonday; distinct and definite as if it had been told to him in so many words; the treason to the state concealed by individual murder; and he, a sworn accomplice—nay, a sworn slave to this murderer and traitor!

Nor was this all; his peril was no less than his guilt; equal on either side—sure ruin if he should be true to his country, and scarce less sure, if he should join its parricides. For, though he had not dared say so much to Catiline, he had already sent the poniard to the house of Cicero, and a brief letter indicating all that he had learned from Volero. This he had done in the interval between the Campus and his unlucky visit to the house of Catiline, whom he then little deemed to be the man of whom he was in quest.

Doubtless, ere this time, the cutler had been summoned to the consul's presence, and the chief magistrate of the Republic had learned that the murderer of his slave was the very person, whom he had bound himself by oaths, so strong that he shuddered at the very thought of them, to support and defend to the utmost.

What was he then to do? how to proceed, since to recede appeared impossible?

How was he to account to the conspirator for his inability to produce the poniard at their appointed meeting? how should he escape the pursuit of his determined vengeance, if he should shun the meeting?

And then, Lucia! The recollection, guilty and degraded as he knew her to be, of her soft blandishments, of her rare beauty, of her wild and inexplicable manner, adding new charms to that forbidden bliss, yet thrilled in every sense. And must he give her up? No! madness was in the very thought! so strangely had she spread her fascinations round him. And yet did he love her? no! perish the thought! Love is a high, a holy, a pure feeling—the purest our poor fallen nature is capable of experiencing; no! this fierce, desperate, guilty passion was no more like true love, than the whirlwind that upheaves the tortured billows, and hurls the fated vessel on the treacherous quicksands, is like to the beneficent and gentle breeze that speeds it to the haven of its hopes, in peace and honor.

After a little while consumed in anxious and uneasy thoughts, he determined—as cowards of the mind determine ever—to temporise, to await events, to depend upon the tide of circumstance. He would, he thought, keep the appointment with his master—for such he felt that Cataline now was indeed—however he might strive to conceal the fact; endeavor to learn what were his real objects; and then determine what should be his own course of action. Doubtful, and weak of principle, and most infirm of purpose, he shrunk alike from breaking the oath he had been entrapped into taking, and from committing any crime against his country.

His country!—To the Roman, patriotism stood for religion!—Pride, habit, education, honor, interest, all were combined in that word, country; and could he be untrue to Rome? His better spirit cried out, no! from every nerve and artery of his body. And then his evil genius whispered Lucia, and he wavered.

Meantime, had no thought crossed him of his own pure and noble Julia, deserted thus and overlooked for a mere wanton? Many times! many times, that day, had his mind reverted to her. When first he went to Cataline's

house, he went with the resolution of leaving it at an early hour, so soon as the feast should be over, and seeking her, while there should yet be time to ramble among the flower-beds on the hill of gardens, or perchance, to drive out in his chariot, which he had ordered to be held in readiness, toward the falls of the Anio, or on the proud Emilian way.

Afterward, in the whirl of his mad intoxication for the fascinating Lucia, all memory of his true love was lost, as the chaste moon-light may be dimmed and drowned for a while by the red glare of the torches, brandished in some licentious orgy. Nor did he think of her again, till he found himself saddened, and self-disgusted, plunged into peril—perhaps into ruin, by his own guilty conduct; and then, when he did think, it was with remorse, and self-reproach, and consciousness of disloyalty, so bitterly and keenly painful—yet unaccompanied by that repentance, which steadily envisages past wrong, and determines to amend in future—that he shook off the recollection, whenever it returned, with wilful stubbornness; and resolved on forgetting, for the present, the being whom a few short hours before, he would have deemed it impossible that he should ever think of but with joy and rapturous anticipation.

Occupied in these fast succeeding moods and fancies, Paullus had made his way homeward from the house of Catiline, so far as to the Cerolian place, at the junction of the Sacred Way and the Carinæ. He paused here a moment; and grasping his fevered brow with his hand, recalled to mind the strange occurrences, most unexpected and unfortunate, which had befallen him, since he stood there that morning; each singly trivial; each, unconnected as it seemed with the rest, and of little moment; yet all, when united, forming a chain of circumstances by which he was now fettered hand and foot—his casual interview with Catiline on the hill; his subsequent encounter of Victor and Aristius Fuscus; the recognition of his dagger by the stout cutler Volero; the death of Varus in the hippodrome; his own victorious exercises on the plain; the invitation to the feast; the sumptuous banquet; and last, alas! and most fatal, the too voluptuous and seductive Lucia.

Just at this moment, the doors of Cicero's stately mansion were thrown open, and a long train came sweeping

out in dark garments, with blazing torches, and music doleful and piercing. And women chanting the shrill funereal strain. And then, upon a bier covered with black, the rude wooden coffin, peculiar to the slave, of the murdered Medon! Behind him followed the whole household of the Consul; and last, to the extreme astonishment of Paullus, preceded by his lictors, and leaning on the arm of his most faithful freedman, came Cicero himself, doing unusual honor, for some cause known to himself alone, to the manes of his slaughtered servant.

As they passed on toward the Capuan gate of the city, the Consul's eyes fell directly on the form of Arvina, where he stood revealed in the full glare of the torch-light; and as he recognised him, he made a sign that he should join him, which, under those peculiar circumstances, he felt that he could not refuse to do.

Sadly and silently they swept through the splendid streets, and under the arched gate, and filed along the celebrated Appian way, passing the tomb of the proud Scipios on the left hand, with its superb sarcophagi—for that great house had never, from time immemorial, been wont to burn their dead—and on the right, a little farther on, the noble temple and the sacred slope of Mars, and the old statue of the god which had once sweated blood, prescient of Thrasy-mene. On they went, frightening the echoes of the quiet night with their wild lamentations and the clapping of their hands, sending the glare of their funereal torches far and wide through the cultured fields and sacred groves and rich gardens, until they reached at length the pile, hard by the columbarium, or slave-burying-place of Cicero's household.

Then, the rites performed duly, the dust thrice sprinkled on the body, and the farewell pronounced, the corpse was laid upon the pile, and the tall spire of blood-red flame went up, wavering and streaming through the night, rich with perfumes, and gums, and precious ointment, so noble was the liberality of the good Consul, even in the interment of his more faithful slaves.

No words were uttered to disturb the sound of the ceremony, until the flames died out, and, the smouldering embers quenched with wine, Thræsea, as the nearest relative of the deceased, gathered the ashes and inurned them,

when they were duly labelled and consigned to their niche in the columbarium; and then, the final *Illicet* pronounced, the sad solemnity was ended.

Then, though not until then, did Cicero address the young man; but then, as if to make up for his previous silence, he made him walk by his side all the way back to the city, conversing with him eagerly about all that had passed, thanking him for the note and information he had sent concerning Volero, and anticipating the immediate discovery of the perpetrators of that horrid crime.

"I have not had the leisure to summon Volero before me," he added. "I wished also that you, Arvina, should be present when I examine him. I judge that it will be best, when we shall have dismissed all these, except the lictors, to visit him this very night. He is a thrifty and laborious artisan, and works until late by lamp light; we will go thither, if you have naught to hinder you, at once."

Arvina could do no otherwise than assent; but his heart beat violently, and he could scarcely frame his words, so dreadful was his agitation. Yet, by dint of immense exertion, he contrived to maintain the outward appearance of composure, which he was very far from feeling, and even to keep up a connected conversation as they walked along. Returning home at a much quicker pace than they had gone out, it was comparatively but a short time before they arrived at the house of Cicero, and there dismissed their followers, many of the slaves and freedmen of Arvina having joined the procession in honour of their fellow-servant Thrasea.

Thence, reserving two lictors only of the twelve, the consul with his wonted activity hurried directly forward by the Sacred Way to the arch of Fabius; and then, as the young men had gone in the morning, through the Forum toward the cutler's shop, taking the shortest way, and evidently well acquainted with the spot beforehand.

"I caused the funeral to take place this night," he said to Arvina, "instead of waiting the due term of eight days, on purpose that I might create no suspicion in the minds of the slayers. They never will suspect him, we have buried even now, to be the man they slew last night, and will fancy, it may be, that the body is not discovered even."

"It will be well if it prove so," replied Paullus, feeling that he must say something, and fearful of committing himself by many words.

"It will, and I think probably it may," answered Cicero. "But see, I was right; there shines the light from Volero's shop, though all the other booths have been closed long ago, and the streets are already silent. There are but few men, even in this great city, of whom I know not something, beyond the mere names. Think upon that, young man, and learn to do likewise; cultivate memory, above all things, except virtue."

"I should have thought such things too mean to occupy a place, even, in the mind of Cicero," answered Arvina.

"Nothing, young man, that pertains to our fellow men, is too mean to occupy the mind of the noblest. Why should it, since it doth occupy the mind of the Gods, who are all great and omnipotent?"

"You lean not then to the creed of Epicurus, which teaches——"

"Who, I?" interrupted Cicero, almost indignantly. "No! by the immortal Gods! nor I trust, my young friend, do you. Believe me—but ha!" he added in a quick and altered tone, "what have we here? there is some villainy in the wind—away! away! there! lictors apprehend that fellow."

For as they came within about a bow-shot of the booth of Volero, the sound of a slight scuffle was heard from within, and the light of the lamp became very dim and wavering, as if it had been overset; and in a moment went out altogether. But its last glimmering ray shewed a tall sinewy figure making out of the door and bounding at a great pace up the street toward the Carmental gate.

Arvina caught but a momentary glance of the figure; yet was that glance enough. He recognized the spare but muscular form, all brawn and bone and sinew; he recognized the long and pardlike bounds!—It was his tyrant, and, as he thought, his Fate!

The lictors rushed away upon his track, but there seemed little chance that, encumbered with their heavy fasces, they would overtake so swift a runner, as, by the momentary sight they had of him, the fugitive appeared to be.

Arvina and the Consul speedily reached the booth.

"Volero! Volero!"

But there came forth no answer.

"Volero! what ho! Volero!"

They listened eagerly, painfully, with ears sharpened by excitement. There came a sound—a splash, as of a heavy drop of water falling on the stone floor; another, and another—the trickling of a continuous stream.

All was dark as a moonless midnight. Yet Cicero took one step forward, and laid his hand upon the counter. It splashed into a pool of some warm liquid.

"Now may the Gods avert!" he cried, "It is blood! there has been murder here! Run, my Arvina, run to Furbo's cookshop, across the way there, opposite; they sit up there all night—cry murder, ho! help! murder!"

A minute had scarcely passed before the heavy knocking of the young man had aroused the house—the neighborhood. And at the cry of murder, many men, some who had not retired for the night, and some half dressed as they had sprung up from their couches, came rushing with their weapons, snatched at random, and with torches in their hands.

It was but too true! the laborious artizan was dead; murdered, that instant, at his own counter, at his very work. He had not moved or risen from his seat, but had fallen forward with his head upon the board; and from beneath the head was oozing in a continuous stream the dark red blood, which had overflowed the counter, and trickled down, and made the paved floor one great pool!

"Ye Gods! what blood! what blood!" exclaimed the first who came in.

"Poor Volero! alas!" cried Furbo, "it is not an hour since he supped on a pound of sausages at my table, and now, all is over!"

They raised his head. His eyes were wide open; and the whole face bore an expression neither of agony or terror, so much as of wild surprise.

The throat was cut from ear to ear, dividing the wind-pipe, the carotid arteries, and jugular veins on both sides; and so strong had been the hand of the assassin, and so keen the weapon, that the neck was severed quite to the back bone.

Among the spectators was a gladiator; he whose especial task it was to cut the throats of the conquered victims on the arena; he looked eagerly and curiously at the wound for a moment, and then said—

“A back stroke from behind—a strong hand, and a broadbacked knife—the man has been slain by a gladiator, or one who knows the gladiator’s trick!”

“The man,” said the Consul calmly, “has been killed by an acquaintance, a friend, or a familiar customer; he had not even risen from his seat to speak with him; and see, the burnisher is yet grasped in his hand, with which he was at work. Ha!” he exclaimed, as his lictors entered, panting and tired by their fruitless chase, “could you not overtake him?”

“We never saw him any more, my consul,” replied both men in one breath.

“Let his head down, my friend,” said Cicero, turning, much disappointed as it seemed, to Furbo, “let it lie, as it was when we found it; clear the shop, lictors; take the names of the witnesses; one of you keep watch at the door, until you are relieved; lock it and give the key to the prætor, when he shall arrive; the other, go straightway, and summon Cornelius Lentulus; he is the prætor for this ward. Go to your homes, my friends, and make no tumult in the streets, I pray you. This shall be looked to and avenged; your Consul watches over you!”

“Live! live the Consul! the good Consul, the man of the people!” shouted the crowd, as they dispersed quietly to their homes.

“Arvina, come with me. To whom told you, that you had found, and Volero sold, this dagger?” he asked very sternly.

“To no one, Cicero. Marcus Aurelius Victor, and Aristius Fuscus were with me, when he recognized it for his work?”

“No one else?”

“No one, save our slaves, and they,” he added in a breath, “could not have heard what passed.”

“Hath no one else seen it?”

“As I was stripping for the contests on the Campus, Catiline saw it in my girdle, and admired its fabric.”

“Catiline!”

“Ay! Consul?”

“And you told *him* that Volero had made it?”

“Consul, no!” But, with the word, he turned as white as marble. Had it been daylight, his face had betrayed him; as it was, Cicero observed that his voice trembled.

“Catiline is the man!” he said solemnly, “the man who slew Medon yesternight, who has slain Volero now. Catiline is the man; but this craves wary walking. Young man, young man, beware! methinks you are on the verge of great danger. Get thee home to thy bed; and again I say, Beware!”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TRUE LOVE.

Dear, my Lord,
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

THE SUN rose clear and bright on the following morning; the air was fresh and exhilarating, and full of mirthful inspiration. But Paullus Arvina rose unrefreshed and languid, with his mind ill at ease; for the reaction which succeeds ever to the reign of any vehement excitement, had fallen on him with its depressing weight; and not that only, but keen remorse for the past, and, if possible, anxiety yet keener for the future.

Disastrous dreams had beset his sleeping hours; and, at his waking, they and the true occurrences of the past day, seemed all blended and confused into one horrible and hideous vision.

Now he envisaged the whole dark reality of his past conduct, of his present situation. Lucia, the charming siren of the previous evening, appeared in her real colors, as the immodest, passionate wanton; Catiline as the monster that indeed he was!

And yet, alas! alas! as the clear perception of the truth dawned on him, it was but coupled with a despairing sense, that to these he was linked inevitably and forever.

The oath! the awful oath which he had sworn in the fierce whirl of passion, registered by the arch-traitor—the

oath involving, not alone, his own temporal and eternal welfare, but that of all whom he loved or cherished ; his own pure, beautiful, inimitable Julia, to whom his heart now reverted with a far deeper and more earnest tenderness, after its brief inconstancy ; as he compared her strong, yet maidenly and gentle love, with the wild and ungovernable passions of the wanton, for whom he had once sacrificed her.

Paullus Arvina was not naturally, not radically evil. Far from it, his impulses were naturally virtuous and correct, his calm sober thoughts always honorable and upright ; but his passions were violent and unregulated ; his principles of conduct not definitively formed ; and his mind wavering, unsettled, and unsteady.

His passions on the previous day had betrayed him fatally, through the dark machinations of the conspirator, and the strange fascinations of his lovely daughter, into the perpetration of a great crime. He had bound himself, by an oath too dreadful to be thought of without shuddering, to the commission of yet darker crimes in future.

And now the mists of passion had ceased to bedim his mental vision, his eyes were opened, that he saw and repented most sincerely the past guilt. How was he to avoid the future ?

To no man in these days, could there be a doubt even for a moment—however great the sin of swearing such an oath ! No one in these days, knowing and repenting of the crime, would hesitate a moment, or fancy himself bound, because he had committed one vile sin in pledging himself thus to guilt, to rush on deeper yet into the perpetration of wickedness.

The sin were in the swearing, not in the breaking of an oath so vile and shameful.

But those were days of dark heathenish superstition, and it was far beyond the reach of any intellect perhaps of that day to arrive at a conclusion, simple as that to which any mind would now leap, as it were instinctively.

In those days, an omitted rite, an error in the ceremonial tribute paid to the marble idol, was held a deeper sin than adultery, incest, or blood shedding. And the bare thought of the vengeance due for a broken oath would often times

keep sleepless, with mere dread, the eyes of men who could have slumbered calmly on the commission of the deadliest crimes.

Such, then, was the state of Arvina's mind on that morning—grieving with deep remorse for the faults of which he confessed himself guilty; trembling at the idea of rushing into yet more desperate guilt; and at the same time feeling bound to do so, in despite of his better thoughts, by the fatal oath which bound him to the arch traitor.

While he was sitting in his lonely chamber, with his untasted meal of ripe figs, and delicate white bread, and milk and honeycomb before him, devouring his own heart in his fiery anguish, and striving with all his energies of intellect to devise some scheme by which he might escape the perils that seemed to hem him round on every side, his faithful freedman entered, bearing a little billet, on which his eye had scarcely fallen before he recognized the shapely characters of Julia's well-known writing.

He broke the seal which connected the flaxen band, and with a trembling eye, and a soul that feared it knew not what, from the very consciousness of guilt, he read as follows:

“A day has passed, my Paullus, and we have not met! The first day in which we have not met and conversed together, since that whereon you asked me to be yours! I would not willingly, my Paul, be as those miserable and most foolish girls, of whom my mother has informed me, who, given up to jealousy and doubt, torment themselves in vain, and alienate the noble spirits, which are bound to them by claims of affection only, not of compulsion or restraint. Nor am I so unreasonable as to think, that a man has no duties to perform, other than to attend a woman's leisure. The Gods forbid it! for whom I love, I would see great, and famous, and esteemed in the world's eyes as highly as in mine! The house, it is true, is our sphere—the Forum and the Campus, the great world with its toils, its strifes, and its honors, yours! All this I speak to myself often. I repeated it many, many times yesterday—it ought to have satisfied me—it did satisfy my reason, Paul, but it spoke not to my heart! That whispers ever, ‘he came not yesterday to see me! he promised, yet he came not!’ and it will not be answered. Are you sick, Paullus,

that you came not? Surely in that case you had sent for me. Hortensia would have gone with me to visit you. No! you are not sick, else most surely I had known it! Are you then angry with me, or offended? Unconscious am I, dearest, of any fault against you in word, thought, or deed. Yet will I humble myself, if you are indeed wroth with me. Have I appeared indifferent or cold? oh! Paul, believe it not. If I have not expressed the whole of my deep tenderness which is poured out all, all on thee alone—my yearning and continued love, that counts the minutes when thou art not near me; it is not that I cease ever to think of thee, to adore thee, but that it were unmaidenly and overbold to tell thee of it. See, now, if I have not done so here; and my hand trembles, and my cheek burns, and almost I expect to see the pallid paper blush, to find itself the bearer of words so passionate as these. But you will pardon me, and come to me forthwith, and tell me, if anything, in what I have displeased thee.

“It is a lovely morning, and Hortensia has just learned from Caius Bibulus, that at high noon the ambassadors of the wild Allobroges will march in with their escort over the Mulvian Bridge. She wishes much to see the pomp, for we are told that their stature is gigantic and their presence noble, and their garb very wild, yet magnificent withal and martial. Shall we go forth and see them? Hortensia will carry me in her *carpentum*, and you can either ride with us on horseback, or if you be not over proud take our reins yourself as charioteer, or, what will perhaps be the best of all, come in your own car and escort us. I need not say that I wish to see you *now*, for *that* I wish always. Come, then, and quickly, if you would pleasure your own Julia.”

“Sweet girl,” he exclaimed, as he finished reading it, “pure as the snow upon Soracte, yet warm and tender as the dove. Inimitable Julia! And I—I—Oh, ye gods! ye gods! that beheld it!” and he smote his brow heavily with his hand, and bit his lip, till the blood almost sprang beneath the pressure of his teeth; but recovering himself in a moment, he turned to Thræsea—“Who brought this billet? doth he wait?”

“Phædon, Hortensia’s Greek boy, brought it, noble Paulus. He waits for your answer in the atrium.”

“Quick, then, quick, Thræsea, give me a reed and paper.”

And snatching the materials he wrote hastily :

“Chance only, evil chance, most lovely Julia, and business of some weight, restrained me from you most unwilling yesterday. More I shall tell you when we meet—indeed all! for what can I wish to conceal from you, the better portion of my soul. Need I say that I come—not, alas, on the wings of my love, or I should be beside you as I write, but as quickly as the speed of horses may whirl me to your presence; until then, fare you well, and confide in the fidelity of Paullus.”

“Give it to Phædon,” he said, tossing the note to Thræsea, “and say to him, ‘if he make not the better haste, I shall be at Hortensia’s house before him.’ And then, hark ye, tell some of those knaves in the hall without, to make ready with all speed my light chariot, and yoke the two black horses Aufidus and Acheron. With all speed, mark ye! And then return, good Thræsea, for I have much to say to you, before I go.”

When he was left alone, he arose from his seat, walked three or four times to and fro his chamber, in anxious and uneasy thought; and then saying, “Yes! yes! I will not betray him, but I will take no step in the business any farther, and I will tell him so to-night. I will tell him, moreover, that Cicero has the dagger, for now that Volero is slain, I see not well how it can be identified. The Gods defend me from the dark ones whom I have invoked. I will not be untrue to Rome, nor to Julia, any more—perish the whole earth, rather! Ay! and let us, too, perish innocent, better than to live guilty!”

As he made up his mind, by a great effort, to the better course, the freedman returned, and announcing that the car would be ready forthwith, inquired what dress he should bring him.

Never mind that! What I have on will do well enough, with a *petasus*;* for the sun shines so brightly that it will be scarce possible to drive bare headed. But I have work

*The Petasus was a broad brimmed hat of felt with a low round crown. It was originally an article of the Greek dress, but was adopted by the Romans

for you of more importance. You know the cave of Egeria, as men call it, in the valley of the Muses?"

"Surely, my Paullus."

"I know, I know; but have you ever marked the ground especially around the cave—what opportunities there be for concealment, or the like?"

"Not carefully," he answered. "but I have noticed that there is a little gorge just beyond the grotto, broken with crags and blocks of tufo, and overgrown with much brushwood, and many junipers and ivy."

"That will do then, I warrant me," replied Arvina. "Now mark what I tell you, Thrasea; for it may be, that my life shall depend on your acting as I direct. At the fourth hour of the night, I am to meet one in the grotto, on very secret business, whom I mistrust somewhat; who it is, I may not inform you; but, as I think my plans will not well suit his councils, I should not be astonished were he to have slaves, or even gladiators, with him to attack me—but not dreaming that I suspect anything, he will not take many. Now I would have you arm all my freedmen, and some half dozen of the trustiest slaves, so as to have in all a dozen or fifteen, with corslets under their tunics, and boarspears, and swords. You must be careful that you are not seen going thither, and you were best send them out by different roads, so as to meet after nightfall. Hide yourselves closely somewhere, not far from the cavern's mouth, whence you may see, unseen yourselves, whatever passes. I will carry my light hunting horn; and if you hear its blast rush down and surround the cave, but hurt no man, nor strike a blow save in self-defence, until I bid you. Do you comprehend me?"

"I comprehend, and will obey you to the letter, Paulus," answered the grave freedman, "but will not you be armed?"

"I will, my Thrasea. Leave thou a leathern hunting helmet here on the table, and light scaled cuirass, which I will do on under my toga. I shall be there at the fourth hour precisely; but it were well that ye should be on your posts by the second hour or soon after. For it may be, he too will lay an ambuscade, and so all may be discovered.

"It shall be done, most noble master."

“And see that ye take none but trustworthy men, and that ye all are silent—to would be ruin.”

“As silent as the grave, my Paullus,” answered the freedman.

“The car and horses are prepared, Paullus,” exclaimed a slave, entering hastily.

“Who goes with me to hold the reins?” asked his master.

“The boy Myron.”

“It is well. Fetch me a petasus, and lay the toga in the chariot. I may want it. Now, Thræsea, I rely on you! Remember—be prudent, sure, and silent.”

“Else may I perish ill,” replied the faithful servitor, as his master, throwing the broad brimmed hat carelessly on his curly locks, rushed out, as if glad to seek relief from his own gloomy thoughts in the excitement of rapid motion; and, scarcely pausing to observe the condition or appearance of his beautiful black coursers, sprang into the low car of bronze, shaped not much differently from an old fashioned arm chair with its back to the horses; seized the reins, and drove rapidly away, standing erect—for the car contained no seats—with the boy Myron clinging to the rail behind him.

A few minutes brought him through the Cyprian lane and the Suburra to the Virbian slope, by which he gained the Viminal hill, and the Hortensian villa; at the door of which, in a handsome street leading through the Quirinal gate to the Flaminian way, or great northern road of Italy, stood the carpentum, drawn by a pair of noble mules, awaiting its fair freight.

This was a two-wheeled covered vehicle, set apart mostly for the use of ladies; and, though without springs, was as comfortable and luxurious a carriage as the art of that day could produce; nor was there one in Rome, with the exception of those kept for public use in the sacred processions, that could excel that of the rich and elegant Hortensia.

The pannels were beautifully painted, and the arched top or tilt supported by gilded caryatides at the four corners. Its curtains and cushions were of fine purple cloth; and altogether, though far less convenient. it was a much

gayer and more sumptuous looking vehicle than the perfection of modern coach building.

The ladies were both waiting in the atrium, when the young man dismounted from his car; and never had his Julia, he thought, looked more lovely than she did this morning, with the redundant masses of her rich hair confined by a net of green and gold, and a rich *pallium*, or shawl of the same colors, gracefully draped over her snowy stola, and indicating by the soft sweep of its outlines the beauties of a figure, which it might veil but could not conceal.

Joyously, in the frank openness of her pure nature, she sprung forward to meet him, with both her fair hands extended, and the ingenuous blood rising faintly to her pale cheeks.

“Dear, dearest Paul—I am so happy, so rejoiced to see you.”

Nothing could be more tender, more affectionate, than all her air, her words, her manner. Love flashed from her bright eyes irrepressible, played in the dimples of her smiling mouth, breathed audible in every tone of her soft silvery voice. Yet was there nothing that the gravest and most rigid censor could have wished otherwise—nothing that he could have pronounced, even for a moment, too warm, or too free for the bearing of the chariest maiden.

The very artlessness of her emotions bore evidence to their purity, their holiness. She was rejoiced to see her permitted lover, she felt no shame in that emotion of chaste joy, and would no more have dreamed of concealing it from him whom she loved so devotedly, than of masking her devotion to the Gods under a veil of indifference or coldness.

Here was the very charm of her demeanor, as here was the difference between her manner, and that of her rival Lucia.

In Julia, every thought that sprang from her heart, was uttered by her lips in frank and fearless innocence; she had no thought she was ashamed of, no wish she feared to utter. Her clear bright eyes dwelt unabashed and fondly on the face of him she loved; and no scrutiny could have detected in their light, one glance of unquiet or immodest passion. Her manner was warm and unreserved toward Paul, because she had a right to love him, and cared not

who knew that she did so. Lucia's was as cold as snow, on the contrary; yet it required no second glance to perceive that the coldness was but the cover superinduced to hide passions too warm for revelation. Her eye was downcast; yet did its stolen glances speak things, the secret consciousness of which would have debased the other in her own estimation beyond the hope of pardon. Her tongue was guarded, and her words slow and carefully selected, for her imaginations would have made the brazen face of the world blush for shame could it have heard them spoken.

Hortensia smiled to witness the manifest affection of her sweet child; but the smile was, she knew not why, half mournful, as she said—

“You are unwise, my Julia, to show this truant how much you prize his coming; how painfully his absence depresses you. Sages declare that women should not let their lords guess, even, how much they are loved.”

“Why, mother,” replied Julia, her bright face gleaming radiantly with the pure lustre of her artless spirit, “I *am* glad to see him; I *do* prize his coming; I *do* love Paullus. Why, then, should I dissemble, when to do so were dishonest, and were folly likewise?”

“You should not tell him so, my child,” replied the mother, “I fear you should not tell him so. Men are not like us women, who love but the more devotedly, the more fondly we are cherished. There is, I fear, something of the hunter's, of the conqueror's, ardour, in their passion; the pursuit is the great allurements; the winning the great rapture; and the prize, once securely won, too often cast aside, and disregarded.”

“No! no!” returned the girl eagerly, fixing her eyes on her lover's features, as if she would read therein the outward evidences of that nobility of soul, which she believed to exist within. “I will not believe it; it were against all gratitude! all honor! all heart-truth! No, I will not believe it; and if I did, Hortensia, by all the Gods, I had rather live without love, than hold it on so vile a tenure of deceit. What, treasure up the secrets of your soul from your soul's lord? No! no! I would as soon conceal my devotion from the powers of heaven, as my affections from their rightful master. I, for one, never will believe that all men are selfish and unfaithful.”

“May the Gods grant, my Julia, that sad experience shall never teach you that they they are so. I, at least, will believe, and pray, that, what his sex may be soever, our Paullus will prove worthy ever of that best gift of God, a pure woman’s pure and unselfish love.”

“Oh! may it be so,” answered Paullus, clasping his hands fervently together. “May I die ere I wrong my Julia! and be you sure, sweet girl, that your simple trust is philosophy far truer than the sage’s lore. Base must his nature be, and his heart corrupt, who remains unsubdued to artlessness and love, such as yours, my Julia.”

“But tell us, now,” said the elder lady, “what was it that detained you, and where were you all the day? We expected you till the seventh hour of the night, yet you came not.”

“I will tell you, Hortensia,” he replied, “as we drive along; for I had rather do so, where there be no ears to overhear us. You must let me be your charioteer to-day, and your venerable grey-headed coachman shall ride with my wild imp Myron, in the car, if you will permit it.”

“Willingly,” she replied. “Then something strange has happened. Is it not so?”

“I knew it,” exclaimed Julia, clasping her snowy hands together, “I knew it; I have read it in his eye this half hour. What can it be? it is something fearful, I am certain.”

“Nay! nay! be not alarmed; if there were danger, it is passed already. But come, let me assist you to the carriage; I will tell you all as we go. But if we do not make good speed, the pomp will have passed the bridge before we reach it.”

The ladies made no more delay, but took their places in the carriage, Paul occupying the front seat, and guiding the sober mules with far more ease, than Hortensia’s aged charioteer experienced in restraining the speed of Arvina’s fiery coursers, and keeping them in their place, behind the heavier carpentum.

The narrow streets were now passed, and threading the deep arch of the Quirinal gate, they struck into a lane skirting the base of the hill of gardens, on the right hand, by which they gained the great Flaminian way, just on the farther confines of the Campus; when they drove rapidly

toward the Milvian bridge, built a few years before by Æmilius Scaurus, and esteemed for many a year the masterpiece of Roman architecture.

As soon as they had cleared the confines of the busy city, within which the throng of vehicles, and the passengers, as well on foot as on horseback, compelled Arvina to give nearly the whole of his attention to the guidance of the mules—he slackened the reins, and leaving the docile and well-broken animals to choose their own way, giving only an occasional glance to their movements, commenced the detail of his adventures at the point, where he parted from them on the night before the last.

Many were the emotions of fear, and pity, and anxiety which that tale called forth; and more than once the tears of Julia were evoked by sympathy, first, with her lover's daring, then with the grief of Thræsea. But not a shade of distrust came to cloud her pure spirit, for Paullus mentioned nothing of his interview with Catiline on the Cælian, or in the Campus; much less of his dining with him, or detecting in him the murderer of the hapless Volero.

Still he did not attempt to conceal, that both Cicero and himself had suspicions of the identity of the double murderer, or that he was about to go forth that very evening, for the purpose of attempting—as he represented it—to ascertain, beyond doubt, the truth of his suspicions.

And here it was singular, that Julia evinced not so much alarm or perturbation as her mother; whether it was that she underrated the danger he was like to run, or overrated the prowess and valor of her lover. But so it was, for though she listened eagerly while he was speaking, and gazed at him wistfully after he had become silent, she said nothing. Her beautiful eyes, it is true, swam with big tear-drops for a moment, and her nether lip quivered painfully; but she mastered her feelings, and after a short space began to talk joyously about such subjects as were suggested by the pleasant scenery, through which their road lay, or the various groups of people whom they met on the way.

Ere long the shrill blast of a cavalry trumpet was heard from the direction of the bridge, and a cloud of dust surging up in the distance announced the approach of the train.

There was a small green space by the wayside, covered with short mossy turf, and overshadowed by the spreading branches of a single chesnut, beneath which Paullus drew up the mules of Hortensia's carriage, directing the old charioteer, who seemed hard set to manage his high-bred and fiery steeds, to wheel completely off the road, and hold them well in hand on the green behind him.

By this time the procession had drawn nigh, and two mounted troopers, glittering in casques of highly polished bronze, with waving crests of horsehair, corslets of burnished brass, and cassocks of bright scarlet cloth, dashed by as hard as their fiery Gallic steeds could trot, their harness clashing merrily from the rate at which they rode. Before these men were out of sight, a troop of horse rode past in serried order, five abreast, with a square crimson banner, bearing in characters of gold the well-known initials, S. P. Q. R., and surmounted by a gilded eagle.

Nothing could be more beautifully accurate than the ordered march and exact discipline of this little band, their horses stepping proudly out, as if by one common impulse, in perfect time to the occasional notes of the *lituus*, or cavalry trumpet, by which all their manœuvres were directed; and the men, hardy and fine-looking figures, in the prime of life, bestriding with an air of perfect mastery their fiery chargers, and bearing the weight of their heavy panoply beneath the burning sunshine of the Italian noon, as though a march of thirty miles were the merest child's play.

About half a mile in the rear of this escort, so as to avoid the dust which hung heavily, and was a long time subsiding in the breathless atmosphere, came the train of the ambassadors from the Gaulish Highlands, and on these men were the eyes of the Roman ladies fixed with undisguised wonder, not unmixed with admiration. For their giant stature, strong limbs, and wild barbaric dresses, were as different from those of the well-ordered legionaries, as were their long light tresses, their blue eyes, keen and flashing as a falcon's, and their fair ruddy skins, from the clear brown complexions, dark locks, and black eyes of the Italian race.

The first of these wild people was a young warrior above six feet in height, mounted on a superb grey charger, which bore his massive bulk as if it were unconscious of his burthen. His large blue eyes wandered around him on all

sides with a quick flashing glance that took in everything, yet seemed surprised at nothing; though almost everything which he beheld must have been strange to him. His long red hair flowed down in wavy masses over his neck and shoulders, and his upper lip, though his cheeks and his chin were closely shaven, was clothed with an immense moustache, the ends of which curled upward nearly to his eyes.

Upon his head he wore a casque of bronze, covered with studs of silver, and crested by two vast polished horns, the spoil of the fiercest animal of Europe's forests—the gigantic and indomitable Urus. A coat of mail, composed of bright steel rings interwoven in the Gaulish fashion, covered his body from the throat downward to the hips, leaving his strong arms bare to the shoulder, though they were decorated with so many chains, bracelets, and armlets, and broad rings of gold and silver, as would have gone far to protect them from a sword cut.

His legs were clothed, unlike those of any southern people, in tightly-sitting pantaloons—*braccæ*, as they were called—of gaily variegated tartans, precisely similar to the trews of the Scottish Highlander—a much more ancient part of the costume, by the way, than the kilt, or short petticoat, now generally worn—and these trews, as well as the streaming plaid, which he wore belted gracefully about his shoulders, shone resplendent with checkers of the brightest scarlet, azure, and emerald, and white, interspersed here and there with lines and squares of darker colors, giving relief and harmony to the general effect.

A belt of leather, studded with bosses and knobs of coral and polished mountain pebbles, girded his waist, and supported a large purse of some rich fur, with a formidable dirk at the right side, and, at the left, suspended by gilt chains from the girdle, a long, straight, cutting broadsword, with a basket hilt—the genuine claymore, or great sword—to resist the sweep of which Marcellus had been fain, nearly five hundred years before, to double the strength of the Roman casque, and to add a fresh layer of wrought iron to the tough fabric of the Roman buckler.

This ponderous blade constituted, with the dagger, the whole of his offensive armature; but there was slung on his left shoulder a small round targe, of the hide of the

mountain bull, bound at the rim, and studded massively with bronze, and having a steel pike projecting from the centre—in all respects the same instrument as that with which the clans received the British bayonet at Preston Pans and Falkirk.

The charger of this gallantly-attired chief was bedecked, like his rider, with all the martial trappings of the day; his bridle, mounted with bits of ponderous Spanish fabric, was covered with bosses gemmed with amber and unwrought coral; his housings, of variegated plaid, were elaborately fringed with embroideries of gold; and his rich scarlet poytel was decked, in the true taste of the western savage, with tufts of human hair, every tuft indicating a warrior slain, and a hostile head embalmed in the coffers of the valiant rider.

“See, Julia, see,” whispered Arvina, as he passed slowly by their chariot, “that must be one of their great chiefs, and a man of extraordinary prowess. Look at the horns of the mighty Urus on his helmet, a brute fiercer, and well nigh as large as a Numidian elephant. He must have slain it, single-handed in the forest, else had he not presumed to wear its trophies, which belong only to the greatest of their champions. For every stud of silver on his casque of bronze he must have fought in a pitched battle; and for each tuft of hair upon his charger’s poytel he must have slain a foe in hand-to-hand encounter. There are eighteen tufts on this side, and, I warrant me, as many on the other. Doubtless, he has already stricken down thirty-six foemen.’

“And he numbers not himself as yet so many years! Ye Gods! what monsters,” exclaimed Julia, shuddering at the idea of human hair used as a decoration. “Are they not anthropophagi, the Gauls, my Paullus?”

“No, by the Gods! Julia,” answered Arvina, laughing; “but very valiant warriors, and hospitable beyond measure to those who visit their native mountains; admirers, too, of women, whom they regard as almost divine, beyond all things. I see that stout fellow looking wild admiration at you now, from his clear blue eyes, though he would fain be thought above the reach of wonder.”

“Are they believers in the Gods, or Atheists, as well as barbarous?”

“By Jupiter! neither barbarous, to speak the truth, nor Atheists; they worship Mercury and Jove, Mars and Apollo, and Diana, as we do; and though their tongues be something wild, and their usages seem strange to us, it cannot be denied that they are a brave and noble race, and at this time good friends to the Roman people. Mark that old chieftain; he is the headman of the tribe, and leader of the embassy, I doubt not.”

While he was speaking, a dozen other chiefs had ridden by, accompanied by the chiefs of the Roman escort, some men in the prime of life, some grizzled and weather-beaten, and having the trace of many a hard-fought field in the scars that defaced their sunburnt visages. But the last was an old man, with long silver hair, and eyebrows and mustachios white as the snow on his native Jura; the principal personage evidently of the band, for his casque was plated with gold, and his shirt of mail richly gilded, and the very plaid which he wore, alternately checked with scarlet, black, and gold.

He also, as he passed, turned his deep grey eye toward the little group on the green, and his face lightened up, as he surveyed the athletic form and vigorous proportions of the young patrician, and he leaned toward the officer, who rode beside him, a high crested tribune of the tenth legion, and enquired his name audibly.

The soldier, who had been nodding drowsily over his charger's neck, tired by the long and dusty ride, looked up half bewildered, for he had taken no note of the spectators, but as his eyes met those of Arvina, he smiled and waved his hand, for they were old companions, and he laughed as he gave the required information to the ancient warrior.

The gaze of the old man fell next on the lovely lineaments of Julia, and dwelt there so long that the girl lowered her eyes abashed; but, when she again raised them, supposing that he had passed by, she still met the firm, penetrating, quiet gaze, rivetted on her face, for he had turned half round in the saddle as he rode along.

A milder light came into his keen, hawk-like eye, and a benignant smile illuminated his gray weather-beaten features, as he surveyed and marked the ingenuous and artless beauty of her whole form and face; and he whispered

into the tribune's ear something that made him too turn back, and wave his hand to Paul, and laugh merrily.

"Now, drive us homeward, Paullus," said Hortensia, as the cohort of infantry which closed the procession, marched steadily along, dusty and dark with sweat, yet proud in their magnificent array, and solid in their iron discipline. "Drive us homeward as quickly as you may. You will dine with us, and if you must need go early to your meeting, we will not hinder you."

"Gladly will I dine with you; but I must say farewell soon after the third hour!"

They soon arrived at the hospitable villa, and shortly afterward the pleasant and social meal was served. But Paul was not himself, though the lips he loved best poured forth their fluent music in his ear, and the eyes which he deemed the brightest, laughed on him in their speaking fondness.

Still he was sad, silent, and abstracted, and Julia marked it all; and when he rose to say farewell, just as the earliest shades of night were falling, she arose too; and as she accompanied him to the door, leaning familiarly on his arm, she said—

"You have not told me all, Paullus. I thought so while you were yet speaking; but now I am sure of it. I will not vex you at this time with questions, but will devour my anxiety and grief. But to-morrow, to-morrow, Paullus, if you love me indeed, you will tell me all that disturbs you. True love has no concealment from true love. Do not, I pray you, answer me; but fare you well, and good fortunes follow you."

CHAPTER IX.

THE AMBUSH.

My friends.

That is not so. Sir, we are your enemies.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

IT was already near the fourth hour of the Roman night, or about a quarter past eight of our time, when Paullus issued from the Capuan gate, in order to keep his appointment with the conspirator; and bold as he was, and fearless under ordinary circumstances, it would be useless to deny that his heart beat fast and anxiously under his steel cuirass, as he strode rapidly along the Appian way to the place of meeting.

The sun had long since set, and the moon, which was in her last quarter, had not as yet risen; so that, although the skies were perfectly clear and cloudless, there was but little light by which to direct his foot-steps toward the valley of the Muses, had he not been already familiar with the way.

Stepping out rapidly, for he was fearful now of being too late at the place appointed, he soon passed the two branches of the beautiful and sparkling Almo, wherein the priests of Cybele were wont to lave the statue of their goddess, amid the din of brazen instruments and sacred song; and a little further on, arrived at the cross-road where the way to Ardea, in the Latin country, branched off to the right hand from the great Appian turnpike.

At this point there was a small temple sacred to Bacchus, and a little grove of elms and plane trees overrun with vines, on which the ripe clusters consecrated to the God were hanging yet, though the season of the vintage had elapsed, safe from the hand of passenger or truant school-boy.

Turning around the angle of this building, Arvina entered a dim lane, overshadowed by the tall trees of the grove, which wound over two or three little hillocks, and then sweeping downward to the three kindred streamlets, which form the sources of the Almo, followed their right bank up the valley of the Muses.

Had the mind of Arvina been less agitated than it was by dark and ominous forebodings, that walk had been a pleasant one, in the calm and breezeless evening. The stars were shining by thousands in the deep azure sky; the constant chirrup of the shrill-voiced cicada, not mute as yet, although his days of tuneful life were well nigh ended, rose cheerfully above the rippling murmurs of the waters, and the mysterious rustling of the herbage rejoicing to drink up the copious dew; and heard by fits and starts from the thick clumps of arbutus on the hills, or the thorn bushes on the water's brink, the liquid notes of the nightingale gushed out, charming the ear of darkness.

For the first half mile of his walk, the young patrician met several persons on the way—two or three pairs of lovers, as they seemed, of the lower orders, strolling affectionately homeward; a party of rural slaves returning from their labours on some suburban farm, to their master's house; and more than one loaded chariot; but beyond this all was lonely and silent, with the exception of the stream, the insects, and the vocal night-bird.

There was no sound or sight that would seem to indicate the vicinity of any human being, as Arvina, passing the mouth of a small gorge or hollow scooped out of the bosom of a soft green hill, paused at the arch of a low but richly ornamented grotto, hollowed out of the face of the rock, and supported by a vault of reticulated brick-work, decorated elegantly with reliefs of marble and rich stucco. The soft green mosses and dark tendrils of the waving ivy, which drooped down from the rock and curtained well nigh half the opening, rendered the grotto very dark with-

in. And it was a moment or two before Paullus discovered that he was alone in that secluded place, or in the company only of the old marble god, who, reclining on a couch of the same material at the farther end of the cave, poured forth his bright waters from an inverted jar, into the clear cool basin which filled the centre of the place.

He was surprised not a little at finding himself the first at the place of meeting, for he was conscious that he was behind his time; and had, indeed, come somewhat late on purpose, with a view of taking his stand as if naturally during the interview, between the conspirator and the cave mouth.

It was not, however, altogether a matter of regret to him, that he had gained a little time, for the folds of his toga required some adjustment, in order to enable him to get readily at the hilt of his sword, and the mouth-piece of his hunting-horn, which he carried beneath his gown. And he applied himself to that purpose immediately, congratulating himself, as he did so, on the failure of his first project, and thinking how much better it would be for him to stand as far as possible from the entrance, so as to avoid even the few rays of dim star-light, which crept in through the tangled ivy.

This was soon done; and in accordance with his after-thought, he sat down on a projecting angle of the statue's marble couch, in the inmost corner of the vault, facing the door, and having the pool of the fountain interposed between that and himself.

For a few moments he sat thinking anxiously about the interview, which he believed, not without cause, was likely to prove embarrassing, at least, if not perilous. But, when he confessed to himself, which he was very soon compelled to do, that he could shape nothing of his own course, until he should hear what were the plans in which Catiline desired his coöperation; and when time fled and the man came not, his mind began to wander, and to think about twenty gay and pleasant subjects entirely disconnected with the purpose for which he had come thither. Then he fell gradually into a sort of waking dream, or vision, as it were, of wandering fancies, made up partly of the sounds which he actually heard with his outward ears, though his mind took but little note of them, and partly of

the occurrences in which he had been mixed up, and the persons with whom he had been brought into contact within the last two or three days. The gory visage of the murdered slave, the sweet and calm expression of his own Julia, the truculent eyes and sneering lip of Catiline, and the veiled glance and voluptuous smile of his too seductive daughter, whirled still before him in a strange sort of human phantasmagoria, with the deep searching look of the consul orator, the wild glare of the slaughtered Volero, and the stern face, grand and proud in his last agony, of the dying Varus.

In this mood he had forgotten altogether where he was, and on what purpose, when a deep voice aroused him with a start, and though he had neither heard his footstep, nor seen him enter, Catiline stood beside his elbow.

"What ho!" he exclaimed, "Paullus, have I detained you long in this dark solitude."

"Nay, I know not how long," replied the other, "for I had fallen into strange thoughts, and forgotten altogether the lapse of time; but here have I been since the fourth hour."

"And it is now already past the fifth," said Cataline, "but come, we must make up for the loss of time. Some friends of mine are waiting for us, to whom I wish to introduce you, that you may become altogether one of us, and take the oaths of fidelity. Give me the dagger now, and let us be going on our way."

"I have it not with me, Catiline."

"Have it not with you! Wherefore not? wherefore not, I say, boy?" cried the conspirator, very savagely. "By all the furies in deep hell, you were better not dally with me."

"Because it is no longer in my possession; and therefore I could not bring it with me," he replied firmly, for the threats of the other only inflamed his pride, and so increased his natural courage.

"By the Gods, you brave me, then!" exclaimed Catiline; "fool! fool! beware how you tamper with your fate. Speak instantly, speak out: to whom have you dared give it?"

"There was no daring in the matter, Catiline," he answered steadily, keeping an eye on the arch-traitor's movements; "before I knew that it was yours, I sent it, as I had

promised, to Cicero, with word that Volero could tell him who was the owner of it."

"Ha, didst thou so?" said the other, mastering instantly his fury, in his desire to make himself fully acquainted with all that had passed. "When was all this? has he seen Volero, and learned the secret of him, then?"

"I sent it, Catiline, within an hour of the time I left the Campus yesterday."

"Before coming to my house to dinner?"

"Before going to thy house to dinner, Sergius."

"Before seducing Lucia Orestilla?" again sneered the desperate villain.

"Before yielding," answered the young man, who was now growing angry, for his temper was not of the meekest, "to her irresistible seduction."

"Ha! yielding—well! we will speak of that hereafter. Hath the consul seen Volero?"

"He hath seen him dead; and how dead, Catiline best knoweth."

"It was, then, thou, whom I saw in the feeble lamplight with the accursed wretch that crosses my path everywhere, the dastard, drivelling dotard of Arpinum; thou that despite thine oath, didst lead him to detect the man, thou hadst sworn to obey, and follow! Thou! it is thou, then, that houndest mine enemies upon my track! By the great Gods, I know not whether most to marvel at the sublime, unrivalled folly, which could lead thee to fancy, that thou, a mere boy and tyro, couldst hoodwink eyes like mine; or at the daring which could prompt thee to rush headlong on thine own ruin in betraying me! Boy, thou hast but one course left; to join us heart and hand; to go and renew thine oath in such fashion as even thou, premeditated perjurer, wilt not presume to break, and then to seal thy faith by the blood!"—

"Of whom?"

"Of this new man; this pedant consul of Arpinum."

"Aye!" exclaimed Paullus, as if half tempted to accede to his proposal; "and if I do so, what shall I gain thereby?"

"Lucia, I might say," answered Catiline, "but—seeing that possession damps something at all times the fierceness of pursuit—what if I should reply, the second place in Rome?"

"In Rome?"

“When we have beaten down the proud patricians to our feet, and raised the conquering ensign of democratic sway upon the ramparts of the capitol; when Rome and all that she contains of bright and beautiful, shall be our heritage and spoil; the second place, I say, in regenerated Rome, linked, too, to everlasting glory.”

“And the first place?”

‘By Mars the great avenger! dost soar so high a pitch already? ho! boy, the first is mine, by right, as by daring. How say you? are you mine?’

“If I say no!”

“Thou diest on the instant.”

“I think not,” replied Arvina quietly, “and I do answer No.”

“Then perish, fool, in thy folly.”

And leaping forward he dealt him a blow with a long two-edged dagger, which he had held in his hand naked, during the whole discussion, in readiness for the moment he anticipated; and at the same instant uttered a loud clear whistle.

To his astonishment the blade glanced off the breast of the young man, and his arm was stunned nearly to the shoulder by the unexpected resistance of the stout corslet. The whistle was answered, however, the very moment it was uttered; and just as he saw Paullus spring to the farther side of the cavern, and set his back against the wall, unsheathing a heavy broadsword of the short Roman fashion, three stout men entered the mouth of the cave, heavily armed with weapons of offence, although they wore no defensive armor.

“Give me a sword,” shouted the fierce conspirator, furious at being foiled, and perceiving that his whole enterprise depended on the young man’s destruction. “He is armed under his gown with a breast-plate! Give me a sword, and then set on him all at once. So that will do, now, on.”

“Hold, Sergius Catiline,” exclaimed Arvina, “hold, or by all the Gods you will repent it. If you have three men at your back I have full five times three within call.”

“Call them, then!” answered the other, making at him, “call them! think you again to fool me? Ho, Geta and Arminius, get round the fountain and set on him! make haste I say—kill—kill.”

And with the word he rushed at him, aiming a fierce blow at his head, while the others a moment afterward charged on him from the other side.

But during the brief parley Arvina had disengaged the folds of his gown from his right shoulder, and wrapped it closely about his left arm, and when Catiline rushed in he parried the blow with his sword, and raising the little horn he carried, to his lips, blew a long piercing call, which was answered by a loud shout close at hand, and by the rush of many feet without the grotto.

Catiline was himself astonished at the unexpected aid, for he had taken the words of the young patrician for a mere boast. But his men were alarmed and fell back in confusion, while Paul, profiting by their hesitation, sprang with a quick active bound across the basin of the fountain, and gained the cavern's mouth just as his stout freedman Thrasea showed himself in the entrance with a close casque and cuirass of bronze, and a boar spear in his hand, the heads and weapons of several other able-bodied men appearing close behind.

At the head of these Arvina placed himself instantly, having his late assailants hemmed in by a force, against which they now could not reasonably hope to struggle.

But Paullus showed no disposition to take undue advantage of his superiority, for he said in a calm steady voice, "I leave you now, my friend; and it will not be my fault, if aught that has passed here, is remembered any farther. None here have seen you, or know who you are; and you may rest assured that for *her* sake and mine own honor, if I join not your plans, I will not betray you, or reveal your counsels. To that I am sworn, and come what may, my oath shall not be broken."

"Tush," cried the other, maddened by disappointment, and filled with desperate apprehensions, "men trust not avowed traitors. Upon them, I say, you dogs. Let there be forty of them, but four can stand abreast in the entrance, and we can front them, four as good as they.

And he again dashed at Arvina, without waiting to see if his gladiators meant to second his attack; but they hung back, reluctant to fight against such odds; for, though brave men, and accustomed to risk their lives, without quarrel or excitement, for the gratification of the brute po-

pulace of Rome, they had come to the cave of Egeria, prepared for assassination, not for battle; and their antagonists were superior to them as much in accoutrement and arms—for their bronze head-pieces were seen distinctly glimmering in the rays of the rising moon—as in numbers.

The blades of the leaders clashed together, and several quick blows and parries had been interchanged, during which Thrasea, had he not been restrained by his young master's orders, might easily have stabbed the conspirator with his boar-spear. But he held back at first, waiting a fresh command, until seeing that none came, and that the unknown opponent was pressing his lord hard; while the gladiators, apparently encouraged by his apathy, were beginning to handle their weapons, he shifted his spear in his hands, and stepping back a pace, so as to give full scope to a sweeping blow, he flourished the butt, which was garnished with a heavy ball of metal, round his head in a figure of eight, and brought it down so heavily on the felt skull-cap of the conspirator, that his teeth jarred audibly together, a quick flash sprang across his eyes, and he fell, stunned and senseless, at the feet of his intended victim.

"Hold, Thrasea, hold," cried Paullus, "by the Gods! you have slain him."

"No, I have not. No! no! his head is too hard for that," answered the freedman; "I felt my staff rebound from the bone, which it would not have done, had the skull been fractured. No! he is not dead, though he deserved to die very richly."

"I am glad of it," replied Paullus. "I would not have him killed, for many reasons. Now, hark ye, ye scoundrels and gallows-birds! most justly are your lives forfeit, whether it seem good to me to take them here this moment, or to drag you away, and hand you over to the lictors of the city-prætor, as common robbers and assassins."

"That you cannot do, whilst we live, most noble," answered the boldest of the gladiators, sullenly; "and you cannot, I think, take our lives, without leaving some of your own on our swords' points."

"Brave me not," cried the young man, sternly, "lest you drive me to do that I would not. Your lives, I say, are forfeit; but, seeing that I love not bloodshed, I leave you, for

this time, unpunished. Take up the master whom you serve, and bear him home ; and, when he shall be able to receive it, tell him Paullus Arvina pardons his madness, pities his fears, and betrays no man's trust—least of all his. For the rest, let him choose between enmity and friendship. I care not which it be. I can defend my own life, and assail none. Beware how you follow us. If you do, by all the Gods ! you die. See, he begins to stir. Come, Thræsea, call off your men ; we will go, ere he come to his senses, lest worse shall befall."

And with the words he turned his back contemptuously on the crest-fallen gladiators, and strode haughtily across the threshold, leaving the fierce conspirator, as he was beginning to recover his scattered senses, to the keen agony of conscious villainy frustrated, and the stings of defeated pride and disappointed malice.

The night was well advanced, when he reached his own house, having met no interruption on the way, proud of his well-planned stratagem, elated by success, and flattered by the hope that he had extricated himself by his own energy from all the perils which had of late appeared so dark and difficult to shun.

CHAPTER X.

THE WANTON.

Duri magno sed amore dolores
Polluto, notumque furens quid femina possit.

ÆN. v. 6.

VIRGIL.

It was not till a late hour on the following day, that Catiline awoke from the heavy and half lethargic slumber, which had fallen upon him after the severe and stunning blow he received in the grotto of Egeria.

His head ached fearfully, his tongue clove to his palate parched with fever, and all his muscular frame was disjointed and unstrung, so violently had his nerves been shattered.

For some time after he awoke, he lay tossing to and fro, on his painful couch, scarce conscious of his own identity, and utterly forgetful of the occurrences of the past evening.

By slow degrees, however, the truth began to dawn upon him, misty at first and confused, until he brought to his mind fairly the attack on Arvina, and the affray which ensued; with something of an indistinct consciousness that he had been stricken down, and frustrated in his murderous attempt.

As soon as the certainty of this was impressed on him, he sprang up from his bed, with his wonted impetuosity, and inquired vehemently of a freedman, who sat in his chamber motionless as a statue in expectation of his waking—

“How came I home, Chærea? and at what hour of night?”

“Grievously wounded, Catiline; and supported in the arms of the sturdy Germans, Geta and Arminius; and, for the time, it was past the eighth hour.”

“The eighth hour! impossible!” cried the conspirator; “why it was but the fifth, when that occurred. What said I, my good Chærea? What said the Germans? Be they here now? Answer me quick, I pray you.”

“There was but one word on your lips, Catiline; a constant cry for water, water, so long as you were awake; and after we had given you of it, as much as you would take, and you had fallen into a disturbed and feverish sleep, you still muttered in your dreams, ‘water!’ The Germans answered nothing, though all the household questioned them; and, in good truth, Catiline, it was not very long that they were capable of answering, for as soon as you were in bed, they called for wine, and in less than an hour were thoroughly besotted and asleep. They are here yet, I think, sleeping away the fumes of their potent flagons.”

“Call me Arminius, hither. Hold! What is the time of day?”

“The sun is high already; it must be now near the fourth hour!”

“So late! you did ill, Chærea, to let me lie so long. Call me Arminius hither; and send me one of the boys; or rather go yourself, Chærea, and pray Cornelius Lentulus the Prætor, to visit me before he take his seat on the Puteal Libonis. It is his day, I think, to take cognizance of criminal matters. Begone, and do my bidding!”

Within a moment the Athenian freedman, for he was of that proud though fallen city, returned conducting the huge German gladiator, whose bewildered air and blood-shot eyes seemed to betoken that he had not as yet recovered fully from the effect of his last night’s potations.

No finer contrast could be imagined by poet or painter, than was presented by those three men, each eminently striking in his own style, and characteristic of his nation. The tall spare military-looking Roman, with his hawk nose and eagle eye, and close shaved face and short black hair, his every attitude and look and gesture full of pride

and dominion; the versatile and polished Greek, beautiful both in form and face, as a marble of Praxiteles, beaming with intellect, and having every feature eloquent of poetry and imagination, and something of contempt for the sterner and harder type of mind, to which he and his countryman were subjugated; and last, the wild strong-limbed yet stolid-looking German, glaring out with his bright blue eyes, full of a sort of stupid fierceness, from the long curls of his auburn hair, a type of man in his most primitive state, the hunter and the warrior of the forest, enslaved by Rome's insatiate ambition.

Catiline looked at him fiercely for a moment, and then nodded his head, as if in assent to some of his own meditations; then muttering to himself, "the boar! the mast-fed German boar!" he turned to the Greek, saying sharply—

"Art thou not gone to Lentulus? methought thou hadst been thither, and returned ere this time! Yet tarry, since thou art here still. Are any of my clients in the atrium—any, I mean, of the trustiest!"

"Rufinus, surnamed Lupus, is without, and several others. Stolo, whom you preserved from infamy, when accused of *dolus malus*, in the matter of assault with arms on Publius Natro, is waiting to solicit you, I fancy, for some favor."

"The very man—the Wolf is the very man! and your suitor for favors cannot refuse to confer what he requests. Stay my Chærea. Send Glycon to summon Lentulus, and go yourself and find out what is Stolo's suit. Assure him of my friendship and support; and, hark you, have him and Rufinus into an inner chamber, and set bread before them and strong wine, and return to me presently. Now, then, Arminius," he continued, as the Greek left the room, "what did we do last night, and what befel us?—for I can remember nothing clearly."

The giant shook his tawny locks away from his brow, and gazed into his employer's face with a look of stolid inquiry, and then answered—

"Do! we did nothing, that I know! We followed thee as in duty bound to that cave by the Almo; and when we had stayed there awhile, we brought thee back again, seeing thou couldst not go alone. What can I tell? you know yourself why you took us thither."

“Thou stupid brute!” retorted Catiline, “or worse than brute, rather—for brutes augment not their brutishness by gluttony and wine-bibbing—thou art asleep yet! see if this will awaken thee!”

And with the word he snatched up a large brazen ewer full of cold water, which stood on a slab near him, and hurled it at his head. The gladiator stood quite still, and merely bent his neck a little to avoid the heavy vessel, which almost grazed his temples, and then shook himself like a water spaniel, as the contents flashed full into his face and eyes.

“Do not do that again,” he grunted, “unless you want to have your throat squeezed.”

“By Pollux the pugilist! he threatens!” exclaimed Catiline, laughing at his dogged anger. “Do you not know, cut-throat, that one word of mine can have your tough hide slashed with whips in the common gaol, till your very bones are bare?”

“And do you know what difference it makes, whether my hide be slashed with dog-whips in the gaol, or with broadswords in the amphitheatre? A man can only die! and it were as well, in my mind, to die having killed a Roman in his own house, as a countryman on the arena.”

“By all the Gods!” cried Catiline, “he is a philosopher! but, look you here, my German Solon, you were better regard me, and attend to what I tell you; so may you escape both gaol and amphitheatre. Tell me, briefly, distinctly, and without delay, what fell out last evening.”

“You led us to assault that younker, whom you know; and when we would have set upon him, and finished his business easily, he blew a hunting horn, and fifteen or sixteen stout fellows in full armor came down the bank from behind and shut up the cave’s mouth—you know as well as I do.”

“So far I do, most certainly,” replied the conspirator, “but what then?”

“Why, then, thou wouldest not hear reason; but, though the youth swore he would not betray thee, must needs lay on, one man against sixteen; and so, as was like, gottest thine head broken by a blow of a boar-spear from a great double-handed Thracian. For my part, I wondered he did not put the spear-head through and through

you. It was a great pity that he did not; it would have saved us all, and you especially, a world of trouble."

"And you, cowardly dogs, forsook me; and held back, when by a bold rush we might easily have slain him, and cut our way through the dastard slaves."

"No! no! we could not; they were all Thracians, Dacians, and Pannonians; and were completely armed, too. We might have killed him, very likely, but we could never have escaped ourselves."

"And he, he? what became of him when I had fallen?"

"He bade us take you up," replied the German, "and carry you home, and tell you 'to fear nothing, he would betray no man, least of all you.' He is a fine young fellow, in my judgment; for he might just as well have killed us all, as not, if he had been so minded; and I can't say but that it would have served us rightly, for taking odds of four to one upon a single man. That is, I know, what you Romans call fighting; beyond the Rhine we style it cowardly and murder! Then, after that he went off with his men, leaving us scratching our heads, and looking as dastardly and crest-fallen as could be. And then we brought you home hither, after it had got late enough to carry you through the streets, without making an uproar; and then Lydon and Chærea put you to bed; and I, and Geta, and Ardaric, as for us, we got drunk, seeing there was no more work to do last night, and not knowing what might be to do, to-day. And so it is all well, very well, as I see it."

"Well, call you it, when he has got off unscathed, and lives to avenge himself, and betray me?"

"But he swore he would do neither, Catiline," answered the simple-minded son of the forest.

"Swore!" replied the conspirator, with a fell sneer.

"Ay did he, master! swore by all that was sacred he would never betray any man, and you least of all; and I believe he will keep his promise."

"So do I," answered Catiline, bitterly, "I swear he shall; not for the lack of will, but of means to do otherwise! You are a stupid brute, Arminius; but useful in your way. I have no need of you to-day, so go and tell the butler to give you wine enough to make all three or

you drunk again; but mind that ye are sound, clear-headed, and alert at day-break to-morrow."

"But will he give it to me at my bidding?"

"If not, send him to me for orders; now, begone."

"I ask for nothing better," replied the gladiator, and withdrew, without any word or gesture of salutation, in truth, despising the Roman in his heart as deeply for what he deemed his over-craftiness and over-civilization, as the more polished Greek did, for what on his side he considered the utter absence of both.

Scarce had the German left the room, before the Greek returned, smiling, and seemingly well satisfied with the result of his mission.

Catiline looked at him steadily, and nodding his head, asked him quietly—

"Are they prepared, Chærea?"

"To do anything you would have them, Catiline. Stolo, it seems, is again imperilled—another charge of attempt to murder—and he wants you to screen him."

"And so I will; and will do more. I will make him rich and great, if he do my bidding. Now go, and make them understand this. They must swear that they came hither this morning to claim my aid in bringing them to speech with Lentulus, the Prætor, and then thou must be prepared to swear, Chærea, that I have had no speech or communication with them at all—which is quite true."

"That is a pity," answered the Greek, coolly; "for any one can swear steadily to the truth, but it requires genius to carry out a lie bravely."

"Oh! never fear, thou shalt have lies enough to swear to! Now mark me, when Lentulus comes hither, they must accuse to him Paullus Cæcilius Arvina, whose person, if they know him not, you must describe to them—him who dined with me, you know, the day before yesterday—of subornation to commit murder. The place where he did so, the top of the Cælian hill. The time, sunrise on that same day. The person whom he desired them to slay, Volero the cutler, who dwelt in the Sacred Way. They must make up the tale their own way, but to these facts they must swear roundly. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly; they shall do it well, and both be in one tale. I will help them to concoct it, and dress it up with

little truthful incidents that will tell. But are you sure that he cannot prove he was not there?"

"Quite sure, Chærea. For he *was* there."

"And no witnesses who can prove to whom he spoke?"

"Only one witness, and he will say nothing, unless called upon by Paullus."

"And if so called upon?"

"Will most reluctantly corroborate the tale of Stolo and Rufinus!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the freedman, "thou shouldst have been a Greek, Catiline, thou art too shrewd to be a mere Roman."

"A *mere* Roman, hang-dog!" answered Catiline, "but thou knowest thine opportunity, and profitest by it! so let it pass! Now as for thee, seeing thou dost love lying, thou shalt have thy part. Thou shalt swear that the night before that same morning, at a short time past midnight, thou wert returning by the Wicked street, from the house of Autronius upon the Quirinal, whither I sent thee to bid him to dinner the next day—he shall confirm the tale—when thou didst hear a cry of murder from the Plebeian graveyard on the Esquiline; and hurrying to the spot, didst see Arvina, with his freedman Thræsea bearing a torch, conceal a fresh bleeding body in a broken grave; and, hidden by the stem of a great tree thyself, didst hear him say, as he left the ground, 'That dog will tell no tales!' Thou must swear, likewise, that thou didst tell me the whole affair the next morning, and that I bade thee wait for farther proof ere speaking of the matter. And again, that we visited the spot where thou saw'st the deed, and found the grass trampled and bloody, but could not find the body. Canst thou do this, thinkest thou?"

"Surely I can," said the Athenian, rubbing his hands as if well pleased, "so that no one shalt doubt the truth of it! And thou wilt confirm the truth?"

"By chiding thee for speaking out of place. See that thou blurt it out abruptly, as if unable to keep silence any longer, as soon as the others have finished their tale. Be-gone and be speedy. Lentulus will be here anon!"

The freedman withdrew silently, and Catiline was left alone in communion with his own bad and bitter thoughts; and painful, as it seemed, and terrible, even to himself, was

that communion, for he rose up from his seat and paced the room impetuously, to and fro, gnashing and grinding his teeth, and biting his lips till the blood sprang out.

After a while, however, he mastered his passions, and began to dress himself, which he did by fits and starts in a manner perfectly characteristic of the man, uttering hideous imprecations if the least thing ran counter to his wishes, and flinging the various articles of his attire about the chamber with almost frantic violence.

By the time he had finished dressing himself, Lentulus was announced, and entered with his dignified and haughty manner, not all unmixed with an air of indolence.

"All hail, my Sergius," he exclaimed, as he crossed the threshold. "What hast thou of so grave importance, that thou must intercept me on my way to the judgment seat? Nothing has gone wrong in our councils—ha?"

"Nothing that I know," answered Catiline, "but here are two of my trustiest clients, Stolo and Rufinus, have been these three hours waiting for my awakening, that I might gain your ear for them. They sent me word they had a very heavy charge to make to you; but for my part, I have not seen them, and know not what it is."

"Tush! tush! man; never tell me that," replied Lentulus, with a grim smile. "Do you think I will believe you have sent for me all the way hither this morning, without some object of your own to serve? No! no! my friend; with whomsoever that may pass, it will not go current with Cornelius Lentulus!"

"Just as you please," said the traitor; "you may believe me or not exactly as you choose; but it is true, nevertheless, that I have neither seen the men, nor spoken with them. Nor do I know at all what they want."

"I would, then, you had not sent for me," answered the other. "Come, let us have the knaves in. I suppose they have been robbing some one's hen-roost, and want to lay the blame on some one else!"

"What ho! Chærea."

And as he spoke the word, the curtain which covered the door-way was withdrawn, and the keen-witted freedman made his appearance.

"Admit those fellows, Stolo and Rufinus. The prætor is prepared to give them a hearing."

It would have been difficult, perhaps, to have selected from the whole population of Rome at that day, a more murderous looking pair of scoundrels.

“Well, sirrahs, what secrets of the state have you that weigh so ponderously on your wise thoughts?” asked Lentulus, with a contemptuous sneer.

“Murder, most noble Lentulus—or at least subornation thereof,” answered one of the ruffians.

“Most natural indeed! I should have thought as much. Well, tell us in a word—for it is clear that nobody has murdered either of you—whom have you murdered?”

“If we have murdered no one, it was not for the lack of prompting, or of bribes either.”

“Indeed! I should have thought a moderate bribe would have arranged the matter easily. But come! come! to the point! whom were ye bribed or instigated to get rid of? speak! I am in haste!”

“The cutler, Caius Volero!”

“Volero! Ha!” cried Lentulus, starting. “Indeed! indeed! that may well be. By whom, then, were you urged to the deed, and when?”

“Paulus Cæcilius Arvina tempted us to the deed, by the offer of ten thousand sesterces! We met him by appointment upon the Cælian hill, at the head of the Minerium, a little before sunrise, the day before yesterday.”

“Ha!” and for a moment or two Lentulus fixed his eyes upon the ground, and pondered deeply on what he had just heard. “Have ye seen Volero since?”

“No, Prætor.”

“Nor heard anything concerning him?”

“Nothing!” said Stolo. But he spoke with a confused air and in an undecided tone, which satisfied the judge that he was speaking falsely. Rufinus interposed, however, saying—

“But I have, noble Lentulus. I heard say that he *was* murdered in his own booth, that same night!”

“And having heard this, you told it not to Stolo?”

“I never thought about it any more,” answered Rufinus doggedly, seeing that he had got into a scrape.

“That was unfortunate, and somewhat strange, too, seeing that you came hither together to speak about the very man. Now mark me. Volero *was* that night murdered,

and it appears to me, that you are bringing this accusation against a young patrician, in order to conceal your own base handiwork in the deed. Fellows, I grievously suspect you."

"Wrongfully, then, you do so," answered Stolo, who was the bolder and more ready witted of the two. "Rufinus ever was a forgetful fool; and I trow I am not to be brought into blame for his folly."

"Well for you, if you be not brought into more than blame! Now, mark me well! can you prove where you were that night of the murder, excellent Stolo?"

"Ay! can I," answered the man boldly. "I was with stout Balatro, the fisherman, helping to mend his nets until the fourth hour, and all his boys were present, helping us. And then we went to a cookshop to get some supper in the ox forum, and thence at the sixth hour we passed across to Lydia's house in the Cyprian lane, and spent a merry hour or two carousing with her jolly girls. Will that satisfy you, Lentulus?"

"Ay, if it can be proved," returned the Prætor. "And you, Rufinus; can you also show your whereabouts that evening?"

"I can," replied the fellow, "for I was sick abed; and that my wife can show, and Themison the druggist, who lives in the Sacred Way. For she went to get me an emetic at the third hour; and I was vomiting all night. A poor hand should I have made that night at murder."

"So far, then," replied Lentulus, "you have cleared yourselves from suspicion; but your charge on Arvina needs something more of confirmation, ere I dare cite a Patrician to plead to such a crime! Have you got witnesses? was any one in sight, when he spoke with you on the Minervium?"

"There was one; but I know not if he will choose to speak of it?"

"Who was it?" exclaimed Lentulus, growing a little anxious on the subject, for though he cared little enough about Arvina, he was yet unwilling to see a Patrician arraigned for so small a matter, as was in his eyes the murder of a mechanic.

"Why should he not speak? I warrant you I will find means to make him."

"It was my patron, Lentulus."

"Your patron! man!" he cried, much astonished.
"What, Catiline, here?"

"Catiline it was! my Prætor."

"And have you consulted with him, ere you spoke with me?"

"Not so! most noble, for he would not admit us!"

"Speak, Sergius. Is this so? did you behold these fellows in deep converse with Cæcilius Arvina, in the Minerium? But no! it must be folly! for what should you have been doing there at sunrise?"

"I prithee do not ask me, Lentulus," answered Catiline, with an air of well feigned reluctance. "I hate law suits and judicial inquiries, and I love young Arvina."

"Then you did see them? Nay! nay! you must speak out. I do adjure you, Catiline, by all the Gods! were you, at sunrise, on the Cælian, and did you see Arvina and these two?"

"I was, at sunrise, on the Cælian; and I did see them."

"And heard you what they said?"

"No! but their faces were grave and earnest; and they seemed angry as they separated."

"Ha! In itself only, this were a little thing; but when it turns out that the man *was* slain that same night, the thing grows serious. You, therefore, I shall detain here as witnesses, and partially suspected. Some of your slaves must guard them, Catiline, and I will send a lictor to cite Paullus, that he appear before me after the session at the Puteal Libonis. I am in haste. Farewell!"

"Me! me! hear me! good Lentulus—hear me!" exclaimed Chærea, springing forward, all vehemence and eagerness to speak, as it would seem, ere he should be interrupted.

"Chærea?" cried Catiline, looking sternly at him, and shaking his finger, "Remember!"

"No! no!" replied Chærea—"no! no! I will not hold my peace! No! Catiline, you may kill me, if you choose, but I will speak; to keep this secret any longer would kill me, I tell you."

"If it do not, I will," answered his master, angrily.

"This must not be, my Sergius," interposed Lentulus, "let the man speak if he have any light to throw on this

mysterious business. Say on, my good fellow, and I will be your mediator with your master."

The freedman needed no more exhortation, but poured out a flood of eager, anxious narrative, as had been preconcerted between himself and Catiline, speaking with so much vehemence, and displaying so much agitation in all his air and gestures, that he entirely imposed his story upon Lentulus; and that Catiline had much difficulty in restraining a smile at the skill of the Greek.

"Ha! it is very clear," said Lentulus, "he first slew the slave with his own hand, and then would have compassed—nay! I should rather say, *has* compassed—Vole-ro's slaughter, who must some how or other have become privy to the deed. I must have these detained, and him arrested! There can be no doubt of his guilt, and the people will be, I think, disposed to make an example; there have of late been many cases of assassination!"

As soon as they were left alone, Lentulus looked steadily into the face of his fellow-conspirator for a moment, and then burst into a hoarse laugh.

"Why all this mummerly, my Sergius?" he added, as soon as he had ceased from laughing, "Or wherefore would you have mystified me too?"

"I might have wished to see whether the evidence was like to seem valid to the Judices, from its effect upon the Prætor!" answered the other.

"And are you satisfied?"

"I am."

"You may be so, my Sergius, for, of a truth, until Chærea swore as he did touching Medon, I was myself deceived."

"You believe, then, that this will be sufficient to secure his condemnation?"

"Beyond doubt. He will be interdicted fire and water, if these men stick to their oaths only. It would be well, perhaps, to convict one of Arvina's slaves of the actual death of Volero. That might be done easily enough, but there must be care taken, that you select one who shall not be able to prove any alibi. But wherefore are you so bent on destroying this youth, and by the law, too, which is ever both perilous and uncertain?"

"He knows too much, to live without endangering others."

"What knows he?"

"Who slew Medon—Who slew Volero—What we propose to do, ere long, in the Campus!" answered Catiline, steadily.

"By all the Gods?" cried Lentulus, turning very pale, and remaining silent for some moments. After which he said, with a thoughtful manner, "it would be better to get rid of him quietly."

"That has been tried too."

"Well?"

"It failed! He is now on his guard. He is brave, strong, wary. It cannot be done, save thus."

"He will denounce us. He will declare the whole, ere we can spring the mine beneath him."

"No! he will not; he dares not. He is bound by oaths which ——"

"Oaths!" interrupted Lentulus, with a sneer, and in tones of contemptuous ridicule. "What are oaths? Did they ever bind you?"

"I do not recollect," answered Catiline; "perhaps they did, when I was a boy, and believed in Lemures and Lamia. But Paullus Arvina is not Lucius Catiline, nor yet Cornelius Lentulus; and I say that his oaths shall bind him, until ——"

"And I say, they shall not!" A clear high voice interrupted him, coming, apparently, through the wall of the chamber.

Lentulus started—his very lips were white, and his frame shook with agitation, if it were not with fear.

Catiline grew pale likewise; but it was rage, not terror, that blanched his swarthy brow. He dashed his hand upon the table—

"Furies of Hell!"

While the words were yet trembling on his lips, the door was thrown violently open, the curtains which concealed it torn asunder, and, with her dark eyes gleaming a strange fire, and two hard crimson spots gleaming high up on her cheek bones—the hectic of fierce passion—her bosom throbbing, and her whole frame dilated with anger and excitement, young Lucia stood before them.

"And I say," she repeated, "that they shall not bind him! By all the Gods! I swear it! By my own love! my own

dishonor! I swear that they shall not! Fool! fool! did you think to outwit me? To blind a woman, whose every fear and passion is an undying eye? Go to! go to! you shall not do it."

Audacious, as he was, the traitor was surprised, almost daunted; and while Lentulus, a little reassured, when he saw who was the interlocutor, gazed on him in unmitigated wonder, he faltered out, in tones strangely dissimilar to his accustomed accents of indomitable pride and decision——

"You mistake, girl; you have not heard aright, if you have heard, at all; I would say, you are deceived, Lucia!"

"Then would you lie!" she answered, "for I am not deceived, though you would fain deceive me! Not heard? not heard?" she continued. "Think you the walls in the house of Catiline have no eyes nor ears?" using the very words which he had addressed to her lover; Lucius Catiline! I know all!

"You know all?" exclaimed Lentulus, aghast.

"And will prevent all!" replied the girl, firmly, "it you dare cross my purposes!"

"Dare! dare!" replied Catiline, who now, recovering from his momentary surprise, had regained all his natural haughtiness and vigor. "Who are you, wanton, that dare talk to us of daring?"

"Wanton!" replied the girl, turning fiery red. "Ay! But who made me the wanton that I am? Who fed my youthful passions? Who sapped my youthful principles? Who reared me in an atmosphere, whose very breath was luxury, voluptuousness, pollution, till every drop of my wholesome blood was turned to liquid flame? till every passion in my heart became a fettered earthquake? Fool! fool! you thought, in your impotence of crime, to make Lucia Orestilla your instrument, your slave! You have made her your mistress! You dreamed, in your insolence of fancied wisdom, that, like the hunter-cat of the Persian despots, so long as you fed the wanton's appetite, and basely pandered to her passions, she would leap hoodwinked on the prey you pointed her. Thou fool! that hast not half read thy villain lesson! Thou shouldst have known that the very cat, thou thoughtest me, will turn and rend the huntsman if he dare rob her of her portion! I tell you, Lucius Catiline, you thought me a mere wanton! a

mere sensual thing! a soulless animal voluptuary! Fool! I say, double fool! Look into thine own heart; remember what blood runs in these female veins! Man! Father! Vitiator! My spirit is not female! my blood, my passions, my contempt of peril, my will indomitable and immutable, are, like my mortal body, your begetting! My crimes, and my corruption, are your teaching! Beware then, as you know the heat of your own appetites, how you presume to hinder mine! Beware, as you know your own recklessness in doing and contempt in suffering, how you stir me, your child, to do and suffer likewise! Beware, as you know the extent of your own crimes, the depth of your own pollution, how you drive me, your pupil, to outdo her master! Beware! I say! beware! This man is mine. Harm but one hair upon his head, and you shall die, like a dog, with the dogs who snarl at your bidding, and your name perish with you. I have spoken!"

There needed not one tenth part of the wisdom, which the arch-traitor really possessed, to shew him how much he had miscalculated the range of his daughter's intellect; the fierce energies of her powerful but misdirected mind.

He felt, for a moment, as the daring archimage whose spells, too potent for their master's safety, have evoked and unchained a spirit that defies their guidance. But, like that archimage, conscious that all depends on the exertion of his wonted empire, he struggled hard to regain his lost authority.

"Girl," he replied, in those firm deep tones of grave authority, which he deemed the best calculated to control her excitement, "You are mad! Mad, and ungrateful; and like a frantic dog would turn and rend the hand that feeds you, for a shadow. I never thought of making you an instrument;—fool indeed had I been, to think I could hoodwink such an intellect as yours! If I have striven to clear away the mists of prejudice from before your eyes, which, in your senseless anger, you now call corrupting you, it was because I saw in you a kindred spirit to mine own, capable to soar fearless and undazzled into the very noon of reason. If I have taught you to indulge your passions, opened a universe of pleasures to your ken, it was that I saw in you a woman of mind so manly, that all the weaknesses, which fools call affections, would be but

powerless to warp it from its purpose. I would have made you"—

"The world's scorn!" she interrupted him, bitterly; but he went on, without noticing the interruption—

"The equal of myself in intellect, in energy, and wisdom; else how had you dared to brave me thus, whom never man yet braved and lived to boast of it! And now for a mere girlish fancy, a weak feminine caprice for a man, who cares not for you; who has betrayed you; who, idiot and inconsistent that he is, fresh from your fiery kisses, was whimpering within an hour at the feet of his cold Julia; who has, I doubt not, boasted of your favors, while he deplored his own infatuation, to her, his promised wife!—For a fond frivolous liking of a moment, you would forego gratification, rank, greatness, power, and vengeance! Is this just toward me, wise toward yourself? Is this like Lucia Orestilla? You would preserve a traitor who deserts you, nay, scorns you in his easy triumph! You would destroy all those who love you; you would destroy yourself, to make the traitor and his minion happy! Awake! awake, my Lucia, from this soft foolish fancy! Awake, and be yourself once more! Awake to wisdom, to ambition, to revenge!"

His words were spirited and fiery; but they struck on no kindred chord in the bosom of his daughter. On the contrary, the spark had faded from her eye and the flush from her cheek, and her looks were dispirited and downcast. But as he ceased, she raised her eye and met his piercing gaze firmly, and replied in a sorrowful yet resolute tone.

"Eloquent! aye! you are eloquent! Catiline, would I had never learned it to my cost; but it is too late now! it is all too late! for the rest, I am awake; and so far, at least, am wise, that I perceive the folly of the past, and decypher clearly the sophistry of your false teaching. As for the future, hope is dead, and ambition. Revenge, I seek not; if I did so, thou art there, on whom to wreak it; for saving thou, and myself only, none have wronged me. More words are needless. See that thou lay aside thy plans, and dare not to harm him, or her. He shall not betray thee or thine; for that will I be his surety and hostage! Injure them, by deed or by word, and, one and all, you perish! I ask no promise of you—promises bind you

not!—but let fear bind you, for *I* promise *you*, and be sure that my plight will be kept!”

“Can this be Lucia Orestilla?” exclaimed Catiline, “this puling love-sick girl, this timorous, repentant—I had nearly called thee—maiden! Why, thou fool, what would’st thou with the man farther? Dost think to be his wife?”

“Wife!” cried the wretched girl, clasping her hands together, and looking piteously in her destroyer’s face. “Wife! wife! and me!—alas! alas! that holy, that dear, honored name!—Never! never for me the sweet sacred rites! Never for me the pure chaste kiss, the seat by the happy hearth, the loving children at the knee, the proud approving smile of—Oh! ye gods! ye just gods!—a loved and loving husband!—Wife! wife!” she continued, lashing herself, as she proceeded, into fresh anger; “there is not in the gaols of Rome the slave so base as to call Lucia Orestilla wife! And wherefore, wherefore not?—Man! man! if that thou be a man, and not a demon, but for thee, and thy cursed teachings, I might have known all this—pure bliss, and conscious rectitude, and the respect and love of men. I might have been the happy bride of an honorable suitor, the cherished matron of a respected lord, the proud glad mother of children, that should not have blushed to be sprung from the wanton Lucia! Thou! it is thou, thou only that hast done all this!—And why, I say, why should I not revenge? Beware! tempt me no farther! Do my bidding! Thou slave, that thought’st but now to be the master, obey my bidding to the letter!” And she stamped her foot on the ground, with the imperious air of a despotic queen. And in truth, crest-fallen and heavy in spirit, were the proud men whom she so superbly threatened.

She gazed at them contemptuously for a moment, and then, shaking her fore finger menacingly, “I leave ye,” she said, “I leave ye, but imagine not, that I read not your councils. Me, you cannot deceive. With yourselves only it remains to succeed or to perish. For if ye dare to disobey me, the gods themselves shall not preserve you from my vengeance!”

“I fear you not, my girl,” cried Catiline, “for all that you are now mad with disappointment, and with anger. So you may go, and listen if you will,” he added, pointing to

the secret aperture concealed in the mouldings of the wall. "We shall not speak the less freely for your hearing us."

"There is no need to listen now," she answered, "for I know everything already."

"Every thing that we *have* said, Lucia."

"Everything that you *will* do, Sergius Catiline!"

"Aye?"

"Aye! and everything that I shall do, likewise!" and with the word she left the room.

"A perilous girl, by all the Gods!" said Lentulus, in Greek, as she disappeared. "Will she do as she threatens?"

"Tush!" replied Catiline in Latin, "she speaks Greek like an Athenian. I am not sure, however, that she could understand such jargon as that is. No! she will do none of that. She is the cleverest and best girl living, only a little passionate, for which I love her all the more dearly. No! she will do none of that. Because she will not be alive, to do it, this time to-morrow," he added, putting his mouth within half an inch of the ear of Lentulus, and speaking in the lowest whisper.

Lentulus, bold as he was and unscrupulous, started in horror at his words, and his lips were white as he faltered—"Your own daughter, Lucius!"

"Ha! ha!" laughed the fierce conspirator, aloud; "ha! ha! yes, she is my own daughter, in everything but beauty. She is the loveliest creature in all Rome! But we must yield, I suppose, to her wishes; the women rule us, after all is said, and I suppose I was alarmed needlessly. Doubtless Arvina will be silent. Come, I will walk with you so far on your way to the Forum. What ho! Chærea, see that Rufinus and Stolo lack nothing. I will speak with them, when I return home; and hark you in your ear. Suffer not Lucia Orestilla to leave the house a moment; use force if it be needed; but it will not. Tell her it is my orders, and watch her very closely. Come, Lentulus, it is drawing toward noon."

They left the house without more words, and walked side by side in silence for some distance, when Catiline said in a low voice, "This is unpleasant, and may be dangerous. We must, however, trust to fortune till to-morrow, when my house shall be void of this pest. Then will we proceed, as we had proposed."

Lentulus looked at him doubtfully, and asked, with a quick shudder running through his limbs, as he spoke: "And will you really?—" and there he paused, unable to complete the question.

"Remove her?" added Catiline, completing the sentence which he had left unfinished, "Ay! will I. Just as I would a serpent from my path!"

"And that done, what is to follow?" Lentulus inquired, with an assumption of coolness, which in truth he did not feel.

"We will get rid of Arvina. And then, as it wants but four days of the elections, we may keep all things quiet till the time."

"Be it so!" answered the other. "When do we meet again to settle these things finally?"

"To-morrow, at the house of Læca, at the sixth hour of night."

"Will all be there?"

"All the most faithful; until then, farewell!"

"Farewell."

And they parted; Lentulus hurrying to the Forum, to take his seat on the prætor's chair, and there preside in judgment—fit magistrate!—on men, the guiltiest of whom were pure as the spotless snow, when compared with his own conscious guilt; and Catiline to glide through dark streets, visiting discontented artizans, debauched mechanics, desperate gamblers, scattering dark and ambiguous promises, and stirring up that worthless rabble—who, with all to gain and nothing to lose by civil strife and tumult, abound in all great cities—to violence and thirst of blood.

Three or four hours at least he spent thus; and well satisfied with his progress, delighted by the increasing turbulence of the fierce and irresponsible democracy, and rejoicing in having gained many new and fitting converts to his creed, he returned homeward, ripe for fresh villainy. Chærea met him on the threshold, with his face pale and haggard from excitement.

"Catiline," he exclaimed, "she had gone forth already, before you bade me watch her!"

"She!—Who, slave? who?" and knowing perfectly who was meant, yet hoping, in his desperation, that he heard not aright, he caught the freedman by the throat, and shook him furiously.

“ Lucia Orestilla,” faltered the trembling menial.

“ And has not returned ?” thundered the traitor.

“ Catiline, no !”

“ Liar ! and fool !” cried the other, gnashing his teeth with rage, as he gave way to his ungovernable fury, and hurling him with all his might against the marble door-post.

The freedman fell, like a dead man, with the blood gushing from his nose and mouth ; and Catiline, striding across the prostrate body, retired sullenly and slowly to muse on the disappointment of this his most atrocious project, in the darkness and solitude of his own private chamber whither none dared intrude unsummoned.

CHAPTER XI.

THE RELEASE.

And, for that right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom, in the scorn of consequence.

TENNYSON. CENONE.

PAULLUS ARVINA sat alone in a small chamber of his own house. Books were before him, his favorites; the authors, whose words struck chords the most kindred in his soul; but though his eye rested on the fair manuscripts, it was evident that his mind was absent. The slender preparations for the first Roman meal were displayed temptingly on a board, not far from his elbow; but they were all untouched. His hair was dishevelled; his face pale, either from watching or excitement; and his eye wild and haggard. He wore a loose morning gown of colored linen, and his bare feet were thrust carelessly into unmatched slippers.

It was past noon already; nor, though his favorite freedman Thrasea had warned him several times of the lateness of the hour, had he shewn the least willingness to exert himself, so far even as to dress his hair, or put on attire befitting the business of the day.

It could not but be seen, at a glance, that he was ill at ease; and in truth he was much perturbed by what had passed on the preceding night, and very anxious with regard to the future.

Nor was it without ample cause that he was restless and disturbed; within the last three days he had by his own instability of purpose, and vacillating tastes and temper brought himself down from as enviable a position as well can be imagined, to one as insecure, unfortunate, and perilous.

That he had made to himself in Catiline an enemy, as deadly, as persevering, as relentless as any man could have upon his track; an enemy against whom force and fraud would most likely be proved equally unavailing, he entertained no doubt. But brave as he was, and fearless, both by principle and practice, he cared less for this, even while he confessed to himself, that he must be on his guard now alway against both open violence and secret murder, than he did for the bitter feeling, that he was distrusted; that he had brought himself into suspicion and ill-odor with the great man, in whose eyes he would have given so much to stand fairly, and whose good-will, and good opinion, but two little days before, he flattered himself that he had conciliated by his manly conduct.

Again, when he thought of Julia, there was no balm to his heart, no unction to his wounded conscience! What if she knew not, nor suspected anything of his disloyalty, did not he know it, feel it in every nerve? Did he not read tacit reproaches in every beam of her deep tranquil eye? Did he not fancy some allusion to it, in every tone of her low sweet voice? Did he not tremble at every air of heaven, lest it should waft the rumor of his infidelity to the chaste ears of her, whom alone he loved and honored? Did he not know that one whisper of that disgraceful truth would break off, and forever, the dear hopes, on which all his future happiness depended? And was it not most possible, most probable, that any moment might reveal to her the fatal tidings?—The rage of Catiline, frustrated in his foul designs, the revengeful jealousy of Lucia, the vigilance of the distrustful consul, might each or all at any moment bring to light that which he would have given all but life to bury in oblivion.

For a long time he had sat musing deeply on the perils of his false position, but though he had taxed every energy, and strained every faculty to devise some means by which to extricate himself from the toils, into which he

had so blindly rushed, he could think of no scheme, resolve upon no course of action, which should set him at liberty, as he had been before his unlucky interview with the conspirator.

At times he dreamed of casting himself at the feet of Cicero, and confessing to that great and generous statesman all his temptations, all his trials, all his errors; of linking himself heart and soul with the determined patriots, who were prepared to live or die with the constitution, and the liberties of the republic; but the oath!—the awful imprecation, by which he had bound himself, by which he had devoted all that he loved to the Infernal Gods, recurred to his mind, and shook it with an earthquake's power. And he, the bold free thinker, the daring and unflinching soldier, bound hand and foot by a silly superstition, trembled—aye, trembled, and confessed to his secret soul that there was one thing which he ought to do, yet dared not!

Anon, maddened by the apparent hopelessness of ever being able to recur to the straight road; of ever more regaining his own self-esteem, or the respect of virtuous citizens—forced, as he seemed to be, to play a neutral part—the meanest of all parts—in the impending struggle—of ever gaining eminence or fame under the banners of the commonwealth; he dreamed of giving himself up, as fate appeared to have given him already up, to the designs of Catiline! He pictured to himself rank, station, power, wealth, to be won under the ensigns of revolt; and asked himself, as many a self-deluded slave of passion has asked himself before, if eminence, however won, be not glory; if success in the world's eyes be not fame, and rectitude and excellence.

But patriotism, the old Roman virtue, clear and undying in the hardest and most corrupt hearts, roused itself in him to do battle with the juggling fiends tempting him to his ruin; and whenever patriotism half-defeated appeared to yield the ground, the image of his Julia—his Julia, never to be won by any indirection, never to be deceived by any sophistry, never to be deluded into smiling for one moment on a traitor—rose clear and palpable before him and the mists were dispersed instantly, and the foes of his better judgment scattered to the winds and routed.

Thus wavering, he sat, infirm of purpose, ungoverned—whence indeed all his errors—by any principle or unity of action; when suddenly the sound of a faint and hesitating knock of the bronze ring on the outer door reached his ear. The chamber, which he occupied, was far removed from the vestibule, divided from it by the whole length of the atrium, and fauces; yet so still was the interior of the house, and so inordinately sharpened was his sense of hearing by anxiety and apprehension, that he recognized the sound instantly, and started to his feet, fearing he knew not what.

The footsteps of the slave, though he hurried to undo the door, seemed to the eager listener as slow as the pace of the dull tortoise; and the short pause, which followed after the door had been opened, he fancied to be an hour in duration. Long as he thought it, however, it was too short to enable him to conquer his agitation, or to control the tumultuous beating of his heart, which increased to such a degree, as he heard the freedman ushering the new comer toward the room in which he was sitting, that he grew very faint, and turned as pale as ashes.

Had he been asked what it was that he apprehended, he could assuredly have assigned no reasonable cause to his tremors. Yet this man was as brave, as elastic in temperament, as tried steel. Oppose him to any definite and real peril, not a nerve in his frame would quiver; yet here he was, by imaginary terrors, and the disquietude of an uneasy conscience, reduced to more than woman's weakness.

The door was opened, and Thræsea appeared alone upon the threshold, with a mysterious expression on his blunt features.

"How now?" asked Paullus, "what is this?—Did I not tell you, that I would not be disturbed this morning?"

"Yes! master," answered the sturdy freedman; "but she said that it was a matter of great moment, and that she would——"

"*She!*—Who?" exclaimed Arvina, starting up from the chair, which he had resumed as his servant entered. "Whom do you mean by *She*?"

"The girl who waits in the tablinum, to know if you will receive her."

“The girl!—what girl? do you know her?”

“No, master, she is very tall, and slender, yet round withal and beautifully formed. Her steps are as light as the doe’s upon the Hæmus, and as graceful. She has the finest foot and ankle mine eyes ever looked upon. I am sure too that her face is beautiful, though she is closely wrapped in a long white veil. Her voice, though exquisitely sweet and gentle, is full of a strange command, half proud and half persuasive. I could not, for my life, resist her bidding.”

“Well! well! admit her, though I would fain be spared the trouble. I doubt not it is some soft votary of Flora; and I am not in the vein for such dalliance now.”

“No! Paullus, no! it is a Patrician lady. I will wager my freedom on it, although she is dressed plainly, and, as I told you, closely veiled.”

“Not Julia? by the Gods! it is not Julia Serena?” exclaimed the young man, in tones of inquiry, blent with wonder.

But, as he spoke, the door was opened once more; and the veiled figure entered, realizing by her appearance all the good freedman’s eulogies. It seemed that she had overheard the last words of Arvina; for, without raising her veil, she said in a soft low voice, full of melancholy pathos,

“Alas! no, Paullus, it is not your Julia. But it is one, who has perhaps some claim to your attention; and who, at all events, will not detain you long, on matters most important to yourself. I have intruded thus, fearing you were about to deny me; because that which I have to say will brook no denial.”

The freedman had withdrawn abruptly the very moment that the lady entered; and, closing the door firmly behind him, stood on guard out of earshot, lest any one should break upon his young lord’s privacy. But Paulus knew not this; scarce knew, indeed, that they were alone; when, as she ceased, he made two steps forward, exclaiming in a piercing voice—

“Ye Gods! ye Gods! Lucia Orestilla!”

“Aye! Paul,” replied the girl, raising her veil, and showing her beautiful face, no longer burning with bright amorous blushes, her large soft eyes, no longer beaming

unchaste invitation, but pale, and quiet, and suffused with tender sadness, "it is indeed Lucia. But wherefore this surprise, I might say this terror? You were not, I remember, so averse, the last time we were alone together."

Her voice was steady, and her whole manner perfectly composed, as she addressed him. There was neither reproach nor irony in her tones, nor anything that betokened even the sense of injury endured. Yet was Arvina more unmanned by her serene and tranquil bearing, than he would have been by the most violent reproaches.

"Alas! alas! what shall I say to you," he faltered, "Lucia; Lucia, whom I dare not call *Lucia*."

"Say nothing, Paullus Arvina," she replied, "thou art a noble and generous soul!—Say nothing, for I know what thou would'st say. I have said it to myself many times already. Oh! wo is me! too late! too late! But I have come hither, now, upon a brief and a pleasant errand. For it is pleasant, let them scoff who will! I say, it is pleasant to do right, let what may come of it. — Would God, that I had always thought so!"

"Would God, indeed!" answered the young man, "then had we not both been wretched."

"Wretched! aye! most, most wretched!" cried the girl, a large bright tear standing in either eye. "And art thou wretched, Paullus?"

"Utterly wretched!" he said, with a deep groan, and buried his face for a moment in his hands. "Even before I looked upon you, thought of you, I was miserable! and now, now—words cannot paint my anguish, my self-degradation!"

"Aye! is it so?" she said, a faint sad smile flitting across her pallid lips. "Why I should feel abased and self-degraded, I can well comprehend. I, who have fallen from the high estate, the purity, the wealth, the consciousness of chaste and virtuous maidenhood! I, the despised, the castaway, the fallen! But thou, thou!—from thee I looked but for reproaches—the just reproaches I have earned by my faithless folly! I thought, indeed, to have found you wretched, writhing in the dark bonds which I, most miserable, cast around you; and cursing her who fettered you!"

“Cursing myself,” he answered, “rather. Cursing my own insane and selfish passion, which alone trammelled me, which alone ruined one, better and brighter fifty fold than I!—alas! alas! Lucia.”

And forgetful of all that he had heard to her disparagement from her bad father’s lips, or, if he half remembered discrediting all in that moment of excitement, he flung himself at her feet, and grovelled like a crushed worm on the floor, in the degrading consciousness of guilt..

“Arise, arise for shame, young Arvina!” she said. “The ground, at a woman’s feet, is no place for a man ever; least of all *such* a woman’s. Arise, and mark me, when I tell you that, which to tell you, only, I came hither. Arise, I say, and make me not scorn the man, whom I admire, whom—wo is me! I love.”

Paullus regained his feet slowly, and abashed; it seemed that all the pride and haughtiness of his character had given way at once. Mute and humiliated, he sank into a chair, while she continued standing erect and self-sustained before him by conscious, though new, rectitude of posture.

“Mark me, I say, Arvina, when I tell you, that you are as free as air from the oath, with which I bound you. That wicked vow compels you only so long as I hold you pledged to its performance. Lo! it is nothing any more—for I, to whom alone of mortals you are bound, now and forever release you. The Gods, above and below, whom you called to witness it, are witnesses no more against you. For I annul it here; I give you back your plight. It is as though it never had been spoken!”

“Indeed? indeed? am I free?—Good, noble, generous, dear, Lucia, is it true? can it be? I am free, and at thy bidding?”

“Free as the winds of heaven, Paullus, that come whence no man knoweth, and go whither they will soever, and no mortal hindereth them! As free as the winds, Paullus,” she repeated, “and I trust soon to be as happy.”

“But wherefore,” added the young man, “have you done this? You said you would release me *never*, and now all unsolicited you come and say ‘you are free, Paullus,’ almost before the breath is cold upon my lips that swore obedience. This is most singular, and inconsistent.”

“What in the wide world *is* consistent, Paullus, except virtue? That indeed is immutable, eternal, one, the same on earth as in heaven, present, and past, and forever. But what else, I beseech you, is consistent, or here or anywhere, that you should dream of finding me, a weak wild wanton girl, of firmer stuff than heroes? Are you, even in your own imagination, are you, I say, consistent?”

She spoke eagerly, perhaps wildly; for the very part of self-denial, which she was playing, stirred her mind to its lowest depths; and the great change, which had been going on within for many hours, and was still in powerful progress, excited her fancy, and kindled all her strongest feelings; and, as is not unfrequently the case, all the profound vague thoughts, which had so long lain mute and dormant, found light at once, and eloquent expression.

Paullus gazed at her, in astonishment, almost in awe. Could this be the sensual, passionate voluptuary he had known two days since?—the strange, unprincipled, impulsive being, who yielded like the reed, to every gust of passion—this deep, clear, vigorous thinker! It was indeed a change to puzzle sager heads than that of Arvina! a transformation, sudden and beautiful as that from the torpid earthy grub, to the swift-winged ethereal butterfly! He gazed at her, until she smiled in reply to his look of bewilderment; and then he met her smile with a sad heavy sigh, and answered—

“Most inconsistent, I! alas! that I should say it, far worse than inconsistent, most false to truth and virtue, most recreant to honor! Have not I, whose most ardent aspirations were set on glory virtuously won, whose soul, as I fancied, was athirst for knowledge and for truth, have not I bound myself by the most dire and dreadful oaths, to find my good in evil, my truth in a lie, my glory in black infamy?—Have not I, loving another better than my own life, won thee to love, poor Lucia, and won thee by base falsehood to thy ruin?”

“No! no!” she interrupted him, “this last thing you have not done, Arvina. Awake! you shall deceive yourself no longer! Of this last wrong you are as innocent as the unspotted snow; and I, I only, own the guilt, as I shall bear the punishment! Hear first, why I release you from your oath; and then, if you

care to listen to a sad tale, you shall know by what infamy of others, one, who might else have been both innocent and happy, has been made infamous and foul and vile, and wretched; a thing hateful to herself, and loathsome to the world; a being with but one hope left, to expiate her many crimes by one act of virtue, and then to die! to die young, very young, unwept, unhonored, friendless, and an orphan—aye! from her very birth, more than an orphan!”

“Say on,” replied the young man, “say on, Lucia; and would to heaven you could convince me that I have not wronged you. Say on, then; first, if you will, why you have released me; but above all, speak of yourself—speak freely, and oh! if I can aid, or protect, or comfort you, believe me I will do it at my life’s utmost peril.”

“I do believe you, Paullus. I did believe that, ere you spoke it. First, then, I set you free—and free you are henceforth, forever.”

“But wherefore?”

“Because you are betrayed. Because I know all, that fell out last night. Because I know darker villainy plotted against you, yet to come; villainy from which, trampled by this oath, no earthly power can save you. Because, I know not altogether why or how, my mind has been changed of late completely, and I will lend myself no more to projects, which I loathe, and infamy which I abhor. Because—because—because, in a word, I love you Paullus! Better than all I have, or hope to have on earth.”

“But you must not,” he replied, gravely yet tenderly, “because”——

“You love another,” she interrupted him, very quickly, “You love Julia Serena, Hortensia’s lovely daughter; and she loves you, and you are to be wedded soon. You see,” she added, with a faint painful smile, “that I know everything about you. I knew it long since; long, long before I gave myself to you; even before I loved you, Paul—for I have loved you, also, long!”

“Loved me long!” he exclaimed, in astonishment, “how can that be, when you never saw me until the day before yesterday?”

“Oh! yes I have,” she answered sadly. “I have seen you and known you many years; though you have forgot-

ten me, if even, which I doubt, you ever noticed me at all. But I can bring it to your mind. Have you forgotten how, six summers since, as you were riding down the Collis Hortulorum, you passed a little girl weeping by the way-side?—”

“Over a wounded kid? No, I remember very well. A great country boor had hurt it with a stone.”

“And you,” exclaimed the girl, with her eyes flashing fire, “you sprang down from your horse, and chastised him, till he whined like a beaten hound, though he was twice as big as you were; and then you bound up the kid’s wound, and wiped away the tears—innocent tears they were—of the little girl, and parted her hair, and kissed her on the forehead. That little girl was I, and I have kept that kiss upon my brow, aye, and in my heart too! until now. No lips of man or woman have ever touched that spot which your lips hallowed. From that day forth I have loved you, I have adored you, Paullus. From that day forth I have watched all your ways, unseen and unsuspected. I have seen you do fifty kind, and generous, and gallant actions; but never saw you do one base, or tyrannous, or cowardly, or cruel—”

“Until that fatal night!” he said, with a deep groan. “May the Gods pardon me! I never shall forgive myself.”

“No! no! I tell you, no!” cried the girl, impetuously “I tell you, that I was not deceived, if I fell; but I did not fall then! I knew that you loved Julia, years ago. I knew that I never could be yours in honor; and that put fire and madness in my brain, and despair in my heart. And my home was a hell, and those who should have been my guides and saviours were my destroyers; and I am—*what I am*; but in that you had no share. On that night, I but obeyed the accursed bidding of the blackest and most atrocious monster that pollutes Jove’s pure air by his breath!”

“Bidding,” he exclaimed, starting back in horror, “Cataline’s bidding?”

“My father’s,” answered the miserable girl. “My own father’s bidding!”

“Ye gods! ye gods!” His own daughter’s purity!”

“Purity!” she replied, with a smile of sad bitter irony

“Do you think purity could long exist in the same house with Catiline and Orestilla? Paullus Arvina, the scenes I have beheld, the orgies I have shared, the atmosphere of voluptuous sin I have breathed, almost from my cradle, had changed the cold heart of the virgin huntress into the fiery pulses of the wanton Venus! Since I was ten years old, I have been, wo is me! familiar with all luxury, all infamy, all degradation!”

“Great Nemesis!” he cried, turning up his indignant eyes toward heaven. “But, in the name of all the Gods! wherefore, wherefore? Even to the worst, the most debased of wretches, their children’s honor is still dear.”

“Nothing is dear to Catiline but riot, and debauchery, and murder! Sin, for its own sake, even more than for the rewards its offers to its votaries! Paullus, men called me beautiful! But what cared I for beauty, that charmed all but him, whom alone I desired to fascinate? Men called me beautiful, I say! and in my father’s sight that beauty became precious, when he foresaw that it might prove a means of winning followers to his accursed cause! Then was I educated in all arts, all graces, all accomplishments that might enhance my charms; and, as those fatal charms could avail him nothing, so long as purity remained or virtue, I was taught, ah! too easily! to esteem pleasure the sole good, passion the only guide! Taught thus, by my own parents! Curses, curses, and shame upon them! Pity me, pity me, Paullus. Oh! you are bound to pity me! for had I not loved you, fatally, desperately loved, and known that I could not win you, perchance—perchance I had not fallen. Oh! pity me, and pardon——”

“Pardon you, Lucia,” he interrupted her. “What have you done to me, or who am I, that you should crave my pardon?”

“What have I done? Do you ask in mockery? Have not I made you the partaker of my sin? Have not I lured you into falsehood, momentary falsehood it is true, yet still falsehood, to your Julia? Have I not tangled you in the nets of this most foul conspiracy? Betrayed you, a bound slave, to the monster—the soul-destroyer?”

Arvina groaned aloud, but made no answer, so deeply did his own thoughts afflict, so terribly did her strong words oppress him.

“But it is over—it is over now!” She exclaimed exultingly. “His reign of wickedness is over! The tool, which he moulded for his own purposes, shall be the instrument to quell him: The pitfall which he would have digged in the way of others, shall be to them a door whereby they shall escape his treason, and his ruin. You are saved, my Arvina! By all the Gods! you are saved! And; if it lost me once, it has preserved me now—my wild, unchangeable, and undying love for you, alone of men! For it has made me think! Has quenched the insane flames that burned within me! Has given me new views, new principles, new hopes! Evil no more shall be my good, nor infamy my pride! If, myself, I am most unhappy, I will live henceforth, while I do live, to make others happy! I will live henceforth for two things—revenge and retribution! By all the Gods! Julia and you, my Paullus, shall be happy! By all the Gods! he who destroyed me for his pleasure, shall be destroyed in turn, for mine!”

“Lucia! think! think! he is your father!”

“Perish the monster! I have not—never had father, or home, or—Speak not to me; speak not of him, or I shall lose what poor remains of reason his vile plots have left me. Perish!—by all the powers of hell, he shall perish, miserably!—miserably! And you, you, Paullus, must be the weapon that shall strike him!”

“Never the weapon in a daughter’s hand to strike a father,” answered Paullus, “no! though he were himself a parricide!”

“He is!—he is a parricide!—the parricide of Rome itself!—the murderer of our common mother!—the sacrilegious stabber of his holy country! Hear me, and tremble! It lacks now two days of the Consular election. If Catiline go not down ere that day cometh, then Rome goes down, on that day, and forever?”

“You are mad, girl, to say so.”

“You are mad, youth, if you discredit me. Do not I know? am not I the sharer? the tempter to the guilt myself? and am not I the mistress of its secrets? Was it not for this, that I gave myself to you? was it not unto this that I bound you by the oath, which now I restore to you? was it not by this, that I would have held you my

minion and my paramour? And is it not to reveal this, that I now have come? I tell you, I discovered, how he would yesternight have slain you by the gladiator's sword; discovered how he now would slay you, by the perverted sword of Justice, as Medon's, as Volero's murderer; convicting you of his own crimes, as he hath many men before, by his suborned and perjured clients—his comrades on the Prætor's chair! I tell you, I discovered but just now, that me too he will cut off in the flower of my youth; in the heat of the passions, he fomented; in the rankness of the soft sins, he taught me—cut me off—me, his own ruined and polluted child—by the same poisoned chalice, which made his house clear for my wretched mother's nuptials!"

"Can these things be," cried Paullus, "and the Gods yet withhold their thunder?"

"Sometimes I think," the girl answered wildly, "that there are *no* Gods, Paullus. Do you believe in Mars and Venus?"

"In Gods, whose worship were adultery and murder?" said Arvina. "Not I, indeed, poor Lucia."

"If these be Gods, there is no truth, no meaning in the name of virtue. If not these, what is God?"

"All things!" replied the young man solemnly. "Whatever moves, whatever *is*, is God. The universe is but the body, that clothes his eternal spirit; the winds are his breath; the sunshine is his smile; the gentle dews are the tears of his compassion! Time is the creature of his hand, eternity his dwelling place, virtue his law, his oracles the soul of every living man!"

"Beautiful," cried the girl. "Beautiful, if it were but true!"

"It is true—as true, as the sun in heaven; as certain as his course through the changeless seasons."

"How? how?" she asked eagerly. "What makes it certain?"

"The certainty of death!" he answered.

"Ah! death, death! that is a mystery indeed. And after that—"

"Everlasting life!"

"Ha! do you believe that too? They tell me all that is a fable, a folly, and a falsehood!"

"Perchance it would be well for them it were so."

"Yes!" she replied. "Yes! But who taught you?"

"Plato! Immortal Plato!"

"Ha! I will read him; I will read Plato."

"What! do you understand Greek too, Lucia?"

"How else should I have sung Anacreon, and learned the Lesbian arts of Sappho? But we have strayed wide of our subject, and time presses. Will you denounce, me, Catiline?"

"Not I! I will perish sooner."

"You will do so, and all Rome with you."

"Prove that to me, and—But it is impossible."

"Prove that to you, will you denounce him?"

"I will save Rome!"

"Will you denounce him?"

"If otherwise, I may preserve my country, no."

"Otherwise, you cannot. Speak! will you?"

"I must know all."

"You shall. Mark me, then judge." And rapidly, concisely, clearly, she revealed to him the dread secret. She concealed nothing, neither the ends of the conspiracy, nor the names of the conspirators. She asseverated to him the appalling fact, that half the noblest, eldest families of Rome, were either active members of the plot, sworn to spare no man, or secret well-wishers, content at first to remain neutral, and then to share the spoils of empire. According to her shewing, the Curii, the Portii, the Syllæ, the Cethegi, the great Cornelian house, the Vargunteii, the Autronii, and the Longini, were all for the most part implicated, although some branches of the Portian and Cornelian houses had not been yet approached by the seducers. Crassus, she told him too, the richest citizen of Rome, and Caius Julius Cæsar, the most popular, awaited but the first success to join the parricides of the Republic.

He listened thoughtfully, earnestly, until she had finished her narration, and then shook his head doubtfully.

"I think," he said, "you must be deceived, poor Lucia. I do not see how these things can be. These men, whom you have named, are all of the first houses of the state; have all of them, either themselves or their forefathers, bled for the commonwealth. How then should they now wish to destroy it? They are men, too, of all parties and

all factions; the Syllæ, the proudest and haughtiest aristocrats of Rome. Your father, also, belonged to the Dictator's faction, while the Cornelii and the Curii have belonged ever to the tribunes' party. How should this be? or how should those whose pride, whose interest, whose power alike, rest on the maintenance of their order, desire to mow down the Patrician houses, like grass beneath the scythe, and give their honors to the rabble? How, above all, should Crassus, whose estate is worth seven thousand talents,* consisting, too, of buildings in the heart of Rome, join with a party whose watch-words are fire and plunder, partition of estates, and death to the rich? You see yourself that these things cannot be; that they are not consistent. You must have been deceived by their insolent and drunken boasting!"

"Consistent!" she replied, with vehement and angry irony. "Still harping on consistency! Are virtuous men then consistent, that you expect vicious men to be so? Oh, the false wisdom, the false pride of man! You tell me these things cannot be—perhaps they cannot; but they *are!* I know it—I have heard, seen, partaken all! But if you can be convinced only by seeing that the plans of men, whose every action is insanity and frenzy, are wise and reasonable, perish yourself in your blindness, and let Rome perish with you! I can no more. Farewell! I leave you to your madness!"

"Hold! hold!" he cried, moved greatly by her vehemence, "are you indeed so sure of this? What, in the name of all the Gods, can be their motive?"

"Sure! sure!" she answered scornfully; "I thought I was speaking to a capable and clever man of action; I see that it is a mere dreamer, to whose waking senses I appeal vainly. If *you* be not sure, also, you must be weaker than I can conceive. Why, if there was no plot, would Catiline have slaughtered Medon, lest it should be revealed? Why would he, else, have striven to bind you by oaths; and to what, if not to schemes of sacrilege and treason? Why would he else have murdered Volero? why planted ambushes against your life? why would he now meditate my death, his own child's death, that I am forced

* Seven thousand talents, about 7,500,000 dollars.

to fly his house? Oh! in the wide world there is no such folly, as that of the over wise! Motive—motive enough have they! While the Patrician senate, and the Patrician Consuls hold with firm hands the government, full well they know, that in vain violence or fraud may strive to wrest it from them. Let but the people hold the reins of empire, and the first smooth-tongued, slippery demagogue, the first bloody, conquering soldier, grasps them, and is the King, Dictator, Emperor, of Rome! Never yet in the history of nations, has despotism sprung out of oligarchic sway! Never yet has democracy but yielded to the first despot's usurpation! *They* have not read in vain the annals of past ages, if you have done so, Paullus."

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "look they so far ahead? Ambition, then, it is but a new form of ambition?"

"Will you denounce them, Paullus?"

"At least, I will warn the Consul!"

"You must denounce them, or he will credit nothing."

"I will save Rome."

"Enough! enough! I am avenged, and thou shalt be happy. Go to the Consul, straightway! make your own terms, ask office, rank, wealth, power. He will grant all! and now, farewell! Me you will see no more forever! Farewell, Paullus Arvina, fare you well forever! And sometimes, when you are happy in the chaste arms of Julia, sometimes think, Paullus, of poor, unhappy, loving, lost, lost Lucia!"

"Whither, by all the Gods, I adjure you! whither would you go, Lucia?"

"Far hence! far hence, my Paullus. Where I may live obscure in tranquil solitude, where I may die when my time comes, in peace and innocence. In Rome I were not safe an hour!"

"Tell me where! tell me Lucia, how I may aid, how guard, console, or counsel you."

"You can do none of these things, Paullus. All is arranged for the best. Within an hour I shall be journeying hence, never to pass the gates, to hear the turbulent roar, to breathe the smoky skies, to taste the maddening pleasures, of glorious, guilty Rome! There is but one thing you can do, which will minister to my well-being—but one boon you can grant me. Will you?"

“And do you ask, Lucia?”

“Will you swear?” she inquired, with a faint melancholy smile. “Nay! it concerns no one but myself. You may swear safely.”

“I do, by the God of faith!”

“Never seek, then, by word or deed, to learn whither I have gone, or where I dwell. Look! I am armed,” and she drew out a dagger as she spoke. “If I am tracked or followed, whether by friend or foe, this will free me from persecution; and it shall do so, by the living lights of heaven! This, after all, is the one true, the last friend of the wretched. All hail to thee, healer of all intolerable anguish!” and she kissed the bright blade, before she consigned it to the sheath; and then, stretching out both hands to Paullus, she cried, “You have sworn—Remember!”

“And you promise me,” he replied, “that, if at any time you need a friend, a defender, one who would lay down life itself to aid you, you will call on me, wheresoever I may be, fearless and undoubting. For, from the festive board, or the nuptial bed, from the most sacred altar of the Gods, or from the solemn funeral pyre, I will come instant to thy bidding. ‘Lucia needs Paullus,’ shall be words shriller than the war-trumpet’s summons to my conscious soul.”

“I promise you,” she said, “willingly, most willingly. And now kiss me, Paullus. Julia herself would not forbid this last, sad, pious kiss! Not my lips! not my lips! Part my hair on my brows, and kiss me on the forehead, where your lips, years ago, shed freshness, and hope that has not yet died all away. Sweet, sweet! it is pure and sweet, it allays the fierce burning of my brain. Fare you well, Paul, and remember—remember Lucia Orestilla.”

She withdrew herself from his arm modestly, as she spoke, lowered her veil, turned, and was gone. Many a day and week elapsed, and weeks were merged in months, ere any one, who knew her, again saw Catiline’s unhappy, guilty daughter.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FORGE.

I saw a smith stand with his hammer thus,
The whilst his iron did on anvil cool.

KING JOHN.

It was the evening of the sixteenth day before the calends of November, or, according to modern numeration, the eighteenth of October, the eve of the consular elections, when a considerable number of rough hardy-looking men were assembled beneath the wide low-browed arch of a blacksmith's forge, situated near the intersection of the Cyprian Lane with the Sacred Way, and commanding a full view of the latter noble thoroughfare.

It was already fast growing dark, and the natural obscurity of the hour was increased by the thickness of the lowering clouds, which overspread the whole firmament of heaven, and seemed to portend a tempest. But from the jaws of the semicircular arch of Roman brick, within which the group was collected, a broad and wavering sheet of light was projected far into the street, and over the fronts of the buildings opposite, rising and falling in obedience to the blast of the huge bellows, which might be heard groaning and laboring within. The whole interior of the roomy vault was filled with a lurid crimson light, diversified at times by a brighter and more vivid glare as a column of living flame would shoot up from the

embers, or long trains of radiant sparks leap from the bounding anvil. Against this clear back ground the moving figures of the strong limbed grimy giants, who plied their mighty sledges with incessant zeal on the red hot metal, were defined sharply and picturesquely; while alternately red lights and heavy shadows flickered across the forms and features of many other men, who stood around watching the progress of the work, and occasionally speaking rapidly, and with a good deal of gesticulation, at intervals when the preponderant din of hammers ceased, and permitted conversation to be carried on audibly.

At this moment, however, there was no such pause; for the embers in the furnace were at a white heat, and flashes of lambent flame were leaping out of the chimney top, and vanishing in the dark clouds overhead. A dozen bars of glowing steel had been drawn simultaneously from the charcoal, and thrice as many massive hammers were forging them into the rude shapes of weapons on the anvils, which, notwithstanding their vast weight, appeared to leap and reel, under the blows that were rained upon them faster than hail in winter.

But high above the roar of the blazing chimney, above the din of the groaning stithy, high pealed the notes of a wild Alcaic ode, to which, chaunted by the stentorian voices of the powerful mechanics, the clanging sledges made a stormy but appropriate music. "Strike, strike the iron," thus echoed the stirring strain,

Strike, strike the iron, children o' Mulciber,
 Hot from the charcoal cheerily glimmering!
 Swing, swing, my boys, high swing the sledges!
 Heave at it, heave at it, all! Together!
 Great Mars, the war God, watches ye laboring
 Joyously. Joyous watches the gleam o' the
 Bright sparkles, upsoaring the faster,
 Faster as our merry blows revive them.
 Well knoweth He that clang. It arouses him,
 Heard far aloof! He laughs on us hammering
 The sword, the clear harness of iron,
 Armipotent paramour o' Venus. —
 Red glows the charcoal. Bend to the task, my boys,
 Time flies apace, and speedily night cometh,
 When we no more may ply the anvil;
 Fate cometh eke, i' the murky midnight.

Mark ye the pines, which rooted i' rocky ground,*
 Brave Euroclydon's onset at evening.
 Day dawns. The tree, which stood the tallest,
 Preeminent i' the leafy greenwood,
 Now lies the lowest. Safely the arbutus,
 Which bent before him, flourishes, and the sun
 Wakens the thrush, which slept securely
 Nestled in its emerald asylum.
 So, when the war-shout peals i' the noon o' night,
 Rousing the sleepers fearful, in ecstasy
 When slaves avenge their wrongs, arising
 Strong i' the name o' liberty new born,
 When fury spares not beauty nor innocence,
 First flame the grandest domes. I' the massacre,
 First fall the noblest. Lowly virtue
 Haply the shade o' poverty defends.
 Forge then the broad sword. Quickly the night cometh,
 When red the streets with gore o' the mightiest
 Shall fiercely flow, like Tiber in flood.
 Rise then, avenger, the time it hath come!
 Wake bloody tyrants from merry banquetting,
 From downy couches, snowy-bosomed women
 And ruby wine-cups, wake—The avenger
 Springs to his arms, for the time it hath come!

The wild strain ceased, and with it the clang of the hammers, the bars of steel being already beaten into the form of those short massive two-edged blades, which were the Roman's national and all victorious weapon. But, as it ceased, a deep stern hum of approbation followed, elicited probably by some real or fancied similitude between the imagery of the song, and the circumstances of the auditors, who were to a man of the lowest order of plebeians, taught from their cradles to regard the nobles, and perhaps with too much cause, as their natural enemies and oppres-

* The classical reader will perhaps object to the introduction of the Alcaic measure at this date, 62 A. C., it being generally believed that the Greek measures were first adapted to the Latin tongue by Horace, a few years later. The desire of giving a faint idea of the rhythm and style of Latin song, will, it is hoped, plead in mitigation of this very slight deviation from historical truth—the rather that, in spite of Horace's assertion,

Non ante vulgatas per artes
 Verba loquor sociata chordis,

It is not certain, that no imitations of the Greek measures existed prior to his success.

sors. When the brief applause was at an end, one of the elder bystanders addressed the principal workman, at the forge, in a low voice.

"You are incautious, Caius Crispus, to sing such songs as this, and at such a time, too."

"Tush, Bassus," answered the other, "it is you who are too timid. What harm is there, I should like to know, in singing an old Greek song done into Latin words? I like the rumbling measure, for my part; it suits well with the clash and clang of our rude trade. For the song, there is no offence in it; and, for the time, it is a very good time; and, to poor men like us, a better time is coming!"

"Oh! well said. May it be so!" exclaimed several voices in reply to the stout smith's sharp words.

But the old man was not so easily satisfied, for he answered at once. "If any of the nobles heard it, they would soon find offence in it, my Caius!"

"Oh! the nobles—the nobles, and the Fathers! I am tired of hearing of the nobles. For my part, I do not see what makes them noble. Are they a whit stronger, or braver, or better man than I, or Marcus here, or any of us? I trow not."

"Wiser—they are at least wiser, Caius," said the old man once more, "in this, if in nothing else, that they keep their own councils, and stand by their own order."

"Aye! in oppressing the poor!" replied a new speaker.

"Right, Marcus," said a second; "let them wrangle as much as they may with one another, for their dice, their women, or their wine; in this at least they all agree, in trampling down the poor."

"There is a good time coming," replied the smith; "and it is very near at hand. Now, Niger," he continued, addressing one of his workmen, "carry these blades down to the lower workshop; let Rufus fit them instantly with horn handles; and then, see you to their grinding! Never heed polishing them very much, but give them right keen edges, and good stabbing points."

"I do not know," answered the other man to the first part of the smith's speech. "I am not so sure of that."

"You don't know what I mean," said Crispus, scornfully.

“Yes I do—right well. But I am not so confident, as you are, in these new leaders.”

The smith looked at him keenly for a moment, and then said significantly, “do you know?”

“Aye! do I,” said the other; and, a moment afterward, when the eyes of the bystanders were not directly fixed on him, he drew his hand edgewise across his throat, with the action of one severing the windpipe.

Caius Crispus nodded assent, but made a gesture of caution, glancing his eye toward one or two of the company, and whispering a moment afterward, “I am not sure of those fellows.”

“I see, I see; but they shall learn nothing from what I say.” Then raising his voice, he added, “what I mean, Caius, is simply this, that I have no so very great faith in the promises of this Sergius Catiline, even if he should be elected. He was a sworn friend to Sylla, the people’s worst enemy; and never had one associate of the old Marian party. Believe me, he only wants our aid to set himself up on the horse of state authority; and when he is firm in the saddle, he will ride us down under the hoofs of patrician tyranny, as hard as any Cato, or Pompey, of them all.”

Six or seven of the foremost group, immediately about the anvil when this discourse was going on, interchanged quick glances, as the man used the word elected, on which he laid a strong and singular emphasis, and nodded slightly, as indicating that they understood his more secret meaning. All, however, except Crispus, the owner of the forge, seemed to be moved by what he advanced; and the foreman of the anvil, after musing for a moment, as he leaned on his heavy sledge, said, “I believe you are right; no one but a Plebeian can truly mean well, or be truly fitted for a leader to Plebeians.”

“You are no wiser than Crispus,” interposed the old man, who had spoken first, in a low angry whisper. “Do you want to discourage these fellows from rising to the cry, when it shall be set up? If this be all that you can do, it were as well to close the forge at once.”

“Which I shall do forthwith,” said Caius Crispus; “for I have got through my work and my lads are weary; but do not you go away, my gossips; nor you either,” he

added, speaking to the man whom he had at first suspected, "tarry you, under one pretext or other; we will have a cup of wine, as soon as I have got rid of these fellows. Here, Aulus," turning to his foreman, "take some coin out of my purse, there it hangs by my clean tunic in the corner, and go round to the wine shop, and bring thence a skinful of the best Sabine vintage; and some of you bar up the door, all but the little wicket. And now, my friends, good night; it is very late, and I am going to shut up the shop. Good night; and remember that the only hope of us working men lies in the election of Catiline tomorrow. Be in the Campus early, with all your friends; and hark ye, you were best take your knives under your tunics, lest the proud nobles should attempt to drive us from the ballot."

"We will, we will!" exclaimed several voices. "We will not be cozened out of our votes, or bullied out of them either. But how is this? do not you vote in your class?"

"I vote *with* my class! with my fellow Plebeians and mechanics, I would say! What if I be one of the armorers of the first class, think you that I will vote with the proud senators and insolent knights? No, brethren, not one of us, nor of the carpenters either, nor of the trumpeters, or horn-blowers! Plebeians we are, and Plebeians we will vote! and let me tell you to look sharp to me, on the Campus; and whatever I do, so do ye. Be sure that good will come of it to the people!"

"We will, we will!" responded all his hearers, now unanimous. "Brave heart! stout Caius Crispus! We will have you a tribune one of these days! but good night, good night!"

And, with the words, all left the forge, except the smith and his peculiar workmen, and two or three others, all clients of the Prætor Lentulus, and all in some degree associates in the conspiracy. None of them, however, were initiated fully, except Caius himself, his foreman, Aulus, the aged Bassus, and the stranger; who, though unknown to any one present, had given satisfactory evidence that he was privy to the most atrocious portions of the plot. The wine was introduced immediately, and after a deep draught, circulated more than once, the

conversation was resumed by the initiated, who were now left alone.

“And do you believe,” said the stranger, addressing Caius Crispus, “that Catiline and his companions have any real view to the redress of grievances, the regeneration of the state, or the equalization of conditions?”

“Not in the least, I,” answered the swordsmith. “Do you?”

“I did once.”

“I never did.”

“Then, in the name of all the Gods, why did you join with them?”

“Because by the ruin of the great and noble, the poor must be gainers. Because I owe what I can never pay. Because I lust for what I can never win—luxury, beauty, wealth, and power! And if there come a civil strife, with proscription, confiscation, massacre, it shall go hard with Caius Crispus, if he achieve not greatness!”

“And you,” said the man, turning short round, without replying to the smith, and addressing the aged Bassus, “why did you join the plotters, you who are so crafty, so sagacious, and yet so earnest in the cause?”

“Because I have wrongs to avenge,” answered the old man fiercely; a fiery flush crimsoning his sallow face, and his eye beaming lurid rage. “Wrongs, to repay which all the blood that flows in patrician veins were but too small a price!”

“Ha?” said the other, in a tone half meditative and half questioning, but in truth thinking little of the speaker, and reflecting only on the personal nature of the motives, which seemed to instigate them all. “Ha, is it indeed so?”

“Man,” cried the old conspirator, springing forward and catching him by the arm. “Have you a wife, a child, a sister? If so, listen! you can understand me! I am, as you see old, very old! I have scars, also, all in front, honorable scars, of wounds inflicted by the Moorish assa-gays, of Jugurtha’s desert horsemen—by the huge broad swords of the Teutones and Cimbri. My son, my only son fell, as an eagle-bearer, in the front rank of the hastati of the brave tenth legion—for we had wealth in those days, and both fought and voted in the centuries of the

first class. But our fields were uncultivated, while we were shedding our best blood for the state; and to complete the ruin, my rural slaves broke loose, and joined Spartacus the gladiator. Taken, they died upon the cross; and I was quite undone. Law suits and usury ate up the rest; and, for these eight years past, old Bassus has been penniless, and often cold, and always hungry. But if this had been all, it is a soldier's part to bear cold and hunger—but not to bear disgrace. Man, there have been gyves on these legs—the whip has scarred these shoulders! Ye great Gods! the whip! for what have the poor to do with their Portian or Valerian laws? Nor was this all—the eagle-bearer left a child, a sweet, fair, gentle girl, the image of my gallant boy, the only solace of my famishing old age. I told you she was fair—fatally fair—too fair for a plebeian's daughter, a plebeian's wife! Her beauty caught the lustful eyes, inflamed the brutal heart of a patrician, one of the great Cornelii. It is enough! She was torn from my house, dishonored, and sent home, to die by her own hand, that would not pardon that involuntary sin! She died; the censors heard the tale; and scoffed at the teller of it! and that Cornelius yet sits in the senate; those censors who approved his guilt yet live—I say *live!* Is not that cause enough why I should join the plotters?"

"I cannot answer, No!" replied the other; "and you, Aulus, what is your reason?"

"I would win me a noble paramour. Hortensia's Julia is very soft and beautiful."

The stranger looked at him steadily for a moment, and an expression of disgust and horror crept over his bold face. "Alas!" he said at length, speaking, it would seem, to himself rather than to the others, "poor Rome! unhappy country!"

But, as he spoke, the strong smith, whose suspicion would seem to have been excited, stepped forward and laid his hand upon the stranger's shoulder. "Look you," he said, "master. None of us know you here, I think, and we should all of us be glad to know, both who you are, and, if indeed you be of the faction, wherefore *you* joined it, that you so closely scrutinize our motives."

"Because I was a fool, Caius Crispus; because I believed that, for a great stake, Romans might yet forget *self*,

base and sordid *self*, and act as becomes patriots and men! Because I dreamed, smith, till morning light came back, and I awakened, and—”

“And the dream!” asked the smith eagerly, grasping the handle of his heavy hammer firmly, and setting his teeth hard.

“Had vanished,” replied the other calmly, and looking him full in the eye.

“Bar the door, Aulus,” cried the smith, hastily. “This fellow must die here, or he will betray us,” and he caught him by the throat, as he spoke, with an iron grip, to prevent him from calling out or giving the alarm.

But the stranger, though not to be compared in bulk or muscular proportions with the gigantic artizan, shook off his grasp with contemptuous ease, and answered with a scornful smile,

“Betray you!—tush, I am Fulvius Flaccus.”

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of the smith, he could not have recoiled with wilder wonder.

“What, Fulvius Flaccus, to whose great wrongs all injuries endured by us are but as flea-bites! Fulvius, the grandson of that Fulvius Flaccus, who—”

“Was murdered by Opimius, while striving for the liberties of Romans. But what is this? By Mars and Quirinus! there is something afoot without!”

And, as he uttered the words, he sprang to the wicket, which Aulus had not fastened, and gazed out earnestly into the darkness, through which the regular and steady tramp of men, advancing in ordered files, could now be heard distinctly.

The others were beside him in an instant, with terror and amazement on their faces.

They had not long to wait, before the cause of their alarm became visible. It was a band of some five hundred stout young men of the upper classes, well armed with swords and the oblong bucklers of the legion, though wearing neither casque nor cuirass, led by a curule *ædile*, who was accompanied by ten or twelve of the equestrian order, completely armed, and preceded by his *apparitores* or bea-dles, and half a dozen torch-bearers.

These men passed swiftly on, in treble file, marching as fast as they could down the Sacred Way, until they reach-

ed the intersection of the street of Apollo; by which they proceeded straight up the ascent of the Palatine, whereon they were soon lost to view, among the splendid edifices that covered its slope and summit.

"By all the Gods?" cried Caius Crispus, "This is exceedingly strange! An armed guard at this time of night!"

"Hist! here is something more."

And, as old Bassus spoke, Antonius, the consul, who was supposed to be attached to the faction of Catiline, came down a bye-street, from the lower end of the Carinæ, preceded by his torch-bearers, and followed by a lictor* with his fasces. He was in full dress too, as one of the presiding magistrates of the senate, and bore in his hand his ivory sceptre, surmounted by an eagle.

As soon as he had passed the door of the forge, Crispus stepped out into the street, motioning his guests to follow him, and desiring his foreman to lock the door.

"Let us follow the Consul, at a distance," he exclaimed, "my Bassus; for, as our Fulvius says, there is assuredly something afoot; and it may be that it shall be well for us to know it. Come, let us follow quickly."

They hurried onward, as he proposed; and keeping some twenty or thirty paces in the rear of the Consul's train, soon reached the foot of the street of Apollo. At this point, however, Antonius paused with his lictor; for, in the opposite direction coming up from the Cerolian place toward the Forum, another line of torches might be seen flaming through the darkness, and, even at that distance, the axe heads of the lictors were visible, as they flashed out by fits in the red torch-light.

"By all the Gods!" whispered Bassus, "it is the other consul, the new man from Arpinum. Believe me, my friends, this bodes no good to us! The Senate must have been convoked suddenly—and lo! here come the fathers. Look, look! this is stern Cato."

And, almost as he said the words, a powerfully made and very noble looking man passed so near as to brush the person of the mechanic with the folds of his toga. His face, which was strongly marked, was stern certainly; but it was with the sternness of gravity and deep

*The senior consul, or he whose month it was to preside, had twelve lictors; the junior but one, while within the city.

thought, coupled perhaps with something of melancholy—for it might be that he despaired at times of man's condition in this world, and of his prospects in the next—not of austerity or pride. His garb was plain in the extreme, and, although his tunic displayed the broad crimson facings, and his robe the passmenting of senatorial rank, both were of the commonest materials, and the narrowest and most simple cut.

“Hail, noble Cato!” said the mechanic, as the senator passed by; but his voice faltered as he spoke, and there was something hollow and heartless in the tones, which conveyed the greeting.

Cato raised his eyes, which had been fixed on the ground in meditation, and perused the features of the speaker with a severe and scrutinizing gaze; and then, shaking his head sternly, as if dissatisfied with the result of his observation,

“This is no time of night, sirrah smith,” he said, “for thee, or such as thou, to be abroad. Thy daily work done, thou shouldst be at home with thy wife and children, not seeking profligate adventures, or breeding foul sedition in the streets. Go home! go home! for shame on thee! thou art known and marked.”

And the severe and virtuous noble strode onward, unattended he by any torch-bearer, or freedman, and soon joined his worthy friend, the great Latin orator, who had come up, and having united his train to that of the other consul, was moving up the Palatine.

In the meantime senator after senator arrived, some alone, with their slaves or freedmen lighting them along the streets; others in groups of two or three, all hurrying toward the Palatine. The smith and his friends, who had been at first the sole spectators of the shew, were now every moment joined by more and more of the rabble, until a great concourse was assembled; through which the nobles had some difficulty in forcing their way toward the Temple of Apollo, in which their order was assembling, wherefore as yet they knew not.

At first the crowd was orderly enough, and quiet; but gradually beginning to ferment and grow warm, as it were by the closeness of its packing, cheers were heard, and loud acclamations, as any member of the popular faction made his way through it; and groans and yells and even

courses succeeded, as any of the leaders of the aristocratic party strove to part its reluctant masses.

And now a louder burst of acclamations, than any which had yet been heard, rang through the streets, causing the very roofs to tremble.

“What foolery have we here?” said the smith very sullenly, who, though he responded nothing to it, had by no means recovered from the rebuke of Cato. “Oh! yes! I see, I see,” and he too added the power of his stentorian lungs to the clamor, as a young senator, splendidly dressed, and of an aspect that could not fail to attract attention, entered the little space, which had been kept open at the corner of the two streets, by the efforts of an ædile and his beadles, who had just arrived on the ground.

He was not much, if at all, above the middle size, but admirably proportioned, whether for feats of agility and strength, or for the lighter graces of society. But it was his face more especially, and the magnificent expression of his features, that first struck the beholder—the broad imaginative brow, the keen large lustrous eye, pervading, clear, undazzled as the eagle’s, the bold Roman nose, the resolute curve of the clean-cut mouth, full of indomitable pride and matchless energy—all these bespoke at once the versatile and various genius of the great statesman, orator, and captain, who was to be thereafter.

At this time; however, although he was advancing toward middle age, and had already shaken off some of the trammels which luxurious vice and heedless extravagance had cast around his young puissant intellect, he had achieved nothing either of fame or power. He had, it is true, given signs of rare intellect, but as yet they were signs only. Though his friends looked forward confidently to the time, when they should see him the first citizen of the republic; and it is more than possible, that in his own heart he contemplated even now the attainment of a more glorious, if more perilous elevation.

The locks of this noble looking personage, though not arranged in that effeminate fashion, which has been mentioned as characteristic of Cethegus and some others, were closely curled about his brow—for he, as yet, exhibited no tendency to that baldness, for which in after years he was remarkable—and reeked with the choicest perfumes. He

wore the crimson-bordered toga of his senatorial rank, but under it, as it waved loosely to and fro, might be observed the gaudy hues of a violet colored banqueting dress, sprinkled with flowers of gold, as if he had been disturbed from some festive board by the summons to council.

As he passed through the crowd, from which loud rose the shout, following him as he moved along—"Hail, Caius Cæsar! long live the noble Cæsar!"—his slaves scattered gold profusely among the multitude, who fought and scrambled for the glittering coin, still keeping up their clamorous greeting; while the dispenser of the wasteful largesse appearing to know every one, and to forget no face or name, even of the humblest, had a familiar smile and a cheery word for each citizen.

"Ha! Bassus, my old hero!" he exclaimed, "it is long since thou hast been to visit me. That proves, I hope, that things go better now-a-days at home. But come and see me, Bassus; I have something for thee to keep the cold from thy hearth, this freezing weather."

And he paused not to receive an answer, but moved forward a step or two, till his eye fell upon the swordsmith.

"What, Caius," he said, "sturdy Caius, absent from his forge so early—but I forgot, I forgot! you are a politician, perhaps you can tell me why they have roused me from the best cup of Massic I have tasted this ten years. What is the coil, Caius Crispus?"

"Nay! I know not," replied the mechanic, "I was about to ask the same of you, noble Cæsar!"

"I am the worst man living of whom to inquire," replied the patrician, with a careless smile. "I cannot even guess, unless perchance"—but as he spoke, he discovered, standing beside the smith, the man who had called himself Fulvius Flaccus, and interrupting himself instantly, he fixed a long and piercing gaze upon him, and then exclaimed, "Ha! is it thou?" with an expression of astonishment, not all unmixed with vexation.

The next moment he stepped close up to him, whispered a word into his ear, and hurried with an altered air up the steep street which sealed the Palatine.

A minute or two afterward, Crispus turned to address this man, but he too was gone.

In quick succession senator after senator now came up

the gentle slope of the Sacred Way, until almost all the distinguished men in Rome, whether for good or for evil, had undergone the scrutiny of the group collected around Caius Crispus.

But it was not till among the last that Catiline strode by, gnawing his nether lip uneasily, with his wild sunken eyes glaring suspiciously about him. He spoke to no one, until he came opposite the smith, on whom he frowned darkly, exclaiming, "What do you here? Go home, sirrah, go home!" and as Caius dropped his bold eyes, crest-fallen and abashed, he added in a lower tone, so that, save Bassus only, none of the crowd could hear him, "Wait for me at my house. Evil is brewing!"

Not a word more was spoken. Crispus and the old man soon extricated themselves from the throng and went their way; and in a little time afterward the multitude was dispersed, rather summarily, by a band of armed men under the Prætor Pomptinus, who cleared with very little delicacy the confines of the Palatine, whereon it was announced that the senate were now in secret session.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DISCLOSURE.

Maria montesque polliceri cæpit,
Minari interdum ferro, nisi obnoxia foret.

SALLUST.

A woman, master.

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

AMONG all those of Senatorial rank—and they were very many—who were participants of the intended treason, one alone was absent from the assemblage of the Order on that eventful night.

The keen unquiet eye of the arch-traitor missed Curius from his place, as it ran over the known faces of the conspirators, on whom he reckoned for support.

Curius was absent.

Nor did his absence, although it might well be, although indeed it *was*, accidental, diminish anything of Catiline's anxiety. For, though he fully believed him trusty and faithful to the end, though he felt that the man was linked to him indissolubly by the consciousness of common crimes, he knew him also to be no less vain than he was daring. And, while he had no fear of intentional betrayal, he apprehended the possibility of involuntary disclosures, that might be perilous, if not fatal, in the present juncture.

It has been left on record of this Curius, by one who knew him well, and was himself no mean judge of character, that he possessed not the faculty of concealing any

thing he had heard, or even of dissembling his own crimes; and Catiline was not one to overlook or mistake so palpable a weakness.

But the truth was, that knowing his man thoroughly, he was aware that, with the bane, he bore about with him, in some degree, its antidote. For so vast and absurd were his vain boastings, and so needless his exaggerations of his own recklessness, blood-thirstiness, and crime, that hitherto his vaporings had excited rather ridicule than fear.

The time was however coming, when they were to awaken distrust, and lead to disclosure.

It was perfectly consistent with the audacity of Catiline—an audacity, which, though natural, stood him well in stead, as a mask to cover deep designs—that even now, when he felt himself to be more than suspected, instead of avoiding notoriety, and shunning the companionship of his fellow traitors, he seemed to covet observation, and to display himself in connection with his guilty partners, more openly than heretofore.

But neither Lentulus, nor Vargunteius, nor the Syllæ, nor any other of the plotters had seen Curius, or could inform him of his whereabouts. And, ere they separated for the night, amid the crash of the contending elements above, and the roar of the turbulent populace below, doubt, and almost dismay, had sunk into the hearts of several the most daring, so far as mere mortal perils were to be encountered, but the most abject, when superstition was joined with conscious guilt to appal and confound them.

Catiline left the others, and strode away homeward, more agitated and unquiet than his face or words, or anything in his demeanor, except his irregular pace, and fitful gestures indicated.

Dark curses quivered unspoken on his tongue—the pains of hell were in his heart already.

Had he but known the whole, how would his fury have blazed out into instant action.

At the very moment when the Senate was so suddenly convoked on the Palatine, a woman of rare loveliness waited alone, in a rich and voluptuous chamber of a house not far removed from the scene of those grave deliberations.

The chamber, in which she reclined alone on a pile of

soft cushions, might well have been the shrine of that bland queen of love and pleasure, of whom its fair tenant was indeed an assiduous votress. For there was nothing, which could charm the senses, or lap the soul in luxurious and effeminate ease, that was not there displayed.

The walls glowed with the choicest specimens of the Italian pencil, and the soft tones and harmonious colouring were well adapted to the subjects, which were the same in all—voluptuous and sensual love.

Here Venus rose from the crisp-smiling waves, in a rich atmosphere of light and beauty—there Leda toyed with the wreathed neck and ruffled plumage of the enamoured swan—in this compartment, Danaë lay warm and languid, impotent to resist the blended power of the God's passion and his gold—in that, Ariadne clung delighted to the bosom of the rosy wine-God.

The very atmosphere of the apartment was redolent of the richest perfumes, which streamed from four censers of chased gold placed on a tall candelabra of wrought bronze in the corners of the room. A bowl of stained glass on the table was filled with musk roses, the latest of the year; and several hyacinths in full bloom added their almost overpowering scent to the aromatic odours of the burning incense.

Armed chairs, with downy pillows, covered with choice embroidered cloths of Calabria, soft ottomans and easy couches, tables loaded with implements of female luxury, musical instruments, drawings, and splendidly illuminated rolls of the amatory bards and poetesses of the Egean islands, completed the picture of the boudoir of the Roman beauty.

And on a couch piled with the Tyrian cushions, which yielded to the soft impress of her lovely form, well worthy of the splendid luxury with which she was surrounded, lay the unrivalled Fulvia, awaiting her expected lover.

If she was lovely in her rich attire, as she appeared at the board of Catiline, with jewels in her bosom, and her bright ringlets of luxuriant gold braided in fair array, far lovelier was she now, as she lay there reclined, with those bright ringlets all dishevelled, and falling in a flood of wavy silken masses, over her snowy shoulders, and palpitating bosom; with all the undulating outlines of her su

perb form, unadorned, and but scantily concealed by a loose robe of snow-white linen.

Her face was slightly flushed with a soft carnation tinge, her blue eyes gleamed with unusual brightness. And by the fluttering of her bosom, and the nervous quivering of her slender fingers, as they leaned on a tripod of Parian marble which stood beside the couch, it was evident that she was labouring under some violent excitement.

“He comes not,” she said. “And it is waxing late. He has again failed me! and if he have—ruin—ruin!—Debts pressing me in every quarter, and no hope but from him. Alfenus the usurer will lend no more—my farms all mortgaged to the utmost, a hundred thousand sesterces of interest, due these last Calends, and unpaid as yet. What can I do?—what hope for? In him there is no help—none! Nay! It is vain to think of it; for he is amorous as ever, and, could he raise the money, would lavish millions on me for one kiss. No! *he* is bankrupt too; and all his promises are but wild empty boastings. What, then, is left to me?” she cried aloud, in the intensity of her perturbation. “Most miserable me! My creditors will seize on all—all—all! and poverty—hard, chilling, bitter poverty, is staring in my face even now. Ye Gods! ye Gods! And I can not—can not live poor. No more rich dainties, and rare wines! no downy couches and soft perfumes! No music to induce voluptuous slumbers! no fairy-fingered slaves to fan the languid brow into luxurious coolness! No revelry, no mirth, no pleasure! Pleasure that is so sweet, so enthralling! Pleasure for which I have lived only, without which I must die! *Die!* By the great Gods! I *will* die! What avails life, when all its joys are gone? or what is death, but one momentary pang, and then—quiet? Yes! I will die. And the world shall learn that the soft Epicurean can vie with the cold Stoic in carelessness of living, and contempt of death—that the warm votaress of Aphrodite can spend her glowing life-blood as prodigally as the stern follower of Virtue! Lucretia died, and was counted great and noble, because she cared not to survive her honour! Fulvia will perish, wiser, as soon as she shall have outlived her capacity for pleasure!”

She spoke enthusiastically, her bright eyes flashing a

strange fire, and her white bosom panting with the strong and passionate excitement; but in a moment her mood was changed. A smile, as if at her own vehemence, curled her lip; her glance lost its quick, sharp wildness. She clapped her hands together, and called aloud,

“Ho! Ægle! Ægle!”

And at the call a beautiful Greek girl entered the chamber, voluptuous as her mistress in carriage and demeanor, and all too slightly robed for modesty, in garments that displayed far more than they concealed of her rare symmetry.

“Bring wine, my girl,” cried Fulvia; “the richest Massic; and, hark thee, fetch thy lyre. My soul is dark to-night, and craves a joyous note to kindle it to life and rapture.”

The girl bowed and retired; but in a minute or two returned, accompanied by a dark-eyed Ionian, bearing a Tuscan flask of the choice wine, and a goblet of crystal, embossed with emeralds and sapphires, imbedded, by a process known to the ancients but now lost, in the transparent glass.

A lyre of tortoiseshell was in the hands of Ægle, and a golden plectrum with which to strike its chords; she had cast loose her abundant tresses of dark hair, and decked her brows with a coronal of myrtle mixed with roses, and as she came bounding with sinuous and graceful gestures through the door, waving her white arms with the dazzling instruments aloft, she might have represented well a young priestess of the Cyprian queen, or the light Muse of amorous song.

The other girl filled out a goblet of the amber-coloured wine, the fragrance of which overpowered, for a moment, as it mantled on the goblet's brim, the aromatic perfumes which loaded the atmosphere of the apartment.

And Fulvia raised it to her lips, and sipped it slowly, and delightedly, suffering it to glide drop by drop between her rosy lips, to linger on her pleased palate, luxuriating in its soft richness, and dwelling long and rapturously on its flavour.

After a little while, the goblet was exhausted, a warmer hue came into her velvet cheeks, a brighter spark danced in her azure eyes, and as she motioned the Ionian slave-

girl to replenish the cup and place it on the tripod at her elbow, she murmured in a low languid tone,

“Sing to me, now—sing to me, *Ægle*.”

And in obedience to her word the lovely girl bent her fair form over the lute, and, after a wild prelude full of strange thrilling melodies, poured out a voice as liquid and as clear, aye! and as soft, withal, as the nightingale's, in a soft Sapphic love-strain full of the glorious poetry of her own lovely language.

Where in umbrageous shadow of the greenwood
Buds the gay primrose i' the balmy spring time;
Where never silent, Philomel, the wildest
Minstrel of ether,

Pours her high notes, and caroling, delighted
In the cool sun-proof canopy of the ilex
Hung with ivy green or a bloomy dog-rose
Idly redundant,

Charms the fierce noon with melody; in the moonbeam
Where the coy Dryads trip it unmolested
All the night long, to merry dithyrambics
Blissfully timing

Their rapid steps, which flit across the knot grass
Lightly, nor shake one flower of the blue-bell;
Where liquid founts and rivulets o' silver
Sweetly awaken

Clear forest echoes with unearthly laughter;
There will I, dearest, on a bank be lying
Where the wild thyme blows ever, and the pine tree
Fitfully murmurs

Slumber inspiring. Come to me, my dearest,
On the fresh greensward, as a downy bride-bed,
Languid, unzoned, and amorous, reclining;
Like Ariadne,

When the blythe wine-God, from Olympus hoary,
Wooed the soft mortal tremulously yielding
All her enchantments to the mighty victor—
Happy Ariadne!

There will I, dearest, every frown abandon;
Nor do thou fear, nor hesitate to press me,
Since, if I chide, 'tis but a girl's reproof,
Faintly reluctant.

Doubt not I love thee, whether I return thy
Kisses in delight, or avert demurely
Lips that in truth burn to be kissed the closer,
Eyes that avoid thee,

Loth to confess how amorously glowing
Pants the fond heart. Oh! tarry not, but urge me
Coy to consent; and if a blush alarm thee,
Shyly revealing

Sentiments deep as the profound of Ocean,
If a sigh, faltered in an hour of anguish,
Seem to implore thee—pity not. The maiden
Often adores thee

Most if offending. Never, oh! believe me,
Did the faint-hearted win a girl's devotion,
Nor the true girl frown when a youth disarmed her
Dainty denial.

While she was yet singing, the curtains which covered the door were put quietly aside, and with a noiseless step Curius entered the apartment, unseen by the fair vocalist, whose back was turned to him, and made a sign to Fulvia that she should not appear to notice his arrival.

The haggard and uneasy aspect, which was peculiar to this man—the care-worn expression, half-anxious and half-jaded, which has been previously described, was less conspicuous on this occasion than ever it had been before, since the light lady loved him. There was a feverish flush on his face, a joyous gleam in his dark eye, and a self-satisfied smile lighting up all his features, which led her to believe at first that he had been drinking deeply; and secondly, that by some means or other he had succeeded in collecting the vast sum she had required of him, as the unworthy price of future favours.

In a minute or two, the voluptuous strain ended; and, ere she knew that any stranger listened to her amatory warblings, the arm of Curius was wound about her slender waist, and his half-laughing voice was ringing in her ear,

“Well sung, my lovely Greek, and daintily advised!—By my faith! sweet one, I will take thee at thy word!”

“No! no!” cried the girl, extricating herself from his arms, by an elastic spring, before his lips could touch her cheek. “No! no! you shall not kiss me. Kiss Fulvia, she is handsomer than I am, and loves you too. Come, Myrrha, let us leave them.”

And, with an arch smile and coquettish toss of her pretty head, she darted through the door, and was followed instantly by the other slave-girl, well trained to divine the wishes of her mistress.

“Ægle is right, by Venus!” exclaimed Curius, drawing nearer to his mistress; “you are more beautiful to-night than ever.”

“Flatterer!” murmured the lady, suffering him to enfold her in his arms, and taste her lips for a moment. But the next minute she withdrew herself from his embrace, and said, half-smiling, half-abashed, “But flattery will not pay my debts. Have you brought me the moneys for Alfenus, my sweet Curius? the hundred thousand sesterces, you promised me?”

“Perish the dross!” cried Curius, fiercely. “Out on it! when I come to you, burning with love and passion, you cast cold water on the flames, by your incessant cry for gold. By all the Gods! I do believe, that you love me only for that you can wring from my purse.”

“If it be so,” replied the lady, scornfully, “I surely do not love you much; seeing it is three months, since you have brought me so much as a ring, or a jewel for a keepsake! But you should rather speak the truth out plainly, Curius,” she continued, in an altered tone, “and confess honestly that you care for me no longer. If you loved me as once you did, you would not leave me to be goaded by these harpies. Know you not—why do I ask? you *do* know that my house, my slaves, nay! that my very jewels and my garments, are mine but upon sufferance. It wants but a few days of the calends of November, and if they find the interest unpaid, I shall be cast forth, shamed, and helpless, into the streets of Rome!”

“Be it so!” answered Curius, with an expression which she could not comprehend. “Be it so! Fulvia; and if it be, you shall have any house in Rome you will, for your abode. What say you to Cicero’s, in the Carinæ? or the grand portico of Quintus Catulus, rich with the Cimbric spoils? or, better yet, that of Crassus, with its Hymettian columns, on the Palatine? Aye! aye! the speech of Marcus Brutus was prophetic; who termed it, the other day, the house of *Venus* on the Palatine! And you, my love, shall be the goddess of that shrine! It shall be yours *to-morrow*, if you will—so you will drive away the clouds from that sweet brow, and let those eyes beam forth—by all the Gods!”—he interrupted himself—“I will kiss thee!”

“By all the Gods! thou shalt not—now, nor for evermore!” she replied, in her turn growing very angry.—“Thou foolish and mendacious boaster! what? dost thou deem me mad or senseless, to assail me with such drivelling folly? Begone, fool! or I will call my slaves—I *have* slaves yet, and, if it be the last deed of service they do for me, they shall spurn thee, like a dog, from my doors.—Art thou insane, or only drunken, Curius?” she added, breaking off from her impetuous railing, into a cool sarcastic tone, that stung him to the quick.

“You shall see whether of the two, Harlot!” he replied furiously, thrusting his hand into the bosom of his tunic, as if to seek a weapon.

“Harlot!” she exclaimed, springing to her feet, the hot blood rushing to her brow in torrents—“dare you say this to me?”

“Dare! do you call this daring?” answered the savage. “This? what would you call it, then, to devastate the streets of Rome with flame and falchion—to hurl the fabric of the state headlong down from the blazing Capitol—to riot in the gore of senators, patricians, consulars!—What, to aspire to be the lords and emperors of the universe?”

“What mean you?” she exclaimed, moved greatly by his vehemence, and beginning to suspect that this was something more than his mere ordinary boasting and exaggeration. “What can you mean? oh! tell me; if you do love me, as you once did, tell me, Curius!” and with rare artifice she altered her whole manner in an instant, all the expression of eye, lip, tone and accent, from the excess of scorn and hatred, to blandishment and fawning softness.

“No!” he replied sullenly. “I will not tell you—no! You doubt me, distrust me, scorn me—no! I will tell you nothing! I will have all I wish or ask for, on my own terms—you shall grant all, or die!”

And he unsheathed his dagger, as he spoke, and grasping her wrist violently with his left hand, offered the weapon at her throat with his right—“You shall grant all, or die!”

“Never!”—she answered—“never!” looking him steadily yet softly in the face, with her beautiful blue eyes. “To fear I will never yield, whatever I may do, to love or passion. Strike, if you will—strike a weak woman, and

so prove your daring—it will be easier, if not so noble, as slaying senators and consuls!”

“Perdition!” cried the fierce conspirator, “I *will* kill her!” And with the word he raised his arm, as if to strike; and, for a moment, the guilty and abandoned sensualist believed that her hour was come.

Yet she shrunk not, nor quailed before his angry eye, nor uttered any cry or supplication. She would have died that moment, as carelessly as she had lived. She would have died, acting out her character to the last sand of life, with the smile on her lip, and the soft languor in her melting eye, in all things an Epicurean.

But the fierce mood of Curius changed. Irresolute, and impotent of evil, in a scarce less degree than he was sanguinary, rash, unprincipled, and fearless, it is not one of the least strange events, connected with a conspiracy the whole of which is strange, and much almost inexplicable, that a man so wise, so sagacious, so deep-sighted, as the arch traitor, should have placed confidence in one so fickle and infirm of purpose.

His knitted brow relaxed, the hardness of his eye relented, he cast the dagger from him.

The next moment, suffering the scarf to fall from her white and dazzling shoulders, the beautiful but bad enchantress flung herself upon his bosom, in the abandonment of her dishevelled beauty, winding her snowy arms about his neck, smothering his voice with kisses.

A moment more, and she was seated on his knee, with his left arm about her waist, drinking with eager and attentive ears, that suffered not a single detail to escape them, the fullest revelation of that atrocious plot, the days, the very hours of action, the numbers, names, and rank of the conspirators!

A woman's infamy rewarded the base villain's double treason! A woman's infamy saved Rome!

Two hours later, the crash and roar of the hurricane and earthquake cut short their guilty pleasures. Curius rushed into the streets headlong, almost deeming that the insurrection might have exploded prematurely, and found it—more than half frustrated.

Fulvia, while yet the thunder rolled, and the blue lightning flashed above her head, and the earth reeled beneath

her footsteps, went forth, strong in the resolution of that Roman patriotism, which, nursed by the institutions of the age, and the pride of the haughty heart, stood with her, as it did with so many others, in lieu of any other principle, of any other virtue.

Closely veiled, unattended even by a single slave, that delicate luxurious sinner braved the wild fury of the elements; braved the tumultuous frenzy, and more tumultuous terror, of the disorganised and angry populace; braved the dark superstition, which crept upon her as she marked the awful portents of that night, and half persuaded her to the belief that there were Powers on high, who heeded the ways, punished the crimes of mortals.

And that strange sense grew on her more and more, though she resisted it, incredulous, when after a little while she sat side by side with the wise and virtuous Consul, and marked the calmness, almost divine, of his thoughtful benignant features, as he heard the full details of the awful crisis, heretofore but suspected, in which he stood, as if upon the verge of a scarce slumbering volcano.

What passed between that frail woman, and the wise orator, none ever fully knew. But they parted—on his side with words of encouragement and kindness—on her's with a sense of veneration approaching almost to religious awe.

And the next day, the usurer Alfenus received in full the debt, both principal and interest, which he had long despaired of touching.

But when the Great Man stood alone in his silent study, that strange and unexpected interview concluded, he turned his eyes upward, not looking, even once, toward the sublime bust of Jupiter which stood before him, serene in more than mortal grandeur; extended both his arms, and prayed in solemn accents—

“All thanks to thee, Omnipotent, Ubiquitous, Eternal, ONE! whom we, vain fools of fancy, adore in many forms, and under many names; invest with the low attributes of our own earthy nature; enshrine in mortal shapes, and human habitations! But thou, who wert, before the round world was, or the blue heaven o'erhung it; who wilt be, when those shall be no longer,—thou pardonest our madness, guidest our blindness, guardest our weakness. Thou,

by the basest and most loathed instruments, dost work out thy great ends. All thanks, then, be to thee, by whatsoever name thou wouldest be addressed; to thee, whose dwelling is illimitable space, whose essence is in every thing that we behold, that moves, that is—to thee whom I hail, God! For thou hast given it to me to save my country. And whether I die now, by this assassin's knife, or live a little longer to behold the safety I establish, I have lived long enough, and am content to die!—Whether this death be, as philosophers have told us, a dreamless, senseless, and interminable trance; or, as I sometimes dream, a brief and passing slumber, from which we shall awaken into a purer, brighter, happier being—I have lived long enough! and when thou callest me, will answer to thy summons, glad and grateful! For Rome, at least, survives me, and shall perchance survive, 'till time itself is ended, the Queen of Universal Empire!"

mality in the augural rites sufficing to interrupt them—that little objection was made in any quarter, to the motion of Cicero, that the comitia should be delayed, until the matter could be thoroughly investigated. For he professed only as yet to possess a clue, which he promised hereafter to unravel to the end.

Catiline had, however, so far recovered from his consternation, that he had risen to address the house, when the first words he uttered were drowned by a strange and unearthly sound, like the rumbling of ten thousand chariots over a stony way, beginning, as it seemed, underneath their feet, and rising gradually until it died away over head in the murky air. Before there was time for any comment on this extraordinary sound, a tremulous motion crept through the marble pavements, increasing every moment, until the doors flew violently open, and the vast columns and thick walls of the stately temple reeled visibly in the dread earthquake.

Nor was this all, for as the portals opened, in the black skies, right opposite the entrance, there stood, glaring with red and lurid light, a bearded star or comet; which, to the terror-stricken eyes of the Fathers, seemed a portentous sword, brandished above the city.

The groans and shrieks of the multitude, rushed in with an appalling sound to increase their superstitious awe; and to complete the whole, a pale and ghastly messenger was ushered into the house, announcing that a bright lambent flame was sitting on the lance-heads of the Prætor's guard, which had been summoned to protect the Senate in its deliberations.

A fell sneer curled the lip of Catiline. He was not even superstitious. Self-vanity and confidence in his own powers, and long impunity in crime, had hardened him, had maddened him, almost to Atheism. Yet he dared not attack the sacred prejudices of the men, whom, but for that occurrence, he had yet hoped to win to their own undoing.

But, as he saw their blanched visages, and heard their mutterings of terror, he saw likewise that an impression was made on their minds, which no words of his could for the present counteract. And, with a sneering smile at fears which he knew not, and a smothered curse at

the accident, as he termed it, which had foiled him, he sat down silent.

“The Gods have spoken!” exclaimed Cicero, flinging his arms abroad majestically. “The guilty are struck dumb! The Gods have spoken aloud their sympathy for Rome’s peril; and will ye, ye its chosen sons, whose all of happiness and life lie in its sanctity and safety, will ye, I say, love your own country, your own mother, less than the Gods love her?”

The moment was decisive, the appeal irresistible. By acclamation the vote was carried; no need to debate or to divide the House—‘that the elections be deferred until the eleventh day before the Calends, and that the Senate meet again to-morrow, shortly after sunrise, to deliberate what shall be done to protect the Republic?’

Morning came, dark indeed, and lurid, and more like the close, than the opening of day. Morning came, but it brought no change with it; for not a head in Rome had lain that night upon a pillow, save those of the unburied dead, or the bedridden. Young men and aged, sick and sound, masters and slaves, had wooed no sleep during the hours of darkness, so terribly, so constantly was it illuminated by the broad flashes of blue lightning, and the strange meteors, which rushed almost incessantly athwart the sky. The winds too had been all unchained in their fury, and went howling like tormented spirits, over the terrified and trembling city.

It was said too, that the shades of the dead had arisen, and were seen mingling in the streets with the living, scarcely more livid than the half-dead spectators of portents so ominous. No rumour so absurd or fanatical, but it found on that night, implicit credence. Some shouted in the streets and open places, that the patricians and the knights were arming their adherents for a promiscuous massacre of the people. Some, that the gladiators had broken loose, and slain thousands of citizens already! Some, that there was a Gallic tumult, and that the enemy would be at the gates in the morning! Some that the Gods had judged Rome to destruction!

And so they raved, and roared, and sometimes fought; and would have rioted tremendously; for many of the commoner conspirators were abroad, ready to take advan-

tage of any casual incident to breed an affray ; but that a strong force of civil magistrates patrolled the streets with armed attendants ; and that, during the night several cohorts were brought in, from the armies of Quintus Marcius Rex, and Quintus Metellus Creticus, with all their armor and war weapons, in heavy marching order ; and occupied the Capitol, the Palatine, and the Janiculum, and all the other prominent and commanding points of the city, with an array that set opposition at defiance.

So great, however, were the apprehensions of many of the nobles, that Rome was on the eve of a servile insurrection, that many of them armed their freedmen, and imprisoned all their slaves ; while others, the more generous and milder, who thought they could rely on the attachment of their people, weaponed their slaves themselves, and fortified their isolated dwellings against the anticipated onslaught.

Thus passed that terrible and tempestuous night ; the roar of the elements, unchained as they were, and at their work of havoc, not sufficing to drown the dissonant and angry cries of men, the clash of weapons, and the shrill clamor of women ; which made Rome more resemble the Pandemonium than the metropolis of the world's most civilized and mightiest nation.

But now morning had come at length ; and gradually, as the storm ceased, and the heavens resumed their natural appearance, the terrors and the fury of the multitude subsided ; and, partly satisfied by the constant and well-timed proclamations of the magistrates, partly convinced that for the moment there was no hope of successful outrage, and yet more wearied out with their own turbulent vehemence, whether of fear or anger, the crowd began to retire to their houses, and the streets were left empty and silent.

As the day dawned, there was no banner hoisted on the Janiculum, although its turrets might be seen bristling with the short massive javelins of the legions, and gleaming with the tawny light that flashed from their brazen casques and corslets.

There was no augural tent pitched on the hills without the city walls, wherefrom to take the auspices.

And above all, there were no loud and stirring calls of

the brazen trumpets of the centuries, to summon forth the civic army of the Roman people to the Campus, there to elect their rulers for the ensuing year.

It was apparent therefore to all men, that the elections would not be held that day, though none knew clearly wherefore they had been deferred.

While the whole city was loud with turbulent confusion—for, as morning broke, and it was known that the comitia were postponed, the agitation of terror succeeded to that of insubordination—Hortensia and her daughter sat together, pale, anxious, and heartsick, yet firm and free from all unworthy evidences of dismay.

During the past night, which had been to both a sleepless one, they had sate listening, lone and weak women, to the roar of tumultuous streets, and expecting at every moment they knew not what of violence and outrage.

Paullus Arvina had come in once to reassure them: and informed them that the vigilance of the Consul had been crowned with success, and that the danger of a conflict in the streets was subsiding every moment.

Still, the care which he bestowed on examining the fastenings of the doors, and such windows as looked into the streets, the earnestness with which he inculcated watchful heed to the armed slaves of the household, and the positive manner in which he insisted on leaving Thræsea and a dozen of his own trustiest men to assist Hortensia's people, did more to obliterate the hopes his own words would otherwise have excited, than the words themselves to excite them.

Nor was it, indeed, to be wondered that Hortensia should be liable, above other women, not to base terror,—for of that from her high character she was incapable—but to a settled apprehension and distrust of the Roman Populace.

It was now four-and-twenty years since the city had been disturbed by plebeian violence or aristocratic vengeance. Twenty-four years ago, the avenging sword of Sylla had purged the state of its bloodthirsty demagogues, and their brute followers; twenty-four years ago his powerful hand had reestablished Rome's ancient constitution, full of checks and balances, which secured equal rights to every Roman citizen; which secured all equality, in short

to all men, save that which no human laws can give, equality of social rank, and equality of wealth.

The years, however, which had gone before that restoration, the dreadful massacres and yet more dreadful proscriptions of Cinna and Marius, had left indelible and sanguinary traces on the ancestral tree of many a noble house; and on none deeper than on that of Hortensia's family.

Her brother, Caius Julius, an orator second to none in those days, had been murdered by the followers of Marius, almost before his sister's eyes, with circumstances of appalling cruelty. Her house had been forced open by the infuriate rabble, her husband hewn down with unnumbered wounds, on his own hearth-stone, and her first born child tossed upon the revolutionary pike heads.

Her husband indeed recovered, almost miraculously, from his wounds, and lived to see retribution fall upon the guilty partizans of Marius; but he was never well again, and after languishing for years, died at last of the wounds he received on that bloody day.

Good cause, then, had Hortensia to tremble at the tender mercies of the people.

Nor, though they struck the minds of these high-born ladies with less perplexity and awe than the vulgar souls without, were the portents and horrors of the heaven, without due effect. No mind in those days, however clear and enlightened, but held some lingering belief that such things were ominous of coming wrath, and sent by the Gods to inform their faithful worshippers.

It was moreover fresh in her memory, how two years before, during the consulship of Cotta and Torquatus, in a like terrible night-storm, the fire from heaven had stricken down the highest turrets of the capitol, melted the brazen tables of the law, and scathed the gilded effigy of Romulus and Remus, sucking their shaggy foster-mother, which stood on the Capitoline.

The augurs in those days, collected from Etruria and all parts of Italy, after long consultation, had proclaimed that unless the Gods should be appeased duly, the end of Rome and her empire was at hand.

And now—what though for ten whole days consecutive the sacred games went on; what though nothing had been omitted whereby to avert the immortal indignation

—did not this heaven-born tempest prove that the wrath was not soothed, that the decree yet stood firm ?

In such deep thoughts, and in the strong excitement of such expectation, Hortensia and her daughter had passed that awful night; not without high instructions from the elder lady, grave and yet stirring narratives of the great men of old—how they strove fiercely, energetically, while strife could avail anything; and how, when the last hope was over, they folded their hands in stern and awful resignation, and met their fate unblenching, and with but one care—that the decorum of their deaths should not prove unworthy the dignity of their past lives.

Not without generous and noble resolutions on the part of both, that they too would not be found wanting.

But there was nothing humble, nothing soft, in their stern and proud submission to the inevitable necessity. Nothing of love toward the hand which dealt the blow—nothing of confidence in supernal justice, much less in supernal mercy! Nothing of that sweet hope, that undying trust, that consciousness of self-unworthiness, that full conviction of a glorious future, which renders so beautiful and happy the submission of a dying christian.

No! there were none of these things; for to the wisest and best of the ancients, the foreshadowings of the soul's immortality were dim, faint, and uncertain. The legends of their mythology held up such pictures of the sensuality and vice of those whom they called Gods, that it was utterly impossible for any sound understanding to accept them. And deep thinkers were consequently driven into pure Deism, coupled too often with the Epicurean creed, that the Great Spirit was too grand and too sublime to trouble himself with the brief doings of mortality.

The whole scope of the Roman's hope and ambition, then, was limited to this world; or, if there was a longing for anything beyond the term of mortality, it was for a name, a memory, an immortality of good report.

And pride, which the christian, better instructed, knows to be the germ and root of all sin, was to the Roman, the sole spring of honourable action, the sole source of virtue.

Now, with the morning, quiet was restored both to the angry skies, and to the restless city.

Worn out with anxiety, and watching, sleep fell upon the eyes of Julia, as she sat half recumbent in a large softly-cushioned chair of Etruscan bronze. Her fair head fell back on the crimson pillow, with all its wealth of auburn ringlets flowing dishevelled; and that soft still shadow, which is yet, in its beautiful serenity, half terrible, so nearly is it allied to the shadow of that sleep from which there comes no waking, fell over her pale features.

The mother gazed on her for a moment, with more gentleness in her eye, and a milder smile on her face, than her indomitable pride often permitted her to manifest.

“She sleeps”—she said, looking at her wistfully—“she sleeps! Aye! the young sleep easily, even in their affliction. They sleep, and forget their sorrows, and awaken, either to fresh woes, as soon to be obliterated, or to vain joys, yet briefer, and more fleeting. Thoughtlessness to the young—anguish to the old—such is mortality! And what beyond?—aye, what?—what that we should so toil, so suffer, to be virtuous? Is it a dream, all a dream—this futurity? I fear so”—and, with the words, she lapsed into a fit of solemn meditation, and stood for many minutes silent, and absorbed. Then a keen light came into her dark eyes, a flash of animation coloured her pale cheeks, she stretched her arms aloft, and in a clear sonorous voice—“No! no!” she said, “Honour—honour—immortal honour; thou, at least, art no dream—thou art worth dying, suffering, aye! worth *living* to obtain! For what is life but the deeper sorrow, to the more virtuous and the nobler?”

A few minutes longer she stood gazing on her daughter's beautiful face, until the sound of voices louder than usual, and a slight bustle, in the peristyle, attracted her attention. Then, after throwing a pallium, or shawl, of richly embroidered woollen stuff over the fair form of the sleeper, she opened the door leading to the garden colonnade, and left the room silently.

Scarcely had Hortensia disappeared, before the opposite door, by which the saloon communicated with the atrium, was opened, and a slave entered, bearing a small folded note, secured by a waxen seal, on a silver plate.

He approached Julia's chair, apparently in some hesitation, as if he felt that it was his duty, and was yet half afraid to awaken her. At length, however, he made up his mind, and addressed a word or two to her, which were sufficiently distinct to arouse her—for she started up and gazed wildly about her—but left no clear impression of their meaning on her mind.

This, however, the man did not appear to notice; at all events, he did not wait to observe the effect of his communication, but quitted the room hastily, and in considerable trepidation, leaving the note on the table.

Julia was sleeping very heavily, at the moment when she was so startled from her slumber; and, as is not unfrequently the case, a sort of bewilderment and nervous agitation fell upon her, as she recovered her senses. Perhaps she had been dreaming, and the imaginary events of her dream had blended themselves with the real occurrence which awakened her. But for a minute or two, though she saw the note, and the person who laid it on the table, she could neither bring it to her mind who that person was, nor divest herself of the impression that there was something both dangerous and supernatural in what had passed.

In a little while this feeling passed away, and, though still nervous and trembling, the young girl smiled at her own alarm, as she took up the billet, which was directed to herself in a delicate feminine hand, with the usual form of superscription—

“To Julia Serena, health”—

although the writer's name was omitted.

She gazed at it for a moment, wondering from whom it could come; since she had no habitual correspondent, and the hand-writing, though beautiful, was strange to her. She opened it, and read, her wonder and agitation increasing with every line—

“You love Paullus Arvina,” thus it ran, “and are loved by him. He is worthy all your affection. Are you worthy of him? I know not. I love him also, but alas! less happy, am not loved again, nor hope to be, nor indeed deserve it! They tell me you are beautiful; I have seen you, and yet I know not—they told me once that I too was beautiful, and yet I know not! I know this only, that I

am desperate, and base, and miserable! Yet fear me not, nor mistake me. I love Paullus, yet would not have him mine, now; no! not to be happy—as to be his would render me. Yet had it not been for you, I might have been virtuous, honourable, happy, *his*—for winning him from me, you won from me hope; and with hope virtue; and with virtue honour! Ought I not then to hate you, Julia? Perchance I ought—to do so were at least Roman—and hating to avenge! Perchance, if I *hoped*, I should. But hoping nothing, I hate nothing, dread nothing, and wish nothing.—Yea! by the Gods! I wish to know Paullus happy—yea! more, I wish, even at cost of my own misery, to make him happy. Shall I do so, by making him yours, Julia? I think so, for be sure—be sure, he loves you. Else had he yielded to my blandishments, to my passion, to my beauty! for I am—by the Gods! I am, though he sees it not, as beautiful as thou. And I am proud likewise—or was proud once—for misery has conquered pride in me; or what is weaker yet, and baser—love!

“I think you will make him happy. You can if you will. Do so, by all the Gods! I adjure you do so; and if you do not, tremble!—tremble, I say—for think, if I sacrifice myself to win bliss for him—think, girl, how gladly, how triumphantly, I would destroy a rival, who should fail to do that, for which alone I spare her.

“Spare her! nay, but much more; for I can save her—can and will.

“Strange things will come to pass ere long, and terrible; and to no one so terrible as to you.

“There is a man in Rome, so powerful, that the Gods, only, if there be Gods, can compare with him—so haughty in ambition, that stood he second in Olympus, he would risk all things to be first—so cruel, that the dug-drawn Hyrcanian tigress were pitiful compared to him—so reckless of all things divine or human, that, did his own mother stand between him and his vengeance, he would strike through her heart to gain it.

“This man hath Paullus made his foe—he hath crossed his path; he hath *foiled* him!

“He never spared man in his wrath, or woman in his passion.

“He hateth Paullus!

“He hath looked on Julia!

“Think, then, when lust and hate spur such a man together, what will restrain him.

“Now mark me, and you shall yet be safe. All means will be essayed to win you, for he would torture Paul by making him his slave, ere he make you his victim.

“And Paul may waver. He hath wavered once. Chance only, and I, rescued him! I can do no more, for Rome must know me no longer! See, then, that thou hold him constant in the right—firm for his country! So may he defy secret spite, as he hath defied open violence.

“Now for thyself—beware of women! Go not forth alone ever, or without armed followers! Sleep not, but with a woman in thy chamber, and a watcher at thy door! Eat not, nor drink, any thing abroad; nor at home, save that which is prepared by known hands, and tasted by the slave who serves it!

“Be true to Paullus, and yourself, and you have a friend ever watchful. So fear not, nor despond!

“Fail me—and, failing truth and honour, failing to make Paullus happy, you *do* fail me! Fail me, and nothing, in the world’s history or fable, shall match the greatness of my vengeance—of your anguish!

“Fail me! and yours shall be, for ages, the name that men shall quote, when they would tell of untold misery, of utter shame, and desolation, and despair.

“Farewell.”

The letter dropped from her hand; she sat aghast and speechless, terrified beyond measure, and yet unable to determine, or divine, even, to what its dark warnings and darker denunciations pointed.

Just at this instant, as between terror and amazement she was on the verge of fainting, a clanging step was heard without; the crimson draperies that covered the door, were put aside; and, clad in glittering armour, Paullus Arvina stood before her.

She started up, with a strange haggard smile flashing across her pallid face, staggered a step or two to meet him, and sank in an agony of tears upon his bosom.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CONFESSION.

To err is human; to forgive—divine!

THE astonishment of Paullus, at this strange burst of feeling on the part of one usually so calm, so self-controlled, and seemingly so unimpassioned as that sweet lady, may be more easily imagined than described.

That she, whose maidenly reserve had never heretofore permitted the slightest, the most innocent freedom of her accepted lover, should cast herself thus into his arms, should rest her head on his bosom, was in itself enough to surprise him; but when to this were added the violent convulsive sobs, which shook her whole frame, the flood of tears, which streamed from her eyes, the wild and disjointed words, which fell from her pale lips, he was struck dumb with something not far removed from terror.

That it was fear, which shook her thus, he could not credit; for during all the fearful sounds and rumours of the past night, she had been as firm as a hero.

Yet he knew not, dared not think, to what other cause he might attribute it.

He spoke to her soothingly, tenderly, but his voice faltered as he spoke.

“Nay! nay! be not alarmed, dear girl!” he said. The tumults are all, long since, quelled; the danger has

all vanished with the darkness, and the storm. Cheer up, my own, sweet, Julia."

And, as he spoke, he passed his arm about her graceful form, and drew her closer to his bosom.

But whether it was this movement, or something in his words that aroused her, she started from his arms in a moment; and stood erect and rigid, pale still and agitated, but no longer trembling. She raised her hands to her brow, and put away the profusion of rich auburn ringlets, which had fallen down dishevelled over her eyes, and gazed at him stedfastly, strangely, as she had never gazed at him before.

"Your own Julia!" she said, in slow accents, scarce louder than a whisper, but full of strong and painful meaning. "Oh! I adjure you, by the Gods! by all you love! or hope! Are you false to me, Paullus!"

"False! Julia!" he exclaimed, starting, and the blood rushing consciously to his bold face.

"I am answered!" she said, collecting herself, with a desperate effort. "It is well—the Gods guard you!—Leave me!"

"Leave you!" he cried. "By earth, and sea, and heaven, and all that they contain! I know not what you mean."

"Know you this writing, then?" she asked him, reaching the letter from the table, and holding it before his eyes.

"No more than I know, what so strangely moves you," he answered; and she saw, by the unaffected astonishment which pervaded all his features, that he spoke truly.

"Read it," she said, somewhat more composed; "and tell me, who is the writer of it. You must know."

Before he had read six lines, it was clear to him that it must come from Lucia, and no words can describe the agony, the eager intense torture of anticipation, with which he perused it, devouring every word, and at every word expecting to find the damning record of his falsehood inscribed in characters, that should admit of no denial.

Before, however, he had reached the middle of the letter, he felt that he could bear the scrutiny of that pale girl no longer; and, lowering the strip of vellum on which it was written, met her eye firmly.

For he was resolute for once to do the true and honest thing, let what might come of it. The weaker points of

his character were vanishing rapidly, and the last few eventful days had done the work of years upon his mind; and all that work was salutary.

She, too, read something in the expression of his eye, which led her to hope—what, she knew not; and she smiled faintly, as she said—

“You know the writer, Paullus?”

“Julia, I know her,” he replied steadily.

“Her!” she said, laying an emphasis on the word, but how affected by it Arvina could not judge. “It is then a woman?”

“A very young, a very beautiful, a very wretched, girl!” he answered.

“And you love her?” she said, with an effort at firmness, which itself proved the violence of her emotion.

“By your life! Julia, I do not!” he replied, with an energy, that spoke well for the truth of his asseveration.

“Nor ever loved her?”

“Nor ever—*loved* her, Julia.” But he hesitated a little as he said it; and laid a peculiar stress on the word *loved*, which did not escape the anxious ears of the lovely being, whose whole soul hung suspended on his speech.

“Why not?” she asked, after a moment’s pause; “if she be so very young, and so very beautiful?”

“I might answer, because I never saw her, ’till I loved one more beautiful. But—”

“But you will not!” she interrupted him vehemently. “Oh! if you love me, if you *do* love me, Paullus, do not answer me so.”

“And wherefore not?” he asked her, half smiling, though little mirthful in his heart, at her impetuosity.

“Because if you descend to flatter,” answered the fair girl quietly, “I shall be sure that you intended to deceive me.”

“It would be strictly true, notwithstanding. For though, as she says, we met years ago, he was but a child then; and, since that time, I never saw her until four or five days ago—”

“And since then, how often?” Julia again interrupted him; for, in the intensity of her anxiety, she could not wait the full answer to one question, before another suggested itself to her mind, and found voice at the instant.

“Once, Julia.”

“Only once?”

“Once only, by the Gods!”

“You have not told me wherefore it was, that you never loved her!”

“Have I not told you, that I never saw her till a few days, a few hours, I might have said, ago? and does not that tell you wherefore, Julia?”

“But there is something more. There is another reason. Oh! tell me, I adjure you, by all that you hold dearest, tell me!”

“There is another reason. I told you that she was very young, and very beautiful; but, Julia, she was also very guilty!”

“Guilty!” exclaimed the fair girl, blushing fiery red, “guilty of loving you! Oh! Paullus! Paullus!” and between shame, and anger, and the repulsive shock that every pure and feminine mind experiences in hearing of a sister’s frailty, she buried her face in her hands, and wept aloud.

“Guilty, before I ever heard her name, or knew that she existed,” answered the young man, fervently; but his heart smote him somewhat, as he spoke; though what he said was but the simple truth, and it was well for him perhaps at the present moment, that Julia did not see his face. For there was much perturbation in it, and it is like that she would have judged even more hardly of that perturbation than it entirely deserved. He paused for a moment, and then added,

“But if the guilt of woman can be excusable at all, she can plead more in extenuation of her errors, than any of her sex that ever fell from virtue. She is most penitent; and might have been, but for fate and the atrocious wickedness of others, a most noble being—as she is now a most glorious ruin.”

There was another pause, during which neither spoke or moved, Julia overpowered by the excess of her feelings—he by the painful consciousness of wrong; the difficulty of explaining, of extenuating his own conduct; and above all, the dread of losing the enchanting creature, whom he had never loved so deeply or so truly as he did now, when he had well nigh forfeited all claim to her affection.

At length, she raised her eyes timidly to his, and said, "This is all very strange—there must be much, that I have a right to hear."

"There is much, Julia!—much that will be very painful for me to tell; and yet more so for you to listen to."

"And will you tell it to me?"

"Julia, I will!"

"And all? and truly?"

"And all, and truly, if I tell you at all; but you—"

"First," she said, interrupting him, "read that strange letter to the end. Then we will speak more of these things. Nay?" she continued, seeing that he was about to speak, "I will have it so. It must be so, or all is at an end between us two, now, and for ever. I do not wish to watch you; there is no meanness in my mind, Paullus, no jealousy! I am too proud to be jealous. Either you are worthy of my affection, or unworthy; if the latter, I cast you from me without one pang, one sorrow;—if the first, farther words are needless. Read that wild letter to the end. I will turn my back to you." And seating herself at the table, she took up a piece of embroidery, and made as if she would have fixed her mind upon it. But Paulus saw, as his glance followed her, that, notwithstanding the firmness of her words and manner, her hand trembled so much that she could by no means thread her needle.

He gazed on her for a moment with passionate, despairing love, and as he gazed, his spirit faltered, and he doubted. The evil genius whispered to his soul, that truth must alienate her love, must sever her from him for ever. There was a sharp and bitter struggle in his heart for that moment—but it passed; and the better spirit was again strong and clear within him.

"No!" he said to himself, "No! I have done with fraud, and falsehood! I will not win her by a lie! If by the truth I must lose her, be it so! I will be true, and at least I can—die!"

Thereon, without another word, he read the letter to the end, neither faltering, nor pausing; and then walked calmly to the table, and laid it down, perfectly resolute and tranquil, for his mind was made up for the worst.

"Have you read it?" she asked, and her voice trembled, as much as her hand had done before.

"I have, Julia, to the end. It is very sad—and much of it is true."

"And who is the girl, who wrote it?"

"Her name is Lucia Orestilla."

"Orestilla! Ye Gods! ye Gods! the shameless wife of the arch villain Catiline!"

"Not so—but the wretched, ruined daughter of that abandoned woman!"

"Call her not woman! By the Gods that protect purity! call her not woman! Did she not prompt the wretch to poison his own son! Oh! call her anything but woman! But what—what—in the name of all that is good or holy, can have brought you to know that awful being's daughter?"

"First, Julia, you must promise me never, to mortal ears, to reveal what I now disclose to you."

"Have you forgotten, Paullus, that I am yet but a young maiden, and that I have a mother?"

"Hortensia!" exclaimed the youth, starting back, aghast; for he felt that from her clear eye and powerful judgment nothing could be concealed, and that her iron will would yield in nothing to a woman's tenderness, a woman's mercy.

"Hortensia," replied the girl gently, "the best, the wisest, and the tenderest of mothers."

"True? she is all that you say—more than all! But she is resolute, withal, as iron; and stern, and cold, and unforgiving in her anger!"

"And do you need so much forgiveness, Paullus?"

"More, I fear, than my Julia's love will grant me."

"I think, my Paullus, you do not know the measure of a girl's honest love. But may I tell Hortensia? If not, you have said enough. What is not fitting for a girl to speak to her own mother, it is not fitting that she should hear at all—least of all from a man, and that man—her lover!"

"It is not that, my Julia. But what I have to say contains many lives—mine among others! contains Rome's safety, nay! existence! One whisper breathed abroad, or lisped in a slave's hearing, were the World's ruin. But be it as you will—as you think best yourself and wisest. If you will, tell Hortensia."

"I shall tell her, Paullus. I tell her everything. Since I could babble my first words, I never had a secret from her!"

"Be it so, sweet one. Now I implore you, hear me to the end, before you judge me, and then judge mercifully, as the Gods are merciful, and mortals prone to error."

"And will you tell me the whole truth?"

"The whole."

"Say on, then. I will hear you to the end; and your guilt must be great, Paullus, if you require a more partial arbitress."

It was a trying and painful task, that was forced upon him, yet he went through it nobly. At every word the difficulties grew upon him. At every word the temptation, to swerve from the truth, increased. At every word the dread of losing her, the agony of apprehension, the dull cold sense of despair, waxed heavier, and more stunning. The longer he spoke, the more certain he felt that by his own words he was destroying his own hope; yet he maned his heart stoutly, resisted the foul tempter, and, firm in the integrity of his present purpose, laid bare the secrets of his soul.

Beginning from his discovery of Medon's corpse upon the Esquiline, he now narrated to her fully all that had passed, including much that in his previous tale he had omitted. He told of his first meeting with Cataline upon the Cælian; of his visit to Cicero; of his strange conversation with the cutler Volero; of his second encounter with the traitor in the field of Mars, not omitting the careless accident by which he revealed to him Volero's recognition of the weapon. He told her of the banquet, of the art with which Cataline plied him with wine, of the fascinations of that fair fatal girl. And here, he paused awhile, reluctant to proceed. He would have given worlds, had he possessed them, to catch one glance of her averted eye, to read her features but one moment. But she sat, with her back toward him, her head downcast, tranquil and motionless, save that a tremulous shivering at times ran through her frame perceptible.

He was compelled perforce to continue his narration; and now he was bound to confess that, for the moment, he had been so bewitched by the charms of the siren, that he

had bound himself by the fatal oath, scarce knowing what he swore, which linked him to the fortunes of the villain father. Slightly he touched on that atrocity of Catiline, by telling which aloud he dared not sully her pure ears. He then related clearly and succinctly the murder of the cutler Volero, his recognition of the murderer, the forced deception which he had used reluctantly toward Cicero, and the suspicions and distrust of that great man. And here again he paused, hoping that she would speak, and interrupt him, if it were even to condemn, for so at least he should be relieved from the sickening apprehension, which almost choked his voice.

Still, she was silent, and, in so far as he could judge, more tranquil than before. For the quick tremors had now ceased to shake her, and her tears, he believed, had ceased to flow.

But was not this the cold tranquillity of a fixed resolution, the firmness of a desperate, self-controlling effort?

He could endure the doubt no longer. And, in a softer and more humble voice,

“Now, then,” he said, “you know the measure of my sin—the extent of my falsehood. All the ill of my tale is told, faithfully, frankly. What remains, is unmixed with evil. Say, then; have I sinned, Julia, beyond the hope of forgiveness? If to confess that, my eyes dazzled with beauty, my blood inflamed with wine, my better self drowned in a tide of luxury unlike aught I had ever known before, my senses wrought upon by every art, and every fascination—if to confess, that my head was bewildered, my reason lost its way for a moment—though my heart never, never failed in its faith—and by the hopes, frail hopes, which I yet cling to of obtaining you—the dread of losing you for ever! Julia, by these I swear, my heart never did fail or falter! If, I say, to confess this be sufficient, and I stand thus condemned and lost for ever, spare me the rest—I may as well be silent!”

She paused a moment, ere she answered; and it was only with an effort, choking down a convulsive sob, that she found words at all.

“Proceed,” she said, “with your tale. I cannot answer you.”

But, catching at her words, with all the elasticity of

youthful hope, he fancied that she *had* answered him, and cried joyously and eagerly—

“Sweet Julia, then you can, you will forgive me.”

“I have not said so, Paullus,” she began. But he interrupted her, ere she could frame her sentence—

“No! dearest; but your speech implied it, and—”

But here, in her turn, she interrupted him, saying—

“Then, Paullus, did my speech imply what I did not intend. For I have *not* forgiven—do not know if I can forgive, all that has passed. All depends on that which is to come. You made me promise not to interrupt your tale. I have not done so; and, in justice, I have the right to ask that you should tell it out, before you claim my final answer. So I say, once again, Proceed.”

Unable, from the steadiness of her demeanour, so much even as to conjecture what were her present feelings, yet much dispirited at finding his mistake, the young man proceeded with his narrative. Gaining courage, however, as he continued speaking, the principal difficulties of his story being past, he warmed and spoke more feelingly, more eloquently, with every word he uttered.

He told her of the deep depression, which had fallen on him the following morning, when her letter had called him to the house of Hortensia. He again related the attack made on him by Catiline, on the same evening, in Egeria's grotto; and spoke of the absolute despair, in which he was plunged, seeing the better course, yet unable to pursue it; aiming at virtue, yet forced by his fatal oath to follow vice; marking clearly before him the beacon light of happiness and honour, yet driven irresistibly into the gulf of misery, crime, and destruction. He told her of Lucia's visit to his house; how she released him from his fatal oath! disclaimed all right to his affection, nay! to his respect, even, and esteem! encouraged him to hold honour in his eye, and in the scorn of consequence to follow virtue for its own sake! He told her, too, of the conspiracy, in all its terrible details of atrocity and guilt—that dark and hideous scheme of treason, cruelty, lust, horror, from which he had himself escaped so narrowly.

Then, with a glow of conscious rectitude, he proved to her that he had indeed repented; that he was now, how-

soever he might have been deceived into error and to the brink of crime, firm, and resolved; a champion of the right; a defender of his country; trusted and chosen by the Great Consul; and, in proof of that trust, commissioned by him now to lead his troop of horsemen to Præneste, a strong fortress, near at hand, which there was reason to expect might be assailed by the conspirators.

"And now, my tale is ended," he said. "I did hope there would have been no need to reveal these things to you; but from the first, I have been resolved, if need were, to open to you my whole heart—to show you its dark spots, as its bright ones. I have sinned, Julia, deeply, against you! Your purity, your love, should have guarded me! Yet, in a moment of treacherous self-confidence, my head grew dizzy, and I fell. But oh! believe me, Julia, my heart never once betrayed you! Now say—can you pardon me—trust me—love me—be mine, as you promised? If not—speed me on my way, and my first battle-field shall prove my truth to Rome and Julia."

"Oh! this is very sad, my Paullus," she replied; "very humiliating—very, very bitter. I had a trust so perfect in your love. I could as soon have believed the sunflower would forget to turn to the day-god, as that Paul would forget Julia. I had a confidence so high, so noble, in your proud, untouched virtue. And yet I find, that at the first alluring glance of a frail beauty, you fall off from your truth to me—at the first whispering temptation of a demon, you half fall off from patriotism—honour—virtue! Forgive you, Paullus! I can forgive you readily. For well, alas! I know that the best of us all are very frail, and prone to evil. Love you? alas! for me, I do as much as ever—but say, yourself, how can I trust you? how can I be yours? when the next moment you may fall again into temptation, again yield to it. And then, what would then remain to the wretched Julia, but a most miserable life, and an untimely grave?"

The proud man bowed his head in bitter anguish; he buried his face in his hands; he gasped, and almost groaned aloud, in his great agony. His heart confessed the truth of all her words, and it was long ere he could answer her. Perhaps he would not have collected courage to do so at all, but would have risen in his agony of pride

and despair, and gone his way to die, heart-broken, hopeless, a lost man.

But she—for her heart yearned to her lover—arose and crossed the room with noiseless step to the spot where he sat, and laid her fair hand gently on his shoulder, and whispered in her voice of silvery music,

“Tell me, Paullus, how can I trust you?”

“Because I have told you all this, truly! Think you I had humbled myself thus, had I not been firm to resist? think you I have had no temptation to deceive you, to keep back a part, to palliate? and lo! I have told you all—the shameful, naked truth! How can I ever be so bribed again to falsehood, as I have been in this last hour, by hope of winning, and by dread of losing you, my soul’s idol? Because I have been true, now to the last, I think that you may trust me.”

“Are you sure, Paullus?” she said, with a soft sad smile, yet suffering him to retain the little hand he had imprisoned while he was speaking—“very, very sure?”

“Will you believe me, Julia?”

“Will you be true hereafter, Paullus?”

“By all—”

“Nay! swear not by the Gods,” she interrupted him; “they say the Gods laugh at the perjury of lovers! But oh! remember, Paullus, that if you were indeed untrue to Julia, she could but die!”

He caught her to his heart, and she for once resisted not; and, for the first time permitted, his lips were pressed to hers in a long, chaste, holy kiss.

“And now,” he said, “my own, own Julia, I must say fare you well. My horse awaits me at your door—my troopers are half the way hence to Præneste.”

“Nay!” she replied, blushing deeply, “but you will surely see Hortensia, ere you go.”

“It must be, then, but for a moment,” he answered. “For duty calls me; and *you* must not tempt me to break my new-born resolution. But say, Julia, will you tell all these things to Hortensia?”

She smiled, and laid her hand upon his mouth; but he kissed it, and drew it down by gentle force, and repeated his question,

“Will you?”

“Not a word of it, Paul. Do you think me so foolish?”

“Then I will—one day, but not now. Meanwhile, let us go seek for her.”

And, passing his arm around her slender waist, he led her gently from the scene of so many doubts and fears, of so much happiness.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SENATE.

Most potent, grave, and reverend Seniors.

OTHELLO.

THE second morning had arrived, after that regularly appointed for the Consular elections.

No tumult had occurred, nor any overt act to justify the apprehensions of the people; yet had those apprehensions in no wise abated. The very indistinctness of the rumored terror perhaps increased its weight; and so widespread was the vague alarm, so prevalent the dread and excitement, that in the haggard eyes and pale faces of the frustrated conspirators, there was little, if anything, to call attention; for whose features wore their natural expression, during those fearful days, each moment of which might bring forth massacre and conflagration? Whose, but the great Consul's?

The second morning had arrived; and the broad orb of the newly risen sun, lurid and larger than his wont, as it struggled through the misty haze of the Italian autumn, had scarcely gained sufficient altitude to throw its beams over the woody crest of the Esquiline into the hollow of the Sacred Way.

The slant light fell, however, full on the splendid terraces and shrines of the many-templed Palatine, playing upon their stately porticoes, and tipping their rich capitals with golden lustre.

And at that early hour, the ancient hill was thronged with busy multitudes.

The crisis was at hand—the Senate was in solemn session. The knights were gathered in their force, all arm-

ed. The younger members of the patrician houses were mustered with their clients. The fasces of the lictors displayed the broad heads of the axes glittering above the rods, which bound them—the axes, never borne in time of peace, or within the city walls, save upon strange emergency.

In the old temple of Jupiter Stator, chosen on this occasion for the strength of its position, standing on the very brink of the steep declivity of the hill where it overlooked the great Roman forum, that grand assembly sate in grave deliberation.

The scene was worthy of the actors, as were the actors of the strange tragedy in process.

It was the cella, or great circular space of the inner temple. The brazen doors of this huge hall, facing the west, as was usual in all Roman temples, were thrown open; and without these, on the portico, yet so placed that they could hear every word that passed within the building, sat on their benches, five on each side of the door, the ten tribunes* of the people.

Within the great space, surrounded by a double peristyle of tall Tuscan columns, and roofed by a vast dome, richly carved and gilded, but with a circular opening at the summit, through which a flood of light streamed down on the assembled magnates, the Senate was in session.

Immediately facing the doors stood the old Statue of the God, as old, it was believed by some, as the days of Romulus, with the high altar^a at its base, hung round with votive wreaths, and glittering with ornaments of gold.

Around this altar were grouped the augurs, each clad, as was usual on occasions of high solemnity, in his *trabea*, or robe of horizontal stripes, in white and purple; each holding in his hand his *lituus*, a crooked staff whereby to designate the temples of the heaven, in which to observe the omens.

* The Tribunes of the people were, at this period of the Republic, Senators; the Atinian law, the date of which is not exactly fixed, having undoubtedly come into operation soon after A. C. 130. I do not, however, find it mentioned, that their seats were thereupon transferred into the body of the Senate; and I presume that such was not the case; as they were not real senators, but had only the right of speaking without voting, as was the case with all who sat by the virtue of their offices; without regular election.

On every side of the circumference, except that occupied by the altar and the idol, were ranged in circular state the benches of the order.

Immediately to the right of the altar, were placed the curule chairs, rich with carved ivory and crimson cushions, of the two consuls; and behind them, erect, with their shouldered axes, stood the stout lictors.

Cicero, as the first chosen of the consuls, sat next the statue of the God; calm in his outward mien, as the severe and placid features of the marble deity, although within him the soul labored mightily, big with the fate of Rome. Next him Antonius, a stout, bold, sensual-looking soldier, filled his place—worthily, indeed, so far as stature, mien, and bearing were concerned; but with a singular expression in his eye, which seemed to indicate embarrassment, perhaps apprehension.

After these, the presiding officers of the Republic, were present, each according to his rank, the conscript fathers—first, the Prince of the Senate, and then the Consulars, Censorians, and Prætorians, down to those who had filled the lowest office of the state, that of Quæstor, which gave its occupant, after his term of occupancy expired, admission to the grand representative assembly of the commonwealth.

For much as there has been written on all sides of this subject, there now remains no doubt that, from the earliest to the latest age of Rome, the Senate was strictly, although an aristocratical, still an elective representative assembly.

The Censors, themselves, elected by the Patricians out of their own order, in the assembly of the Curiæ, had the appointment of the Senators; but from those only who had filled one of the magistracies, all of which were conferred by the popular vote of the assembly of the centuries; and all of which, at this period of the Republic, might be, and sometimes were, conferred on Plebeians—as in the case of Marius, six times elected Consul in spite of Patrician opposition.

Such was the constitution of the Senate, purely elective, though like all other portions of the Roman constitution, under such checks and balances as were deemed sufficient to ensure it from becoming a democratical assembly.

And such, in fact, it never did become. For having

been at first an elective body chosen from an hereditary aristocracy, it was at that time, save in the varying principles of individuals, wholly aristocratic in its nature. Nor, after the tenure of the various magistracies, which conferred eligibility to the Senate, was thrown open to the plebeians, did any great change follow; since the preponderance of patrician influence in the assembly of the centuries, and the force perhaps of old habit, combined to continue most of the high offices of state in the hands of members of the Old Houses. Again, when plebeians were raised to office, and became, as they were styled, New Men, they speedily were merged in the nobility; and were no less aristocratic in their measures, than the oldest members of the aristocracy.

For when have plebeians, anywhere, when elevated to superior rank, been true to their origin; been other than the fellest persecutors of plebeians?

The senate was therefore still, as it had been, a calm and conservative assembly.

It was not indeed, what it had been, before Marius first, and then Sylla, the avenger, had decimated it of their foes with the sword; and filled the vacancies with unworthy friends and partizans.

Yet it was still a grand, a wise, a noble body—when viewed as a body—and, for the most part, its decisions were worthy of its dignity and power—were sage, conservative, and patriotic.

On this occasion, all motives had conspired to produce a full house; doubt, anger, fear, excitement, curiosity, the love of country, the strong sense of right, the fiery impulses of interest, hate, vengeance, had urged all men of all parties, to be participants in the eventful business of the day.

About five hundred senators were present; men of all ages from thirty-two years* upward—that being the earliest at which a man could fill this eminent seat. But the majority were of those, who having passed the prime of active life, might be considered to have reached the highest of mental power and capacity, removed alike from the

* The age of senatorial eligibility is nowhere distinctly named. But the quaestorship, the lowest office which gave admission to the Curia, required the age of thirty-one in its occupant.

greenness of inconsiderate youth, and the imbecility of extreme old age.

The rare beauty of the Italian race—the strength and symmetry of the unrivalled warrior nation, of which these were, for the most part, the noblest and most striking specimens; the grand flow of the snow-white draperies, faced with the broad crimson laticlave—the classic grace of their positions—the absence of all rigid angular lines, of anything mean or meagre, fantastic or tawdry in the garb of the solemn concourse, rendered the meeting of Rome's Fathers a widely different spectacle from the convention of any other representative assembly, the world has ever witnessed.

There was no flippancy, no affectation, no light converse—The members, young or old, had come thither to perform a great duty, in strength of purpose, singleness of spirit—and all felt deeply the weight of the present moment, the vastness of the interests concerned. The good and the true were there convened to defend the majesty, perhaps the safety, of their country—the wicked to strive for interest, for revenge, for life itself!

For Catiline well knew, and had instilled his knowledge carefully into the minds of his confederates, that now to conquer was indeed to triumph; that now to be defeated was to fail, probably, forever—to die, it was most like, by the dread doom of the Tarpeian.

Not one of the conspirators but was in his appointed place, firm, seemingly unconscious, and unruffled; and as the eye of the great consul glanced from one to another of that guilty throng, he could not, even amid his detestation of their crimes, but admire the cool hardihood with which they sat unmoved on the brink of destruction; could not but think, within himself, how vast the good that might be wrought by such resolution, under a virtuous leader, and in an upright cause. Catiline noticed the glance; and as he marked it run along the crowded benches, dwelling a moment on the face of each one of his own confederates, he saw in an instant, that all was discovered; and, as he saw, resolved that since craft had failed to conceal, henceforth he would trust audacity alone to carry out his detected villainy.

But now the augurs had performed their rites; the day

was pronounced fortunate; the assembly formal; and nothing more remained, but to proceed to the business of the moment.

A little pause ensued, after the sanction of the augurs had been given; a short space, during which each man drew a deep breath, as though he were aware that ere long he should hear words spoken, that would thrill his every nerve with excitement, and hold him breathless with awe and apprehension.

There was not a voice, not a motion, not the rustling of a garment, through the large building; for every living form was mute, as the marble effigies around them, with intense expectation.

Every eye of conspirator, or patriot, was riveted upon the consul, the new man of Arpinum.

He rose, not unobservant of the general expectation, nor ungratified; for that great man, with all his grand genius, solid intellect, sound virtue, had one small miserable weakness; he was not proud, but vain; vain beyond the feeblest and most craving vanity of womanhood.

Yet now he showed it not—perhaps felt it, in a less degree than usual; it might be, it was crushed within him for the time, by the magnitude of vast interests, the consciousness of right motives, the necessity of extraordinary efforts.

He rose; advanced a step or two, in front of his curule chair, and in a clear slow voice gave utterance to the solemn words, which formed the exordium to all senatorial business.

“May this be good, and of good omen, happy, and fortunate to the Roman people, the Quirites; which now I lay before you, Fathers, and Conscript Senators.”

He paused, emphatically, with the formula; and then raising his voice a little, and turning his eyes slowly round the house, as if in mute appeal to all the senators.

“For that,” he said, “on which you must this day determine, concerns not the majesty or magnitude of Rome—the question is not now of insolent foes to be chastised, or of faithful friends to be rewarded—is not, how the city shall be made more beautiful, the state more proud and noble, the empire more enduring. No, conscript fathers; for the round world has never seen a city, so flourishing in all rare beauty, so decorated with the virtue of her living

citizens, so noble in the memories of her dead heroes—the sun has never shone upon a state, so solidly established; upon an empire so majestic and mighty; extending from the Herculean columns, the far limits of the west, beyond the blue Symplegades; from Hyperborean snows, to the parched sands of Ethiopia!—no! Conscript Fathers, for we have no foes unsubdued, from the wild azure-tinctured hordes of Gaul to the swart Eunuchs of the Pontic king—for we have no friends unrewarded, unsheltered by the wings of our renown.

“No! it is not to beautify, to stablish, to augment—but to preserve the empire, that I now call upon you; that I now urge you, by all that is sweet, is sacred, is sublime in the name of our country; that I implore you, by whatever earth contains of most awful, and heaven of most holy!

“I said to preserve it! And do you ask from whom? Is there a Gallic tumult? Have Cimbric myriads again scaled the Alps, and poured their famished deluge over our devastated frontiers? Hath Mithridates trodden on the neck of Pompey? By the great gods! hath Carthage revived from her ashes? is Hannibal, or a greater one than Hannibal, again thundering at our gates, with Punic engines visible from the Janiculum?

“If it were so, I should not despair of Rome—my heart would not throb, as it now does, nor my voice tremble with anxiety.

“Cisalpine Gaul is tranquil as the vale of Arno! No bow is bended in the Teutonic forests, unless against the elk or urus! The legions have not turned their backs before the scymetars of Pontus! The salt sown in the market-place of Carthage hath borne no crop, but desolation. The one-eyed conqueror is nerveless in the silent grave!

“But were all these, now peaceful, subjugated, lifeless, were all these, I say, in arms, victorious, present, upon this soil of Italy, around these walls of Rome, I should doubt nothing, fear nothing, expect nothing, but present strife, and future victory!

“There is—there is, that spark of valor, that clear light of Roman virtue, alive in every heart; yea! even of our maids and matrons, that they would brook no hostile step even upon the threshold of our empire!

“What then do I foresee? what fear? Massacre—

parricide—conflagration—treason! Treason in Rome itself—in the Forum—in the Campus—*here!* Here in this holiest and safest spot! Here in the shrine of that great God, who, ages since, when this vast Rome was but a mud-built hamlet, that golden capitol, a straw-thatched shed, rolled back the tide of war, and stablished here, here, where my foot is fixed, the immortal seat of empire!

“Even now as I turn my eyes around me they fall abhorrent on the faces, they read indignant the designs, of their country’s parricides!

“Aye! Conscript Fathers, prætorians, patricians of the great old houses, I see them in their places here; ready to vote immediately on their own monstrous schemes! I see them here, adulterers, forgers of wills, assassins, spend-thrifts, poisoners, defilers of vestal virgins, contemners of the Gods, parricides of the Republic! I see them, with daggers sharpened against all true Romans, lurking beneath their fringed and perfumed tunics! Misled by strange ambition, maddened with lust, drunk with despairing guilt, athirst for the blood of citizens!

“I see them! you all see them! Will you await in coward apathy, until they shake you from your lethargy—until the outcries of your murdered children, of your ravished wives arouse you, until you awake from your sleep and find Rome in ashes?

“You hear me—you gaze on me in wonder, you ask me with your eyes what it is that I mean? who are the traitors? Lend me your ears then, and fix well your minds, lest they shrink in disgust and wonder. Lend me your ears only, and I fear not that you will determine, worthily of yourselves, and of the Republic!

“You all well know that on the 16th day before the calends of November, which should have been the eve of the consular Elections, I promised that I would soon lay before you ample proofs of the plot, which then I foretold to you but darkly.

“Mark, now, the faces of the men I shall address, and judge whether I then promised vainly; whether what I shall now disclose craves your severe attention—your immediate action.”

He paused for a moment, as if to note the effect of his words: then turning round abruptly upon the spot, where

Catiline sat, writhing with rage and impatience, and gnawing his nether lip, until the blood trickled down his chin, he flung forth his arm with an indignant gesture, and instantly addressed him by his name, in tones that rang beneath the vaulted roof, over the heads of the self-convicted traitors, like heaven's own thunder, and found a fearful echo in their dismayed and guilty souls.

"Where wert thou, Catiline?" he thundered forth the charge, amid the mute astonishment of all—"Where wert thou on the evening of the Ides? what wert thou doing? Speak! Unless guilt and despair hold thee silent, I say to thee, speak, Catiline!"

Again he stopped in mid-speech, as if for an answer, fixed his eye steadily on the face of the arch conspirator. But he, though he spoke not to reply, quailed not, nor shunned that steady gaze, but met it with a terrible and portentous glare, pregnant with more than mortal hatred.

"Thou wilt not—can'st not—darest not! Now hear and tremble! Hear, and know that no step of thine, or deed, or motion escapes my eye—no, traitor, not one movement!

"On the eve of the Ides, thou wert in the street of the Scythemakers! Ha! does thy cheek burn now? In the house of a senator—of Marcus Porcus Læca. But thou wert not there, till thou hadst added one more deed of murder to those which needed no addition. Thou wert, I say, in the house of Læca; and many whom I now see around me, with trim and well-curled beards, with long-sleeved tunics and air-woven togas, many whom I could name, and will, if needs be, were there with thee!

"What beverage didst thou send around? what oath didst thou administer, thou to thy foul associates? and on the altar of what God?

"Fathers, my mind shrinks, as I speak, with horror—that bowl mantled to the brim with the gore of a human victim; those lips reeked with that dread abomination! His lips, and those of others, fitter to sip voluptuous nectar from the soft mouths of their noble paramours than to quaff such pollution!

"That oath was to destroy Rome, utterly, with fire and the sword, till not one stone should stand upon another, to mark the site of empire!

“The silver eagle was the god to whom he swore! The silver eagle, whose wings were dyed so deep in massacre by Marius—to whom he had a shrine in his own house, consecrated by what crimes, adored by what sacrilege, I say not!

“The consular election was the day fixed; and, had the people met on that day in the Campus, on that day had Rome ceased to be!

“To murder me in my robes of peace, at the Comitia, to murder the consuls elect, to murder the patricians to a man, was his own task, most congenial to his own savage nature!

“To fire the city in twelve several places was destined to his worthy comrades, whose terror my eye now beholds, whose names for the present my tongue shall not disclose. For I would give them time to repent, to change their frantic purpose, to cast away their sin—oh! that they would do so! oh! that they would have compassion on their prostrate and imploring country—compassion on themselves—on me, who beseech them to turn back, ere it be too late, to the ways of virtue, happiness, and honor!

“But names there are, which I will speak out, for to conceal them would avail nothing, since they have drawn the sword already, and raised the banner of rebellion against the majesty of Rome.

“Septimius of Camerinum has stirred the slaves even now to a fresh servile war! has given out arms! has appointed leaders! by the Gods! has a force on foot in the Picene district! Julius is soliciting the evil spirits of Apulia; and, ere four days have flown, you shall have tidings from the north, that Caius Manlius is in arms at Fæsulæ. Already he commands more than two legions; not of raw levies, not of emancipated slaves, or enfranchised gladiators—though these ere long will swell his host. No! Sylla’s veterans muster under his banner—the same swords gleam around him which conquered the famed Macedonian phalanx at bloody Chæronea, which stormed the long walls of Piræus, which won Bithynia, Cappadocia, Paphlagonia, which drove great Mithridates back to his own Pontus!

“Nor is this all—for, if frustrated by the postponement of the consular comitia, believe not that the rage of the

parricide is averted, or his thirst for the blood of Romans quenched forever.

“No, Fathers, he hath but deferred the day; and even now he hath determined on another. The fifth before the calends! Await that day in quiet, and ye will never rue your apathy. For none of you shall live to rue it, save those who now smile grimly, conscious of their own desperate resolve, expectant of your apathy.

“Nor is his villainy all told, even now; for so securely and so wisely has he laid his plans, that, had not the great Gods interfered and granted it to me to discover all, he must needs have succeeded! On the night of the calends themselves he would have been the master of Præneste, that rich and inaccessible strong-hold, by a nocturnal esca-lade! That I myself have already made impossible—the magistrates are warned, the free burghers armed, and the castle garrisoned by true men, and impregnable.

“Do ye the like, Fathers and Conscript Senators, and Rome also shall be safe, inaccessible, immortal. Give me the powers to save you, and I devote my mind, my life. I am here ready to die at this instant—far worse than death to a noble mind, ready to go hence, and be forgotten, if I may rescue Rome from this unequalled peril!”

Again, he ceased speaking for a moment, and many thought that he had concluded his oration; but in a second's space he resumed, in a tone more spirited and fiery yet, his eyes almost flashing lightning, and his whole frame appearing to expand, as he confronted the undaunted traitor.

“Dost thou not now see, Catiline, that in all things thou art my inferior? Dost thou not feel thyself caught, detected like a thief? baffled? defeated? beaten? and wilt thou not now lay down thine arms, thy rage, thy hate, against this innocent republic? wilt thou not liberate me now from great fear, great peril, and great odium?”

“No! thou wilt not—the time hath flown! thou canst not repent—canst not forgive, or be forgiven—the Gods have maddened thee to thy destruction—thy crimes are full-blown, and ripening fast for harvest—earth is aweary of thy guilt—Hades yawns to receive thee!

“Tremble, then, tremble! Yea! in the depths of thy secret soul—for all thine eye glares more with hate than terror, and thy lip quivers, not with remorse but rage—

yea! thou dost tremble—for thou dost see, feel, know, thy schemes, thy confederates, thyself, detected, frustrated, devoted to destruction!

“Enough! It is for you, my Fathers, to determine; for me to act your pleasure. And if your own souls, your own lives, your own interests, yea! your own fears, cry not aloud to rouse you, with a voice stronger than the eternal thunder, why should I seek to warn you? Whom his own, his wife’s, children’s, country’s safety, the glory of his great forefathers, the veneration of the everlasting Gods awaiting his decision from the tottering pinnacle of Rome’s capitol—whom all these things excite not to action—no voice of man, no portent of the Gods themselves can stir to energy or valor; and I but waste my words in exhorting you to manhood!

“But they *will* burst the bonds of your long stupor; they *will* re-ignite, in your hearts, that blaze of Roman virtue, which may sleep for a while, but never can be all extinguished!—and ye *will* stir yourselves like men; ye *will* save your country! For this thing I do not believe; that the immortal Gods would have built up this commonwealth of Rome to such a height of beauty, of glory, of puissance, had they foredoomed it to destruction, by hands so base as those now armed against it. Nor, had it been their pleasure to abolish its great name, and make it such as Troy and Carthage, would they have placed me here, the consul, endowed by themselves with power to discern, but with no power to avert destruction!”

His words had done their work. The dismayed blank faces of all the conspirators, with the exception of the arch traitor only, whom it would seem that nothing could disconcert or dismay, confirmed the impression made upon all minds by that strong appeal. For, though he had mentioned no man’s name save Catiline’s and Læca’s only, suspicion was called instantly to those who were their known associates in riot and debauchery; and many eyes were scrutinizing the pale features, which struggled vainly to appear calm and unconcerned.

The effect of the speech was immediate, universal. There were not three men of the order present who were not now convinced as fully in their own minds of the truth of Cicero’s accusation, as they would, had it come forth in

thunder from the cold lips of the marble God, who overlooked their proud assembly.

There was a long drawn breath, as he ceased speaking—one, and simultaneous through the whole concourse; and, though there were a few men there, Crassus, especially, and Caius Julius Cæsar, who, though convinced of the existence of conspiracy, would fain have defended the conspirators, in the existing state of feeling, they dared not attempt to do so.

Then Cicero called by name on the Prince of the Senate, enquiring if he would speak on the subject before the house, and on receiving from him a grave negative gesture, he put the same question to the eldest of the consulars, and thence in order, none offering any opinion or showing any wish to debate, until he came to Marcus Cato. He rose at once to speak, stern and composed, without the least sign of animation on his impassive face, without the least attempt at eloquence in his words, or grace in his gestures; yet it was evident that he was heard with a degree of attention, which proved that the character of the man more than compensated the unvarnished style and rough phraseology of the speaker.

“As it appears to me,” he said, “Fathers and Conscript Senators, after the very luminous and able oration which our wise consul has this day held forth, it would be great folly, and great loss of time, to add many words to it. This I am not about to do, I assure you, but I arise in my place to say two things. Cicero has told you that a conspiracy exists, and that Catiline is the planner, and will be the executor of it. This, though I know not by what sagacity or foresight, unless from the Gods, he discovered it—this, I say, I believe confidently, clearly—all things declare it—not least the faces of men! I believe therefore, every word our consul has spoken; so do you all, my friends. Nevertheless, it is just and right, that the man, villain as he may be, shall be heard in his own behalf. Let him then speak at once, or confess by his silence! This is the first thing I would say—the next follows it! If he admit, or fail clearly to disprove his guilt, let us not be wanting to ourselves, to our country, or to the great and prudent consul, who, if man can, will save us in this crisis. Let us, I say, decree forthwith, **‘THAT THE CONSULS SEE**

THE REPUBLIC TAKES NO HARM!' and let us hold the consular election to-morrow, on the field of Mars—There, with our magistrates empowered to act, our clients in arms to defend us, let us see who will dare to disturb the Roman people! Let who would do so, remember that not all the power or favor of Great Marius could rescue Saturninus from the death he owed the people—remember that we have a consul no less resolute and vigorous, than he is wise and good—that there are axes in the fasces of the Lictors—that there stands the Tarpeian!"

And as he spoke, he flung wide both his arms; pointing with this hand to the row of glittering blades which shone above the head of the chief magistrate, with that, through the open door-way of the temple, to the bold front of the precipitous and fatal rock, all lighted up by the gay sunbeams, as it stood fronting them, beyond the hollow Velabrum, crowned with the ramparts of the capitol.

A general hum, as if of assent, followed, and without putting the motion to the vote, Cicero turned his eye rapidly to every face, and receiving from every senator a slight nod of assent, he looked steadily in the fierce and ghastly face of the traitor, and said to him;

"Arise, Catiline, and speak, if you will!—But take my counsel, confess your guilt, go hence, and be forgiven!"

"Forgiven!" cried the traitor, furious and desperate—"Forgiven!—this to a Roman citizen!—this to a Roman noble! Hear me, Fathers and Conscript Senators—hear me!—who am a soldier and a man, and neither driveller nor dotard. I tell you, there is no conspiracy, hath been none, shall be none—save in the addled brains of yon prater from Arpinum, who would fain set his foot upon the neck of Romans. All is, all shall be peace in Rome, unless the terror of a few dastards drive you to tyranny and persecution, and from persecution come resistance? For myself, let them who would ruin me, beware. My hand has never yet failed to protect my head, nor have many foes laughed in the end at Sergius Catiline!—unless," he added with a ferocious sneer—"they laughed in their death-pang. For my wrongs past, I have had some vengeance; for these, though I behold the axes, though I see, whence I stand, the steep Tarpeian, I think I shall have more, and live to feast my eyes with the downfall of my foes. Fathers, there

are two bodies in the State, one weak, with a base but crafty head—the other powerful and vast, but headless. Urge me a little farther, and you shall find that a wise and daring head will not be wanting long, to that bold and puissant body. Urge me, and I will be that head; oppress me, and ——”

But insolence such as this, was not tolerable. There was an universal burst, almost a shout, of indignation from that assembly, the wonted mood of which was so stern, so cold, so gravely dignified, and silent. Many among the younger senators sprang to their feet, enraged almost beyond the control of reason; nor did the bold defiance of the daring traitor, who stood with his arms folded on his breast, and a malignant sneer of contempt on his lip, mocking their impotent displeasure, tend to disarm their wrath.

Four times he raised his voice, four times a cry of indignation drowned his words, and at length, seeing that he could obtain no farther hearing, he resumed his seat with an expression fiendishly malignant, and a fierce imprecation on Rome, and all that it contained.

After a little time, the confusion created by the audacity of that strange being moderated; order and silence were restored, and, upon Cato's motion, the Senate was divided.

Whatever might have been the result had Catiline been silent, the majority was overwhelming. The very partisans and favorers of the conspiracy, not daring to commit themselves more openly, against so strong a manifestation, passed over one by one, and voted with the consul.

Catiline stood alone, against the vote of the whole order. Yet stood and voted resolute, as though he had been conscious of the right.

The vote was registered, the Senate declared martial law, investing the consuls with dictatorial power, by the decree which commanded them to **SEE THAT THE REPUBLIC TAKES NO HARM.**

The very tribunes, factious and reckless as they were, potent for ill and powerless for good, presumed not to interpose. Not even Lucius Bestia, deep as he was in the design—Bestia, whose accusation of the consul from the rostrum was the concerted signal for the massacre, the conflagration—not Bestia himself, relied so far on the inviolability of his person, as to intrude his *veto*.

The good cause had prevailed—the good Consul triumphed! The Senate was dismissed, and as the stream of patrician togas flowed through the temple door conspicuous, the rash and reckless traitor shouldered the mass to and fro, dividing it as a brave galley under sail divides the murmuring but unresisting billows.

Once in the throng he touched Julius Cæsar's robe as he brushed onward, and as he did so, a word fell on his ear in the low harmonious tones which marked the orator, second to none in Rome, save Cicero alone!—

“Fear not,” it said—“another day will come!—”

“Fear!—” exclaimed the Conspirator in a hoarse cry, half fury, half contempt. “What is fear?—I know not the thing, nor the word!—Go, prate of fear to Cicero, and he will understand you!”

These words perhaps alienated one who might have served him well.

But so it ever is! Even in the shrewdest and most worldly wise of men, passion will often outweigh interest; and plans, which have been framed for years with craft and patience, are often wrecked by the impetuous rashness of a moment.

END OF VOL. I.

THE ROMAN TRAITOR:

OR, THE DAYS OF

CICERO, CATO AND CATALINE.

A TRUE TALE OF THE REPUBLIC.

BY HENRY WILLIAM HERBERT,

AUTHOR OF "CROMWELL," "MARMADUKE WYVIL," "BROTHERS," ETC.

Why not a Borgia or a Catiline?—POPE.

VOLUME II.

This is one of the most powerful Roman stories in the English language, and is of itself sufficient to stamp the writer as a powerful man. The dark intrigues of the days which Cæsar, Sallust and Cicero made illustrious; when Cataline defied and almost defeated the Senate; when the plots which ultimately overthrew the Roman Republic were being formed, are described in a masterly manner. The book deserves a permanent position by the side of the great *Bellum Catalinarium* of Sallust, and if we mistake not will not fail to occupy a prominent place among those produced in America.

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THE ROMAN TRAITOR;

OR, THE DAYS OF

CICERO, CATO AND CATALINE.

A TRUE TALE OF THE REPUBLIC.

CHAPTER I.

THE OLD PATRICIAN.

A Roman father of the olden time.

MS. PLAY.

IN a small street, not far from the Sacred Way and the Roman Forum, there was a large house, occupying the whole of one *insula*, as the space contained between four intersecting streets was called by the ancients.

But, although by its great size and a certain rude magnificence, arising from the massy stone-work of its walls, and the solemn antiquity of the old Oscan columns which adorned its entrance, it might be recognised at once as the abode of some Patrician family; it was as different in many respects from the abodes of the aristocracy of that day, as if it had been erected in a different age and country.

It had no stately colonnades of foreign marbles, no tessellated pavement to the vestibule, no glowing frescoes on the walls, no long lines of exterior windows, glittering with the new luxury of glass. All was decorous, it is true; but all, at the same time, was stern, and grave, and singular for its antique simplicity.

On either hand of the entrance, there was, in accordance with the custom of centuries long past, when Rome's Consulars were tillers of the ground, a large shop with an open front, devoted to the sale of the produce of the own-

er's farm. And, strange to say, although the custom had been long disused in these degenerate times, it seemed that the owner of this time-honored mansion adhered sturdily to the ancient usage of his race.

For, in one of these large cold unadorned vaults, a tall grayheaded slave, a rural laborer, as it required no second glance to perceive, was presiding over piles of cheese, stone-jars of honey, baskets of autumn fruits, and sacks of grain, by the red light of a large smoky flambeau; while a younger man, who from his resemblance to the other might safely be pronounced his son, was keeping an account of the sales by a somewhat complicated system of tallies.

In the other apartment, two youths, slaves likewise from the suburban or rustic farm, were giving samples, to such as wished to buy, of different qualities of wine from several amphora or earthen pitchers, which stood on a stone counter forming the sill of the low-browed window.

It was late in the evening already, and the streets were rapidly growing dark; yet there were many passengers abroad, more perhaps than was usual at that hour; and now and then, a little group would form about one or the other of the windows, cheapening and purchasing provisions, and chatting for a few minutes, after their business was finished, with their gossips.

These groups were composed altogether of the lowest order of the free citizens of Rome, artizans, and small shop keepers, and here and there a woman of low origin, or perhaps a slave, the house steward of some noble family, mingling half reluctantly with his superiors. For the time had not arrived, when the soft eunuchs of the East, and the bold bravoës of the heroic North, favorites and tools of some licentious lord, dared to insult the freeborn men of Rome, or gloried in the badges of their servitude.

The conversation ran, as it was natural to expect, on the probable results of the next day's election; and it was a little remarkable, that among these, who should have been the supporters of the democratic faction, there appeared to be far more of alarm and of suspicion, concerning the objects of Catiline, than of enthusiasm for the popular cause.

“He a man of the people, or the people’s friend!” said an old grave-looking mechanic; “No, by the Gods! no more than the wolf is the friend of the sheepfold!”

“He may hate the nobles,” said another, “or envy the great rich houses; but he loves nothing of the people, unless it be their purses, if he can get a chance to squeeze them”—

“Or their daughters,” interrupted a third, “if they be fair and willing”—

“Little cares he for their good-will,” cried yet a fourth, “so they are young and handsome. It is but eight days since, that some of his gang carried off Marcus’, the butcher’s, bride, Icilia, on the night of her bridal. They kept her three days; and on the fourth sent her home dishonored, with a scroll, ‘that she was *now* a fit wife for a butcher’!”

“By the Gods!” exclaimed one or two of the younger men, “who was it did this thing?”

“One of the people’s friends!” answered the other, with a sneer.

“The people have no friends, since Caius Marius died,” said the deep voice of Fulvius Flaccus, as he passed casually through the crowd.

“But what befel the poor Icilia?” asked an old matron, who had been listening with greedy sympathy to the dark tale.

“Why, Marcus would yet have taken her to his bosom, seeing she had no share in the guilt; but she bore a heart too Roman to bring disgrace upon one she loved, or to survive her honor. Icilia *is* no longer.”

“She died like Lucretia!” said an old man, who stood near, with a clouded brow, which flashed into stormy light, as the same deep voice asked aloud,

“Shall she be so avenged?”

“But the transient gleam faded instantly away, and the sad face was again blank and rayless, as he replied—

“No—for who should avenge her?”

“The people! the people!” shouted several voices, for the mob was gathering, and growing angry—

“The Roman People should avenge her!”

“Tush!” answered Fulvius Flaccus. “There is no Roman people!”

“And who are you,” exclaimed two or three of the younger men, “that dare tell us so?”

“The grandson,” answered the republican, “of one, who, while there yet *was* a people, loved it”—

“His name? his name?” shouted many voices.

“He hath no name”—replied Fulvius. “He lost that, and his life together.”

“Lost them for the people?” inquired the old man, whom he had first addressed, and who had been scrutinizing him narrowly.

“And *by* the people,” answered the other. “For the people’s cause; and by the people’s treason!—as is the case,” he added, half scornfully, half sadly, “with all who love the people.”

“Hear him, my countrymen,” said the old man. “Hear him. If there be any one can save you, it is he. It is Fulvius, the son of Caius, the son of Marcus—Flaccus. Hear him, I say, if he will only lead you.”

“Lead us! speak to us! lead us!” shouted the fickle crowd. “Love us, good Fulvius, as your fathers did of old.”

“And die, for you, as they died!” replied the other, in a tone of melancholy sarcasm. “Hark you, my masters,” he added, “there are none now against whom to lead you; and if there were, I think there would be none to follow. Keep your palms unsoiled by the base bribes of the nobles! Keep your ears closed to the base lies of the demagogues! Keep your hearts true and honest! Keep your eyes open and watchful! Brawl not, one with the other; but be faithful, as brethren should. Be grave, laborious, sober, and above all things humble, as men who once were free and great, and now, by their own fault, are fallen and degraded. Make yourselves fit to be led gloriously; and, when the time shall come, there will be no lack of glorious leaders!”

“But to-morrow? what shall we do to-morrow?” cried several voices; but this time it was the elder men, who asked the question, “for whom shall we vote to-morrow?”

“For the friend of the people!” answered Flaccus.

“Where shall we find him?” was the cry; “who is the friend of the people?”

“Not he who would arm them, one against the other,”

he replied. "Not he, who would burn their workshops, and destroy their means of daily sustenance! Not he, by all the Gods! who sports with the honor of their wives, the virtue"—

But he was interrupted here, by a stern sullen hum among his audience, increasing gradually to a fierce savage outcry. The mob swayed to and fro; and it was evident that something was occurring in the midst, by which it was tremendously excited.

Breaking off suddenly in his speech, the democrat leaped on a large block of stone, standing at the corner of the large house in front of which the multitude was gathered, and looked out anxiously, if he might descry the cause of the tumult.

Nor was it long ere he succeeded.

A young man, tall and of a slender frame, with features singularly handsome, was making his way, as best he could, with unsteady steps, and a face haggard and pale with debauchery, through the tumultuous and angry course.

His head, which had no other covering than its long curled and perfumed locks, was crowned with a myrtle wreath; he wore a long loose saffron-colored tunic richly embroidered, but ungirt, and flowing nearly to his ankles; and from the dress, and the torch-bearers, who preceded him, as well as from his wild eye and reeling gait, it was evident that he was returning from some riotous banquet.

Fulvius instantly recognised him. It was a kinsman of his own, Aulus, the son of Aulus Fulvius, the noblest of the survivors of his house, a senator of the old school, a man of stern and rigid virtue, the owner of that grand simple mansion, beside the door of which he stood.

But, though he recognised his cousin, he was at a loss for a while to discover the cause of the tumult; 'till, suddenly, a word, a female name, angrily murmured through the crowd, gave a clue to its meaning.

"Icilia! Icilia!"

Still, though the crowd swayed to and fro, and jostled, and shouted, becoming evidently more angry every moment, it made way for the young noble, who advanced fearlessly, with a sort of calm and scornful insolence,

contemning the rage which his own vile deed had awakened.

At length one of the mob, bolder than the rest, thrust himself in between the torch bearers and their lord, and meeting the latter face to face, cried out, so that all the crowd might hear,

“Lo! Aulus Fulvius! the violator of Icilia! the friend of the people!”

A loud roar of savage laughter followed; and then, encouraged by the applause of his fellows, the man added,

“Vote for Aulus Fulvius, the friend of the people! vote for good Aulus, and his virtuous friend Catiline!”

The hot blood flashed to the brow of the young noble, at the undisguised scorn of the plebeian’s speech. Insolence he could have borne, but contempt!—and contempt from a plebeian!

He raised his hand; and slight and unmuscular as he appeared, indignation lent such vigor to that effeminate arm, that the blow which he dealt him on the face, cast the burly mechanic headlong, with the blood spouting from his mouth and nostrils.

A fearful roar of the mob, and a furious rush against the oppressor, followed.

The torch-bearers fought for their master gallantly, with their tough oaken staves; and the young man showed his patrician blood by his patrician courage in the fray. Flaccus, too, wished and endeavored to interpose, not so much that he cared to shield his unworthy kinsman, as that he sought to preserve the energies of the people for a more noble trial. The multitude, moreover, impeded one another by their own violent impetuosity; and to this it was owing, more than to the defence of his followers, or the intercession of the popular Flaccus, that the young libertine was not torn to pieces, on the threshold of his own father’s house.

The matter, however, was growing very serious—stones, staves, and torches flew fast through the air—the crash of windows in the neighboring houses was answered by the roar of the increasing mob, and every thing seemed to portend a very dangerous tumult; when, at the same moment, the door of the Fulvian House was

thrown open, and the high-crested helmets of a cohort were seen approaching, in a serried line, above the bare heads of the multitude.

Order was restored very rapidly; for a pacific party had been rallying around Fulvius Flaccus, and their efforts, added to the advance of the levelled pila of the cohort, were almost instantly successful.

Nor did the sight, which was presented by the opening door of the Fulvian mansion, lack its peculiar influence on the people.

An old man issued forth, alone, from the unfolded portals.

He was indeed extremely old; with hair as white as snow, and a long venerable beard falling in waves of silver far down upon his chest. Yet his eyebrows were black as night, and these, with the proud arch of his Roman nose, and the glance of his eagle eyes, untamed by time or hardship, almost denied the inference drawn from the white head and reverend chin.

His frame, which must once have been unusually powerful and athletic, was now lean and emaciated; yet he held himself erect as a centennial pine on Mount Algidus, and stood as firmly on his threshold, looking down on the tumultuous concourse, which waved and fluctuated, like the smaller trees of the mountain side, beneath him.

His dress was of the plain and narrow cut, peculiar to the good olden time; yet it had the distinctive marks of the senatorial rank.

It was the virtuous, severe, old senator—the noblest, alas! soon to be the last, of his noble race.

“What means this tumult?” he said in a deep firm sonorous voice, “Wherefore is it, that ye shout thus, and hurl stones about a friendly door! For shame! for shame! What is it that ye lack? Bread? Ye have had it ever at my hands, without seeking it thus rudely.”

“It is not bread, most noble Aulus, that we would have,” cried the old man, who had made himself somewhat conspicuous before, “but vengeance!”

“Vengeance, on whom, and for what?” exclaimed the noble Roman.

But ere his question could be answered, the crowd

opened before him, and his son stood revealed, sobered indeed by the danger he had run, but pale, haggard, bleeding, covered with mud and filth, and supported by one of his wounded slaves.

"Ah!" cried the old man, starting back aghast, "What is this? What fresh crime? What recent infamy? What new pollution of our name?"

"Icilia! Icilia! vengeance for poor Icilia!" cried the mob once again; but they now made no effort to inflict the punishment, for which they clamored; so perfect was their confidence in the old man's justice, even against his own flesh and blood.

At the next moment a voice was heard, loud and clear as a silver trumpet, calling upon the people to disperse.

It was the voice of Paullus, who now strode into the gap, left by the opening concourse, glittering in the full panoply of a decurion of the horse, thirty dismounted troopers arranging themselves in a glittering line behind him.

At the sight of the soldiery, led by one whose face was familiar to him, the audacity of the young man revived; and turning round with a light laugh toward Arvina,

"Here is a precious coil," he said, "my Paullus, about a poor plebeian harlot!"

"I never heard that Icilia was such," replied the young soldier sternly, for the dark tale was but too well known; "nor must you look to me, Aulus Fulvius, for countenance in deeds like these, although it be my duty to protect you from violence! Come my friends," he continued, turning to the multitude, "You must disperse, at once, to your several homes; if any have been wronged by this man, he can have justice at the tribunal of the Prætor! But there must be no violence!"

"Is this thing true, Aulus?" asked the old man, in tones so stern and solemn, that the youth hung his head and was silent.

"Is this thing true?" the Senator repeated.

"Why, hath he not confessed it?" asked the old man, who had spoken so many times before; and who had lingered with Fulvius Flaccus, and a few others of the crowd. "It is true."

"Who art thou?" asked the old Patrician, a terrible suspicion crossing his mind.

“The father of that daughter, whom thy son forcibly dishonored!”

“Enter!” replied the senator, throwing the door, in front of which he stood, wide open, “thou shalt have justice!”

Then, casting a glance full of sad but resolute determination upon the culprit, all whose audacity had passed away, he said in a graver tone,

“Enter thou likewise; thou shalt have punishment!”

“Punishment!” answered the proud youth, his eye flashing, “Punishment! and from whom?”

“Punishment from thy father! wilt thou question it? Punishment, even unto death, if thou shalt be found worthy to die!—the law is not dead, if it have slept awhile! Enter!”

He dared not to reply—he dared not to refuse. Slow, sullen, and crest-fallen, he crossed his father’s threshold; but, as he did so, he glared terribly on Paullus, and shook his hand at him, and cried in tones of deadly hatred,

“This is thy doing! curses—curses upon thee! thou shalt rue it!”

Arvina smiled in calm contempt of his impotent resentment.

The culprit, the accuser, and the judge passed inward; the door closed heavily behind them; the crowd dispersed; the soldiery marched onward; and the street, in front of the Fulvian House, was left dark and silent.

An hour perhaps had passed, when the door was again opened, and the aged plebeian, Icilia’s father, issued into the dark street.

“Scourged!” he cried, with a wild triumphant laugh, “Scourged, like a slave, at his own father’s bidding! Rejoice, exult, Julia! thy shame is half avenged!”

CHAPTER II.

THE CONSULAR COMITIA.

Your voices!

CORIOLANUS.

THE morning had at length arrived, big with the fate of Rome. The morning of the Consular elections.

The sun shone broad and bright over the gorgeous city, and the wide green expanse of the field of Mars, whereon, from an hour before the first peep of dawn, the mighty multitude of Roman citizens had stood assembled.

All the formalities had been performed successfully. The Consul Cicero, who had gone forth beyond the walls to take the auspices, accompanied by an augur, had declared the auguries favorable.

The separate enclosures, with the bridges, as they were termed, across which the centuries must pass to give their votes, had been erected; the distributors of the ballots, and the guardians of the ballot-boxes, had been appointed.

And now, as the sun rushed up with his crown of living glory into the cloudless arch of heaven, the brazen trumpets of the centuries pealed long and loud, calling the civic army to its ranks, in order to commence their voting.

That was the awful moment; and scarce a breast was there, but beat high with hope or fear, or dark and vague anticipation.

The Consul and the friends of order were, perhaps, calmer and more confident, than any others of that mighty concourse; for they were satisfied with their preparations;

they were firm in the support of the patrician houses, and in the unanimity of the Roman knights conciliated by Cicero.

Scarcely less confident were the conspirators; for with so much secrecy had the arrangements of the Consul been made, that although Catiline knew himself suspected, knew that his motives were perspicuous, and his measures in some sort anticipated, he yet believed that the time was propitious.

He hoped, and believed as fully as he hoped, that Cicero and his party, content with the triumph they had obtained in the Senate, and with the adjudication by that body of dictatorial power to the consuls, were now deceived into the idea that the danger was already over.

Still, his fierce heart throbbed violently; and there was a feeling of hot agonizing doubt blent with the truculent hope, the savage ambition, the strong thirst of blood, which goaded him almost to madness.

From an early hour he had stood surrounded by his friends, the leaders of that awful faction, hard by the portico of the *diribitorium*, or pay-office, marking with a keen eye every group that entered the field of Mars, and addressing those, whom he knew friendly to his measures, with many a fiery word of greeting and encouragement.

Cassius and Lentulus, a little way behind him, leaned against the columns of the gateway, with more than a thousand of the clients of their houses lounging about in groups, seemingly inattentive, but really alive to every word or glance of their leaders.

These men were all armed secretly with breast plates, and the puissant Roman sword, beneath their peaceful togas.

These men, well-trained in the wars of Sylla, hardy and brave, and acting in a body, were destined to commence the work of slaughter, by slaying the Great Consul, so soon as he should open the comitia.

Cethegus had departed, already, to join his gladiators, who, to the number of fifteen hundred, were gathered beyond the Janiculum, ready to act upon the guard, and to beat down the standard which waved there, the signal of election.

Statilius, Gabinius, and Cæparius, were ready with their

armed households and insurgent slaves, prepared at a moment's notice to throw open the prison doors, and fire the city in twelve places.

Fearless, unanimous, armed, and athirst for blood, the foes of the republic stood, and marked with greedy eyes and visages inflamed and fiery, their victims sweep through the gates, arrayed in their peaceful robes, unarmed, as it would seem, and unsuspecting.

Not a guard was to be seen anywhere; not a symptom of suspicion; much less of preparation. The wonted cohort only was gathered about the standard on the bridge gate of the Janiculum; but even these bore neither shields, nor javelins; and sat or lounged about, unconcerned, and evidently off their guard.

But the keen eye of Catiline, could mark the band of grey-tunicked Gladiators, mustered, and ready to assume the offensive at a moment's notice, though now they were sauntering about, or sitting down or lying in the shade, or chatting with the country girls and rustic slaves, who covered the sloping hill-sides of the Janiculum, commanding a full view of the Campus Martius.

"The Fools!" muttered Catiline. "The miserable, God-deserted idiots! Does the man of Arpinum deem me then so weak, to be disarmed by an edict, quelled by a paltry proclamation?"

Then, as the stout smith, Caius Crispus, passed by him, with a gang of workmen, and a rabble of the lowest citizens,

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "hail, Crispus—hail, brave hearts!—all things look well for us to-day—well for the people! Your voices, friends; I must have your voices!"

"You shall—Catiline!" replied the smith—"and our hands also!" he added, with a significant smile and a dark glance.

"Catiline! Catiline—all friends of the good people, all foes of the proud patricians, give noble Catiline your voices!"

"Catiline! Catiline for the persecuted people!" and, with a wild and stirring shout, the mob passed inward through the gate, leaving the smith behind, however; who stopped as if to speak with one of the Cornelian clients, but in reality to wait further orders.

“When shall we march”—he asked, after a moment or two, stealthily approaching the chief conspirator. “Before they have called the prerogative century to vote, or when the knights are in the bridges?”

“When the standard goes down, fool!” replied Catiline, harshly. “Do not you know your work?”

At this moment, a party of young and dissipated nobles came swaggering along the road, with their ungirded tunics flowing down to their heels, their long sleeves fringed with purple falling as far as to their wrists, and their curled ringlets floating on their shoulders. Among them, with a bloodshot eye, a pale and haggard face, and a strange terrible expression, half-sullen, half-ashamed, on all his features, as if he fancied that his last night’s disgrace was known to all men, strode Aulus Fulvius, the son of that stern senator.

“Your voices! noblemen, your voices!” cried Catiline, laughing with feigned gayety—“Do but your work to-day, and to-night”—

“Wine and fair women!” shouted one; but Aulus smiled savagely, and darkly, and answered in one word “Revenge!”

Next behind them, came Bassus, the veteran father of the dead eagle-bearer; he who had told so sad a tale of patrician cruelty to Fulvius Flaccus, in the forge.

“Why, Bassus, my brave veteran, give me your hand,” cried the conspirator, making a forward step to meet him. “For whom vote you to-day, for Murcena and Silanus? Ha?”

“For Catiline and justice!” answered the old man, “justice on him who wronged the Eagle-bearer’s child! who sits in the senate even yet, defiled with her pure blood!—the infamous Cornelius!”

Another man had paused to listen to these words, and he now interposed, speaking to Bassus,

“Verily Catiline is like to do thee justice, my poor Bassus, on a member of the Cornelian house! Is’t Lentulus, I prithee, or Cethegus, on whom thou would’st have justice?”

But the old man replied angrily, “The people’s friend shall give the people justice! who ever knew a noble pity or right a poor man?”

“Ask Aulus Fulvius”—replied the other, with a sarcas-

tic tone, and a strange smile lighting up his features. "Besides, is not Catiline a noble?"

At the word Aulus Fulvius leaped on him like a tiger, with his face crimsoning, and his heart almost bursting with fury.

He could not speak for rage, but he seized the man who had uttered those mysterious words by the throat, and brandished a long poniard, extricated in a second's space from the loose sleeve of his tunic, furiously in the air.

As the bright blade flashed in the sunlight, there was a forward rush among the conspirators, who, anxious to avert any casual affray, that might have created a disturbance, would have checked the blow.

But their aid would have come too late, had not the man thus suddenly assaulted, by an extraordinary exertion of strength, vigor, and agility, wrenched the dagger from Aulus' hand, and, tripping him at the same moment with his foot, hurled him upon his back in the dust, which surged up in a great cloud, covering his perfumed hair and snow-white toga, with its filthy and fætid particles.

"Ha! ha!" he cried with a loud ringing laugh, as he tossed the weapon high into the sunny air, that all around might see it—"Here is one of your *noble* people's friends!—Do they wear daggers *all*, for the people's throats? Do they wave torches *all*, against the people's workshops?"

The matter seemed to be growing serious, and while two or three of the conspirators seized Aulus, and compelled him with gentle violence to desist from farther tumult, Cæparius whispered into the ear of Catiline, "This knave knows far too much. Were it not best three or four of our friend Crispus' men should knock him on the head?"

"No! no!" cried Catiline—"By Hades! no! It is too late, I tell you. The whole thing will be settled within half an hour. There goes the second trumpet."

And as he spoke, the shrill blast of the brazen instruments rose piercingly and almost painfully upon the ear; and the people might be seen collecting themselves rapidly into the centuries of their tribes, in order to give their votes in their places, as ascertained by lot.

"And the third"—exclaimed Cassius, joyfully—"Will give the signal for *election!*" Catiline interrupted him, as if fearful that he would say something that should commit the

party. "But see," he added, pointing with his hand across the wide plain toward a little knoll, on which there stood a group of noble-looking men, surrounded by a multitude of knights and patricians, "See yonder, how thickly the lativian tunics muster, and the crimson-edged togas of the nobles—all the knights are there too, methinks. And look! look the consuls of the year! and my competitors! Come, my friends, come; we must toward the consul. He is about to open the comitia."

"Catiline! Catiline! the people's friend!" again shouted Caius Crispus; and Bassus took the word, and repeated it in the shrill quavering accents of old age—"All those who love the people vote for the people's friend—vote for the noble Catiline!"

And at once thousands of voices took the cry, "Catiline! Catiline! Hail, Catiline, that shall be Consul!"

And, in the midst of these triumphant cries, hardened and proud of heart, and confident of the success of his blood-thirsty schemes, he hurried forward, accompanied by Lentulus and his armed satellites, panting already with anticipated joy, and athirst for slaughter.

But, as he swept along, followed by the faction, a great body of citizens of the lower orders, decent substantial men, came crowding toward the Campus, and paused to inquire the cause of the tumult, which had left its visible effects in the flushed visages and knotted brows of many present.

Two or three voices began to relate what had passed; but the smith Crispus, who had lingered with one or two of his ruffians, intent to murder the man who had crossed his chief, so soon as the signal should be given, rudely broke in, and interrupted them with the old cry, "The people's friend! All ye who love the people, vote for the people's friend, vote for the noble Catiline!"

"Had mighty Marius been alive, Marius of Arpinum, or the great Gracchi, they had cried, 'Vote rather for the man of the people!—vote for Cicero of Arpinum!'"

"Tush, what knows he of Marius?" replied the smith.

"What knows he of the great Gracchi?" echoed one of his followers.

"Whether should best know Marius, they who fought by his side, or they who slew his friends? Who should

best know the great Gracchi if not Fulvius, the grandson of that Fulvius Flaccus, who died with them, in the forum, by the hands of Saturninus?"

"Vote for Catiline! vote for Catiline! friends of the people!" shouted the smith again, reëchoed by all his savage and vociferous gang, seeking to drown the voice of the true man of the people.

"Aye" exclaimed Fulvius, ironically, springing upon a stone horse-block, thence to address the people, who shouted "Flaccus! Flaccus!" on all sides. "Live Fulvius Flaccus! Speak to us, noble Fulvius!"

"Aye!" he exclaimed, "friends of the people, followers of Marius, vote, if ye be wise men, for the murderer of his kinsman—for Catiline, who slew Marius Gratidianus!"

"No! no! we will none of them! no Catiline! no follower of Sylla! To your tribes, men of Rome—to your tribes!"

The mingled cries waxed wild and terrible; and it was clear that the popular party was broken, by the bold words of the speaker, into two bodies, if ever it had been united. But little cared the conspirators for that, since they had counted, not upon winning by a majority of tribes, but by a civic massacre.

And now—even as that roar was the loudest, while Flaccus in vain strove to gain a hearing, for the third time the brazen trumpets of the centuries awoke their stirring symphonies, announcing that the hour had arrived for the tribes to commence their voting.

Those who were in the secret looked eagerly over the field. The hour had come—the leader was at their head—they waited but the signal!

That signal, named by Catiline, in the house of Læca, —the blood of Cicero!

They saw a mass of men, pressing on like a mighty wedge through the dense multitude; parting the waves of the living ocean as a stout galley parts the billows; struggling on steadily toward the knoll, whereon, amid the magnates of the land, consulars, senators, and knights, covering it with the pomp of white and crimson gowns, gemmed only by the flashing axe-heads of the lictors, stood the great Consul.

They saw the gladiators forming themselves into a sepa-

rate band, on the slopes of the Janiculum, with a senator's robe distinct among the dark gray tunics.

Catiline and his clients were not a hundred paces distant from Cicero, and the assembled nobles. They had halted! Their hands were busy in the bosom of their gowns, griping the hilts of their assassin's tools!

Cethegus and his gladiators were not a hundred paces distant from the bridge-gate of the Janiculum, and the cohort's bannered eagle.

They, too, had halted! they, too, were forming in battle order—they too were mustering their breath for the dread onset—they too were handling their war weapons!

Almost had Caius Crispus, in his mad triumph, shouted victory.

One moment, and Rome had been the prize for the winner in the gladiators' battle.

And the notes of the brazen trumpets had not yet died away, among the echoing hills.

They had not died away, before they were taken up and repeated, east, west, and north and south, by shriller, more pervading clangors.

It burst over the heads of the astonished people like heaven's thunder, the wild prolonged war-flourish of the legions. From the Tarpeian rock, and the guarded Capitol; from the rampired Janiculum; from the fortress, beyond the Island bridge; from the towered steeps of the Quirinal, broke simultaneously the well known Roman war note!

Upsprang, along the turreted wall of the Janiculum, with crested casques, and burnished brazen corslets, and the tremendous javelins of the cohorts, a long line of Metellus' legionaries.

Upsprang on the heights of the Capitol, and on each point of vantage, an answering band of warriors, full armed.

And, last not least, as that warlike din smote the sky, Cicero, on whom every eye was riveted of that vast course, flung back his toga, and stood forth conspicuous, armed with a mighty breastplate, and girded with the sword that won him, at an after day, among the mountains of Cilicia, the high style of Imperator.

A mighty shout burst from the faithful ranks of the

knights ; and, starting from their scabbards, five thousand sword-blades flashed in a trusty ring around the savior of his country.

“ Catiline would have murdered Him ! ” shouted the voice of Fulvius Flaccus—“ Catiline would have burned your workshops ! Catiline would have made himself Dictator, King ! Vote, men of Rome, vote, friends of the people ! vote now, I say, for Catiline ! ”

Anticipated, frustrated, outwitted, — the conspirators glared on each other hopeless.

Against forces so combined, what chance of success ?

Still, although ruined in his hopes, Catiline bore up bravely, and with an insolence of hardihood that in a good cause had been heroism.

Affecting to laugh at the precautions, and sneer at the pusillanimous mind that had suggested them, he defied proof, defied suspicion.

There was no overt act—no proof ! and Cicero, satisfied with his triumph—for alarmed beyond measure, and astonished, all ranks and classes vied with each other in voting for Silanus and Muræna—took no step to arrest or convict the ringleaders.

It was a moral, not a physical victory, at which he had aimed so nobly.

And nobly had he won it.

The views of the conspiracy frustrated ; the hearts of its leaders chilled and thunder-stricken ; the loyalty and virtue of all classes aroused ; the eyes of the Roman people opened to knowledge of their friends ; two wise and noble consuls chosen, by who were on the point of casting their votes for a murderer and traitor ; the city saved from conflagration ; the commonwealth preserved, in all its majesty ; these were the trophies of the Consular Comitia.

CHAPTER III.

THE PERIL.

Things, bad begun, make strong themselves by ill.

MACBETH.

SIXTEEN days had elapsed, since the conspirators were again frustrated at the Consular Comitia.

Yet not for that had the arch-traitor withdrawn his foot one hair's breadth from his purpose, or paused one moment in his career of crime and ruin.

There is, beyond doubt, a necessity—not as the ancients deemed, supernatural, and the work of fate, but a natural moral necessity—arising from the very quality of crime itself, which spurs the criminal on to new guilt, fresh atrocity.

In the dark path of wickedness there is no halting place; the wretched climber must turn his face for ever upward, for ever onward; if he look backward his fall is inevitable, his doom fixed.

So was it proved with Catiline. To gain impunity for his first deed of cruelty and blood, another and another were forced on him, until at last, harassed and maddened by the consciousness of untold guilt, his frantic spirit could find no respite, save in the fierce intoxication of excitement, the strange delight of new atrocity.

Add to this, that, knowing himself anticipated and discovered, he knew also that if spared for a time by his opponent, it was no lack of will, but lack of opportunity alone to crush him, that held the hands of Cicero inactive.

Thus, although for a time the energies of his weaker comrades sank paralysed by the frustration of their schemes, and by the certainty that they were noted and observed even in their most secret hours, his stronger and more vehement spirit found only in the greater danger the greater stimulus to action.

Sixteen days had elapsed, and gradually, as the conspirators found that no steps were taken by the government for their apprehension or punishment, they too waxed bolder, and began to fancy, in their insolent presumption, that the republic was too weak or too timid to enforce its own laws upon undoubted traitors.

All the causes, moreover, which had urged them at first to councils so desperate, existed undiminished, nay, exaggerated by delay.

Their debts, their inability to raise those funds which their boundless profusion rendered necessary, still maddened them; and to these the consciousness of detected guilt, and that "necessity which," in the words of their chief, "makes even the timid brave," were superadded.

The people and the Senate, who had all, for a time, been vehemently agitated by a thousand various emotions of anger, fear, anxiety, revenge, forgetting, as all popular bodies are wont to do, the past danger in the present security, were beginning to doubt whether they had not been alarmed at a shadow; and were half inclined to question the existence of any conspiracy, save in the fears of their Consul.

It was well for Rome at that hour, that there was still in the commonwealth, a counterpoise to the Democratic Spirit; which, vehement and energetical beyond all others in sudden and great emergencies, is ever restless and impatient of protracted watchfulness and preparation, and lacks that persistency and resolute endurance which seems peculiar to aristocratic constitutions.

And now especially were demonstrated these opposite characteristics; for while the lower orders, and the popular portion of the Senate, who had been in the first instance most strenuous in their alarm, and most urgent for strong measures, were now hesitating, doubting, and almost compassionating the culprits, who had fallen under such a load of obloquy, the firmer and more moderate minds, were

guarding the safety of the commonwealth in secret, and watching, through their unknown emissaries, every movement of the traitors.

It was about twelve o'clock at night, on the eighth day before the Ides, corresponding to our seventh of November, when the Consul was seated alone in the small but sumptuous library, which has been described above, meditating with an anxious and care-worn expression, over some papers which lay before him on the table.

No sound had been heard in the house for several hours; all its inhabitants except the Consul only, with the slave who had charge of the outer door, and one faithful freedman, having long since retired to rest.

But from without, the wailing of the stormy night-wind rose and fell in melancholy alternations of wild sobbing sound, and breathless silence; and the pattering of heavy rain was distinctly audible on the flat roofs, and in the flooded tank, or *impluvium*, which occupied the centre of the hall.

It was in one of the lulls of the autumnal storm, that a heavy knock was heard on the pannel of the exterior door, reverberating in long echoes, through the silent vestibule, and the vast colonnades of the Atrium and peristyle.

At that dead hour of night, such a summons would have seemed strange in any season: it was now almost alarming.

Nor, though he was endowed pre-eminently with that moral strength of mind which is the highest quality of courage, and was by no means deficient in mere physical bravery, did Cicero raise his head from the perusal of his papers, and listen to that unwonted sound, without some symptoms of anxiety and perturbation.

So thoroughly acquainted as he was, with the desperate wickedness, the infernal energy, and absolute fearlessness of Catiline, it could not but occur to him instantly, when he heard that unusual summons, at a time when all the innocent world was buried in calm sleep, how easy and obvious a mode of liberation from all danger and restraint, his murder would afford to men so daring and unscrupulous, as those against whom he was playing, for no less a stake than life or death.

There was, he well knew, but a single slave, and he old and unarmed, in the vestibule, nor was the aged and effe-

minate Greek freedman, one on whom reliance could be placed in a deadly struggle.

All these things flashed suddenly upon the mind of Cicero, as the heavy knocking fell upon his ear, followed by a murmur of many voices, and the tread of many feet without.

He arose quietly from the bronze arm-chair, on which he had been sitting, walked across the room, to a recess beside the book-shelves, and reached down from a hook, on which it hung, among a collection of armor and weapons, a stout, straight, Roman broad-sword, with a highly adorned hilt and scabbard.

Scarcely, however, had he taken the weapon in his hand, before the door was thrown open, and his freedman ushered in three men, attired in the full costume of Roman Senators.

"All hail, at this untimely hour, most noble Cicero," exclaimed the first who entered.

"By all the Gods!" cried the second, "rejoiced I am, O Consul, to see that you are on your guard; for there is need of watchfulness, in truth, for who love the republic."

"Which need it is, in short," added the third, "that has brought us hither."

"Most welcome at all times," answered Cicero, laying aside the broad-sword with a smile, "though of a truth, I thought it might be less gracious visitors. Noble Marcellus, have you good tidings of the commonwealth? and you, Metellus Scipio, and you Marcus Crassus? Friends to the state, I know you; and would trust that no ill news hath held you watchful."

"Be not too confident of that, my Consul," replied Scipio. "Peril there is, at hand to the commonwealth, in your person."

"We have strange tidings here, confirming all that you made known to the Senate, on the twelfth day before the Calends, in letters left by an unknown man with Crassus' doorkeeper this evening," said Marcellus. "We were at supper with him, when they came, and straightway determined to accompany him hither."

"In my person!" exclaimed Cicero—"Then is the peril threatened from Lucius Sergius Catiline! were it for myself alone, this were a matter of small moment; but, see-

ing that I hold alone the clues of this dark plot, it were disastrous to the state, should ought befall me, who have set my life on this cast to save my country."

"Indeed disastrous!" exclaimed the wealthy Crassus; "for these most horrible and cursed traitors are sworn, as it would seem, to consume this most glorious city of the earth, and all its stately wealth, with the sword and fire."

"To destroy all the noble houses," cried Scipio, "and place the vile and loathsome rabble at the helm of state."

"All this, I well knew, of old," said Cicero calmly. "But I pray you, my friends, be seated; and let me see these papers."

And taking the anonymous letters from the hands of Crassus, he read them aloud, pausing from time to time, to meditate on the intention of the writer.

"Marcus Licinius Crassus," thus ran the first, "is spoken of by those, who love not Rome, as their lover and trusty comrade! Doth Marcus Licinius Crassus deem that the flames, which shall roar over universal Rome, will spare his houses only? Doth Marcus Crassus hope, that when the fetters shall be stricken from the limbs of every slave in Rome, his serfs alone will hold their necks beneath a voluntary yoke?—Doth he imagine that, when all the gold of the rich shall be distributed among the needy, his seven thousand talents shall escape the red hands of Catiline and his associates? Be wise! Take heed! The noble, who forsakes his order, earns scorn alone from his new partisans! When Cicero shall fall, all noble Romans shall perish lamentably, with him—when the great Capitol itself shall melt in the conflagration, all private dwellings shall go down in the common ruin. Take counsel of a friend, true, though unknown and humble! Hold fast to the republic! rally the nobles and the rich, around the Consul! Ere the third day hence, he shall be triumphant, or be nothing!—Fare thee well!"

"This is mysterious, dark, incomprehensible," said Cicero, as he finished reading it. "Had it been sent to me, I should have read it's secret thus, as intended to awake suspicion, in my mind, of a brave and noble Roman! a true friend of his country!" he added, taking the hand of Crassus in his own. "Yet, even so, it would have failed. For as soon would I doubt the truth of heaven itself, as ques-

tion the patriotic faith of the conqueror of Spartacus! But left at thy house, my Crassus, it seems almost senseless and unmeaning. What have we more?

"The snake is scotched, not slain! The spark is concealed, not quenched! The knife is sharp yet, though it lie in the scabbard! When was conspiracy beat down by clemency, or treason conquered by timidity? Let those who would survive the ides of November, keep their loins girded, and their eyes wakeful. What I am, you may not learn, but this much only—I was a noble, before I was a beggar! a Roman, before I was a—traitor!"

"Ha!" continued the consul, examining the paper closely, "This is somewhat more pregnant—the Ides of November!—the Ides—is it so?—They shall be met withal!—It is a different hand-writing also; and here is a third—Ha!"

"A third, plainer than the first," said Metellus Scipio—"pray mark it."

"Three men have sworn—who never swear in vain—a knight, a senator, and yet a senator again! Two of the three, Cornelii! Their knives are keen, their hands sure, their hearts resolute, against the new man from Arpinum! Let those who love Cicero, look to the seventh day, before November's Ides."

"The seventh day—ha? so soon? Be it so," said the undaunted magistrate. "I am prepared for any fortune."

"Consul," exclaimed the Freedman, again entering, "I watched with Geta, in the vestibule, since these good fathers entered; and now there have come two ladies clad in the sacred garb of vestals. Two lictors wait on them. They ask to speak with the consul."

"Admit them, madman!" exclaimed Cicero; "admit them with all honor. You have not surely kept them in the vestibule?"

"Not so, my Consul. They are seated on the ivory chairs in the Tablinum."

"Pardon me, noble friends. I go to greet the holy virgins. This is a strange and most unusual honour. Lead the way, man."

And with the words, he left the room in evident anxiety and haste; while his three visitors stood gazing each on the other, in apprehension mingled with wonder.

In a few moments, however, he returned alone, very pale, and wearing on his fine features a singular expression of awe and dignified self-complacency, which seemed to be almost at variance with each other.

"The Gods," he said, as he entered, in a deep and solemn tone, "the Gods themselves attest Rome's peril by grand and awful portents. The College of the Vestals sends tidings, that 'The State totters to its fall!'"

"May the Great Gods avert!" cried his three auditors, simultaneously, growing as pale as death, and faltering out their words from ashy lips in weak or uncertain accents.

"It is so!" said Cicero; who, though a pure Deist, in truth, and no believer in Rome's monstrous polytheism, was not sufficiently emancipated from the superstition of the age to dispute the truth of prodigies and portents. "It is so. The priestess, who watched the sacred flame on the eternal hearth, beheld it leap thrice upward in a clear spire of vivid and unearthly light, and lick the vaulted roof-stones—thrice vanish into utter gloom! Once, she believed the fire extinct, and veiled her head in more than mortal terror. But, after momentary gloom, it again revived, while three strange sighs, mightier than any human voice, came breathing from the inmost shrine, and waved the flame fitfully to and fro, with a dread pallid lustre. The College bids the Consul to watch for himself and the republic, these three days, or ill shall come of it."

Even as he spoke, a bustle was again heard in the vestibule, as of a fresh arrival, and again the freedman entered.

"My Consul, a veiled patrician woman craves to confer with you, in private."

"Ha! all Rome is afoot, methinks, to-night. Do you know her, my Glaucias?"

"I saw her once before, my Consul. On the night of the fearful storm, when the falchion of flame shook over Rome, and the Senate was convened suddenly."

"Ha! She! it is well—it is very well! we shall know all anon." And his face lighted up joyously, as he spoke. "Excuse me, Friends and Fathers. This is one privy to the plot, with tidings of weight doubtless. Thanks for your news, and good night; for I must pray you leave me. Your warning hath come in good season, and I will not be

taken unaware. The Gods have Rome in their keeping, and, to save her, they will not let *me* perish. Fare ye well, nobles. I must be private with this woman."

After the ceremonial of the time, his visitors departed; but as they passed through the atrium, they met the lady, conducted by the old Greek freedman.

Little expecting to meet any one at that untimely hour, she had allowed her veil to fall down upon her shoulders; and, although she made a movement to recover it, as she saw the Senators approaching her by the faint light of the single lamp which burned before the household gods on the small altar by the *impluvium*, Marcus Marcellus caught a passing view of a pair of large languishing blue eyes, and a face of rare beauty.

"By the great Gods!" he whispered in Crassus' ear, "that was the lovely Fulvia."

"Ha! Curius' paramour!" replied the other. "Can it be possible that the stern Consul amuses his light hours, with such high-born harlotry?"

"Not he! not he!" said Scipio. "I doubt not Curius is one of them! He is needy, and bold, and bloody."

"But such a braggart!" answered Marcellus.

"I have known braggarts fight," said Crassus. "There was a fellow, who served in the fifth legion; he fought before the standard of the *hastati*; and I deemed him a coward ever, but in the last strife with Spartacus he slew six men with his own hand. I saw it."

"I have heard of such things," said Scipio. "But it grows late. Let us move homeward." And then he added, as he was leaving the Consul's door, "If he can trust his household, Cicero should arm it. My life on it! They will attempt to murder him."

"He has given orders even now to arm his slaves," said the Freedman, in reply; "and so soon as they have got their blades and bucklers, I go to invite hither the surest of his clients."

"Thou shalt do well to do so—But see thou do it silently."

And with the words, they hurried homeward through the dark streets, leaving the wise and virtuous magistrate in conference with his abandoned, yet trustworthy informant, Fulvia.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CRISIS.

He is about it. The doors are open.

MACBETH.

THE morning had scarcely dawned, after that dismal and tempestuous night, when three men were observed by some of the earlier citizens, passing up the Sacred Way, toward the Cerolian Place.

It was not so much that the earliness of the hour attracted the notice of these spectators—for the Romans were a matutinal people, even in their most effeminate and luxurious ages, and the sun found few loiterers in their chambers, when he came forth from his oriental gates—as that the manner and expression of these men themselves were singular, and such as might well excite suspicion.

They all walked abreast, two clad in the full garb of Senators, and one in the distinctive dress of Roman knight-hood. No one had heard them speak aloud, nor seen them whisper, one to the other. They moved straight onward, steadily indeed and rather slowly, but with something of consciousness in their manner, glancing furtively around them from beneath their bent brows, and sometimes even casting their eyes over their shoulders, as if to see whether they were followed.

At about a hundred paces after these three, not however accompanying them, or attached to their party, so far at least as appearances are considered, two large-framed fellows, clothed in the dark gray frocks worn by slaves and gladiators, came strolling in the same direction.

These men had the auburn hair, blue eyes, and massive, if not stolid cast of features peculiar to northern races, at that time the conquered slaves, though destined soon to be the victors, of Rome's gigantic power.

When the first three reached the corner of the next block of buildings, to the corner of that magnificent street called the Carinæ, they paused for a few moments; and, after looking carefully about them, to mark whether they were observed or not, held a short whispered conversation, which their stern faces, and impassioned gestures seemed to denote momentous.

While they were thus engaged, the other two came sauntering along, and passed them by, apparently unheeded, and without speaking, or saluting them.

Those three men were the knight Caius Cornelius, a friend and distant kinsman of Cethegus, who was the second of the number, and Lucius Vargunteius, a Senator, whose name has descended only to posterity, through the black infamy of the deed, which he was even at that moment meditating.

Spurred into action by the menaces and violence of Catiline, who had now resolved to go forth and commence open warfare from the entrenched camp prepared in the Appenines, by Caius Manlius, these men had volunteered, on the previous night, at a second meeting held in the house of Læca, to murder Cicero, with their own hands, during his morning levee.

To this end, they had now come forth thus early, hoping so to anticipate the visit of his numerous clients, and take him at advantage, unprepared and defenceless.

Three stout men were they, as ever went forth armed and determined for premeditated crime; stout in frame, stout of heart, invulnerable by any physical apprehension, unassailable by any touch of conscience, pitiless, fearless, utterly depraved.

Yet there was something in their present enterprise, that half daunted them. Something in the character of the man, whom they were preparing to assassinate—something of undefined feeling, suggesting to them the certainty of the whole world's reproach and scorn through everlasting ages, however present success "might trammel up the consequence."

Though they would not have confessed it to their own hearts, they were reluctant toward their task; and this unadmitted reluctance it was, which led them to pause and parley, under the show of arranging their schemes, which had in truth been fully organized on the preceding night.

They were too far committed, however, to recede; and it is probable that no one of them, although their hearts were full almost to suffocation, as they neared the good Consul's door, had gone so far as to think of withdrawing his hand from the deed of blood.

The outer door of the vestibule was open; and but one slave was stationed in the porch; an old man quite unarmed, not having so much even as a porter's staff, who was sitting on a stone bench, in the morning sunshine.

As the conspirators ascended the marble steps, which gave access to the vestibule, and entered the beautiful Tuscan colonnade, the two Germans, who had stopped and looked back for a moment, seeing them pass in, set off as hard as they could run, through an adjoining street toward the house of Catiline, which was not very far distant.

It was not long ere they reached it, and entered without question or hindrance, as men familiar and permitted.

In a small room, adjoining the inner peristyle, the master of the house was striding to and fro across the tessellated floor, in a state of perturbation, extreme even for him; whose historian has described him with bloodless face, and evil eyes, irregular and restless motions, and the impress of frantic guilt, ever plain to be seen in his agitated features.

Aurelia Orestilla sat near him, on a low cushioned stool, with her superb Italian face livid and sicklied by unusual dread. Her hands lay tightly clasped upon her knee—her lips were as white as ashes. Her large lustrous eyes, burning and preternaturally distended, were fixed on the haggard face of her husband, and followed him, as he strode up and down the room in impotent anxiety and expectation.

Yet she, privy as she was to all his blackest councils, the instigator and rewarder of his most hideous crime, knowing the hell of impotent agony that was consuming his heart, she dared not address him with any words of hope or consolation.

At such a crisis all ordinary phrases of comfort or cheer-

ing love, seem but a mockery to the spirit, which can find no rest, until the doubts that harass it are ended; and this she felt to be the case, and, had her own torturing expectation allowed her to frame any speech to soothe him, she would not have ventured on its utterance, certain that it would call forth a torrent of imprecation on her head, perhaps a burst of violence against her person.

The very affections of the wicked, are strangely mixed at times, with more discordant elements; and it would have been a hard question to solve, whether that horrible pair most loved or hated one another.

The woman's passions, strange to relate, had been kindled at times, by the very cruelty and fury, which at other moments made her almost detest him. There was a species of sublimity in the very atrocity of Catiline's wickedness, which fascinated her morbid and polluted fancy; and she almost admired the ferocity which tortured her, and from which, alone of mortal ills, she shrank appalled and unresisting.

And Catiline loved her, as well as he could love anything, loved her the more because she too, in some sort, had elicited his admiration; for she had crossed him many times, and once braved him, and, alone of human beings, he had not crushed her.

They were liker to mated tigers, which even in their raptures of affection, rend with the fang, and clutch with the unsheathed talon, until the blood and anguish testify the fury of their passion, than to beings of human mould and nature.

Suddenly the traitor stopped short in his wild and agitated walk, and seemed to listen intently, although no sound came to the ears of the woman, who was no less on the alert than he, for any stir or rumor.

"It is"—he said at length, clasping his hands above his head—"it is the step of Arminius, the trusty gladiator—do you not hear it, Orestilla?"

"No," she replied, shaking her head doubtfully. "There is no sound at all. My ear is quicker of hearing, too, than yours, Catiline, and if there were any step, I should be first to mark it."

"Tush! woman!" he made answer, glaring upon her fiercely. "It is my *hear* that hears it."

“You have a heart, then!” she replied bitterly, unable even at that time to refrain from taunting him.

“And a hand also, and a dagger! and, by Hell and all its furies! I know not why I do not flesh it in you. I will one day.”

“No, you will not,” she answered very quietly.

“And wherefore not? I have done many a worse deed in my day. The Gods would scarce punish me for that slaughter; and men might well call it justice.—Wherefore not, I say? Do you think I so doat on your beauty, that I cannot right gladly spare you?”

“Because,” answered the woman, meeting his fixed glare, with a glance as meaning and as fiery, “because, when I find that you meditate it, I will act quickest. I know a drug or two, and an unguent of very sovereign virtue.”

“Ha! ha!” The reckless profligate burst into a wild ringing laugh of triumphant approbation. “Ha! ha! thou mightst have given me a better reason. Where else should I find such a tigress? By all the Gods! it is your clutch and claws that I prize, more than your softest and most rapturous caress! But hist! hist! now—do you not hear that step?”

“I do—I do,” she replied, clasping her hands again, which she had unclined in her anger—“and it is Arminius’ step! I was wrong to cross thee, Catiline; and thou so anxious! we shall hear now—we shall hear all.”

Almost as she spoke, the German gladiator rushed into the room, heated and panting from his swift race; and, without any sign of reverence or any salutation, exclaimed abruptly,

“Catiline, it is over, ere this time! I saw them enter his house!”

The woman uttered a low choking shriek, her face flushed crimson, and then again turned paler than before, and she fell back on her cushioned seat, swooning with joy at the welcome tidings.

But Catiline flung both his arms abroad toward heaven, and cried aloud—“Ye Gods, for once I thank ye! if there be Gods indeed!” he added, with a sneer—“thou sawest them enter, ha!—thou art not lying?—By all the furies! If you deceive me, I will take care that you see nothing more in this world.”

“Catiline, these eyes saw them!”

“At length! at length!” he exclaimed, his eye flashing, and his whole countenance glowing with fiendish animation, “and yet curses upon it!—that I could not slay him—that I should owe to any other hand my vengeance on my victim. Thou hast done well—ha! here is gold, Arminius! the last gold I own—but what of that, to-morrow—to-morrow, I will have millions! Away! away! bold heart, arouse your friends and followers—to arms, to arms, cry havoc through the streets, and liberty and vengeance!”

While he was speaking yet, the door was again opened, and Cethegus entered with the others, dull, gloomy, and crest-fallen; but Catiline was in a state of excitement so tremendous, that he saw nothing but the men.

At one bound he reached Cethegus, and catching him by both hands—“How!” he exclaimed—“How was it?—quick, tell me, quick! Did he die hard? Did he die, conscious, in despair, in anguish?—Tell me, tell me, you tortured him in the slaying—tell me, he died a coward, howling and cursing fate, and knowing that I, I slew him, and—speak Cethegus?—speak, man! By the Gods! you are pale! silent!—these are not faces fit for triumph! speak, man, I say, how died he?—show me his blood, Cethegus! you have not wiped it from your dagger, give me the blade, that I may kiss away the precious death-drops.”

So rapidly and impetuously had he spoken, heaping query on query, that Cethegus could not have answered, if he would. But, to say the truth, he was in little haste to do so. When Catiline ceased, however, which he did at length, from actual want of breath to enquire farther, he answered in a low smothered voice.

“He is not dead at all—he refused”——

“Not dead!” shrieked Catiline, for it was a shriek, though articulate, and one so piercing that it roused Aurelia from her swoon of joy—“Not dead! Yon villain swore that he saw you enter—not dead!” he repeated, half incredulously—“By heaven and hell! I believe you are jesting with me! Tell me that you have lied, and I—I will worship you, Cethegus.”

“His porter refused us entrance, and, as the door was opened, we saw in the Atrium the slaves of his household, and half a hundred of his clients, all armed from head to

foot, with casque and corslet, pilum, broad-sword, and ouckler. And, to complete the tale, as we returned into the street baffled and desperate, a window was thrown open in the banquet-hall above, and we might see the Consul, with Cato, and Marcellus, and Scipio, and a score of Consulars beside, gazing upon us in all the triumph of security, in all the confidence of success. We are betrayed, that is plain—our plans are all known as soon as they are taken, all frustrated ere acted! All is lost, Catiline, for what remains to do?"

"To dare!" answered the villain, all undaunted even by this reverse—"and, if need be, to die—but to despair, never!"

"But who can be the traitor?—where shall we look to find him?"

"Look there," exclaimed Catiline, pointing to the German gladiator, who stood all confounded and chap-fallen. "Look there, and you shall see one; and see him punished too! What ho! without there, ho! a dozen of you, if you would shun the lash!"

And, at the summons, ten or twelve slaves and freedmen rushed into the room in trepidation, almost in terror, so savage was the temper of the lord whom they served, and so merciless his wrath, at the most trivial fault or error.

"Drag that brute, hence!" he said, waving his hand toward the unhappy gladiator, "put out his eyes, fetter him foot and hand, and cast him to the congers in the fish-pond."

Without a moment's pause or hesitation, they cast themselves upon their miserable comrade; and, though he struggled furiously, and struck down two or three of the foremost, and shouted himself hoarse, in fruitless efforts to explain, he was secured, and bound and gagged, within a shorter time than is required to describe it.

This done, one of the freedmen looked toward his dreaded master, and asked, with pale lips, and a faltering voice,

"Alive, Catiline?"

"Alive—and hark you, Sirrah, fasten his head above the water, that he die not too speedily. Those biggest congers will lug him manfully, Cethegus; we will go see the

sport, anon. It will serve to amuse us, after this disappointment. There! away with him, begone!"

The miserable creature struggled desperately in his bonds, but in vain; and strove so terribly to speak, in despite his gag, that his face turned almost black, from the blood which rushed to every pore; but no sound could he utter, as he was dragged away, save a deep-mouthed groan, which was drowned by the laughter of the remorseless wretches, who gazed on his anguish with fiendish merriment; among which, hideous to relate, the thrilling sounds of Aurelia's silvery and contagious mirth were distinctly audible.

"He will take care to see more truly in Hades!" said Catiline, with his sardonic smile, as he was dragged out of the room, by his appalled and trembling fellows. "But now to business. Tell me, did you display any weapon? or do aught, that can be proved, to show your intent on the Consul?"

"Nothing, my Catiline," replied Cethegus, firmly.

"Nothing, indeed, Cethegus? By all our hopes! deceive me not!"

"By your head! nothing, Catiline."

"Then I care nothing for the failure!" answered the other. "Keep good hearts, and wear smiling faces! I will kill him myself to-morrow, if, like the scorpion, I must die in the deed."

"Try it not, Catiline. You will but fail—and"——

"Fail! who ever knew me fail, in vengeance?"

"No one!" said Orestilla—"and no one can hinder you of it. No! not the Gods!"

"There are no Gods!" exclaimed the Traitor, "and if there be, it were all one—I defy them!"

"Cicero says there is ONE, they tell me," said Cethegus, half mocking, half in earnest—"and he is very wise."

"Very!" replied the other, with his accustomed sneer—"Therefore that ONE may save him—if he can!"

"The thing is settled," cried Aurelia Orestilla, "I told him yesterday he ought to do it, himself—I should not be content, unless Catiline's hand dealt him the death blow, Catiline's eye gloated upon him in the death-struggle, Catiline's tongue jeered him in the death-pang!"

"You love him dearly, Orestilla," said Cethegus.

"And dearly he has earned it," she replied.

"By Venus! I would give half my hopes, to see him kiss you."

"And I, if my lips had the hydra's venom. But come," she added, with a wreathed smile and a beaming eye, "Let us go see the fishes eat yon varlet; else shall we be too late for the sport."

"Rare sport!" said Cethegus, "I have not seen a man eaten, by a tiger even, these six months past; and by a fish, I think, never!"

"The fish do it better," replied Catiline—"Better, and cleaner—they leave the prettiest skeleton you can imagine—they are longer about it, you will say—True; but I do not grudge the time."

"No! no! the longer, the merrier!" said Aurelia, laughing melodiously—"The last fellow I saw given to the tigers, had his head crushed like a nut-shell, by a single blow. He had not time to shriek even once. There was no fun in that, you know."

"None indeed," said Cethegus—"but I warrant you this German will howl gloriously, when the fish are at him."

"Yes! yes!" exclaimed the lovely woman, clapping her hands joyously. "We must have the gag removed, to give free vent to his music. Come, come, I am dying to see him."

"Some one must die, since Cicero did not."

"Happy fellow this, if he only knew it, to give his friends so much pleasure!"

"One of them such a fair lady too!"

"Will there be more pleasure, think you, in seeing the congers eat the gladiator, or in eating the congers afterward?"

"Oh! no comparison! one can eat fat congers always."

"We have the advantage of them truly, for they cannot always eat fat gladiators."

And they walked away with as much glee and expectation, to the scene of agony and fiendish torture, vitiated by the frightful exhibitions of the circus and the arena, as men in modern days would feel, in going to enjoy the fictitious sorrows of some grand tragedian.

Can it be that the contemplation of human wo, in some form or other, is in all ages grateful to poor corrupt humanity?

CHAPTER V.

THE ORATION.

Quousque tandem abutere—

CICERO.

THE Senate was assembled in the great temple on the Palatine, built on the spot where Jupiter, thence hailed as Stator, had stayed the tide of flight, and sent the rallied Romans back to a glorious triumph.

A cohort was stationed on the brow of the hill, its spearheads glancing in the early sunshine.

The Roman knights, wearing their swords openly, and clad in their girded tunics only, mustered around the steps which led to the colonnade and doors of the temple, a voluntary guard to the good consul.

A mighty concourse had flowed together from all quarters of the city, and stood in dense masses in all the neighboring streets, and in the area of the temple, in hushed and anxious expectation.

The tribunes of the people, awed for once by the imminence of the peril, forgot to be factious.

Within the mighty building, there was dead silence—silence more eloquent than words.

For, to the wonder of all men, undismayed by detection, unrebuked by the horror and hate which frowned on him from every brow, Catiline had assumed his place on the benches of his order.

Not one, even of his most intimate associates, had dared to salute him; not one, even of the conspirators, had dared to recognize the manifest traitor.

As he assumed his place, the senators next to him had arisen and withdrawn from the infamous vicinity, some of them even shaking their gowns, as if to dissipate the contamination of his contact.

Alone he sat, therefore, with a wide vacant space around him—alone, in that crowded house—alone, yet proud, unrebuked, undaunted.

The eyes of every man in the vast assembly were riveted in fear, or hatred, or astonishment, on the set features and sullen scowling brow, of the arch conspirator.

Thus sat they, thus they gazed for ten minutes' space, and so deep was the all-absorbing interest, that none observed the Consul, who had arisen to his feet before the curule chair, until the great volume of his clear sonorous voice rolled over them, like the burst of sudden thunder amid the hush of nature which precedes it.

It was to no set form of words, to no premeditated speech, that he gave utterance; nor did he in the usual form address the Conscript Fathers.

With his form drawn to its fullest height, his arm outstretched as if it was about to launch the thunderbolt, he hurled his impassioned indignation against the fearless culprit.

“Until how long, O Catiline, wilt thou abuse our patience? Until how long, too, will thy frantic fury baffle us? Unto what extremity will thy unbridled insolence display itself? Do the nocturnal guards upon the Palatine nothing dismay you, nothing the watches through the city, nothing the terrors of the people, nothing the concourse hitherward of all good citizens, nothing this most secure place for the senate's convocation, nothing the eyes and faces of all these?” And at the words, he waved both arms slowly around, pointing the features and expression of every senator, filled with awe and aversion.

“Dost thou not feel that all thy plots are manifest? Not see that thy conspiracy was grasped irresistibly, so soon as it was known thoroughly to all these? Which of us dost thou imagine ignorant of what thou didst, where thou wert, whom thou didst convoke, what resolution thou didst take last night, and the night yet preceding? Oh! ye changed Times! Oh, ye degenerate customs! The Senate comprehends these things, the Consul sees them! Yet this

man lives! Lives, did I say? Yea, indeed, comes into the Senate, bears a part in the public councils, marks out with his eyes and selects every one of us for slaughter. But we, strenuous brave men, imagine that we do our duty to the state, so long as we escape the frenzy, the daggers of that villain. Long since it had been right, Catiline, that thou shouldst have been led to death by the Consul's mandate—Long since should that doom have been turned upon thyself, which thou hast been so long devising for all of us here present. Do I err, saying this? or did that most illustrious man, Publius Scipio, pontifex maximus, when in no magisterial office, take off Tiberius Gracchus, for merely disturbing the established order of the state? And shall we, Consuls, endure Catiline aiming to devastate the world with massacre and conflagration? For I omit to state, as too ancient precedents, how Caius Servilius Ahala slew with his own hand Spurius Melius, when plotting a revolution! There was, there was, of old, that energy of virtue in this commonwealth, that brave men hedged the traitorous citizen about with heavier penalties than the most deadly foe! We hold a powerful and weighty decree of the Senate against thee, O Catiline. Neither the counsel nor the sanction of this order have been wanting to the republic. We, we, I say it openly, we Consuls are wanting in our duty.

“The Senate decreed once, that Lucius Opimius, then Consul, should see THAT THE REPUBLIC TOOK NO HARM; not one night intervened. Caius Gracchus was slain on mere suspicions of sedition, the son of a most noble father, most noble grandfather, most noble ancestry. Marcus Fulvius, a consular, was slain with both his children. By a like decree of the Senate, the charge of the republic was committed to Caius Marius and Lucius Valerius, the Consuls—did the republic's vengeance delay the death of Lucius Saturninus, a tribune of the people, of Caius Servilius, a prætor, even a single day? And yet, we Consuls, suffer the edge of this authority to be blunted, until the twentieth day. For we have such a decree of the Senate, but hidden in the scroll which contains it, as a sword undrawn in its scabbard. By which decree it were right, O Catiline, that thou shouldst have been slaughtered on the instant. Thou livest; and livest not to lay aside, but to

confirm and strengthen thine audacity. I desire, O Conscript fathers, to *be* merciful; I desire, too, in such jeopardy of the republic, not to *seem* culpably neglectful. Yet I condemn myself of inability, of utter weakness. There is a camp in Italy! hostile to the republic, in the defiles that open on Etruria! Daily the numbers of the foe are increasing! And yet the general of that camp, the leader of that foe, we see within the walls, aye, even in the Senate, day by day, plotting some intestine blow against the state. Were I to order thee to be arrested, to be slain now, O Catiline, I should have cause, I think, to dread the reproaches of *all* good citizens, for having stricken thee too late, rather than that of *one*, for having stricken thee too severely. And yet, that which should have been done long ago, I am not yet for a certain reason persuaded to do now. Then—then at length—will I slay thee, when there is not a man so base, so desperately wicked, so like to thee in character, but he shall own thy slaying just. So long as there shall be one man, who dares to defend thee, thou shalt live. And thou shalt live, as now thou livest, beset on every side by numerous, and steady guards, so that thou canst not even stir against the commonwealth. The eyes moreover, and the ears of many, even as heretofore, shall spy thee out at unawares, and mount guard on thee in private.

“For what is there, Catiline, which thou now canst expect more, if neither night with all its darkness, could conceal thy unholy meetings, nor even the most private house contain within its walls the voice of thy conspiracy? If all thy deeds shine forth, burst into public view? Change now that hideous purpose, take me along as thy adviser, forget thy schemes of massacre, of conflagration. Thou art hemmed in on every side. Thy every council is more clear to me than day; and these thou canst now review with me. Dost thou remember, how I stated in the Senate, on the twelfth day before the Calends of November, (1) that Caius Manlius, the satellite and co-minister of thy audacity, would be in arms on a given day, which day would be the sixth (2) before the Calends of November!—Did I err, Catiline, not in the fact, so great as it was, so atrocious, so incredible, but, what is much more

(1) The 21st of October. (2) The 27th of October.

wondrous, in the very day? Again I told thee in the Senate, that thou hadst conspired to slay the first men of the state, on the fifth (1) day before the Calends of November, when many leading men of Rome quitted the city, not so much to preserve their lives, as to mar thy councils. Canst thou deny that thou wert hemmed in on that day by my guards, and hindered by my vigilance from stirring thy hand against the state, when, frustrate by the departure of the rest, thou saidst that our blood, ours who had remained behind, would satisfy thee? What? When thou wert so confident of seizing Præneste, by nocturnal escalade, upon the very (2) Calends of November, didst thou not feel that it was by my order that colony was garrisoned, guarded, watched, impregnable?—Thou doest nothing, plottest nothing, thinkest nothing which I shall not—I say not—hear—but shall not see, shall not conspicuously comprehend.

“Review with me now, the transactions of the night before the last, so shalt thou understand that I watch far more vigilantly for the safety, than thou for the destruction of the state. I say that on that former night, (3) thou didst go to the street of the Scythemakers, I will speak plainly, to the house of Marcus Læca; that thou didst meet there many of thy associates in crime and madness. Wilt thou dare to deny it? Why so silent? If thou deniest, I will prove it. For I see some of those here, here in the Senate, who were with thee. Oh! ye immortal Gods! in what region of the earth do we dwell? in what city do we live? of what republic are we citizens? Here! they are here, in the midst of us, Conscript Fathers, here in this council, the most sacred, the most solemn of the universal world, who are planning the slaughter of myself, the slaughter of you all, planning the ruin of this city, and therein the ruin of the world. I, the consul, see these men, and ask their opinions on state matters. Nay, those whom it were but justice to slaughter with the sword, I refrain as yet from wounding with a word. Thou wert therefore in the house of Læca, on that night, O Catiline. Thou didst allot the districts of Italy; thou didst determine whither each one of thy followers should set forth; thou didst choose whom

(1) The 28th of October. (2) The first of November.

(3) The 6th of November. This oration was delivered on the 8th.

thou wouldst lead along with thee, whom leave behind; thou didst assign the wards of the city for conflagration; thou didst assert that ere long thou wouldst go forth in person; thou saidst there was but one cause why thou shouldst yet delay a little, namely, that I was alive. Two Roman knights were found, who offered themselves to liberate thee from that care, and promised that they would butcher me, that very night, a little before daylight, in my own bed. Of all these things I was aware, when your assembly was scarce yet broken up. I strengthened my house, and guarded it with an unwonted garrison. I refused admittance to those whom thou hadst sent to salute me, when they arrived; even as I had predicted to many eminent men that they would arrive, and at that very time.

“Since then these things stand thus, O Catiline, proceed as thou hast begun; depart when thou wilt from the city; the gates are open; begone; too long already have those camps of Manlius lacked their general. Lead forth, with the morrow, all thy men—if not all, as many at least as thou art able; purify the city of thy presence. Thou wilt discharge me from great terror, so soon as a wall shall be interposed between thee and me. Dwell among us thou canst. now no longer. I will not endure, I will not suffer, I will not permit it! Great thanks must be rendered to the immortal Gods, and to this Stator Jove, especially, the ancient guardian of this city, that we have escaped so many times already this plague, so foul, so horrible, so fraught with ruin to the republic. Not often is the highest weal of a state jeopardied in the person of a single individual. So long as you plotted against me, merely as Consul elect, O Catiline, I protected myself, not by public guards, but by private diligence. When at the late Comitia, thou wouldst have murdered me, presiding as Consul in the Field of Mars, with thy competitors, I checked thy nefarious plans, by the protection and force of my friends, without exciting any public tumult.—In a word, as often as thou hast thrust at me, myself have I parried the blow, although I perceived clearly, that my fall was conjoined with dread calamity to the republic. Now, now, thou dost strike openly at the whole commonwealth, the dwellings of the city; dost summon the temples of the Immortal Gods, the lives of all citizens, in a word, Italy herself, to havoc

and perdition. Wherefore—seeing that as yet, I dare not do what should be my first duty, what is the ancient and peculiar usage of this state, and in accordance with the discipline of our fathers—I will, at least, do that which in respect to security is more lenient, in respect to the common good, more useful. For should I command thee to be slain, the surviving band of thy conspirators would settle down in the republic; but if—as I have been long exhorting thee, thou wilt go forth, the vast and pestilent contamination of thy comrades will be drained out of the city. What is this, Catiline? Dost hesitate to do that, for my bidding, which of thine own accord thou wert about doing? The Consul commands the enemy to go forth from the state. Dost thou enquire of me, whether into exile? I do not order, but, if thou wilt have my counsel, I advise it.

“For what is there, O Catiline, that can delight thee any longer in this city, in which there is not one man, without thy band of desperadoes, who does not fear, not one who does not hate thee?—What brand of domestic turpitude is not burnt in upon thy life? What shame of private bearing clings not to thee, for endless infamy? What scenes of impure lust, what deeds of daring crime, what horrible pollution attaches not to thy whole career?—To what young man, once entangled in the meshes of thy corruption, hast thou not tendered the torch of licentiousness, or the steel of murder? Must I say more? Even of late, when thou hadst rendered thy house vacant for new nuptials, by the death of thy late wife, didst thou not overtop that hideous crime, by a crime more incredible? which I pass over, and permit willingly to rest in silence, lest it be known, that in this state, guilt so enormous has existed, and has not been punished. I pass over the ruin of thy fortunes, which all men know to be impending on the next (1) Ides, I proceed to those things which pertain not to the private infamy of thy career, not to thy domestic difficulties and baseness, but to the supreme safety of the state, and to the life and welfare of us all. Can the light of this life, the breath of this heaven, be grateful to thee, Catiline, when thou art conscious that not one of these but

(1) The 13th of November. (2) The 31st of December.

knows how thou didst stand armed in the comitium, on the day previous (2) to the calends of January, when Lepidus and Tullus were the Consuls? That thou hadst mustered a band of assassins to slay the Consuls, and the noblest of the citizens? That no relenting of thy heart, no faltering from fear, opposed thy guilt and frenzy, but the wonted good fortune of the commonwealth? And now I pass from these things, for neither are these crimes not known to all, nor have there not been many more recently committed. How many times hast not thou thrust at me while elect, how many times when Consul? How many thrusts of thine so nearly aimed, that they appeared inevitable; have I not shunned by a slight diversion, and, as they say of gladiators, by the movements of my body? Thou doest nothing, attemptest nothing, plannest nothing, which can escape my knowledge, at the moment, when I would know it. Yet thou wilt neither cease from endeavoring nor from plotting. How many times already hath that dagger been wrested from thy hand? how many times hath it fallen by chance, and escaped thy grasp? Still thou canst not be deprived of it, more than an instant's space!—And yet, I know not with what unhallowed rites it has been consecrated and devoted by thee, that thou shouldst deem it necessary to flesh it in the body of a Consul.

“Now then, what life is this of thine? For I will now address thee, not so that I may seem moved by that detestation which I feel toward thee, but by compassion, no portion of which is thy due. But a moment since, thou didst come into the Senate, and which one man, from so vast a concourse, from thine own chosen and familiar friends, saluted thee? If this has befallen no one, within the memory of man, wilt thou await loud contumely, condemned already by the most severe sentence of this silence? What wouldst thou have, when all those seats around thee were left vacant on thy coming? When all those Consulars, whom thou so frequently hadst designated unto slaughter, as soon as thou didst take thy seat, left all that portion of the benches bare and vacant? With what spirit, in one word, can thou deem this endurable? By Hercules! did my slaves so dread me, as all thy fellow citizens dread thee, I should conceive it time for leaving my own house—dost thou not hold it time to leave this city?—And if I felt

self without just cause suspected, and odious to my countrymen, I should choose rather to be beyond the reach of their vision, than to be gazed upon by hostile eyes of all men. Dost thou hesitate, when conscious of thine own crimes thou must acknowledge that the hate of all is just, and due long ago—dost thou, I say, hesitate to avoid the presence and the sight of those whose eyes and senses thine aspect every day is wounding? If thine own parents feared and hated thee, and could by no means be reconciled, thou wouldst, I presume, withdraw thyself somewhat beyond the reach of their eyes—now thy country, which is the common parent of us all, dreads and detests thee, and has passed judgment on thee long ago, as meditating nothing but her parricide. Wilt thou now neither revere her authority, nor obey her judgment, nor yet dread her violence? Since thus she now deals with thee, Catiline, thus speaks to thee in silence.

“No deed of infamy hath been done in these many years, unless through thee—no deed of atrocity without thee—to thee alone, the murder of many citizens, to thee alone the spoliation and oppression of our allies, hath been free and unpunished. Thou hast been powerful not only to escape laws and prosecutions, but openly to break through and overturn them. To these things, though indeed intolerable, I have submitted as best I might—but it can now no longer be endured that I should be in one eternal dread of thee only—that Catiline, on what alarm soever, alone should be the source of terror—that no treason against me can be imagined, such as should be revolting to thy desperate criminality. Wherefore begone, and liberate me from this terror, so that, if true, I may not be ruined; if false I may at least shake with fear no longer.”

“If thy country should thus, as I have said, parley with thee, should she not obtain what she demands, even if she lack force to compel it? What more shall I say, when thou didst offer thyself to go into some private custody? What, when to shun suspicion, thou didst profess thy willingness to take up thy residence under the roof of Manius Lepidus? Refused by whom, thou hadst audacity to come to me, and request that I would admit thee to my house. And when thou didst receive from me this answer,

that I could not exist within the same house with that man, whose presence even inside the same city walls, I esteemed vast peril to my life, thou didst then go to the prætor Quintus Metellus ; and, then, repulsed by him, to Marcus Marcellus, thine own comrade, a virtuous man truly, one whom past doubt thou didst deem likely to be most vigilant in guarding, most crafty in suspecting, most strenuous in bringing thee to justice. And how far shall that man be believed distant from deserving chains and a dungeon, who judges himself to be worthy of safekeeping ?—Since, then, these things are so, dost hesitate, O Catiline, since here thou canst not tarry with an equal mind, to depart for some other land, and give that life, rescued from many just and deserved penalties, to solitude and exile ? ‘Lay the matter,’ thou sayest, ‘before the Senate,’ for that it is which thou requirest, ‘and if this order shall command thee into banishment, thou wilt obey their bidding.’ I will not lay it before them—for to do so is repugnant to my character, yet I will so act, that thou shalt clearly see what these think of thee. Depart from the city, Catiline ! Deliver the state from terror ! begone into banishment, if that be the word for which thou tarriest !”

Then the great Orator paused once again, not to breathe, though the vehement and uninterrupted torrent of his eloquence, might well have required an interval of rest, but to give the confounded listener occasion to note the feelings of the assembled Senate, perfectly in accordance with his words.

It was but a moment, however, that he paused, and, that ended, again burst out the thunderous weight of his magnificent invective.

“What means this, Catiline ? Dost thou note these, dost thou observe their silence ? They permit my words, they are mute. Why dost thou wait that confirmation of their words, which thou seest given already by their silence ? But had I spoken these same words to that admirable youth Publius Sextius, or to that very valiant man, Marcus Marcellus, I tell thee that this very Senate would have, already, in this very temple, laid violent hands on me, the Consul, and that too most justly ! But with regard to thee, when quiescent they approve, when passive they decree, when mute they cry aloud ! Nor these alone, whose authority

it seems is very dear, whose life most cheap, in your eyes, but all those Roman knights do likewise, most honorable and most worthy men, and all those other valiant citizens, who stand about the Senate house, whose dense ranks thou couldst see, whose zeal thou couldst discover, whose patriotic cries thou couldst hear, but a little while ago; whose hands and weapons I have scarcely, for a long time, restrained from thee, whom I will yet induce to escort thee to the gates of Rome, if thou wilt leave this city, which thou hast sought so long to devastate and ruin.

“And yet what say I? Can it be hoped that anything should ever bend thee? that thou shouldst ever be reformed? that thou shouldst dream of any flight? that thou shouldst contemplate any exile? Would, would indeed that the immortal Gods might give thee such a purpose! And yet I perceive, if astounded by my voice thou shouldst bend thy spirit to go into voluntary exile, how vast a storm of odium would hang over me, if not at this present time, when the memory of thy villainies is recent, at least from the passions of posterity. But to me it is worth this sacrifice, so that the storm burst on my individual head, and be connected with no perils to the state. But that thou shouldst be moved by thine own vices, that thou shouldst dread the penalties of the law, that thou shouldst yield to the exigences of the republic, this indeed is not to be expected; for thou art not such an one, O Catiline, that any sense of shame should ever recall thee from infamy, any sense of fear from peril, any glimmering of reason from insanity. Wherefore, as I have said many times already, go forth from among us; and if thou wouldst stir up against me, as constantly thou sayest, against me thine enemy a storm of enmity and odium, then begone straightway into exile. Scarcely shall I have power to endure the clamors of the world, scarcely shall I have power to sustain the burthen of that odium, if thou wilt but go into voluntary banishment, now, at the consul's bidding. If, on the contrary, thou wouldst advance my glory and my reputation, then go forth with thy lawless band of ruffians! Betake thyself to Manlius! stir up the desperate citizens to arms! withdraw thyself from all good men! levy war on thy country! exult in unhallowed schemes of robbery and murder, so that thou shalt not pass for one driven forth

by my tyranny into the arms of strangers, but for one joining by invitation his own friends and comrades. Yet why should I invite thee, when I well know that thy confederates are sent forth already, who nigh Forum Aurelium shall wait in arms for your arrival? When I well know that thou hast already a day promised and appointed whereon to join the camp of Manlius? When I well know that the silver eagle hath been prepared already—the silver eagle which will, I trust, prove ruinous and fatal to thee and all thine host, to which a shrine has been established in thine own house, thy villainies its fitting incense? For how shalt thou endure its absence any longer, thou who wert wont to adore it, setting forth to sacrilege and slaughter, thou who so often hast upraised that impious right hand of thine from its accursed altars to murder citizens of Rome?

“At length, then, at length, thou must go forth, whither long since thy frantic and unbridled passions have impelled thee. Nor shall this war against thy country vex or afflict thee. Nay, rather shall it bring to thee a strange and unimaginable pleasure, for to this frantic career did nature give thee birth, to this hath thine own inclination trained, to this, fortune preserved thee—for never hast thou wished—I say not peaceful leisure—but war itself, unless that war were sacrilegious. Thou hast drawn together from the most infamous of wretches, wretches abandoned not only by all fortune, but all hope, a bodyguard of desperadoes! Among these what pleasure wilt thou not experience, in what bliss not exult, in what raptures not madly revel, when thou shalt neither see nor hear one virtuous man in such a concourse of thy comrades? To this, this mode of life tended all those strenuous toils of thine, which are so widely talked of—to lie on the bare ground, not lying in wait merely for some occasion of adultery, but for some opportunity of daring crime! To watch through the night, not plotting merely against the sleep of betrayed husbands, but against the property of murdered victims! Now, then, thou hast a notable occasion for displaying those illustrious qualities of thine, that wonderful endurance of hunger, of cold, of destitution, by which ere long thou shalt feel thyself undone, and ruined. This much, however, I did accomplish, when I defeated thee in

the comitia, that thou shouldst strike at the republic as an exile, rather than ravage it as a consul; and that the warfare, so villanously evoked by thee, should be called rather the struggle of a base banditti, than the fair strife of warriors.

“ Now, Conscript Fathers, that I may solemnly abjure and deprecate the just reproaches of my country, listen, I pray you, earnestly to what I say, and commit it deeply to your memories and minds. For if my country, who is much dearer to me than my life, if all Italy, if the whole commonwealth should thus expostulate with me, ‘ What dost thou, Marcus Tullius? Him, whom thou hast proved to be my enemy, whom thou seest the future leader in the war against me, whom thou knowest even now the expected general in the camp of my foes—him, the author of every crime, the head of this conspiracy, the summoner of insurgent slaves, and ruined citizens—him wilt thou suffer to go forth, and in such guise, that he shall not be as one banished from the walls, but rather as one let loose to war against the city? Wilt thou not, then, command that he shall be led away to prison, that he shall be hurried off to death, that he shall be visited with the last torments of the law? What is it, that dissuades thee? Is it the custom of thine ancestors? Not so—for many times in this republic have men, even in private stations, inflicted death on traitors!—Is it the laws, enacted, concerning the punishment of Roman citizens? Not so—for never, in this city, have rebels against the commonwealth been suffered to retain the rights of Citizens or Romans! Dost thou shrink from the odium of posterity? If it be so, in truth, thou dost repay great gratitude unto the Roman people, who hath elevated thee, a man known by thine own actions only, commended by no ancestral glory, so rapidly, through all the grades of honor, to this most high authority of consul; if in the fear of any future odium, if in the dread of any present peril, thou dost neglect the safety of the citizens! Again, if thou dost shrink from enmity, whether dost deem most terrible, that, purchased by a severe and brave discharge of duty, or that, by inability and shameful weakness? Or, once more, when all Italy shall be waste with civil war, when her towns shall be demolished, her houses blazing to the sky, dost fancy that thy

good report shall not be then consumed in the fierce glare of enmity and odium ?

“ To these most solemn appeals of my country, and to the minds of those men who think in likewise, I will now make brief answer. Could I have judged it for the best, O Conscript Fathers, that Catiline should have been done to death, then would I not have granted one hour’s tenure of existence to that gladiator. For if the first of men, noblest of citizens, were graced, not polluted, by the blood of Saturninus, and the Gracchi, and Flaccus, and many more in olden time, there surely is no cause why I should apprehend a burst of future odium for taking off this parricide of the republic. Yet if such odium did inevitably impend above me, I have ever been of this mind, that I regard that hatred which is earned by honorable duty not as reproach, but glory ! Yet there are some in this assembly, who either do not see the perils which are imminent above us, or seeing deny their eyesight. Some who have nursed the hopes of Catiline by moderate decrees ; and strengthened this conspiracy from its birth until now, by disbelieving its existence—and many more there are, not of the wicked only, but of the inexperienced, who, if I should do justice upon this man, would raise a cry that I had dealt with him cruelly, and as a regal tyrant.

“ Now I am well assured that, if he once arrive, whither he means to go, at the camp of Manlius, there will be none so blind as not to see the reality of this conspiracy, none so wicked as to deny it. But on the other hand, were this man slain, alone, I perceive that this ruin of the state might indeed be repressed for a season, but could not be suppressed for ever—while, if he cast himself forth, and lead his comrades with him, and gather to his host all his disbanded desperate outlaws, not only will this full grown pestilence of Rome be utterly extinguished and abolished, but the very seed and germ of all evil will be extirpated for ever.

“ For it is a long time, O Conscript Fathers, that we have been dwelling amid the perils and stratagems of this conspiracy. And I know not how it is that the ripeness of all crime, the maturity of ancient guilt and frenzy, hath burst to light at once during my consulship. But, this I know, that if from so vast a horde of assassins and banditti

this man alone be taken off, we may perchance be relieved for some brief space, from apprehension and dismay, but the peril itself will strike inward, and settle down into the veins and vitals of the commonwealth. As oftentimes, men laboring under some dread disease, if, while tossing in feverish heat, they drink cold water, will seem indeed to be relieved for some brief space, but are thereafter much more seriously and perilously afflicted, so will this ulcer, which exists in the republic, if relieved by the cutting off this man, grow but the more inveterate, the others left alive. Wherefore, O Conscript Fathers, let the wicked withdraw themselves, let them retire from among the good, let them herd together in one place, let them, in one word, as often I have said before, be divided from us by the city wall. Let them cease to plot against the consul in his own house, to stand about the tribunal of the city prætor deterring him from justice, to beset even the senate house with swords, to prepare blazing brands and fiery arrows for the conflagration of the city. Let it, in one word, be borne as an inscription upon the brow of every citizen, what are his sentiments toward the republic. This I can promise you, O Conscript Fathers, that there shall be such diligence in us consuls, such valor in the Roman knights, such unanimity in all good citizens, that you shall see, Catiline once departed, all that is secret exposed, all that is dark brought to light, all that is dangerous put down, all that is guilty punished. Under these omens, Catiline, to the eternal welfare of the state, to thine own ruin and destruction, to the perdition of all those who have linked themselves with thee in this league of infamy and parricide, go forth to thine atrocious and sacrilegious warfare! And do thou Jove, who wert consecrated by Romulus under the same auspices with this city, whom we truly hail as the *STATOR*, and supporter of this city, of this empire, chase forth this man, and this man's associates, from thine own altars, and from the shrines of other Gods, from the roofs and hearths of the city, from the lives and fortunes of the citizens, and consummate the solemn ruin of all enemies of the good, all foes of their country, all assassins of Italy, linked in one league of guilt and bond of infamy, living or dead, by thine eternal torments."

The dread voice ceased—the terrible oration ended.

And instantly with flushed cheek, and glaring eye, and the foam on his gnashed teeth, fierce, energetica., undaunted, Catiline sprang to his feet to reply.

But a deep solemn murmur rose on all sides, deepening, swelling into a vast overwhelming conclamation—"Down with the Traitor—away with the Parricide!"

But unchecked by this awful demonstration of the popular mind, he still raised his voice to its highest pitch, defying all, both gods and men, till again it was drowned by that appalling torrent of scorn and imprecation.

Then, with a furious gesture, and a yelling voice that rose clear above all the din and clamor,

"Since," he exclaimed, "my enemies will drive me headlong to destruction. I will extinguish the conflagration which consumes me in their universal ruin!"

And pursued by the yells, and groans, and curses of that great concourse, and hunted by wilder furies within his own dark soul, the baffled Traitor rushed precipitately homeward.

CHAPTER VI.

THE FLIGHT.

Abiit, excessit, evasit, erupit.

CICERO.

His heart was a living hell, as he rushed homeward. Cut off on every side, detected, contemned, hated, what was left to the Traitor ?

To retrace his steps was impossible,—nor, if possible, would his indomitable pride have consented to surrender his ambitious schemes, his hopes of vengeance.

He rushed homeward ; struck down a slave, who asked him some officious question ; spurned Orestilla out of his way with a bitter earnest curse ; barred himself up in his inmost chamber, and remained there alone one hour.

One hour ; but in that hour what years, what ages of time, what an eternity of agony, was concentrated !

For once in many years he sat still, motionless, silent, while thought succeeded thought, and passion passion, with indescribable rapidity and vividness.

In that one hour all the deeds of his life passed before him, from his wild and reckless boyhood to his atrocious and dishonored manhood.

The victims of his fiendish passions seemed to fleet, one by one, before his eyes, with deathlike visages and ghastly menace.

The noble virgin, whom he had first dishonored, scarcely as yet a boy, pointed with bloody fingers to the deep self-inflicted wound, which yawned in her snowy bosom.

The vestal, who had broken through all bounds of virtue, piety, and honor, sacrificed soul and body to his un pitying lust, gazed at him with that unearthly terror in her eyes, which glared from them as they looked their last at earth and heaven, when she descended, young and lovely, into a living grave.

The son, whom he had poisoned, to render his house vacant for unhallowed nuptials, with his whole frame convulsed in agony, and the sardonic grin of death on his writhing lips, frowned on him.

His brother, who had drawn life from the same soft bosom, but whose kindred blood had pleaded vainly against the fratricidal dagger, frowned on him.

His sister's husband, that mild and blameless knight, whose last breath was spent in words of peace and pardon to his slayer, now frowned on him.

The stern impassive face of Marius Gratidianus, unmoved alike by agony or insult, frowned on him, in the serene dignity of sustaining virtue.

Men of all ranks and ages, done to death by his hand or his head, by poison, by the knife, by drowning, by starvation—women deceived or violated, and then murdered, while their kisses were yet warm on his lips—infants tortured to death in the very wantonness of cruelty, and crime that must have been nigh akin to madness, gibbered, and glared upon him.

These things would seem impossible, they are in truth incredible, but they are true beyond the possibility of cavil.

He was indeed one of those unaccountable and extraordinary monsters, who, thanks to nature! appear but once in many ages, to whom sin is dear for its own naked self, to whom butchery* is a pastime, and blood and agonies and tears a pleasurable excitement to their mad morbid appetites.

And in this hour of downfall, one by one, did his fancy conjure up before him the victims of his merciless love, his merciless hatred—both alike, sure and deadly.

It was a strange combination of mind, for there must have been in the spirit that evoked these phantoms of the

* Let those who doubt this, think of Couthon and Carrier, Fouché and Marat, and Barere!

conscience, something of remorse, if not of repentance. Pale, ghastly, grim, reproachful, they all seemed to him to be appealing to the just heavens for justice and revenge. Yet there was even more of triumph and proud self-gratulation in his mood, than of remorse for the past, or of apprehension for the future.

As he thought of each, as he thought of all, he in some sort gloated over the memory of his success, in some sort derived confidence from the very number of his unpunished crimes.

“They crossed me,” he muttered to himself, “and where are they?—My fate cried out for their lives, and their lives were forfeit. Who ever stood in my path, that has not perished from before my face? Not one! Who ever strove with me, that has not fallen? who ever frowned upon me, that has not expiated the bended brow by the death-grin?—Not one! not one! Scores, hundreds, have died for thwarting me! but who of men has lived to boast of it!—Not one!”

He rose from his seat, stalked slowly across the room, drew his hand across his brow twice, with a thoughtful gesture, and then said,

“Cicero! Cicero! Better thou never hadst been born! Better—but it must be—my Fate, my fate demands it, and neither eloquence nor wisdom, virtue nor valor, shall avail to save thee. These were brave, beautiful, wise, pious, eloquent; and what availed it to them? My Fate, my fate shall prevail! To recede is to perish, is to be scorned—to advance is to win—to win universal empire,” and he stretched out his hand, as if he clutched an imaginary globe—“to win fame, honor, the applause of ages—for with the people—the *dear* people—failure alone and poverty are guilt—success, by craft or crime, success is piety and virtue!—On! Catiline! thy path is onward still, upward, and onward! But not here!”

Then he unbarred the door, “What ho, Chærea!” and prompt, at the word, the freedman entered. “Send out my trustiest slaves, summon me hither instantly Lentulus and the rest of those, who supped here on the Calends. Ha! the Calends.” He repeated the word, as if some new idea had struck him, on the mention of that day, and he paused thoughtfully. “Aye! Paullus A-vina! I haud

well nigh forgotten---I have it; Aulus is the man; he hath some private grudge at him! and beside those," he added, again addressing the freedman, "go thyself and bring Aulus Fulvius hither, the son of the Senator---him thou wilt find with Cethegus, the others at the house of Decius Brutus, near the forum. They dine with Sempronia. Get thee gone, and beshrew thy life! tarry not, or thou diest!"

The man quitted the room in haste; and Catiline continued muttering to himself---"Aye! but for that cursed boy, we should have had Præneste on the Calends! He shall repent it, ere he die, and he shall die too; but not yet---not till he is aweary of his very life, and then, by tortures that shall make the most weary life a boon. I have it all the method, and the men! Weak fool, thou better hadst been mine."

Then turning to the table he sat down, and wrote many letters, addressed to men of Consular dignity, persons of worth and honor, declaring that, borne down on all sides by false accusations, and helpless to oppose the faction of his enemies, he yielded to the spite of fortune, and was departing for Marseilles a voluntary exile, not conscious of any crime, but careful of the tranquillity of the republic, and anxious that no strife should arise from his private griefs.

To one, who afterward, almost deceived by his profound and wonderful dissimulation, read it aloud in the Senate, in proof that no civil war was impending, he wrote:

"Lucius Catiline to Quintus Catulus, sends health. Your most distinguished faith, known by experience, gives me in mighty perils a grateful confidence, thus to address you. Since I have resolved to prepare no defence in the new steps which I have taken, I am resolved to set forth my apology, conscious to myself of no crime, which---So may the God of Honor guard me!--you may rely upon as true. Goaded by injury and insult, robbed of the guerdon of my toils and industry, that state of dignity at which I aimed, I publicly have undertaken, according to my wont, the cause of the unhappy and oppressed; not because I am unable to pay all debts contracted on my own account, from my own property---from those incurred in behalf of others, the generosity of Orestilla and her daughter, by their treasures, would have released me---but because I saw men honored who deserve no honor, and felt myself

disgraced, on false suspicion. On this plea, I now take measures, honorable in my circumstances, for preserving that dignity which yet remains to me. I would have written more, but I learn that violence is about to be offered me. Now I commend to you Orestilla, and trust her to your faith. As you love your own children, shield her from injury. Farewell."

This strange letter, intended, as after events evidently proved, to bear a double sense, he had scarce sealed, when Aulus Fulvius was announced.

For a few moments after he entered, Catiline continued writing; then handing Chærea, who at a sign had remained in waiting, a list of many names, "Let them," he said, "be here, prepared for a journey, and in arms at the fifth hour. Prepare a banquet of the richest, ample for all these, in the Atrium; in the garden Triclinium, a feast for ten—the rarest meats, the choicest wines, the delicatest perfumes, the fairest slave-girls in most voluptuous attire. At the third hour! See to it! Get thee hence!"

The freedman bowed low, and departed on his mission; then turning to the young patrician,

"I have sent for you," he said, "the first, noble Aulus, because I hold you the first in honor, bravery, and action; because I believe that you will serve me truly, and to the utmost. Am I deceived?"

"Catiline, you have judged aright."

"And that you cannot serve me, more gratefully to yourself, than in avenging me on that young pedant, Paullus Arvina."

The eyes of the youthful profligate flashed dark fire, and his whole face beamed with intense satisfaction.

"By all the Powers of Tartarus!" he cried, "Show me but how, and I will hunt him to the gates of Hades!"

Catiline nodded to him, with an approving smile, and after looking around him warily for a minute, as if fearful even of the walls' overhearing him, he stepped close up to him, and whispered in his ear, for several moments.

"Do you conceive me, ha?" he said aloud, when he had ended.

"Excellent well!" cried the other in rapturous triumph, "but how gain an opportunity?"

"Look you, here is his signature, some trivial note or

other, I kept it, judging that one day it might serve a purpose. You can write, I know, very cleverly—I have not forgotten Old Alimentus' will—write to her in his name, requesting her to visit him, with Hortensia, otherwise she will doubt the letter. Then you can meet her, and do as I have told you. Will not that pass, my Fulvius?"

"It *shall* pass," answered the young man confidently. "My life on it! Rely on me!"

"I hold it done already," returned Catiline. "But you comprehend all—unstained, in all honor, until she reach me; else were the vengeance incomplete."

"It shall be so. But when?"

"When best you can accomplish it. This night, I leave the city."

"You leave the city!"

"This night! at the sixth hour!"

"But to return, Catiline?"

"To return with a victorious, an avenging army! To return as destroyer! with a sword sharper than that of mighty Sylla, a torch hotter than that of the mad Ephesian! To return, Aulus, in such guise, that ashes and blood only show where Rome—*was!*"

"But, ere that, I must join you?"

"Aye! In the Appenines, at the camp of Caius Manlius."

"Fear me not. The deed is accomplished—hatred and vengeance, joined to resolve, never fail."

"Never! but lo, here come the rest. Not a word to one of these. The burly sword-smith is your man, and his fellows! Strike suddenly, and soon; and, till you strike, be silent. Ha! Lentulus, Cethegus, good friends all—welcome, welcome!" he cried, as they entered, eight in number, the ringleaders of the atrocious plot, grasping each by the hand. "I have called you to a council, a banquet, and, thence to action!"

"Good things all," answered Lentulus, "so that the first be brief and bold, the second long and loud, the last daring and decisive!"

"They shall be so, all three! Listen. This very night, I set forth to join Caius Manlius in his camp. Things work not here as I would have them; my presence keeps alive suspicion, terror, watchfulness. I absent, security

will grow apace, and from that boldness, and from boldness, rashness! So will you find that opportunity, which dread of me, while present, delays fatally. Watch your time—choose your men; augment, by any means, the powers of our faction; gain over friends; get rid of enemies, secretly if you can; if not, audaciously. Destroy the Consul—you will soon find occasion, or, if not find, make it. Be ready with the blade and brand, to burn and to slaughter, so soon as my trumpets shall sound havoc from the hills of Fiesolè. Metellus and his men, will be sent after me with speed; Marcius Rex will be ordered from the city, with his cohorts, to Capua, or Apulia, or the Picene district; for in all these, the slaves will rise, so soon as my Eagle soars above the Appenine. The heart of the city will then lie open to your daggers."

"And they shall pierce it to the core," cried Cethegus.

"Wisely you have resolved, my Catiline, as ever," said Longinus Cassius. "Go, and success sit upon your banners!"

"Be not thou over slow, my Cassius, nor thou, Cethegus, over daring. Temper each one, the metal of the other. Let your counsels be, as the gathering of the storm-clouds, certain and slow; your deeds, as the thunderbolt, rash, rapid, irresistible!"

"How will you go forth, Catiline? Alone? in secret?" asked Autronius.

"No! by the Father of Quirinus! with my casque on my head, and my broad-sword on my thigh, and with three hundred of my clients at my back! They sup in my Atrium, at the fifth hour of the night, and at the sixth, we mount our horses. I *think* Cicero will not bar our passage."

"By Mars! he would beat the gates down rather, to let you forth the more easily."

"If he be wise he would."

"He *is* wise," said Catiline. "Would God that he were less so."

"To be overwise, is worse, sometimes, than to be foolish," answered Cethegus.

"And to be over bold, worse than to be a coward!" said Catiline. "Therefore, Cethegus, be thou neither. Now, my friends, I do not say leave me, but excuse me, until the third hour, when we will banquet. Nay! go not forth

from the house, I pray you ; it may arouse suspicion, which I would have you shun. There are books in the library, for who would read ; foils in the garden, balls in the five-court, for who would breathe themselves before supper ; and lastly, there are some fair slaves in the women's chamber, for who would listen to the lute, or kiss soft lips, and not unwilling. I have still many things to do, ere I depart."

"And those done, a farewell caress to Orestilla," said Cethegus, laughing.

"Aye ! would I could take her with me."

"Do you doubt her, then, that you fear to leave her?"

"If I doubted, I would *not* leave her—or I would leave her *so*, as not to doubt her. Alexion himself, cannot in general cure the people, whom I doubt."

"I hope you never will doubt me," said Curius, who was present, the Judas of the faction, endeavoring to jest ; yet more than half feeling what he said.

"I hope not"—replied Catiline, with a strange fixed glance, and a singular smile ; for he did in truth, at that very moment, half doubt the speaker. "If I do, Curius, it will not be for long ! But I must go," he added, "and make ready. Amuse yourselves as best you can, till I return to you. Come, Aulus Fulvius, I must speak with you farther."

And, with the words, he left them, not indeed to apply themselves to any sport or pleasure, but to converse anxiously, eagerly, almost fearfully, on the events which were passing in succession, so rapid, and so unforeseen. Their souls were too much absorbed by one dominant idea, one devouring passion, to find any interest in any small or casual excitement.

To spirits so absorbed, hours fly like minutes, and none of those guilty men were aware of the lapse of time, until Catinine returned, dressed in a suit of splendid armor, of blue Iberian steel, embossed with studs and chasings of pure silver, with a rich scarlet sagum over it, fringed with deep lace. His knees were bare, but his legs were defended by greaves of the same fabric and material with his corslet ; and a slave bore behind him his bright helmet, triply crested with crimson horsehair, his oblong shield charged with a silver thunderbolt, and his short broad-sword

of Bilboa steel, which was already in those days, as famous as in the middle ages. He looked, indeed, every inch a captain; and if undaunted valor, unbounded energy, commanding intellect, an eye of lightning, unequalled self-possession, endless resource, incomparable endurance of cold, heat, hunger, toil, watchfulness, and extremity of pain, be qualities which constitute one, then was he a great Captain.

A captain well formed to lead a host of demons.

The banquet followed, with all that could gratify the eye, the ear, the nostril, or the palate. The board blazed with lights, redoubled by the glare of gold and crystal. Flowers, perfumes, incense, streamed over all, till the whole atmosphere was charged with voluptuous sweetness. The softest music breathed from the instruments of concealed performers. The rarest wines flowed like water. And flashing eyes, and wreathed smiles, and bare arms, and bare bosoms, and most voluptuous forms, decked to inflame the senses of the coldest, were prodigal of charms and soft abandonment.

No modest pen may describe the orgies that ensued,—the drunkenness, the lust, the frantic mirth, the unnatural mad revelry. There was but one at that banquet, who, although he drank more deeply, rioted more sensually, laughed more loudly, sang more wildly, than any of the guests, was yet as cool amid that terrible scene of excitement, as in the council chamber, as on the battle field.

His sallow face flushed not; his hard clear eye swam not languidly, nor danced with intoxication; his voice quivered not; his pulse was as slow, as even as its wont. That man's frame, like his soul, was of trebly tempered steel.

Had Catiline not been the worst, he had been the greatest of Romans.

But his race in Rome was now nearly ended. The water-clocks announced the fifth hour; and leaving the more private triclinium, in which the ringleaders alone had feasted, followed by his guests,—who were flushed, reeling, and half frenzied,—with a steady step, a cold eye, and a presence like that of Mars himself, the Arch Traitor entered the great open hall, wherein three hundred of his

clients, armed sumptuously in the style of legionary horse-men, had banqueted magnificently, though they had stopped short of the verge of excess.

All rose to their feet, as Catiline entered, hushed in dread expectation.

He stood for one moment, gazing on his adherents, tried veterans every man of them, case-hardened in the furnace of Sylla's fiery discipline, with proud confidence and triumph in his eye; and then addressed them in clear high tones, piercing as those of an adamantine trumpet.

"Since," he said, "it is permitted to us neither to live in Rome securely, nor to die in Rome honorably, I go forth—will you follow me?"

And, with an unanimous cry, as it had been the voice of one man, they answered,

"To the death, Catiline!"

"I go forth, harming no one, hating no one, fearing no one! Guiltless of all, but of loving the people! Goaded to ruin by the proud patricians, injured, insulted, well nigh maddened, I go forth to seek, not power nor revenge, but innocence and safety. If they will leave me peace, the lamb shall be less gentle; if they will drive me into war, the famished lion shall be tamer. Soldiers of Sylla, will you have Sylla's friend in peace for your guardian, in war for your captain?"

And again, in one tumultuous shout, they replied, "In peace, or in war, through life, and unto death, Catiline!"

"Behold, then, your Eagle!"—and, with the word, he snatched from a marble slab on which it lay, covered by tapestry, the silver bird of Mars, hovering with expanded wings over a bannered staff, and brandished it on high, in triumph. "Behold your standard, your omen, and your God! Swear, that it shall shine yet again above Rome's Capitol!"

Every sword flashed from its scabbard, every knee was bent; and kneeling, with the bright blades all pointed like concentric sunbeams toward that bloody idol, in deep emotion, and deep awe, they swore to be true to the Eagle, traitors to Rome, parricides to their country.

"One cup of wine, and then to horse, and to glory!"

The goblets were brimmed with the liquid madness;

they were quaffed to the very dregs ; they clanged empty upon the marble floor.

Ten minutes more, and the hall was deserted ; and mounted on proud horses, brought suddenly together, by a perfect combination of time and place, with the broad steel heads of their javelins sparkling in the moonbeams, and the renowned eagle poised with bright wings above them, the escort of the Roman Traitor rode through the city streets, at midnight, audacious, in full military pomp, in ordered files, with a cavalry clarion timing their steady march—rode unresisted through the city gates, under the eyes of a Roman cohort, to try the fortunes of civil war in the provinces, frustrate of massacre and conflagration in the capitol.

Cicero knew it, and rejoiced ; and when he cried aloud on the following day, " **ABIIT, EXCESSIT, EVASIT, ERUPIT—** He hath departed, he hath stolen out, he hath gone from among us, he hath burst forth into war"—his great heart thrilled, and his voice quivered, with prophetic joy and conscious triumph. He felt even then that he had " **SAVED HIS COUNTRY.**"

CHAPTER VII.

THE AMBASSADORS.

Give first admittance to th' ambassadors.

HAMLET.

IT wanted a short time of noon, on a fine bracing day in the latter end of November.

Something more than a fortnight had elapsed since the flight of Catiline; and, as no further discoveries had been made, nor any tumults or disturbances arisen in the city, men had returned to their former avocations, and had for the most part forgotten already the circumstances, which had a little while before convulsed the public mind with fear or favor.

No certain tidings had been received, or, if received, divulged to the people, of Catiline's proceedings; it being only known that he had tarried for a few days at the country-house of Caius Flaminius Flamma, near to Arretium, where he was believed to be amusing himself with boar-hunting.

On the other hand, the letters of justification, and complaint against Cicero, had been shewn to their friends by all those who had received them, all men of character and weight; and their contents had thus gained great publicity.

The consequence of this was, naturally enough, that the friends and favorers of the conspiracy, acting with singular wisdom and foresight, studiously affected the utmost moderation and humility of bearing, while complaining every where of the injustice done to Catiline, and of the false suspicions maliciously cast on many estimable indi-

viduals, by the low-born and ambitious person who was temporarily at the head of the state.

The friends of Cicero and the republic, on the contrary, lay on their oars, in breathless expectation of some new occurrence, which should confirm the public mind, and approve their own conduct; well aware that much time could not elapse before Catiline would be heard of at the head of an army.

In the meantime, the city wore its wonted aspect; men bought and sold, and toiled or sported; and women smiled and sighed, flaunted and wantoned in the streets, as if, a few short days before, they had not been wringing their hands in terror, dissolved in tears, and speechless from dismay.

It was a market day, and the forum was crowded almost to overflowing. The country people had flocked in, as usual, to sell the produce of their farms; and their wagons stood here and there laden with seasonable fruits, cheeses, and jars of wine, pigeons in wicker cages, fresh herbs, and such like articles of traffic. Many had brought their wives, sun-burned, black-haired and black-eyed, from their villas in the Latin or Sabine country, to purchase city luxuries. Many had come to have their lawsuits decided; many to crave justice against their superiors from the Tribunes of the people; many to get their wills registered, to pay or borrow money, and to transact that sort of business, for which the day was set aside.

Nor were the townsmen absent from the gay scene; for to them the *nundinæ*, or market days, were holydays, in which the courts of law were shut, and the offices closed to them, at least, although open to the rural citizens, for the despatch of business.

The members of the city tribes crowded therefore to the forum many of these too accompanied by their women, to buy provisions, to ask for news from the country, and to stare at the uncouth and sturdy forms of the farmers, or admire the black eyes and merry faces of the country lasses.

It was a lively and gay scene; the bankers' shops, distinguished by the golden shields of the Samnites, suspended from the lintels of their doors, were thronged with money-changers, and alive with the hum of traffic.

Ever and anon some curule magistrate, in his fringed toga, with his lictors, in number proportioned to his rank, would come sweeping through the dense crowd; or some plebeian officer, with his ushers and beadles; or, before whom the ranks of the multitude would open of their own accord and bow reverentially, some white-stoled vestal virgin, with her fair features closely veiled from profane eyes, the sacred fillets on her head, and her lictor following her dainty step with his shouldered fasces. Street musicians there were also, and shows of various kinds, about which the lower orders of the people collected eagerly; and, here and there, among the white stoles and gayly colored shawls of the matrons and maidens, might be seen the flowered togas and showy head-dresses of those unfortunate girls, many of them rare specimens of female beauty, whose character precluded them from wearing the attire of their own sex.

“Ha! Fabius Sanga, whither thou in such haste through the crowd?” cried a fine manly voice, to a patrician of middle age who was forcing his way hurriedly among the jostling mob, near to the steps of the Comitium, or building appropriated to the reception of ambassadors.

The person thus addressed turned his head quickly, though without slackening his speed.

“Ah! is it thou, Arvina? Come with me, thou art young and strong; give me thy arm, and help me through this concourse.”

“Willingly,” replied the young man. “But why are you in such haste?” he continued, as he joined him; “you can have no business here to-day.”

“Aye! but I have, my Paullus. I am the patron to these Gallic ambassadors, who have come hither to crave relief from the Senate for their people. They must receive their answer in the Comitium to-day; and I fear me much, I am late.”

“Ah! by the Gods! I saw them on that day they entered the city. Right stout and martial barbarians! What is their plea? will they succeed?”

“I fear not,” answered Sanga. “They are too poor. Senatorial relief must be bought nowadays. The longest purse is the most righteous cause! Their case is a hard one, too. Their nation is oppressed with debt, both pri-

vate and public; they have been faithful allies to the state, and served it well in war, and now seek remission of some grievous tributes. But what shall we say? They are poor—barbarians—their aid not needed now by the republic—and, as you know, my Paullus, justice is sold now in Rome, like silk, for its weight in gold!”

“The more shame!” answered Paullus. “It was not by such practices, that our fathers built up this grand edifice of the republic.”

“Riches have done it, Paullus! Riches and Commerce! While we had many tillers of the ground, and few merchants, we were brave in the field, and just at home!”

“Think you, then, that the spirit of commerce is averse to justice, and bravery, and freedom?”

“No, I do not think it, Arvina, I know it!” answered Fabius Sanga, who, with the truth and candor of a patrician of Rome’s olden school, possessed, and that justly, much repute for wisdom and foresight. “All mercantile communities are base communities. Look at Tyre, in old times! Look at Carthage, in our grandfathers’ days! at Corinth in our own! Merchants are never patriots! and rich men seldom; unless they be landholders! But see, see, there are my clients, descending the steps of the Comitium! By all the Gods! I am too late! their audience is ended! Now, by Themis, the goddess of justice! will they deem me also venal!”

As he spoke, they had come to the foot of the grand flight of marble steps, leading up to the doors of the Græcostasis, or comitium; or rather had come as near to the foot, as the immense concourse, which had gathered about that spot to stare at the wild figures and foreign gait of the ambassadors, would allow them to approach.

“It is in vain to press forward yet, my Sanga. A moment or two, and these clowns will be satisfied with gazing; yet, by Hercules! I cannot blame them. For these Highlanders are wondrous muscular and stout warriors to look upon, and their garb, although somewhat savage, is very martial and striking.”

And, in truth, their Celtic bonnets, with their long single eagle feathers, set somewhat obliquely on their abundant auburn hair; their saffron-colored shirts, tight-fitting trows of tartan plaid, and variegated mantles floating over their

drawny shoulders, their chains and bracelets of gold and silver, their long daggers in their girdles, and their tremendous broad-swords swinging at their thighs, did present a strange contrast to the simple tunics of white woolen, and plain togas of the same material, which constituted the attire of nine-tenths of the spectators.

"I must must get nearer!" replied Sanga, anxiously; "I must speak with them! I can see by the moody brows, and sullen looks of the elder nobles, and by the compressed lips and fiery glances of the young warriors, that matters have gone amiss with them. I shall be blamed, I know, for it—but I have failed in my duty as their patron, and must bear it. There will be mischief; I pray you let us pass, my friends," he continued, addressing the people, "I am the patron of their nation; let us pass."

But it was in vain that they besought and strove; the pressure of the mob was, if anything, augmented; and Paullus was compelled to remain motionless with his companion, hoping that the Allobroges would move in their direction.

But, while they were thus waiting, a thin keen-looking man pressed up to the ambassadors, from the farther side, while they were yet upon the steps, and saluting them cordially, pressed their hands, as if he were an old and familiar friend.

Nor did the Highlanders appear less glad to see him, for they shook his hand warmly, and spoke to him with vehement words, and sparkling eyes.

"Who is that man, who greets our Allobroges so warmly?" asked Arvina of his companion. "Know you the man?"

"I know him!" answered Sanga, watching the gestures which accompanied their conversation with an eager eye, although too far off to hear anything that was passing. "It is one of these traders, of whom we spoke but now; and as pestilent a knave and rogue as ever sold goods by short measure, and paid his purchases in light coin! Publius Umbrenus is the man. A Gallic trader. He hath become rich by the business he hath carried on with this same tribe, bartering Roman wares, goldsmith's work, trinkets, cutlery, wines, and the like, against their furs and hides, and above all against their amber. He gains three hundred

fold by every barter, and yet, by the God of Faith! he brings them in his debt after all; and yet the simple-minded, credulous Barbarians, believe him their best friend. I would buy it at no small price, to know what he saith to *them*. See! he points to the Comitium. By your head, Paullus! he is poisoning their minds against the Senate!"

"See!" said Arvina. "They descend the steps in the other direction. He is leading them away with him some-whither."

"To no good end!" said Sanga emphatically; and then smiting his breast with his hand, he continued, evidently much afflicted, "My poor clients! my poor simple Highlanders! He will mislead them to their ruin?"

"They are going toward Vesta's temple," said Arvina. "If we should turn back through the arch of Fabius, and so enter into the western branch of the Sacred Way, we might overtake them near the Ruminal Fig-tree."

"*You* might, for you are young and active. But I am growing old, Paullus, and the gout afflicts my feet, and makes me slower than my years. Will you do so, and mark whither he leads them; and come back, and tell me? You shall find me in Natta's, the bookseller's shop, at the corner of the street Argiletum."

"Willingly, Sanga," answered the young man. "The rather, if it may profit these poor Gauls anything."

"Thou art a good youth, Paullus. The Gods reward it to thee. Remember Natta's book-shop."

"Doubt me not," said Arvina; and he set off at a pace so rapid, as brought him up with those, whom he was pursuing, within ten minutes.

The ambassadors, six or eight in number, among whom the old white-headed chief he had observed—when he went with Hortensia and his betrothed, to see their ingress into Rome—together with the young warrior whose haughty bearing he had noticed on that occasion, were most eminent, had been joined by another Roman beside Umbrenus.

Him, Paullus recognised at once, for Titus Volturcius, a native and nobleman of Crotona, a Greek city, on the Gulf of Tarentum, although a citizen of Rome.

He was a man of evil repute, as a wild debauchee, a gambler, and seducer; and Arvina had observed him more than once in company with Cornelius Lentulus.

This led him to suspect, that Sanga was perhaps more accurate in his suspicions, than he himself imagined; and that something might be in progress here, against the republic.

He watched them warily, therefore; and soon found an ample confirmation of the worst he imagined, in seeing them enter the house of Decius Brutus, the husband of the beautiful, but infamous Sempronia.

It must not be supposed, that the privity of these various individuals to the conspiracy, was accurately known to young Arvina; but he was well aware, that Lentulus and Catiline were sworn friends; and that Sempronia was the very queen of those abandoned and licentious ladies, who were the instigators and rewarders of the young nobles, in their profligacy and their crimes; it did not require, therefore, any wondrous degree of foresight, to see that something dangerous was probably brewing, in this amalgamation of ingredients so incongruous, as Roman nobles and patrician harlots, with wild barbarians from the Gallic highlands.

Without tarrying, therefore, longer than to ascertain that he was not mistaken in the house, he hurried back to meet Sanga, at the appointed place, promising himself that not Sanga only, but Cicero himself, should be made acquainted with that which he had discovered so opportunely.

The Argiletum was a street leading down from the vegetable mart, which lay just beyond the *Porta Fluminiana*, or river gate, to the banks of the Tiber, at the quays called *pulchrum littus*, or the beautiful shore; it was therefore a convenient place of meeting for persons who had parted company in the forum, particularly when going in that direction, which had been taken by Umbrenus and the Ambassadors.

Hastening onward to the street appointed—which was for the most part inhabited by booksellers, copyists, and embellishers of illuminated manuscripts, beside a few tailors—he was hailed, just as he reached the river gate, by a well-known voice, from a cross street; and turning round he felt his hand warmly grasped, by an old friend, Aristius Fuscus, one of the noble youths, with whom he had striven, in the Campus Martius, on that eventful day, when he first visited the house of Catiline.

“Hail! Paullus,” exclaimed the new comer, “I have

n. seen you in many days. Where have you been, since you beat us all in the quinquertum. ?

“Absent from town, on business of the state, part of the time, my Fuscus,” answered Arvina, shaking his friend’s hand gayly. “I was sent to Præneste, with my troop of horse, before the calends of November; and returned not until the Ides.”

“And since that, I fancy”—replied the other laughing, “You have been sunning yourself in the bright smiles of the fair Julia. I thought you were to have led her home, as your bride, ere this time.”

“You are wrong for once, good friend,” said Paullus, with a well-pleased smile. “Julia is absent from the city also. She and Hortensia are on a visit to their farm, at the foot of Mount Algidus. I have not seen them, since my return from Præneste.”

“Your slaves, I trow, know every mile-stone by this time, on the via Labicana! Do you write to her daily?”

“Not so, indeed, Aristius;” he replied. “We are too long betrothed, and too confident, each in the good faith of the other, to think it needful to kill my poor slaves in bearing amatory billets.”

“You are wise, Paullus, as you are true, and will, I hope, be happy lovers!”

“The Gods grant it!” replied Paullus.

“Do they return shortly? It is long since I have visited Hortensia. She would do justly to refuse me admittance when next I go to salute her.”

“Not until after the next market day. But here I must leave you; I am going to Natta’s shop, in the Argiletum.”

“To purchase books? Ha! or to the tailor’s? the last, I presume, gay bridegroom—there are, you know, two Nattas.”

“Natta, the bookseller, is my man. But I go thither, not as a buyer, but to meet a friend, Fabius Sanga.”

“A very wise and virtuous Roman,” replied the other, stopping at the corner of the street Argiletum, “but tarry a moment; when shall we meet again? I am going down to the hippodrome, can you not join me there, when you have finished your business with Sanga?”

“I can; gladly.” answered Arvina.

As they stopped, previous to separating, a young man,

who had been walking for some distance close at their heels, passed them, nodding as he did so, to Arvina, who returned his salutation, very distantly.

"Aulus Fulvius!" said Aristius, as Paullus bowed to him, "as bad a specimen of a young patrician, as one might see for many days, even if he searched for rascals, as the philosopher did for an honest man, by lanthorn's light at noon. He has been following our steps, by my head!—to pick up our stray words, and weave them into calumnies, and villainy."

"I care not," answered Arvina, lightly. "He may make all he can of what he heard, we were talking no treason!"

"No, truly; not even lover's treason," said his friend. "Well, do not tarry long, Arvina."

"I will not; be assured. Not the fourth part of an hour. See! there is Fabius Sanga awaiting me even now. Walk slowly, and I will overtake you, before you reach the Campus."

And with the word, he turned down the Argiletum, and joined the patron of the Allobroges, at the bookseller's door.

In the meantime Aulus Fulvius, who had heard all that he desired, wheeled about, and walked back toward the Carmental gate. But, as he passed the head of the Argiletum, he cast a lurid glance of singular malignity upon Arvina, who was standing in full view, conversing with his friend; and muttered between his teeth,

"The fool! the hypocrite! the pedant! well said, wise Catiline, 'that it matters not much whether one listen to his friends, so he listen well to his enemies!' The fool—so he thinks he shall have Julia. But he never shall, by Hades! never!"

A slenderly made boy, dressed in a succinct huntsman's tunic, with *subligacula*, or drawers, reaching to within a hand's breadth of his knee, was loitering near the corner, gazing wistfully on Arvina; and, as Aulus muttered those words half aloud, he jerked his head sharply around, and looked very keenly at the speaker.

"Never shall have Julia!" he repeated to himself, "he must have spoken that concerning Arvina. I wonder who he is. I never saw him before. I must know—I must

know, forthwith! For he *shall* have her, by heaven and Him, who dwells in it! he *shall* have her!"

And, turning a lingering and languid look toward Faullus, the slight boy darted away in pursuit of Aulus.

A moment afterward Arvina, his conference with Sangga ended, and ignorant of all that by-play, took the road leading to the Campus, eager to overtake his friend Aristius.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE LATIN VILLA.

I come, O Agamemnon's daughter fair,
To this thy sylvan lair.

ELECTRA.

THROUGH a soft lap in the wooded chain of Mount Algidus, a bright pellucid stream, after wheeling and fretting among the crags and ledges of the upper valleys, winds its way gently, toward the far-famed Tiber.

Shut in, on every side, except the south, by the lower spurs of the mountain ridge, in which it is so snugly nestled, covered with rich groves of chesnut-trees, and sheltered on the northward by the dark pines of the loftier steeps, it were difficult to conceive a fairer site for a villa, than that sweet vale.

Accordingly, on a little knoll in the jaws of the gorge, whence issued that clear streamlet, facing the pleasant south, yet sheltered from its excessive heats by a line of superb plane trees, festooned with luxuriant vines, there stood a long low building of the antique form, built of dark-colored stone.

A villa, in the days of Cicero, was a very different thing from the luxurious pleasure-houses which came into vogue in the days of the later Emperors, of which Pliny has given us descriptions so minute and glowing; yet even his Tusculan retreat was a building of vast pretension, when compared with this, which was in fact neither more nor less than an old Roman Farmhouse, of that innocent and unsophisticated day, when the Consulars of the Republic were tillers of the soil, and when heroes returned, from

the almost immortal triumph, to the management of the spade and the ploughshare.

This villa had, it is true, been adorned somewhat, and fitted to the temporary abode of individuals more refined and elegant, than the rough steward and rustic slaves, who were its usual tenants. Yet it still retained its original form, and was adapted to its original uses.

The house itself, which was but two stories high, was in form a hollow square, to the courts enclosed in which access was gained by a pair of lofty wooden gates in the rear. It had, in the first instance, presented on all sides merely a blank wall exteriorly, all the windows looking into the court, the centre of which was occupied by a large tank of water, the whole interior serving the purpose of a farm yard. The whole ground floor of the building, had formerly been occupied by stables, root-houses, wine-presses, dairies, cheese-rooms and the like, and by the slaves' kitchen, which was the first apartment toward the right of the entrance. The upper story contained the granaries and the dormitories of the workmen; and three sides still remained unaltered.

The front, however, of the villa had been pierced with a handsome doorway, and several windows; a colonnade of rustic stonework had been carried along the façade, and a beautiful garden had been laid out before it, with grassy terraces, clipped hedges, box trees, transmuted by the gardener's art into similitudes of Peacocks, Centaurs, Tritons, Swans, and many other forms of fowls or fishes, unknown alike and unnamed by Gods or mortals.

The sun was within about half an hour of his setting, and his slant beams, falling through a gap in the western hills, streamed down into the little valley, casting long stripes of alternate light and shadow over the smoothly shaven lawn, sparkling upon the ripples of the streamlet, and gilding the embrowned or yellow foliage of the sere hill-sides, with brighter and more vivid colors.

At this pleasant hour, notwithstanding the lateness of the season, and looking upon this pleasant scene, a group of females were collected, under the rustic colonnade of Italian marble, engaged in some of those light toils, which in feminine hands are so graceful.

The foremost of these, seated apart somewhat from the

others, were the stately and still beautiful Hortensia, and her lovely daughter, both of them employed in twirling the soft threads from the merrily revolving spindle, into large osier baskets; and the elder lady, glancing at times toward the knot of slave girls, as if to see that they performed their light tasks; and at times, if their mirth waxed too loud, checking it by a gesture of her elevated finger.

A little while before, Julia had been singing in her sweet low voice, one of those favorite old ballads, which were so much prized by the Romans, and to which Livy is probably so much indebted for the redundant imagery of his "pictured page," commemorative of the deeds and virtues of the Old Houses.

But, as her lay came to its end, her eye had fallen on the broad blood-red disc of the descending day-god, and had followed him upon his downward path, until he was lost to view, among the tangled coppices that fringed the brow of the western hill.

Her hands dropped listlessly into her lap, releasing the snow-white thread, which they had drawn out so daintily; and keeping her eyes still fixed steadily on the point where he had disappeared, she gave vent to her feelings in a long-drawn 'heigho!' in every language, and in all times, expression of sentimental sadness.

"Wherefore so sad a sigh, my Julia?" asked Hortensia, gazing affectionately at the saddened brow of the fair girl—"methinks! there is nothing very melancholy here; nothing that should call forth repining."

"See, see Hortensia, how he sinks like a dying warrior, amid those sanguine clouds," cried the girl, pointing to the great orb of the sun, just as its last limb was disappearing.

"And into a couch of bays and myrtles, like that warrior, when his duty is done, his fame won!" exclaimed Hortensia, throwing her arm abroad enthusiastically; and truly the hill-side, behind which he was lost to view, was feathered thick with the shrubs of which she spoke—"methinks! there is nought for which to sigh in such a setting, either of the sun, or the hero!"

"But see, how dark and gloomy he has left all behind him!—the river which was golden but now, while he smiled upon it, now that he is gone, is leaden."

“But he shall rise again to-morrow, brighter and yet more glorious; and yet more gloriously shall the stream blaze back his rising than his setting lustre.”

“Alas! alas! Hortensia!”

“Wherefore, alas, my Julia?”

“For so will not the warrior rise, who sinks forever, although it may be into a bed of glory! And if the setting of the sun leave all here lustreless and dark and gloomy, although *that* must arise again to-morrow, what must the setting do of one who shall arise no more for ever; whose light of life was to one heart, what the sunbeam was to the streamlet, but which, unlike that sunbeam, shall never shine on the heart any more, Hortensia.”

“My poor child,” cried the noble matron, affected almost to tears, “you are thinking of Paullus.”

“When am I not thinking of him, mother?” said the girl. “Remember, we have left the city, seeking these quiet shades, in order to eschew that turmoil, that peril, in the heat of which *he* is now striving for his country! Remember, that he will plunge into all that strife, the more desperately, because he fancies that he was too remiss before! Remember this, Hortensia; and say, if thou canst, that I have no cause for sad forebodings!”

“That can I not, my Julia,” she replied—“For who is there on earth, who knoweth what the next sun shall bring forth? The sunshine of to-day, oft breeds the storm of to-morrow—and, again, from the tempest of the eve, how oft is born the brightest and most happy morning. Wisest is he, and happiest, my child, who wraps himself in his own virtue, careless of what the day shall bring to pass, and confident, that all the shafts of fortune must rebound, harmless and blunted, from his sure armor of philosophy.”

“Must not the heart have bled, Hortensia, before it can so involve itself in virtue?—must not such philosophy be the tardy offspring of great sorrow?”

“For the most part I fear it is so, Julia,” answered the matron, “but some souls there are so innocent and quiet, so undisturbed by the outward world, that they have that, almost by nature, which others only win by suffering and tears.”

“Cold and unfeeling souls, I fancy,” replied the girl. “For it appears to me that this philosophy which smiles on

all spite of fortune, must be akin to selfish and morose indifference. I see not much to love, Hortensia, or to admire in the stoic!"

"Nor much more, I imagine," said Hortensia, not sorry to draw her mind from the subject which occupied it so painfully, "in the Epicurean!"

"Much less!" answered Julia, quickly, "his creed is mere madness and impiety. To believe that the Gods care nothing for the good or evil—ye Gods!" she interrupted herself suddenly, almost with a shriek. "What is this? a slave riding, as if for life, on a foaming horse, from the cityward. Oh! my prophetic soul, Hortensia!"

And she turned pale as death, although she remained quite firm and self-possessed.

"It may be nothing, Julia; or it may be good tidings," answered Hortensia, although she was in truth scarce less alarmed, than her daughter, by the unexpected arrival.

"Good tidings travel not so quickly. Beside, what can there be of good, so unexpected? But we shall know—we shall know quickly," and she arose, as if to descend the steps into the garden, but she sank back again into her seat, crying, "I am faint, I am sick, *here*, Hortensia," and she laid her hand on her heart as she spoke. "Nay! do not tarry with me, I pray thee, see what he brings. Anything but the torture of suspense!"

"I go, I go, my child," cried the matron, descending the marble steps to the lawn, on which the slave had just drawn up his panting horse. "He has a letter in his hand, be of good courage."

And a moment afterward she cried out joyously, "It is in his hand, Julia, Paullus Arvina's hand. Fear nothing."

And with a quick light step, she returned, and gave the little slip of vellum into the small white hand, which trembled so much, that it scarcely could receive it.

"A snow-white dove to thee, kind Venus!" cried the girl, raising her eyes in gratitude to heaven, before she broke the seal.

But as she did so, and read the first lines, her face was again overcast, and her eyes were dilated with wild terror.

"It is so—it is so—Hortensia! I knew—oh! my soul! I knew it!" and she let fall the letter, and fell back in her seat almost fainting.

“What?—what?” exclaimed Hortensia. “It is Arvina’s hand—he must be in life!—what is it, my own Julia?”

“Wounded almost to death!” faltered the girl, in accents half choked with anguish. “Read! read aloud, kind mother.”

Alarmed by her daughter’s suffering and terror, Hortensia caught the parchment from her half lifeless fingers, and scanning its contents hastily with her eyes, read as follows.

“Paullus Arvina, to Julia and Hortensia, greeting! Your well known constancy and courage give me the confidence to write frankly to you, concealing nothing. Your affection makes me sure, that you will hasten to grant my request. Last night, in a tumult aroused by the desperate followers of Catiline, stricken down and severely wounded, I narrowly missed death. Great thanks are due to the Gods, that the assassin’s weapon failed to penetrate to my vitals. Be not too much alarmed, however; Alexion, Cicero’s friend and physician, has visited me; and declares, that, unless fever supervene, there is no danger from the wound. Still, I am chained to my couch, wearily, and in pain, with none but slaves about me. At such times, the heart asks for more tender ministering—wherefore I pray you, Julia, let not one day elapse; but come to me! Hortensia, by the Gods! bring her to the city! Catiline hath fled, the peril hath passed over—but lo! I am growing faint—I can write no more, now—there is a swimming of my brain, and a cloud over my eyes. Farewell. Come to me quickly, that it prove not too late—come to me quickly, if you indeed love ARVINA.”

“We will go, Julia. We will go to him instantly,” said Hortensia—“but be of good cheer, poor child. Alexion declares, that there is no danger; and no one is so wise as he! Be of good cheer, we will set forth this night, this hour! Ere daybreak, we will be in Rome. Hark, Lydia,” she continued, turning to one of the slave girls, “call me the steward, old Davus. Let the boy Geta, take the horse of the messenger; and bring thou the man hither.” Then she added, addressing Julia, “I will question him farther, while they prepare the carpentum! Ho, Davus.”—for the old slave, who was close at hand, entered forthwith—“Have the mules harnessed, instantly, to the carpentum, and let the six Thracians, who accompanied us

from Rome, saddle their horses, and take arms. Ill fortune has befallen young Arvina; we must return to town this night—as speedily as may be.”

“Within an hour, Hortensia, all shall be in readiness, on my head be it, else.”

“It is well—and, hark you! send hither wine and bread—we will not wait until they make supper ready; beside, this youth is worn out with his long ride, and needs refreshment.”

As the steward left the room, she gazed attentively at the young slave, who had brought the despatch, and, not recognising his features, a half feeling of suspicion crossed her mind; so that she stooped and whispered to Julia, who looked up hastily and answered,

“No—no—but what matters it? It is *his* handwriting, and his signet.”

“I do not know,” said Hortensia, doubtfully—“I think he would have sent one of the older men; one whom we knew; I think he would have sent Medon”—Then she said to the boy, “I have never seen thy face before, I believe, good youth. How long hast thou served Arvina?”

“Since the Ides of October, Hortensia. He purchased me of Marcus Crassus.”

“Purchased thee, Ha?” said Hortensia, yet more doubtfully than before—“that is strange. His household was large enough already. How came he then to purchase thee?”

“I was hired out by Crassus, as is his wont to do, to Crispus the sword-smith, in the Sacred Way—a cruel tyrant and oppressor, whom, when he was barbarously scourging me for a small error, noble Arvina saw; and then, finding his intercession fruitless, purchased me, as he said, that thereafter I should be entreated as a man, not as a beast of burthen.”

“It is true! by the Gods!” exclaimed the girl, clasping her hands enthusiastically, and a bright blush coming up into her pale face. “Had I been told the action, without the actor’s name, I should have known therein Arvina.”

“Thou shouldst be grateful, therefore, to this good Arvina”—said Hortensia, gazing at him with a fixed eye, she knew not wherefore, yet with a sort of dubious presentiment of coming evil.

“Grateful!” cried the youth, clasping his hands fervently together—“ye Gods! grateful! Hortensia, by your head! I worship him—I would die for him.”

“How came he to send thee on this mission? Why sent he not Medon, or Euphranor, or one of his elder freedmen?”

“Medon, he could not send, nor Euphranor. It went ill with them both, in that affray, wherein my lord was wounded. The older slaves keep watch around his bed; the strongest and most trusty, are under arms in the Atrium.”

“And wert thou with him, in that same affray?”

“I was with him, Hortensia.”

“When fell it out, and for what cause?”

“Hast thou not heard, Hortensia?—has he not told you? by the Gods! I thought, the world had known it. How before Catiline, may it be ill with him and his, went forth from the city, he and his friends and followers attacked the Consuls, on the Palatine, with armed violence. It was fought through the streets doubtfully, for near three hours; and the fortunes of the Republic were at stake, and well nigh despaired of, if not lost. Cicero was down on the pavement, and Catiline’s sword flashing over him, when, with his slaves and freedmen, my master cut his way through the ranks of the conspiracy, and bore off the great magistrate unharmed. But, as he turned, a villain buried his *sica* in his back, and though he saved the state, he well nigh lost his life, to win everlasting fame, and the love of all good citizens!”

“Hast seen him since he was wounded?” exclaimed Julia, who had devoured every word he uttered, with insatiable longing and avidity.

“Surely,” replied the boy. “I received that scroll from his own hands—my orders from his own lips—‘spare not an instant,’ he said, ‘Jason; tarry not, though you kill your steed. If you would have me live, let Julia see this letter before midnight.’ It lacks as yet, four hours of midnight. Doth it not, noble Julia?”

“Five, I think. But how looked, how spoke he? Is he in great pain, Jason? how seemed he, when you left him?”

“He was very pale, Julia—very wan, and his lips ashy

white. His voice faltered very much, moreover, and when he had made an end of speaking, he swooned away. I heard that he was better somewhat, ere I set out to come hither; but the physician speaks of fever to be apprehended, on any irritation or excitement. Should you delay long in visiting him, I fear the consequences might be perilous indeed."

"Do you hear? do you hear that, Hortensia? By the Gods! Let us go at once! we need no preparation!"

"We will go, Julia. Old Davus' hour hath nearly passed already. We will be in the city before day-break! Fear not, my sweet one, all shall go well with our beloved Paullus."

"The Gods grant it!"

"Here is wine, Jason," said Hortensia. "Drink, boy, you must needs be weary after so hard a gallop. You have done well, and shall repose here this night. To-morrow, when well rested and refreshed, you shall follow us to Rome."

"Pardon me, lady," said the youth. "I am not weary; love for Arvina hath prevailed over all weariness! Furnish me, I beseech you, with a fresh horse; and let me go with you."

"It shall be as you wish," said Hortensia, "but your frame seems too slender, to endure much labor."

"The Gods have given me a willing heart, Hortensia—and the strong will makes strong the feeble body."

"Well spoken, youth. Your devotion shall lose you nothing, believe me. Come, Julia, let us go and array us for the journey. The nights are cold now, in December, and the passes of the Algidus are bleak and gusty."

The ladies left the room; and, before the hour, which Davus had required, was spent, they were seated together in the rich carpentum, well wrapped in the soft many-colored woollen fabrics, which supplied the place of furs among the Romans—it being considered a relic of barbarism, to wear the skins of beasts, until the love for this decoration again returned in the last centuries of the Empire.

Old Davus grasped the reins; two Thracian slaves, well mounted, and armed with the small circular targets and lances of their native land, galloped before the carriage,

accompanied by the slave who had brought the message, while four more similarly equipped brought up the rear; and thus, before the moon had arisen, travelling at a rapid pace, they cleared the cultivated country, and were involved in the wild passes of Mount Algidus.

Scarcely, however, had they wound out of sight, when galloping at mad and reckless speed, down a wild wood-road on the northern side of the villa, there came a horseman bestriding a white courser, of rare symmetry and action, now almost black with sweat, and envelopped with foam-flakes.

The rider was the same singular-looking dark-complexioned boy, who had overheard the exclamation of Aulus Fulvius, concerning young Arvina, uttered at the head of the street Argiletum.

His body was bent over the rude saddle-bow with weariness, and he reeled to and fro, as if he would have fallen from his horse, when he pulled up at the door of the villa.

"I would speak," he said in a faint and faltering voice, "presently, with Hortensia—matters of life and death depend on it."

"The Gods avert the omen!" cried the woman, to whom he had addressed himself, "Hortensia hath gone but now to Rome, with young Julia, on the arrival of a message from Arvina."

"Too late! too late!"—cried the boy, beating his breast with both hands. "They are betrayed to death or dishonor!"

"How? what is this? what say you?" cried the chief slave of the farm, a person of some trust and importance, who had just come up.

"It was a tall slight fair-haired slave who bore the message—he called himself Jason—he rode a bay horse, did he not?" asked the new comer.

"He was! He did! A bay horse, with one white foot before, and a white star on his forehead. A rare beast from Numidia, or Cyrenaica," replied the steward, who was quite at home in the article of horse-flesh.

"He brought tidings that Arvina is sorely wounded?"

"He brought tidings! Therefore it was that they set forth at so short notice! He left the horse here, and was mounted on a black horse of the farm."

“Arvina is not wounded! That bay horse is Cethegus’, the conspirator’s! Arvina hath sent *no* message! They are betrayed, I tell you, man. Aulus Fulvius awaits them with a gang of desperadoes in the deep cleft of the hills, where the cross-road comes in by which you reach the Flaminian from the Labican way. Arm yourselves speedily and follow, else will they carry Julia to Catiline’s camp in the Appenines, beside Fiesolé! What there will befall her, Catiline’s character best may inform you! Come—to arms—men! to horse, and follow!”

But ignorant of the person of the messenger, lacking an authorized head, fearful of taking the responsibility, and incurring the reproach, perhaps the punishment, of credulity, they loitered and hesitated; and, though they did at length get to horse and set out in pursuit, it was not till Hortensia’s cavalcade had been gone above an hour.

Meanwhile, unconscious of what had occurred behind them, and eager only to arrive at Rome as speedily as possible, the ladies journeyed onward, with full hearts, in silence, and in sorrow.

There is a deep dark gorge in the mountain chain, through which this road lay, nearly a mile in length; with a fierce torrent on one hand, and a sheer face of craggy rocks towering above it on the other. Beyond the torrent, the chesnut woods hung black and gloomy along the precipitous slopes, with their ragged tree-tops distinctly marked against the clear obscure of the nocturnal sky.

Midway this gorge, a narrow broken path comes down a cleft in the rocky wall on the right hand side, as you go toward Rome, by which through a wild and broken country the Flaminian way can be reached, and by it the district of Etruria and the famous Val d’Arno.

They had just reached this point, and were congratulating themselves, on having thus accomplished the most difficult part of their journey, when the messenger, who rode in front, uttered a long clear whistle.

The twang of a dozen bowstrings followed, from some large blocks of stone which embarrassed the pass at the junction of the two roads, and both the Thracians who preceded the carriage, went down, one of them killed outright, the other, with his horse shot dead under him.

“Ho! Traitor!” shouted the latter, extricating himself

from the dead charger, and hurling his javelin with fatal accuracy at the false slave, "thou at least shalt not boast of thy villainy! Treachery! treachery! Turn back, Hortensia! Fly, avus! to me! to me, comrades!"

But with a loud shout, down came young Aulus Fulvius, from the pass, armed, head to foot, as a Roman legionary soldier—down came the gigantic smith Caius Crispus, and fifteen men, at least, with blade and buckler, at his back.

The slaves fought desperately for their mistress' liberty or life; but the odds were too great, both in numbers and equipment; and not five minutes passed, before they were all cut down, and stretched out, dead or dying, on the rocky floor of the dark defile.

The strife ended, Aulus Fulvius strode quickly to the carpentum, which had been overturned in the affray, and which his lawless followers were already ransacking.

One of these wretches, his own namesake Aulus, the sword-smith's foreman, had already caught Julia in his licentious grasp, and was about to press his foul lips to her cheek, when the young patrician snatched her from his arms, and pushed him violently backward.

"Ho! fool and villain!" he exclaimed, "Darest thou to think such dainties are for thee? She is sacred to Catiline and vengeance!"

"This one, at least, then!" shouted the ruffian, making at Hortensia.

"Nor that one either!" cried the smith interposing; but as Aulus, the foreman, still struggled to lay hold of the Patrician lady, he very coolly struck him across the bare brow with the edge of his heavy cutting sword, cleaving him down to the teeth—"Nay! then take that, thou fool."—Then turning to Fulvius, he added; "He was a brawler always, and would have kept no discipline, now or ever."

"Well done, smith!" replied Aulus Fulvius. "The same fate to all who disobey orders! We have no time for dalliance now; it will be day ere long, and we must be miles hence ere it dawns! Bind me Hortensia, firmly, to yon chesnut tree, stout smith; but do not harm her. We too have mothers!" he added with a singular revulsion of feeling at such a moment. "For you, my beauty, we will have you consoled by a warmer lover than that most shallow-pated fool and sophist, Arvina. Come! I say come!"

no one shall harm you!" and without farther words, despite all her struggles and remonstrances, he bound a handkerchief tightly under her chin to prevent her cries, wrapped her in a thick crimson pallium, and springing upon his charger, with the assistance of the smith, placed her before him on the saddle-cloth, and set off a furious pace, through the steep by-path, leaving the defile tenanted only by the dying and the dead, with the exception of Hortensia, who rent the deaf air in vain with frantic cries of anguish, until at last she fainted, nature being too weak for the endurance of such prolonged agony.

About an hour afterward, she was released and carried to her Roman mansion, alive and unharmed in body, but almost frantic with despair, by the party of slaves who had come up, too late to save her Julia, under the guidance of the young unknown.

He, when he perceived that his efforts had been useless, and when he learned how Julia had been carried off by the conspirators, leaving the party to escort Hortensia, and bear their slaughtered comrades homeward, rode slowly and thoughtfully away, into the recesses of the wild country whither Aulus had borne his captive, exclaiming in a low silent voice with a clinched hand, and eyes turned heavenward, "I will die, ere dishonor reach her! Aid me! aid me, thou Nemesis—aid me to save, and avenge!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE MULVIAN BRIDGE.

Under which king, Bezonian? Speak, or die!

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

ON that same night, and nearly at the same hour wherein the messenger of Aulus Fulvius arrived at the Latin villa, there was a splendid banquet given in a house near the forum.

It was the house of Decius Brutus, unworthy bearer of a time-honored name, the husband of the infamous Sempornia.

At an earlier hour of the evening, a great crowd had been gathered round the doors, eager to gaze on the ambassadors of the Highland Gauls, who, their mission to Rome ended unsuccessfully, feasted there for the last time previous to their departure.

As it grew dark, however, tired of waiting in the hope of seeing the plaided warriors depart, the throng had dispersed, and with exception of the city watches and the cohorts, which from hour to hour perambulated them, the streets were unusually silent, and almost deserted.

There was no glare of lights from the windows of Brutus' house, as there would be in these days, and in modern mansions, to indicate the scene of festivity; for it was in the inmost chamber, of the most secluded suite of apartments, that the boards had been spread for the *comissatio*, or nocturnal revel.

The *cæna*, or dinner, had been partaken by all the guests previous to their arrival at their entertainer's, and the tables were laid only with light dainties and provocatives to thirst, such as salted meats and fishes, the roe of the sturgeon highly seasoned, with herbs and fruits, and pastry and confections, of all kinds.

Rich urns, with heaters, containing hot spiced wines, prepared with honey, smoked on the boards of costly citrean wood, intermixed with crystal vases filled with the rarest vintages of the Falernian hills, cooled and diluted with snow-water.

And around the circular tables, on the tapestried couches, reclined the banqueters of both sexes, quaffing the rich wines to strange toasts, jesting, and laughing wildly, singing at times themselves as the myrtle branch and the lute went round, at times listening to the licentious chaunts of the unveiled and almost unrobed dancing girls, or the obscene and scurrilous buffoonery of the mimes and clowns, who played so conspicuous a part in the Roman entertainments of a later period.

Among these banqueters there was not a single person not privy to the conspiracy, and few who have not been introduced already to the acquaintance of the reader, but among these few was Sempronia—Sempronia, who could be all things, at all times, and to all persons—who with all the softness and grace and beauty of the most feminine of her sex, possessed all the daring, energy, vigor, wisdom of the bravest and most intriguing man—accomplished to the utmost in all the liberal arts, a poetess and minstrel unrivalled by professional performers, a dancer more finished and voluptuous than beseemed a Roman matron, a scholar in both tongues, the Greek as well as her own, and priding herself on her ability to charm the gravest and most learned sages by the modesty of her bearing and the wealth of her intellect, as easily as the most profligate debauchees by her facetious levity, her loose wit, and her abandonment of all restraint to the wildest license.

On this evening she had strained every nerve to fascinate, to dazzle, to astonish.

She had danced as a bacchanal, with her luxuriant hair dishevelled beneath a crown of vine leaves, with her bright shoulders and superb bust displayed at every motion by

the displacement of the panther's skin, which alone covered them, timing her graceful steps to the clang of the silver cymbals which she waved and clashed with her bare arms above her stately head, and showing off the beauties of her form in attitudes more classically graceful, more studiously indelicate, than the most reckless figurante of our days.

She had sung every species of melody and rhythm, from the wildest dithyrambic to the severest and most grave alcaic; she had struck the lute, calling forth notes such as might have performed the miracles attributed to Orpheus and Amphion.

She had exerted her unrivalled learning so far as to discourse eloquently in the uncouth and almost unknown tongues of Germany and Gaul.

For she had Gaulish hearers, Gaulish admirers, whom, whether from mere female vanity, whether from the awakening of some strange unbridled passion, or whether from some deeper cause, she was bent on delighting.

For mixed in brilliant contrast with the violet and flower enwoven tunics, with the myrtle-crowned perfumed love-locks of the Roman feasters, were seen the gay and many-checked plaids, the jewelled weapons, and loose lion-like tresses of the Gallic Highlanders, and the wild blue eyes, sharp and clear as the untamed falcon's, gazing in wonder or glancing in childlike simplicity at the strange scenes and gorgeous luxuries which amazed all their senses.

The tall and powerful young chief, who had on several occasions attracted the notice of Arvina, and whom he had tracked but a few days before into this very house, reclined on the same couch with its accomplished mistress, and it was on him that her sweetest smiles, her most speaking glances were levelled, for him that her charms were displayed so unreservedly and boldly.

And the eyes of the young Gaul flashed at times a strange fire, but it was difficult to tell, if it were indignation or desire that kindled that sharp flame—and his cheek burned with a hectic and unwonted hue, but whether it was the hue of shame or passion, what eye could determine.

One thing alone was evident, that he encouraged her in

her wild licence, and affected, if he did not feel, the most decided admiration for her beauty.

His hand had toyed with hers, his fingers had strayed through the mazes of her superb raven ringlets, his lip had pressed hers unrebuked, and his ear had drunk in long murmuring low-breathed sighs, and whispers unheard by any other.

Her Roman lovers, in other words two-thirds of those present, for she was no chary dame, looked at each other, some with a sneering smile, some with a shrewd and knowing glance, and some with ill-dissembled jealousy, but not one of them all, so admirable was her dissimulation—if that may be called admirable, which is most odious—could satisfy himself, whether she was indeed captivated by the robust and manly beauty of the young barbarian, or whether it was merely a piece of consummate acting, the more to attach him to their cause.

It might have been observed had the quick eye of Catiline been there, prompt to read human hearts as if they were written books—that the older envoys looked with suspicious and uneasy glances, at the demeanor of their young associate, that they consulted one another from time to time with grave and searching eyes, and that once or twice, when Sempronia, who alone of those present understood their language, was at a distance, they uttered a few words in Gaelic, not in the most agreeable or happiest accent.

Wilder and wilder waxed the revelry, and now the slaves withdrew, and breaking off into pairs or groups, the guests dispersed themselves among the peristyles, dimly illuminated with many twinkling lamps, and shrubberies of myrtle and laurestinus which adorned the courts and gardens of the proud mansions.

Some to plot deeds of private revenge, private cruelty—some to arrange their schemes of public insurrection—some to dally in secret corners with the fair patricians—some to drain mightier draughts than they had yet partaken, some to gamble for desperate stakes, all to drown care and the anguish of conscious guilt, in the fierce pleasure of excitement.

Apart from the rest, stood two of the elder Gauls, in deep and eager conference—one the white-headed chief,

and leader of the embassy, the other a stately and noble-looking man of some forty-five or fifty years.

They were watching their comrade, who had just stolen away, with one arm twined about the fair Sempronia's waist, and her hand clasped in his, through the inner peristyle, into the women's chambers.

"Feergus, I doubt him," said the old man in a low guarded whisper. "I doubt him very sorely. These Roman harlots are made to bewitch any man, much more us Gael, whose souls kindle at a spark!"

"It is true, Phadraig," answered the other, still speaking in their own tongue. "Saw ever any man such infamy?—And these—these dogs, and goats, call us barbarians! Us, by the Spirit of Thunder! who would die fifty deaths every hour, ere we would see our matrons, nay! but our matrons' basest slaves, demean themselves as these patricians! Base, carnal, bloody-minded beasts are they—and yet forsooth they boast themselves the masters of the world."

"Alas! that it should be so, Feergus," answered the other. "But so it is, that they *are* masters, and shall be masters yet awhile, but not long. I have heard, I have seen among the mist of our water-falls, the avalanches of our hills, the voices and the signs of Rome's coming ruin, but not yet. Therefore it is that I counselled peace."

"I know that thou art Taishatr, the great seer of our people," replied the other with an expression of deep awe on his features—"Shall Rome indeed so perish!"

"She shall, Feergus. Her sons shall forget the use of the blade, her daughters of the distaff—for heroes and warriors she shall bring forth pipers and fiddlers, pandars and posturers; for heroines and matrons, songstresses, dancing girls, and harlots. The beginning thou seest now, the end cometh not in ages."

"And our people, Phadraig, our northern races"—

"Shall govern and despise them! our arms shall carry devastation into regions of which their Consuls never heard, and under Gaelic eagles; our *men* shall wield thunder louder and deadlier, than the bolts of Roman Gods. I have said, Feergus. It shall be, but not yet; nor shall our eyes behold it; but it shall soothe us yet, in these days of our country's desolation, to know how great she shall be

hereafter, and these how less than little—the very name of Roman synonymous with slavery and degradation!”

There was a long pause, during which neither of the chieftains spoke, the one musing over the strange visions, which are phenomena by no means unusual to mountaineers, in all ages; the other dreaming of future glory to his race, and aroused by the predictions of the seer, to an ecstasy, as it were, of expectant triumph.

“Enough of this”—said the old man, at length. “As I said but now, I doubt Eachin sorely.”

“If he prove false, I will stab him to the heart, with my own hand, though he be my father’s brother’s grandson, and the best warrior of our tribe; but no, no, Phadraig, the boy is young, and his blood is hot and fiery; and the charms of that witch might well move a colder spirit—but he is true as steel, and wise and wary for one so young. He may sun himself in her smiles, or revel on her lips, but trust me, Eachin of the iron hand, will never betray council.”

“Keep your eye on him, nevertheless, Feargus,” said the other, “and, as you said but now, kill him at once, if you perceive him false.”

“Ha! what! noble Patricius?” cried Lentulus, coming up to them suddenly, and addressing the old chief by his latinized name—“what is this that thou arguest so sagely, in thy sonorous and male tongue.”

“The might and majesty of Rome,” answered the old man quietly, “and our people’s misery and degradation.”

“Nay! nay! chief, be not downhearted. Look upward now, after dark night comes brilliant morning,” said the Roman. “Your people shall rise ere long, to power and glory and dominion.”

“So I told Feargus.”

“Ha! the brave Ferragus! and doth he not credit your wisdom’s prophecy.”

“I put all faith in Rome’s gratitude, in Catiline’s valor and justice.”

“Aye! when we once have put down this faction, we will do justice to our friends.”

“And we are of the number!”

“Surely, the twenty thousand horse, which you have promised us, are twenty thousand pledges of your friendship, as many claims on our favor.”

"See, here comes Eachin," said the old man; "and time wears onward, it is nigh midnight. We must away to our lodgings. Our train awaits us, and we but tarry for your envoy and the letters."

"Titus Volturcius! I will go fetch him hither. He hath our letters sealed and ready. He is but draining a last cup, with our brave Cethegus. I will go fetch him." And, with the words, he turned away, gathering his toga in superb draperies about his stately person, and traversing the corridor with proud and measured strides, and as he went, muttered through his teeth—"The fool barbarians! As if we would give them anything but chains and scourges! The poor benighted idiots!"

"Ho, Eachin, where left you our fair hostess?" asked Feargus in Latin—"methinks you are smitten somewhat with her beauty!"

"She is very beautiful!" said the old chieftain gravely.

"Beautiful! Feargus! Phadraig! beautiful, did ye say?" and the youth gazed at them in wonder, "That vile sensual, soulless harlot! she beautiful! Then virtue must be base indeed, and honor shameful!" he cried, with noble indignation, in his own Gaëlic tongue, his eyes flashing, and his cheek burning crimson.

"Why, if you held her then so cheaply, have you so much affected her society?"

"Oh! you suspect me, Feargus. But it needs not. The barbarian hath some shrewdness, and some honesty. Sempronia too, suspected us, and would have won my secret from me, had I indeed a secret, by sweet words and sweeter kisses."

"And thou"—

"Gave kiss for kiss, with interest; and soft word for soft word. I have sighed as if I were any Roman—but no secret, Feargus; Phadraig, no secret. Do you doubt me?"

"Not I, boy," answered the warrior. "Your father was my cousin, and I think you are not a bastard."

"I think not either. But see, here come these *noble* Romans!"

"It is their envoy with the letters for their leader. We shall be dismissed now, from this haunt of thieves and harlots!"

“And laughed at, when dismissed, for fools and barbarians!”

“One never knows who is the fool, till the game is lost.”

“Nor who is laughed at 'till it is won!”

“Here is our Titus, my good friends,” said Lentulus, coming forward, leading along with him a slightly-made but well-formed and active-looking man, with a downcast yet roving eye, and a sneering lip, as if he were one who believing nothing, deserved not to be believed in anything himself. “He hath the letters, and credentials secured on his person. On his introduction, our Catiline shall know you as true friends, and as such receive and reward you!”

“Titus Volturcius, is welcome. We tarried but for him, we will now take our leaves, with thanks for your gracious courtesies.”

“A trifle, a mere trifle,” said Sempronia, who had that moment returned—“We only desired to teach you how we Romans live in our homes daily.”

“A very pleasant lesson, ha! my young friend”—said Lentulus to Eachin; and then he said out to Cethegus, in Greek, “I am compelled to call the Highland bull my friend, for his accursed name would break the jaws of any Roman—there is no twisting it into Latin!”

“Hush! he will hear you, Lentulus,” said the other. “I believe the brutes hear with their eyes, and understand through their finger-ends,” and he too used the same language; yet, strange to say, it would have seemed as if the young man did in some sort comprehend his words, for his cheek turned fiery red, and he bit his lip, and played nervously with the hilt of the claymore.

“Thou will not forget the lesson!” whispered Sempronia.

“Never!” replied the Highlander. “Never while one red drop runs in these veins. And the last drop in them will I shed gladly, to teach these noble Romans how grateful a barbarian can be, poor though he be and half savage, for being thus instructed in Roman hospitality and Roman virtue! Farewell, ye noble Senators, farewell most beautiful and noble matron!”

And with deep salutations, half dignified, half awkward, the Gauls strode away, into the quiet and moon-lighted

streets, strange contrast to the glare and riot of those patrician halls and polluted chambers.

"A singular speech that!" said Cethegus musing. "It sounded much as if it might bear a double meaning! could it be irony and cover treason?"

"Irony in a stupid Gaul! thou art mad, Cethegus, to think of it!" said Autronius with a sneer.

"I should as soon look for wit in an elephant," said Longinus Cassius.

"Or I for love in a cold lizard!" cried Sempronia, laughing.

"You found some love in the barbarian, I think, my Sempronia?" exclaimed Cethegus.

"More warmth than wit, I assure you," she replied still laughing. "I acted my part with him rarely. If he were inclined once to play us false, he is bound to us now by chains"—

"Of roses, fair one?"

"Never mind. If he break them, call me"—

"Chaste? Sempronia"—enquired Cæparius, interrupting her.

"Audacious!" she answered with an affected frown, amid the laugh which followed the retort.

"What do you think of it, my Lentulus?" asked Cethegus, who although he had jested with the others, did not by any means appear satisfied in his mind, or convinced of the good faith of the Highlanders.

"That it is two hours now past midnight," answered Lentulus yawning, "and that I am amazing sleepy. I was not in bed till the third watch last night, writing those letters, ill luck to them. That is what I think, Cethegus. And that I am going to bed now, to trouble myself about the matter no more, until the Saturnalia."

And so that company broke up, never to meet again, on this side Hades.

Not long thereafter the Gauls, having reached their lodgings at the house of their patron Fabius Sanga, where everything had been prepared already for their departure, mounted their horses, and set forth on their way homeward, accompanied by a long train of armed followers; Titus Volturcius riding in the first rank, between the principal chiefs of the party.

The moon had risen ; and the night was almost as clear as day, for a slight touch of frost had banished all the vapors from the sky, and the stars sparkled with unusual brilliancy.

Although it was clear and keen, however, the night was by no means cold, as it would have been under the like circumstances in our more northern climes ; and the gardens in the suburbs of the city with their numerous clumps of stone-pine, and thickets of arbutus and laurestinus, looked rich and gay with their polished green foliage, long after the deciduous trees had dropped their sere leaves on the steamy earth.

No sounds came to the ears of the travellers, as they rode at that dead hour of night through the deserted streets ; the whole of the vast city appeared to be hushed in deep slumber, soon, Caius Volturcius boasted as they rode along, to burst like a volcano into the din and glare of mighty conflagration.

They met not a single individual, as they threaded the broad suburra with their long train of slaves and led-horses ; not one as they passed through the gorge between the Viminal and Quirinal hills, nor as they scaled the summit of the latter eminence, and reached the city walls, where they overlooked Sallust's gardens in the valley, and on the opposite slope, the perfumed hill of flowers.

A sleepy sentinel unbarred the gate for the ambassadors, while four or five of his comrades sat dozing in their armor around a stove, in the centre of the little guard-house, or replenishing their horn cups, at short intervals, from an urn of hot wine, which hissed and simmered on the hearth.

"Excellent guard they keep!" said Volturcius sneeringly, "right trusty discipline! of much avail would such watchers be, were Catiline without the walls, with ten thousand men, of Sylla's veterans."

"And is your Catiline so great a captain?" asked the Highlander.

"The best in Rome, since Sylla is no more! He learned the art of war under that grand, that consummate soldier! He was scarce second to him in his life time!"

"Why, then, hath Rome found no service for him?" asked the Gaul. "If he, as you say, is so valiant and so

skillful, why hath he not commanded in the east, in place of Pompey, or Lucullus?"

"Jealousy is the bane of Rome! jealousy and corruption! Catiline will not pander to the pride of the insolent patricians, nor buy of them employments or honors with his gold."

"And is *he* free from this corruption?"

"No man on earth of more tried integrity! While all of Rome beside is venal, his hand alone is conscious of no bribe, his heart alone incorruptible!"

"Thou must be a true friend of his; all men speak not so highly of this Catiline."

"Some men lie! touching *him* specially, they lie!"

"By the Gods! I believe so!" answered the old Gaul, with calm irony.

"By Mars! and Apollo! they lie foully!"

"I think I have heard one, at least, do so."

"Thou shalt hear hundreds, if thou listen to them."

"So many?"

"Aye! by the Gods!—most of the—by your head! Patricius, that was a man, I think; armed too; who looked forth from behind yon buttress of the bridge."

"No! no! Volturcius, 'twas but the shadow of yon pine tree, waving athwart the moonlight. I marked it long since," answered the wily Gaul. "Proceed, I pray you—most of the what, wert thou about to say?"

But, by this time, the speakers had advanced to the centre of the long Mulvian bridge, a magnificent stone structure crossing the broad and sluggish Tiber, two miles below the city; and giving access to the far-famed Flaminian way.

Their train, following closely after them, had all entered into the defile, the last of them having already passed the abutment nearest to Rome, when a loud shout arose from either side the bridge; and from the thickets and gardens at each extremity forth rushed a band of stout youths armed with casques and cuirasses of bronze, with the oblong shields and Spanish stabbing swords of the legionaries.

Each band was led by a Prætor, Lucius Valerius Flaccus commanding at the end next Rome, and Caius Pomptinus, on the Emilian way, and each fell into accurate and

beautiful array, barring the outlets of the bridge with a triple file of bright blades and sturdy bucklers.

Nor was this all; for a little party was pushed forward on each flank, with bows and javelins, ready to enfilade the narrow pass with cross shot of their missiles, in case any attempt should be made to force a passage. And at the end, moreover, of the bridge toward Etruria and the camp of Catiline, at which such an attempt was most likely to occur, the glittering helmets and crimson horsehair crests of a troop of cavalry were seen glancing in the moonbeams, as they wheeled into line behind the footmen, ready to charge at once should the infantry be broken.

"Stand! stand!" cried the soldiery at each end. "Stand and surrender!"

But the younger men of the Gauls, unsheathing their claymores, set up their terrible slogan, or Celtic battle cry; and, plunging their spurs into the sides of their fiery horses came thundering across the bridge with a charge that would probably have trodden the Prætor's infantry under foot, had not the old chief, whom the Romans called Patricius, and Ferragus reined their steeds suddenly across the way, calling upon their men to halt and be steady.

But Volturcius, knowing too well the consequence of being taken, dashed forward with his sword drawn; and made a desperate attempt to cut his way through the infantry, striking down two or three, slashing and stabbing to the right and left, displaying singular skill in the use of his weapon, and extreme personal intrepidity.

"Treason! treason, my friends!" he shouted. "Ho, Ferragus, Patricius, ho! Charge, charge, men, gallantly. They are but a handful!" and still he plied his blade, which was now crimson to the hilt, with fearful energy.

"No! no! not so!" cried the ambassadors—"lay down your arms! it is the prætor's train. Lay down your arms! all shall be well, if you resist not."

And at the same time, "Yield thee! yield thee! Volturcius," cried Pomptinus. "We are friends all; and would not hurt thee—but have thee we must, and thy letters.—Dost thou not know me, Titus?"

"Very well, Caius," cried the other, still fighting desperately against a host; for the men were commanded not to kill, but to take him alive at all hazards. "I know thee

very well; but I will not yield to thee! So take that, Prætor!" and, with the word, he dealt him a blow on his crest that brought him to his knee in a moment.

"He is a mad man!" cried a veteran legionary. "We must kill him!"

"Not for your lives," shouted Pomptinus, and springing to his feet he plunged his sword home into his horse's chest, up to the very hilt; and then leaping on one side nimbly, as the animal fell headlong, being slain outright, he seized Volturcius by the shoulder, and pulled him down from the saddle.

But even at this disadvantage, the conspirator renewed the single combat with the prætor; until at length, assured by his repeated promises that his life should be spared, he yielded his sword to that officer, and adjuring him in the name of all the Gods! to protect him, gave himself up a prisoner, as if to avowed enemies.

Those of the Gauls, who had been ignorant, at first, what was in progress, perceiving now that the whole matter had been arranged with the concurrence of their chiefs, submitted quietly; and two or three of the prætor's people who had been wounded being accommodated with temporary litters made of bucklers and javelins with watch cloaks thrown over them, the whole party turned their horses' heads, and directed their march toward Rome.

And silence, amid which the gentle murmur of the river, and the sigh of the breeze were distinctly audible, succeeded to the clang of arms, and the shouts of the combatants, unheard for many a year, so near to the walls of the world's metropolis.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARREST.

Rebellious subjects; Enemies of peace.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

IT was already daylight, when the loud clang and clatter of a squadron passing along the streets, at a sharp trot, aroused the citizens of Rome from their beds, for though the morning had broke, it was still very early.

Many a lattice was opened, and many a head thrust out, as the troopers swept along with all their accoutrements jingling and clashing through the early silence, a spectacle which in ordinary times, would have excited much astonishment, perhaps aroused a tumult, since it was in direct opposition to the laws, that armed soldiers should enter the city walls in time of peace.

But so much had the public mind been disturbed of late, that the sight, which a month before would have filled the streets with anxious or angry multitudes, now hardly seemed to merit a second glance, and the spectators hurried back to their couches, invoking the aid of the good Consul, who watched so well over the liberties and lives of Rome, or muttering curses on his head, according as they were well or ill-afflicted toward the state.

One man there was, however, who was awakened by the clatter from the deep sleep of drunkenness, with a flushed face and an aching head, in a house on the Clivus Scauri, steep street running down the southern slope of the Pa-

latine, into the Cerolian Place, and overlooking the mansion of Cicero.

Starting up from his low couch, he called out sharply and with a querulous accent to a freedman, who was watching his feverish slumbers, desiring him to look out and see what made that clatter.

The man passed quickly into an adjoining room which commanded a view of the street, and returned instantly, saying,

"It is a squadron of horse, Cæparius. Young Arvina's, I think; and they appear to be conducting a prisoner, for there is one man among them, in his tunic and abolla only, while the troopers around him have their swords drawn."

Sobered at once, the conspirator leaped from his couch, and almost overthrew the attendant, in his eagerness to reach the window in time to observe the troopers.

They were just halting in the Cerolian place, when he saw them, and dismounting, chargers and men in a confused and dusty group before the door of Cicero.

He gazed, as if his eyes would burst from their sockets, if possibly he might distinguish the wearer of the rich blue riding cloak, of which he could catch glimpses among the glittering corslets and scarlet cassocks of the legionary horse. But for a while he gazed in vain.

At length two figures mounted the marble steps, leading to the Tuscan colonnade, and were thus brought clearly into view, above the crested casques of the soldiery.

One, a tall well-made figure, splendidly accoutred in the cavalry armor of the day, he recognized at once for Arvina, and in the stouter person, clad in the blue abolla, the color of which he had already connected with one whom he knew—his worst fears all realized—he discovered the messenger of treason, Titus Volturcius of Crotona.

"By the Gods! all is lost," he muttered, striking his hand violently on his thigh. "Escape alone, is left to us. Ha!" he continued, addressing his freedman, "I will arise, and go forth speedily. Give me my tunic. So—never mind the feminalia; there, clasp my sandals! Death and furies! how slow thou art, now my dagger, and my toga. Hark, now. I go to the house of Lentulus. See thou, and have my chariot harnessed for a journey, with the four

Thracian steeds ; put into it my armor, a sword, casque and buckler for thyself ; and all the gold which is locked in the great chest in the Atrium. Here is the key. Tarry not for thy life, and bring the car thyself to the arch of Fabius Allobrox ; wait there until I come to thee. I will be there within the hour."

"It shall be done, Cæparius."

"See that it *be* done, if thou wouldst scape the scourge !" and with the word he rushed out of the chamber, as if the avenger of blood were at his heels.

But the freedman looked after him, with a bitter and scornful smile, and muttered—

"The scourge!—the scourge! and I a freedman! This is another friend of the people. His villanies, I fancy, are near upon detection, and he would fly to join Catiline, but I will thwart him."

In the meantime, quitting his own house in great trepidation, the conspirator walked very rapidly through the streets, until he reached the house of Lentulus, which was not far distant from the forum.

He was admitted instantly, and without question, for all the slaves knew him, as the intimate friend of their master ; but at the bed room door, he was stopped by the favorite freedman of Lentulus, who urged that his lord had not retired till morning, and had desired that he should not be disturbed earlier than noon.

Cæparius, on the other hand insisted, raising his voice so loudly that the sleeper was awakened, and recognizing the accent of his friend, cried out peevishly—

"Oh! let him in, Agathon ; let him in quickly, or he will talk thee deaf, and me frantic! What in the name of Proserpine and Pluto! is it now?"

"The plot is discovered! all is lost!" exclaimed the other, forgetting all prudence in the haste and terror of the moment.

"To the abyss of Tartarus with the plot, and thee also!" replied the other savagely. "I hope it *is* discovered, for I shall get some sleep then. I have had none these six months."

And turning on his other side, he drew the embroidered coverlid over his head, and appeared to court the interrupted slumber.

“By all Gods! I tell thee, Lentulus, Volturcius is arrested. These eyes beheld him dragged into the house of Cicero. My chariot waits me now, at the arch of Fabius. I go to join Catiline.”

“I prithee, then, go quickly—thou torturest me, man, I say. Get thee gone! get thee gone! Better to die, than to live thus sleepless.”

“Whom the Gods wish to ruin, they first dementate!” exclaimed Cæparius—“thou wilt be seized, within the hour.”

“I care not. So that till then I can sleep; once more, I say—Begone!”

Cæparius shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head as he left the room; and then made the best of his way to the arch of Fabius; but he found not his chariot there, nor though he waited well nigh two hours, did it arrive at all.

Hopeless at length, and desperate, he set forth alone and on foot, in the vain hope of escaping the pursuit of Cicero's unerring justice.

Meanwhile, disturbed more than he would admit by Cæparius' tidings, Lentulus did, in some sort, arouse himself to consideration.

“It may be so,” he said to himself. “Cæparius declared he saw him. If it be so, 'twere better perhaps, indeed, to leave the city. And yet,” he continued pondering deeply, “to fly is to admit guilt, and it is too late, moreover. Tush! tush! I daresay, it is but Cæparius' terror—he was a fool always, and I believe a coward also. Beside, if it be true, there is no proof; and what dare Cicero against me—against me, a Consular of Rome?—At the worst, he will implore me to deliver the city of my presence, as he did Catiline. Ha! Ha! I will to sleep again. Yet stay, I am athirst, after Sempronia's revel! Fool, that I was, not to drink more last night, and quench this fiery craving. Ho! Agathon, my boy, fetch me the great goblet, the double* sextarius, of spiced mulse with a snow-water.”

This order was obeyed instantly, and after draining the huge beaker to the bottom, the indolent and reckless trai-

* The latin *Sextarius* contained about 99-100 parts of an English Pint.

tor, rolled himself over, and was asleep again as soundly in five minutes, as if he were not in truth slumbering upon the brink of a volcano.

Not long however did he sleep in peace, for Cæparius had scarcely been gone an hour, when he was again startled from his doze, by a knocking so violent, at the outer door, that the whole house reëchoed with the din.

He heard the doors opened, and a short angry parle, broken short by the raised voice of the new comers, and the clanging of armed footsteps, along the marble corridor which led toward his chamber.

A moment afterward, pale as death, with his hair starting and a wild eye, Agathon entered the room.

"How now?" exclaimed Lentulus, who fully aroused by this time, was sitting on the edge of the low bedstead, with a purple gown cast carelessly around him, "what is this new disturbance?"

"The Atrium is full of armed soldiers, Lentulus," replied the man with a faltering accent.

"Well! hast thou never seen a soldier before, that thou starest so wildly?" asked his master with a sneer, which even the extremity of danger could not restrain.

"Their leader insists on present speech with thee. I told him that thou wert asleep; but he replied that, waking or asleep, he must have speech with thee."

"Truly a valiant leader," answered the Prætor. "Hath he a name, this bold centurion?"

"Paullus Cæcilius Arvina," replied the young man, who having followed the freedman to the door had overheard all that was passing, "is my name—no centurion, as thou mayest see, Lentulus. Loth am I to disturb thy slumbers."

"Then wherefore do it, youth?" asked Lentulus, quickly. "Most broken things may be repaired, but I know not how you shall mend a broken nap, or recompense the loss of it, if irreparable."

"Not of my own will, but by the Consul's order."

"The Consul's? What? Antonius? He scarce need have sent a troop of horse, to ask an old friend to breakfast!"

"Cicero sent me, Prætor, to crave your instant presence at his house, touching affairs of state."

“Ha! Cicero!” said he, affecting to be much surprised “Cicero scarcely is on such terms with me, as to take such a liberty, waking me thus at the dead of night.”

“It is well nigh the fourth hour, Lentulus.”

“What if it be, an I choose to call it midnight? and what, if I refuse to obey such unceremonious bidding?”

“In that case, Lentulus, my orders are to compel your attendance. I have two decuries of men in your Atrium. But I trust that you will drive me to no such necessity.”

“Two decuries!” replied Lentulus scornfully. “I have but to lift my little finger, and my freedmen and slaves would kick your decuries, and yourself after them into the velabrum.”

The blood mounted to the brow of the young soldier. “I have endured,” he said, “something too much of this. Will you go with us peacefully, Lentulus, or will you force us to take you through the street like a felon?”

“Oh! peacefully, Arvina, peacefully. I did but jest with you, my hero. But I knew not that the cavalry of the seventh legion—the legion of Mars I think they call it—had become so degraded, as to do the work of thieftakers.”

“Nor I, Lentulus,” answered Paul. “But you should know best in this matter. If it be theft for which thou art summoned before Cicero, then are we indeed thieftakers. But if so, not only I believe should we be the first legionaries of Rome so employed, but thou the first Roman Consular so guilty.”

“So proud! ha!” exclaimed the haughty conspirator, gazing at him with a curled lip and flashing eye. “Well, I could quell that pride in one moment, with *one* word.”

“Even so proud, because honest!” answered the young man, as haughtily as the other. “For the rest, will you clothe yourself at once?—I can wait babbling here no longer.”

“I *will* quell it. Look you, boy, you love Julia, the bright daughter of Hortensia—she is worth loving, by the way, and Catiline hath noted it. You fancy that she is safe now, at the Latin villa of her mother. She is not safe—nor at the Latin villa! I have touched you, have I not?”

Arvina started, as if a serpent had bitten him; but in a

moment he recovered himself, saying calmly, "Tush! it is a poor deceit! you cannot alarm me."

"In truth it was a deceit, but not so very poor after all, since it succeeded. You were sorely wounded a few days since, Arvina, and wrote, I think, to Julia, requesting her to set forth at once to Rome, with Hortensia."

"Folly!" replied Arvina, "Drivelling folly! Come, hasten your dressing, Lentulus! You need not perfume your hair, and curl your beard, as if you were going to a banquet."

"I never hasten anything, my Paullus. Things done hastily, are rarely things done well. What? thou didst not write such a letter?—I thought thou hadst—of this at least I am sure, that she received such an one; and set out for Rome, within an hour after."

"By the Gods!" exclaimed Paullus, a little eagerly, for Lentulus had changed the slight bantering tone in which he had been speaking, for a quick short decided accent seeming to denote that he was in earnest. "Where is she now. Speak, Lentulus, I adjure thee. Tell me, if thou wouldst have me serve thee!"

"I thought I could abate that pride somewhat," said Lentulus sneeringly. "I thought so indeed. But, by all the Gods! Arvina, I know not where your Julia may be now. I know whither they are conveying her—where she soon will be—but I fancy that the knowing it, would give you but little pleasure; unless, indeed, you could prevent it, my poor youth!"

"To know, is something at least toward preventing it. If, therefore, thou art not, as I believe indeed thou art, merely mocking me, I pray thee tell me, whither are they conveying her? Where will she soon be?"

"To the camp of Manlius, nigh Fiesolè! In the arms of one Lucius Sergius Catiline—a great admirer of your auburn-haired, blue-eyed beauties, my Arvina."

The young man, with his eyes gleaming and his face crimsoning with furious rage, made two steps forward, and seizing the burly traitor by the throat, compressed his gullet, as if in an iron vice, and shook him to and fro as easily as if he had been a stripling.

"Shame on thee, filth and carrion that thou art, to speak of a betrothed bride to her promised husband! It

it were true, wretched villain ! I would save the hangman his task, and break your traitor's throat with this hand—but thou liest ! thou liest !” he shouted, pushing him to the other end of the narrow sleeping chamber. “ In poor revenge thou liest ! But if you wish to live, beware how you so lie any more !”

“ I do not lie indeed, my dear Arvina,” replied the other in a bland fawning voice full of mock humility. “ But, I prithee, boy, keep thy hands from my throat in future, unless thou wouldst desire to know how a crook-bladed sica some sixteen inches long feels in the region of thy heart. Such an one as this, Arvina,” he added, showing a long keen weapon not unlike a Turkish yatagan in shape, which he drew from beneath his pillow. Then casting it aside, with a contemptuous gesture, he continued—“ But this is mere child's play. Now mark me. I did not lie, nor do ! Aulus Fulvius wrote the letter—Aulus Fulvius' slave carried it, yester-even—Aulus Fulvius beset the road by which they must come—Aulus Fulvius is ere this time on his road many a league conveying her to Catiline—and this,” he said, putting a small slip of parchment into the hands of the astonished Paullus, “ is Aulus Fulvius' handwriting. Yes ! certainly, that is his S in the word *Salutem*. He affects ever the Greek sigma in his writing. He is a very pretty penman, Aulus Fulvius !”

The strip of parchment bore these words :

“ Whom I am you will know by the matter. The camp in Etruria will receive the dove from the Latin villa. All hath succeeded—health !”

“ I found it on my desk, when I returned from supper this morning. Aulus's slave brought it hither. He is within, if thou wouldst speak him.

Arvina staggered back like a man who has received a mortal stab, as he read those fatal words ; and stared about him with a wild and wandering eye.

It was a moment or two before he could find any speech, and when he did speak at length, it was in tones so altered and broken that his nearest friend would not have recognized his voice.

“ Wherefore ”—he gasped—“ Wherefore have you done this to me.”

“ For vengeance !” thundered the proud conspirator,

fasting his crimson-bordered toga over his laticlavian tunic. "For vengeance, boy. Lead on—lead on to your consul."

"In what have I wronged you?" cried Arvina, in a paroxysm of almost unspeakable despair. "In what, that you should take such infernal vengeance?"

"For Julia's love thou didst betray Catiline! betray *us*! In Julia's infamy thou shalt be punished!"

"Anything! anything! anything but this—strike here, strike here with that sica, thou didst unsheath but now. Slay me, by inches if thou wilt—but spare her, oh! by your mother's memory! oh! by your sister's honor! spare her, and I will—"

"Lead on! To your consul!" exclaimed Lentulus waving his hand proudly to the door. "I can but die—the Gods be thanked for it! Thy life is bitterer than many deaths already! I say, coward and fool, lead on! Where is thy boasted pride? In the dust! at my feet! I trample, I spit on it! once again to your consul!"

"And thou couldst save her!"

"By a word! At a hint from me Fulvius will set her free."

"But that word? but that hint?"

"My lips shall never utter—my hand indite; unless—"

"Unless? unless what?—speak! speak, Lentulus. By the Gods! By your head! By your life! speak."

"Place me beyond the walls of Rome, with twenty of my freedmen, armed and mounted—it can be done on the instant; they are here; they are ready!—and Julia may be in thy bosom ere to-morrow's sun shall sink behind the hills of Latium!"

"A Traitor to my country! Lentulus, never!"

"Tush! boy! think upon beautiful, soft, weeping, *innocent* Julia rescued by thee from Catiline—from pollution—think on her gratitude, her love, her kiss! Think on a life, a whole long life, of rapture!—and then balance against it one small foolish word—"

"Dishonor!" Arvina interrupted him fiercely.

"Aye! to which thou consignest Julia, whom thou *lovest*! Kind Venus guard me from such lovers!"

"Dishonor never can come nigh her," replied Arvina, who had recovered his senses completely, and who, though

unutterably wretched, was now as firm and as cold as marble. "Death it may be, but not dishonor!"

"Be it so," answered Lentulus. "We will leave her the option of the two, but believe me, when dishonor is pleasant, women rarely choose death in preference to it. You have had your option too, my Arvina. But I, it seems, can have none, but must wait upon your consul."

"You have the same which you give Julia!" answered Paullus, sternly. "There is your dagger, and your heart here!" he added, laying his hand on the broad breast of the infamous Patrician.

"True! count its pulses—cooler, I think, and more regular than thine, Paullus. Tush! man! I know a hundred wiser things and pleasanter than dying. But once more, lead on! I will speak no word again till I speak to the consul!"

And without farther words he strode to the door, followed closely by the young soldier, resolute and determined to perform his duty, let what might come of it! He passed through his marble peristyles, looked with a cool eye on his flowery parterres and sparkling fountains, nodded a careless adieu to his slaves and freedmen, and entered the Atrium where Arvina's troopers awaited him, wondering and impatient at the long delay.

With a proud gesture he waved his hand toward the door, and six of the number marched forward, three and three, while the rest falling into regular array behind him, escorted him with all respect, but with stern watchfulness, along the Via Sacra to the Carinæ.

Quickly arriving at the Atrium of Cicero's house, which was filled with his friends and clients all in arms, and with many knights and patricians, whom he knew, but no one of whom saluted or seemed to recognize him, he was admitted into the Tablinum, or saloon, at the doors of which six lictors were on guard with their fasces.

On entering this small but sumptuous chamber he found assembled there already, Cethegus, Statilius, and Gabinius, silent, with white lips, in an agony of terror worse than death.

"Ha! my friends!" he exclaimed, with an unaltered mien and voice, "We are met once again. But we seem

not, by all the Gods! to be well pleased with the meeting. Why so downcast, Cethegus?"

"Because on earth it is our last meeting," he replied. And it was clear to see that the boldest and fiercest, and most furious of the band, while danger was afar, was the most utterly appalled now, when fate appeared imminent and certain.

"Why, then!" answered Lentulus, "we shall meet in Hell, Cethegus."

"By the Gods! jest not so foully—"

"Wherefore not, I prithee? If that this be our last meeting, good faith! let it be a merry one! I know not, for my part, what ails ye all."

"Are you mad? or know you not that Volturcius is a prisoner, and our letters in the hands of the consul? They will kill us ere noon."

"Then they must make haste, Caius. It is noon already. But, cheer thee up, be not so much afraid, my brave Cethegus—they dare not slay us."

"Dare not?"

"For their own lives, they dare not!" But as he spoke, raising his voice to its highest pitch, the curtains which closed the other end of the Tablinum were suddenly drawn back, and Cicero appeared, clad in his consular robes, and with his ivory staff in his hand. Antonius his colleague stood in the intercolumniation, with all the lictors at his back, and many knights in their appropriate tunics, but with military cloaks above them in place of the peaceful toga, and with their swords girded by their sides.

"Prætor," said Cicero in a dignified but serene voice, with no show of taunting or of triumph over his fallen enemy. "The Senate is assembled in the temple of Concord. The Fathers wait but for your coming. Give me your hand that I may conduct you thither."

"My hand, consul? Not as a friend's, I trust," said the undaunted Traitor.

"As a magistrate's, Cornelius Lentulus," replied Cicero severely, "whose hand, even if guilty, may not be polluted by an inferior's grasp."

"As a magistrate's you have it, consul. We go?"

"To the shrine of Concord! Antonius, my noble colleague, let us begone. Senators, follow us; escape you

cannot, if you would; and I would spare you the disgrace of chains."

"We follow, Cicero," answered Cethegus in a hollow voice, and casting his eyes with a wild and haggard expression on Gabinius, he added in a whisper, "to our death!"

"Be it so!" replied the other. "One can but die once; and if his time be come, as well now as hereafter. I fear not death now, when I see it face to face. I think, I have heard thee say the same."

"He spoke," answered Statilius, with a bitter and sarcastic laugh, "of the death of others then. Would God, he *then* had met his own! So should we *now* have been innocent and fearless!"

"I at least, if not innocent, *am* fearless."

And watched on every side by the knights, and followed by the lictors, two behind each, the ringleaders of the plot, all save Cæparius who had fled, and Catiline—who was in open arms, an outlaw and proclaimed enemy of his country—the ringleaders were led away to trial.

The fate of Rome hung on the firmness of their judges.

CHAPTER XI.

THE YOUNG PATRICIAN.

Not always robes of state are worn,
Most nobly by the nobly born.

H. W. H.

THE light of that eventful morning, which broke, pregnant with ruin to the conspiracy, found Aulus Fulvius and his band, still struggling among the rugged defiles which it was necessary to traverse, in order to gain the Via Cassia or western branch of the Great North Road.

It had been necessary to make a wide circuit, in order to effect this, inasmuch as the Latin road, of which the Labican way was a branch, left the city to the South-eastward, nearly opposite to the Flaminian, or north road, so that the two if prolonged would have met in the forum, and made almost a right line.

Nor had this been their only difficulty, for they had been compelled to avoid all the villages and scattered farm houses, which lay on their route, in the fear that Julia's outcries and resistance—for she frequently succeeded in removing the bandage from her mouth—would awaken suspicion and cause their arrest, while in the immediate vicinity of Rome.

At one time, the party had been within a very few miles of the city, passing over the Tiber, scarce five miles above the Mulvian bridge, about an hour before the arrest of the ambassadors; and it was from this point, that Aulus sent

off his messenger to Lentulus, announcing his success, thereby directly disobeying the commands of Catiline, who had enjoined it on him almost with his last words, to communicate this enterprise to none of his colleagues in guilt.

Crossing the Flaminian, or great northern road, they had found a relay of fresh horses, stationed in a little grove, of which by this time they stood greatly in need, and striking across the country, at length reached the Cassian road, near the little river Galera, just as the sun rose above the eastern hills.

At this moment they had not actually effected above ten miles of their journey, as reckoned from the gates of Rome to the camp of Catiline, which was nearly two hundred miles distant, though they had traversed nearly forty during the night, in their wearisome but unavoidable circuit.

They were, however, admirably mounted on fresh horses, and had procured a *cisium*, or light carriage for two persons, not much unlike in form to a light gig, in which they had placed the unhappy Julia, with a slight boy, the son of Caius Crispus, as the driver.

By threats of the most atrocious nature, they had at length succeeded in compelling her to temporary silence. Death she had not only despised, but implored, even when the point of their daggers were razing the skin of her soft neck; and so terribly were they embarrassed and exasperated by her persistence, that it is probable they would have taken her life, had it not been for fear of Catiline, whose orders were express to bring her to his camp alive and in honor.

At length Aulus Fulvius had threatened in the plainest language outrages so enormous, that the poor girl's spirit sank, and that she took an oath, in order to avoid immediate indignities, and those the most atrocious, to remain silent during the next six hours.

Had she been able to possess herself of any weapon, she would undoubtedly have destroyed herself, as the only means she could imagine of escaping what to her was worse than loss of life, the loss of honor; and it was chiefly in the hope of effecting this ere nightfall, that she took the oath prescribed to her, in terms of such tremendous sanctity, that no Roman would dream of breaking it, on any pretext of compulsion.

Liberated by their success in this atrocious scheme, from that apprehension, they now pushed forward rapidly, and reached the station at Baccanæ, in a wooded gorge between a range of low hills, and a clear lake, at about nine in the morning, of our time, or the third hour by Roman computation.

Here they obtained a fresh horse for the vehicle which carried Julia, and tarrying so long only as to swallow a draught of wine, they pressed onward through a steep defile along which the road wound among wooded crags toward Sutrium.

At this place, which was a city of some note, they were joined by forty or fifty partisans, well armed and mounted on good horses, all veteran soldiers who had been settled on the confiscated estates of his enemies by the great usurper Sylla, and thenceforth feeling themselves strong enough to overawe any opposition they might meet on the way, they journeyed at a slower rate in perfect confidence of success, numbering now not less than sixty well-equipped Cavaliers.

Before noon, they were thirty miles distant from Rome, and had reached the bottom of a long and almost precipitous ascent where the road, scorning any divergence to the right or left, scaled the abrupt heights of a craggy hill, known at the present day as the Monte Soriano, the ancient name of which has not descended to these times.

Scarcely however had they reached the first pitch of the hill, in loose and straggling order, when the rearmost rider came spurring furiously to the head of the column, and announced to Aulus Fulvius, that they were pursued by a body of men, nearly equal to themselves in number, who were coming up at a rate so rapid, as made it certain that they would be overtaken, encumbered as they were with the wheeled carriage conveying the hapless Julia.

A brief council was held, in which, firmly resisting the proposal of the new-comers to murder their captive, and disperse in small bodies among the hills, Aulus Fulvius and Caius Crispus determined on dividing their men into two parties. The first of these, commanded by the smith, and consisting of two-thirds of their whole force, was destined to press forward as rapidly as possible; while Fulvius, with the second, should make a charge down hill

upon the pursuers, by which it was hoped that they might be so effectually checked and alarmed as to give up the pursuit.

No time was lost in the execution, a second horse was attached to the *cisium*, for they had many sumpter animals along with them, and several spare chargers; and so much speed did they make, that Crispus had reached the summit of the ridge and commenced the descent before the pursuers had come up with Fulvius and the rear.

There is a little hollow midway the ascent, which is thickly set with evergreen oaks, and hollies, and in the centre of this hollow, the road makes a turn almost at right angles.

Behind the corner of the wood, which entirely concealed them from any persons coming up the hill, Aulus drew up his men in double lines, and as the band, whom he suspected to be in pursuit of him, came into the open space, in loose array, and with their horses blown and weary, he charged upon them with a fierce shout, and threw them into disorder in a moment.

Nothing could indicate more clearly, the utter recklessness of the Catilinarian party, and the cheap estimate at which they held human life, than the perfect unconcern with which they set upon a party of men, whose identity with those whom they feared was so entirely unproved.

Nothing, at the same time, could indicate more clearly, the fury and uncalculating valor which had grown up among them, nurtured by the strange policy of Catiline, during a peace of eighteen years' duration.

Eighteen men, for, Aulus Fulvius included, they numbered no more, set fiercely upon a force of nearly three times their number, with no advantage of arms or accoutrement, or even of discipline, for although all old soldiers, these men had not, for years, been accustomed to act together, nor were any of them personally acquainted with the young leader, who for the first time commanded them.

The one link which held them together, was welded out of crime and desperation. Each man knew that his neighbor, as well as himself, must win or die—there was no compromise, no half-way measure that could by any possibility preserve them.

And therefore as one man they charged, as one man they struck, and death followed every blow.

At their first onset, with horses comparatively fresh, against the blown chargers and disordered mass of their pursuers, they were entirely successful. Above a dozen of their opponents went down horse and man, and the remainder were driven scattering along the slope, nearly to the foot of the declivity.

Uncertain as he had been at the first who were the men, whom he thus recklessly attacked, Aulus Fulvius had not well turned the angle of the wood, before he recognized the faces of almost all the leading men of the opposite party.

They were the oldest and most trusty of the clients of his house; and half a dozen, at the least, of his own name and kindred led them.

It needed not a moment therefore, to satisfy him that they were in quest of himself, and of himself alone—that they were no organized troop and invested with no state authority, but merely a band suddenly collected from his father's household, to bring him back in person from the fatal road on which he had entered so fatally.

Well did he know the rigor of the old Roman law, as regarded the paternal power, and well did he know, the severity with which his father would execute it.

The terrors inspired by the thought of an avenging country, would have been nothing—the bare idea of being surrendered a fettered captive to his dread father's indignation, maddened him.

Fiercely therefore, as he rushed out leading his armoured followers, the fury of his first charge was mere boy's play when compared to the virulent and concentrated rage with which he fought, after he had discovered fairly against whom he was pitted.

Had his men shared his feeling, the pursuers must have been utterly defeated and cut to pieces, without the possibility of escape.

But while he recognized his personal enemies in the persons he attacked, the men who followed him as quickly perceived that those, whom they were cutting down, were not regular soldiers, nor led by any Roman magistrate.

They almost doubted, therefore, as they charged, whe-

ther they were not in error; and when the horsemen of the other faction were discomfitted and driven down the hill on the instant, they felt no inclination to pursue or harass them farther.

Not so, however, Aulus. He had observed in the first onset, the features of a cousin, whom he hated; and now, added to other motives, the fierce thirst for his kinsman's blood, stirred his blood almost into frenzy. Knowing, moreover, that he was himself the object of their pursuit, he knew likewise that the pursuit would not be given up for any casual check, but that to conquer, he must crush them.

Precipitately, madly therefore he drove down the hill, oversetting horseman after horseman, the greater part of them unwounded—for the short Roman sword, however efficient at close quarters and on foot, was a most ineffective weapon for a cavalier—until he reached the bottom of the hill.

There he reined up his charger for a moment, and looked back, waving his hand and shouting loudly to bring on his comrades to a second charge.

To his astonishment, however, he saw them collected in a body at nearly a mile's distance, on the brow of the first hill, beckoning him to come back, and evidently possessed by no thought, less than that of risking their lives or liberty by any fresh act of hostility.

In the mean time, the fugitives, who had now reached the level ground and found themselves unpressed, began to halt; and before Aulus Fulvius had well made up his mind what to do, they had been rallied and reformed, and were advancing slowly, with a firm and unbroken front, well calculated to deter his handful, which had already been diminished in strength, by one man killed, and four or five more or less severely wounded, from rashly making any fresh attack.

Alone and unsupported, nothing remained for him but to retreat if possible, and make his way back to his people, who, he felt well assured would again charge, if again menaced with pursuit. To do this, however, had now ceased to be an easy, perhaps to be a feasible matter.

Between himself and his own men, there were at least ten of his father's clients; several of them indeed were

wounded, and all had been overthrown in the snock either by himself or his troopers; but they had all regained their horses, and—apparently in consequence of some agreement or tacit understanding with his comrades, were coming down the hill at a gentle trot to rejoin their own party.

Now it was that Aulus began to regret having sent forward the smith, and those of the conspirators to whom he was individually known, with Julia in the van. Since of the fellows who had followed him thus far, merely because inferior will always follow superior daring, and who now appeared mightily inclined to desert him, not three were so much as acquainted with his name, and not one had any intimacy with him, or indeed any community of feeling unless it were the community of crime.

These things flashed upon Aulus in an instant; the rather that he saw the hated cousin, whom he had passed unnoticed in his headlong charge, quietly bringing the clients into line between himself and his wavering associates.

He was in fact hemmed in on every side; he was alone, and his horse, which he had taxed to the uttermost, was wounded and failing fast.

His case was indeed desperate, for he could now see that his own faction were drawing off already with the evident intention of rejoining the bulk of the party, careless of his fate, and glad to escape at so small a sacrifice.

Still, even in this extremity he had no thought of surrender—indeed to him death and surrender were but two names for one thing.

He looked to the right and to the left, if there were any possibility of scaling the wooded slopes and so rejoining the sturdy swordsmith without coming to blows again with his father's household; but one glance told him that such hopes were vain indeed. On either hand the crags rose inaccessible even to the foot of man, unless he were a practised mountaineer.

Then rose the untamed spirit of his race, the firm Roman hardihood, deeming naught done while anything remains to do, and holding all things feasible to the bold heart and ready hand—the spirit which saved Rome when Hannibal was thundering at her gates, which made her

from a petty town the queen and mistress of the universe.

He gathered his reins firmly in his hand, and turning his horse's head down the declivity put the beast to a slow trot, as if he had resolved to force his way toward Rome; but in a moment, when his manœuvre had, as he expected caused the men in his rear to put their horses to their speed, and thus to break their line, he again wheeled, and giving his charger the spur with pitiless severity drove up the steep declivity like a thunderbolt, and meeting his enemies straggling along in succession, actually succeeded in cutting down two, before he was envelopped, unhorsed and disarmed, which, as his cousin's men came charging up and down the road at once, it was inevitable that he must be from the beginning.

"Curses upon thee! it is thou!" he said, grinding his teeth and shaking his weaponless hand at his kinsman in impotent malignity—"it is thou! Caius. Curses upon thee! from my birth thou hast crossed me."

"It were better thou hadst died, Aulus," replied the other solemnly, but in sorrow more than anger, "better that thou hadst died, than been so led back to Rome."

"Why didst *thou* not kill me then?" asked Aulus with a sneer of sarcastic spite—"Why dost thou not kill me now?"

"Thou art *sacro sanctus*!" answered the other, with an expression of horror in his eyes—"doomed, set apart, sanctified unto destruction—words, alas! henceforth avail nothing. Bind him"—he continued, turning toward his men—"Bind him, I say, hard, with his hands behind his back, and his legs under his horse's belly! Go your way," he added, "Go to your bloody camp, and accursed leader"—waving his hand as he spoke, to the veterans above, who seemed half inclined to make an effort to rescue the prisoner. "Go your way. We have no quarrel with you now; we came for him, and having got him we return."

"What?" cried the dark-eyed boy who had come up too late to the Latin villa on the preceding night, and who, strange to state, was riding with the clients of the Fulvian house, unwearied—"What, will you not save *her*? will you not do that for which alone I led ye hither? will you be falsifiers of your word and dishonored?"

"Alas!" answered Caius Fulvius, "it is impossible.—We are outnumbered, my poor boy, and may not aid you, as we would; but be of good cheer, this villain taken, they will not dare to harm her."

The youth shook his head mournfully; but made no reply.

Aulus, however, who had heard all that was said, glared savagely upon the boy, and after examining his features minutely for a moment exclaimed—"I know thy face! who art thou! quick thy name?"

"I have no name!" replied the other gloomily.

"That voice! I know thee!" he shouted, an expression of infernal joy animating his features. "Thou miserable fool, and driveller! and is it for this—for this, that thou hast brought the bloodhounds on my track, to restore *her* to *him*? Mark me, then, mark me, and see if I am not avenged—her dishonor, her agony, her infamy are no less certain than my death. Catiline, Catiline shall avenge me upon her—upon him—upon thee—thou weaker, more variable thing than—woman! Catiline! think'st thou he will fail?"

"He hath failed ere now!" replied the boy proudly.

"Failed! when?" exclaimed Aulus, forgetting his own situation in the excitement of the wordy contest.

"When he crossed me"—then turning once more to the leader of the Fulvian clients, the dark-eyed boy said in a calm determined voice, "You will not, therefore, aid me?"

"We cannot."

"Enough! Look to him, then, that he escape you not."

"Fear us not. But whither goest thou?"

"To rescue Julia. Tell thou to Arvina how these things have fallen out, and whither they have led her; and, above all, that one is on her traces who will die or save her."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Aulus savagely in the glee of his vengeful triumph. "Thou wilt die, but not save her. I am avenged, already—avenged in Julia's ruin!"

"Wretch!" exclaimed his kinsman, indignant and disgusted—"almost it shames me that my name is Fulvius! Fearful, however, is the punishment that overhangs thee! think on that, Aulus! and if shame fetter not thy tongue, at least let terror freeze it."

“Terror? of whom? perhaps of thee, accursed?”

“Aulus. Thou hast—a father!”

At that word father, his eyes dropped instantly, their haughty insolence abashed; his face turned deadly pale; his tongue *was* frozen; he spoke no word again until at an early hour of morning, they reached the house he had so fatally dishonored.

Meanwhile, as the party, who had captured him, returned slowly with their prisoner down the mountain side, the last of the rebels having galloped off long before to join the swordsmith and his gang, the boy, who took so deep an interest in Julia, dismounted from the white horse, which had borne him for so many hours with unabated fire and spirit, and leaving the high road, turned into a glade among the holm oaks, watered by a small streamlet, leading his courser by the rein.

Having reached a secluded spot, quite removed from sight of the highway, he drew from a small wallet, which was attached to the croupe, some pieces of coarse bread and a skin of generous wine, of which he partook sparingly himself, giving by far the larger portion to his four-footed friend, who greedily devoured the cake saturated with the rich grape-juice.

This done he fastened the beast to a tree so that he could both graze and drink from the stream; and then throwing himself down at length on the grass, he soon fell into a heavy and quiet sleep.

It was already sunset, when he awoke, and the gray hues of night were gathering fast over the landscape; but he seemed to care nothing for the approaching darkness as he arose reinvigorated and full of spirit, and walked up to his horse which whinnied his joyful recognition, and tossed his long thin mane with a spirited and fiery air, as he felt the well-known hand clapping his high arched crest.

“Courage! brave horse,” he cried—“Courage, White Ister. We will yet save her, for—Arvina!”

And, with the words he mounted, and cantered away through the gloom of the woodland night, on the road toward Bolsena, well assured of the route taken by Caius Crispus and his infernal crew.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ROMAN FATHER.

Daughter, He fled.
* * * * *
That Flight was parricide.

MASON'S CHARACTER.

THE streets of Rome were in fierce and terrible confusion all that day long, on which the conspirators were arrested, and all the night that followed it.

Late on the evening of that day, when it was already dark, the Consul had addressed the people by torch-light in the forum, delivering that superb speech, known as the third oration against Catiline.

In it, he had informed them clearly of all the events which had occurred in the last twenty-four days, since the delivery of his second speech, more especially treating of those which had taken place in the preceding day and night.

The conspiracy made manifest by overwhelming evidence—the arrest of the ambassadors, the seizure of the letters, the acknowledgment of those letters for their own by the terrified and bewildered traitors, and lastly the committal of the ringleaders of the plot to close custody, previous to the discussion of their fate—such were the wondrous and exciting facts, which he had announced to the assembled multitudes, inviting them to join him in a solemn thanksgiving to the Gods, and public celebration, decreed by the Senate to his honor; congratulating them

on their escape from a danger so imminent and so general; and calling on them, in conclusion, to watch over the safety of the city by nocturnal guards and patrols, as they had done so diligently during all that emergency.

The thundering acclamations, which greeted the close of that luculent and powerful exposition, the zeal with which the concourse hailed him unanimously Savior of Rome and Father of his country, the eagerness of affection with which all ranks and ages thronged around him, expressing their gratitude and their devotion, by all means imaginable, proved satisfactorily that, whatever might have been the result had massacre, plunder, and conflagration fallen upon them unawares, the vast mass of the people were now loyal, and true to their country.

The seven hills never had resounded with louder din of civic triumph, than they did on that glorious night; not when the noble Scipio triumphed for Carthage overthrown; not when the mighty Marius,* begirt with a host of captives and all the pomp of war, dismounted, happiest of men, from his Teutonic Car.

The streets were as light as day with the glare of lamps, and torches, and bonfires blazing on all the circumjacent heights, as with tremendous shouts, and unpremeditated triumph, the mighty multitude escorted the great Consul home, not to his own house, where the rites of the Good Goddess were in celebration, and whither no male could be admitted, but to his next-door neighbor's mansion, in which he and his friends were entertained with more than regal splendor.

What could have been more glorious, what more un-mixed with any touch of bitterness, or self reproach, than Cicero's position on that evening?

His country saved from miseries unparalleled—saved by himself alone—no aid of rival generals, no force of marshalled hosts to detract from the greatness of his own achievement—all the strife borne, all the success won, all the glory conquered by the force of his own genius, of his own

* *Quid illo cive tulisset*

*Natura in terris quid Roma beatius unquam,
Si circumducto captivoum agmine, et omni
Bellorum pompâ, animam exhalasset opimam,
Quam de Teutonico vellet descendere Curru.**

moral resolution. No blood of friends had been spilt to buy that conquest, and wring its tribute of anguished sorrow from eyes bright with the mixed excitement of regret and triumph—no widow's tears, no orphan's sighs, had mounted heavenward amid those joyous exclamations.

With no sword drawn, with no army arrayed, alone in his peaceful toga, he had conquered the world's peace; and, for that night at least, be enjoyed, as his great merit's meed, a world's gratitude.

All night long had the streets been crowded with loud and ardent throngs of all ages, sexes, ranks, conditions, questioning, cheering, carolling, carousing—all, in appearance at least, unanimous in joy; for none dared in such an ebullition of patriotic feeling to display any disaffection.

And the morrow dawned upon Rome, still noisy, still alive with tumultuous joy, still filled, through the whole area within its walls, by thousands, and tens of thousands, hoarse with shouting, weary almost of revelling, haggard and pale from the excess of excitement.

Such was the scene, which the metropolis of the world presented, when at the second hour of the morning, on the day following the arrest of Lentulus, a small party consisting of about fifty horsemen, conducting a prisoner, with his arms bound behind his back, gagged, and with the lapet of his cloak so disposed as to conceal his face, entered the Quirinal gate, from the direction of the Flaminian way.

They were the clients of the Fulvian House, leading the miserable Aulus homeward, under the command of his cousin. The horses were jaded, and bleeding from many a spur gall; the men were covered with dust and sweat; and several of their number were wounded; but, what at once struck the minds of all who beheld them, was that their faces, although stern and resolute, were grave, dejected and sad, while still it would seem that they were returning in triumph from some successful expedition.

At any other time, the entrance of such a party would have awakened much astonishment and surprise, perhaps might have created a tumult among the excitable and easily agitated Romans; but now so strangely had the popular mind been stimulated during the last days, that they either

paid no attention to the train at all, or observed, pointing to the prisoner, that there went another of the parricides.

Just, however, as the new-comers entered the gate, another armed band met them, moving outward; the latter being a full troop, thirty in number, of cavalry of the seventh legion, with a banner, and clarion, and Paullus Arvina at their head, in complete armor, above which he wore a rich scarlet cloak, or *paludamentum*, floating over his left shoulder.

The face of the young man was as pale as that of a corpse, his eyes were sunken, and surrounded by dark circles, his cheeks were hollow, and among the short black curls, which were visible beneath the brazen peak of his sculptured casque, there was one as white as snow.

Since the dread news had reached him of Julia's abduction, he had not closed his eyes for a moment; and, although scarcely eight and forty hours had elapsed, since he received the fatal intelligence, he had grown older by many years.

No one, who looked upon him, would have judged him to be younger than thirty-five or forty years, when he was in truth little more than half way on life's journey toward the second period.

There was a cold firm determination too written on all his features, such as is rarely seen in young men; and the wild vacillating light which used to flicker so changefully over his fine face, was lost in an expression of mournful and despairing resolution.

Still his attitude on his charger's back was fine and spirited; his head was proudly erect: and his voice, as from time to time, he uttered some command to his troopers, was clear, steady, and sonorous.

So much indeed was he altered, that Caius Fulvius, who knew him well, gazed at him doubtfully for half a minute ere he addressed him, as the two troops came almost into contact, the mounted clients of the Fulvian House, withdrawing to the wayside to allow the legionaries to pass.

Assured at last that it was indeed Arvina, he called out as he passed—

"Tell me, I pray thee, Paullus, what means this course in the streets? hath aught of ill befallen?"

"Ha! is it thou, Caius Fulvius?" replied Arvina. "I

will speak with thee anon. Lead the men forward," he added, turning round in his saddle to the second Decurion of his troop, "my good Drusus. I will overtake you, ere you shall reach the Mulvian bridge." Here wheeling his horse to the side of the young nobleman, "Where hast thou been, Caius, that thou hast not heard? All the conspirators have been arrested. Lentulus, and Cethegus, Gabinius, Statilius, and Cæparius! They have confessed their letters—the Gaulish ambassadors, and Titus Volturcius have given evidence against them. The senate is debating even now on their doom."

"Indeed! indeed! when did all this fall out?" enquired the other evidently in great astonishment.

"Yesterday morning they were taken. The previous night, in the third watch, the ambassadors were stopped on the Mulvian bridge, and the treasonable papers found on Volturcius."

"Ha! this is indeed news!" cried Caius. "What will befall Lentulus and the rest? Do men know anything!"

"Death!" answered Arvina gravely.

"Death! art thou certain? A Prætor, a consular of Rome! and all the others Senators! Death! Paullus?"

"Death!" replied the other still more solemnly, than before. "Yet methinks! that rather should be a boon, than the fit penalty of such guilt! But where have you been, that you are ignorant of all this, and whom have you there?"

Caius Fulvius shook his head sorrowfully, and a deep groan burst from the lips of the muffled man, a groan of rage mingled with hate and terror.

"I will tell *thee*, Arvina," said the young man, after a moment's pause, during which Paullus had been gazing with a singular, and even to himself incomprehensible, emotion at the captive horseman. "We have been sent to fetch *him* back," and he pointed to his wretched cousin, "as he fled to join Catiline. We overtook him nigh to Volsinii."

"Who—who—" exclaimed Arvina in a terrible hoarse voice—"By all the Gods! who is he?"

"Aulus—"

"Ha! villain! villain! He shall die by my hand!

first from Arvina's lips with a stifled cry, and drawing his sword as he spoke, he made toward him.

But Caius Fulvius, and several others of the clients threw themselves into the way, and the former said quietly but very firmly, "No—no, my Paullus, that must not be. His life is devoted to a baser doom; nor must his blood be shed by a hand so noble! But wherefore—Ha!" he exclaimed, interrupting himself in mid speech. "Ha! Julia, I remember—I remember—would to the Gods I could have rescued her."

For one second's space Paullus Arvina glared upon the speaker, as if he would have stabbed him where he sat on his horse motionless and unresisting; then, shaking his head with an abrupt impatient motion as if to rid himself of some fixed image or impression, he said,

"You are right, Caius. But tell me! by the Gods! was she with him? saw you aught of her, as you took him?"

"She was in his power, my poor Paullus, as we were told at Sutrium; but when we overtook him, he had sent forward all his band but a small party, who fought so hard and handled us so roughly, that, he once taken, we dared not set on them again. But, be of good cheer, my Paullus. There is a gallant youth on the track of them; the same youth who went to save her at the Latin villa but arrived too late; the same who brought us the tidings of yon villain's flight, who led us in pursuit of them. He follows still, and swears that he will save her! The Gods grant it!"

"A youth, ha! who is he?"

"I know not. He refused to tell us, still saying that he was nameless. A slight slender black-eyed youth. Exceeding dark-complexioned, but handsome withal. You would have said, to look on him, he would lack strength to ride an hour; yet, by the God of Faith! he was in the saddle incessantly for nearly forty hours, and shewed less weariness than our sturdiest men. Never saw I such fiery will, and resolute endurance, in one so young and feeble."

"Strange!" muttered Paullus—"strange! why came he not to me?"

"He did go to your mansion, but found you not. You were absent on state business—then came he to the father of this demon, who sent us in pursuit, and we have, as I

tell you, succeeded. May you do so likewise! He charged me to say to you 'there was one on her track who would die to save her.' "

"'Tis passing strange! I may not even guess who it should be," he added musing, "the Gods give him strength. But tell me, Caius, can I, by any speed, overtake them?"

"I fear me not, Paullus, ere they have reached the camp. They were nigh to Volsinii at noon yesterday; of course they will not loiter on the way."

"Alas!" replied the unhappy youth. "Curses! curses! ten thousand curses on his head!" and he glanced savagely upon Aulus as he spoke—"to what doom do ye lead him?"

"To an indignant father's pitiless revenge!"

"May he perish ill!—may his unburied spirit wander and wail forever upon the banks of Acheron, unpardoned and despairing!"

And turning suddenly away, as if afraid to trust himself longer in sight of his mortal enemy, he plunged his spurs deep into his charger's flank, and galloped away in order to overtake his troop, with which he was proceeding to join the army which Antonius the consul and Petreius his lieutenant were collecting on the sea-coast of Etruria in order to act against Catiline.

Meanwhile the others rode forward on their gloomy errand toward the Fulvian House.

They reached its doors, and at the trampling of their horses' feet, before any summons had been given, with a brow dark as night and a cold determined eye, the aged Senator came forth to meet his faithful clients.

At the first glance he cast upon the party, the old man saw that they had succeeded; and a strange expression of satisfaction mixed with agony crossed his stern face.

"It is well!" he said gravely. "Ye have preserved the honor of my house. I give ye thanks, my friends. Well have ye done your duty! It remains only that I do my own. Bring in your prisoner, Caius, and ye, my friends, leave us, I pray you, to our destiny."

The young man to whom he addressed himself, leaped down from his horse with one or two of the clients, and, unbuckling the thong which fastened his cousin's legs under the belly of the beast he rode, lifted him to the ground; for in a sort of sullen spite, although unable to resist, he

moved neither hand nor foot, more than a marble statue would have done; and when he stood on the pavement, he made no step toward the door, and it was necessary to carry him bodily up the steps of the colonnade, and through the vestibule into the atrium.

In that vast hall a fearful group was assembled. On a large arm chair at the upper end sat an aged matron, perfectly blind, with hair as white as snow, and a face furrowed with wrinkles, the work of above a century. She was the mother of the Senator, the grandmother of the young culprit. At her right hand stood another large chair vacant, the seat of the master of the house; and at her left sat another lady, already far advanced in years, yet stately, firm, and unflinching—the wretched, but proud mother. Behind her stood three girls of various ages, the youngest not counting above sixteen years, all beautiful, and finely made, but pale as death, with their superb dark eyes dilated and their white lips mute with strange horror.

Lower down the hall toward the door, and not far removed from the altar of the household gods, near the impluvium, stood a black wooden block, with a huge broad axe lying on it, and a grim-visaged slave leaning against the wall with folded arms in a sort of stoical indifference—the butcher of the family. By his trade, he little cared whether he practised it on beasts or men; and perhaps he looked forward with some pleasurable feelings to the dealing of a blow against one of the proud lords of Empire.

No one could look upon that mute and sad assemblage without perceiving that some dread domestic tragedy was in process; but how dreadful no one could conceive, who was not thoroughly acquainted with the strange and tremendous rigor of the old Roman Law.

The face of the mother was terribly convulsed, as she heard the clanging hoof tramps at the door; and in an agony of unendurable suspense she laid her hand upon her heart, as if to still its wild throbbing.

Roman although she was, and trained from her childhood upward in the strictest school of Stoicism, he, on whom they were gathered there to sit in judgment, was still her first-born, her only son; and she could not but remember in this hour of woe the unutterable pleasure with which she had listened to the first small cry of him, then so inno-

cent and weak and gentle, who now so strong in manhood and so fierce in sin, stood living on the verge of death.

But now as the clanging of the horse hoofs ceased, different sounds succeeded; and in a moment the anxious ears of the wife and mother could discern the footsteps of the proud husband, and the fallen child.

They entered the hall, old Aulus Fulvius striding with martial steps and a resolute yet solemn brow toward the chair of judgment, like to some warlike Flamen about to execute the wrath of the Gods upon his fated victim; the son shuffling along, with downcast eyes and an irregular pace, supported on one hand by his detested cousin, and on the other by an aged freedman of the house.

The head of the younger Aulus was yet veiled with the lappet of his gown; so that he had seen none of those who were then assembled, none of the fatal apparatus of his fore-ordered doom.

But now, as the old man took his seat, he made a movement with his hand, and Caius, obedient to the gesture, lifted the woollen covering from the son's brow, and released his hold of his arm. At a second wafture, the nephew and the freedman both departed, glad to be spared the witnessing a scene so awful as that which was about to ensue.

The sound of their departing footsteps fell with an icy chill on the stout heart of the young conspirator; and although he hated the man, who had just left the room, more than any living being, he would yet willingly have detained him at that crisis.

He felt that even hatred was less to be apprehended than the cold hard decision of the impassive unrelenting father, in whose heart every sentiment was dead but those of justice and of rigorous honor.

“Aulus, lift up your eyes!”

And, for the first time since he had entered the hall, the culprit looked up, and gazed with a wild and haggard eye on the familiar objects which met his glance on every side; and yet, familiar as they were, all seemed to be strange, altered, and unusual.

The statues of his dead ancestors, as they stood, grim and uncouth in their antique sculpture, between the pillars of the wall, seemed to dilate in size, and, become gigantic,

to frown stern contempt on their degenerate descendant. The grotesque forms of the Etruscan household Gods appeared to gibber at him; the very flames upon the altar, before them, cast lurid gleams and ominous to his distempered fancy.

It was singular, that the last thing which he observed was that, which would have been the first to attract the notice of a stranger—the block, the axe, and the sullen headman.

A quick shudder ran through every limb and artery of his body, and he turned white and livid. His spirit was utterly appalled and broken; his aspect was that of a sneaking culprit, a mean craven.

“Aulus, lift up your eyes!”

And he did lift them, with a strong effort, to meet the fixed and searching gaze of his father; but so cold, so penetrating was that gaze, that his glance fell abashed, and he trembled from head to foot, and came well nigh to falling on the earth in his great terror.

“Aulus, art thou afraid to die?—thou, who hast sworn so deeply to dye thine hands in *my* gore, in the gore of all who loved their country? Art thou afraid to die, stabber, adulterer, poisoner, ravisher, parricide, Catilinarian? Art thou afraid to die? I should have thought, when thou didst put on such resolves, thou wouldst have cast aside all that is human! Once more, I say, art thou afraid to die?”

“To die!” he exclaimed in husky tones, which seemed to stick in his parched throat—“to die! to be nothing!”

And again the convulsive shudder ran through his whole frame.

But ere the Senator could open his lips to reply, the blind old grandam asked, in a voice so clear and shrill that its accents seemed to pierce the very souls of all who heard it—

“Is he a coward, Aulus Fulvius? Is he a coward, too, as well as a villain? The first of our race, is he a coward?”

“I fear it,” answered the old man gloomily. “But, cowardly or brave, he must disgrace our house no farther. His time is come! his fate cries out for him! Aulus must die! happy to die without the taint of public and detected

infamy—happy to die unseen in his father's house, not in the base and sordid Tullianum."

"Mother! mother!" exclaimed the wretched youth in a paroxysm of agony. "Sisters, speak for me—plead for me! I am young, oh, too young to die!"

"The mother, whom thou hast sworn to murder—the sisters, whose virgin youth thou hast agreed to yield to the licentious arms of thy foul confederates!" answered the old man sternly; while the women, with blanched visages, convulsed with agony, were silent, even to that appeal.

"Speak, speak! will you not speak for me, for your first-born son, my mother?"

"Farewell!"—the cold word came forth from her pallid lips, with a mighty effort—"Farewell, unhappy!" And, unable to endure the dreadful scene any longer, she arose from her seat, and laid her hand on the blind woman's arm. "Come," she said, "mother of my lord! our task is ended! his doom spoken! Let us go hence!"

But the youngest sister, overcoming her fear of the stern father, her modesty of youth, and her sense of high-strained honor, cast herself at the old man's feet, and clung about his knees, crying with a shrill painful cry—

"Oh, father! by your right hand! by your gray head! by all the Gods! I implore you, pardon, spare him!"

"Up! up! base girl!" cried the old man; "wouldst have the infamy of our house made public? and thou, most miserable ooy, spare ner, thou, this disgrace, and me this anguish—veil thy head! bow thee o the block! bid the slave do his office! At least, Aulus, if thou hast not lived, at least die, a Roman!"

The second of the girls, while her sister had made that fruitless appeal to the father's mercy, walked steadily to her brother, kissed his brow with a tearless eye, and in a low voice bade him "Farewell for ever!" then turned away, impassive as her father, and followed her mother and the blind grandam from the fatal hall.

But the third daughter stepped up to the faltering youth with a hectic flush on her cheek, and a fitful fire in her eye, and whispered in his ear,

"Aulus, my brother! unhappy one, it is vain! Thou *must* die, for our house's honor! Die, then, my brother, as it becomes a Fulvius, bravely, and by a free hand!

Which of our house perished ever by a base weapon, or a slavish blow? Thou wert brave ever,—be brave now, oh! my brother!”

And at her words, his courage, his pride, rallied to his aid; and he met her eye with a flashing glance, and answered in a firm tone, “I *will*, sister, I will die as becomes a Roman, as becomes a Fulvius! But how shall I die by a free hand, bound as I am, and weaponless?”

“Thus, brother,” she replied, drawing a short keen knife from the bosom of her linen stola; and severing the bonds which confined his elbows, she placed it in his hands. “It is keen! it will not fail you! it is the last gift of the last who loves you, Aulus!”

“The best gift! Farewell, sister!”

“Farewell, Aulus, for ever!” And she too kissed him on the brow; and as she kissed him, a hot tear fell upon his cheek. Then, turning toward her sister who was still clinging to the old man’s knees, embarrassing him with useless prayers, so that he had observed none of that by-play, she said to her firmly,

“Come, little girl, come! It is fruitless! Bid him farewell! he is prepared to die! he cannot survive his honor!”

And she drew her away, screaming and struggling, with eyes deluged in tears, from the apartment wherein the Senator now stood face to face with his first born, the slave alone present as a witness of the last struggle.

But Aulus had by this time recovered all the courage of his race, all his own natural audacity; and waving his hand with a proud gesture toward the slave, he exclaimed in tones of severe authority:

“Dismiss that wretched slave, Aulus Fulvius. Ready I am to die—nay! I wish not to live! But it becomes not *thee* to doom me to such a death, nor *me* so to die! Noble I am, and free; and by a free hand will I die, and a noble weapon!”

There was so much command, so much high pride, and spirit, in his tone, his expression, and his gesture, that an answering chord was struck in the mind of the old man; so that without reply, and without evincing any surprise at seeing the youth’s arms unbound, he waved a signal to the slave to depart from the atrium

Then the youth knelt down on one knee before the altar, and cried aloud in a solemn voice—

“Pardon me, ye Gods of our house, for this dishonor which I have brought upon you; absolve me, ye grand ancestors; mine eyes are open now, and I perceive the sin, the shame, the sorrow of my deeds! Absolve me, ye great Gods, and ye glorious men; and thou, my father, think sometimes of the son, whom it repented of his guilt, but whom it pained not”—he raised his arm aloft, and the bright knife-blade glittered in the rays of the altar-fire, when the old Senator sprang forward, with all his features working strangely, and cried “Hold!”

It might be that he had relented; but if it were so, it was too late; for, finishing his interrupted sentence with these words—

—“to die for his house’s honor!”—

the young man struck himself one quick blow on the breast, with a hand so sure and steady, that the knife pierced through his ribs as if they had been paper, and clove his heart asunder, standing fixed hilt-deep in his chest; while, without word, or groan, or sigh or struggle, he dropped flat on his back beside the *impluvium*, and was dead in less time than it has taken to describe the deed.

The father looked on for a moment calmly; and then said in a cool hard voice, “It is well! it is well! The Gods be thanked! he died as a Roman should!”

Then he composed his limbs, and threw a white cloth which lay nigh the block, over the face and body of the wretched youth.

But, as he turned to leave the atrium, nature was too strong for his philosophy, for his pride; and crying out, “My son! my son! He was yet mine own son! mine own Aulus!” and burying his face in his toga, he burst into a paroxysm of loud grief, and threw himself at length on the dead body: father and son victims alike to the inexorable Roman honor!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DOOM.

Without debatement further, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not striving time allowed.

HAMLET.

THE nones* of November were perilous indeed to Rome.

The conspirators, arrested two days previously, and fully convicted on the evidence of the Gaulish ambassadors, of Titus Volturcius of Crotona, and of Lucius Tarquinius,—convicted on the evidence of their own letters—and lastly convicted by their own admissions, were yet uncondemned and in free custody, as it was termed; under the charge of certain senators and magistrates, whose zeal for the republic was undoubted.

There was still in the city a considerable mass of men, turbulent, disaffected, ripe for tumult—there was still in the Senate a large party, not indeed favorable to the plot, but far from being unfavorable to the plotters,—Catiline was at the head of a power which had increased already to nearly the force of two legions, and was in full march upon Rome.

Should the least check of the armies sent against him occur under such circumstances, there was but little doubt that an eruption of the Gladiators, and a servile insurrection, would liberate the traitors, and perhaps even crown their frantic rashness with success.

* The fifth day of November.

Such was the state of things, on the morning of the nones; and the brow of the great Consul was dark, and his heart heavy, as he entered the Senate, convened on this occasion in the temple of Jupiter Stator, in order to take the voice of that body on the fate of Lentulus and the rest.

But scarcely had he taken his seat, before a messenger was introduced, breathless and pale, the herald of present insurrection.

The freedmen and clients of Lentulus were in arms; the gladiators and the slaves of Cethegus were up already, and hurrying through the streets toward the house of Quintus Cornificius, wherein their master was confined.

Many slaves of other houses, and no small number of disaffected citizens had joined them; and the watches were well nigh overpowered.

Ere long the roar of the mob might be heard even within those hallowed precincts, booming up from the narrow streets about the Forum, like the distant sound of a heavy surf.

Another, and another messenger followed the first in quick succession—one manipule of soldiers had been overpowered, and driven into some houses where they defended themselves, though hard set, with their missiles—the multitude was thundering at the gates of the City Prisons; and, if not quelled immediately, would shortly swell their numbers by the accession of all the desperate criminals, convicted slaves, and reckless debtors, who were crowded together in those abodes of guilt and wretchedness.

Then was it seen, when the howls of the rabble were echoing through the arches of the sanctuary wherein they sate; when massacre and conflagration were imminent, and close at hand; then was it seen, how much of real majesty and power resided still in the Roman Senate.

Firm, as when Hannibal was thundering at their gates, solemn as when the Gaul was ravaging their city, they sat, and debated, grave, fearless, and unmoved.

Orders were issued to concentrate forces upon the spot where the tumult was raging; the knights, who were collected under arms, in the whole force of their order, without the gates of the Temple as a guard to the Senate, were informed that the Fathers were sufficiently defended by

their own sanctity; and were requested to march down upon the forum, and disperse the rioters.

The heavy tramp of their solid march instantly succeeded the transmission of the order; and, in a short time after, the deep swell of their charging shout rose high above the discordant clamors of the mob, from the hollow of the Velabrum.

Still, not a Senator left his seat, or changed countenance; although it might be seen, by the fiery glances and clinched hands of some among the younger nobles, that they would have gladly joined the knights, in charging their hereditary enemies, the Democratic rabble.

The question which was then debating was of more weight, however, than any triumph over the mob; for by the decision of that question it was to be determined whether the traitors and the treason should be crushed simultaneously and forever, or whether Rome itself should be abandoned to the pleasure of the rebels.

That question was the life or death of Lentulus, Cethegus, Gabinius, Statilius, and Cæparius; all of whom were in separate custody, the last having been brought in on the previous evening, arrested on his way to the camp of Catiline and Manlius.

Should the Senate decree their death, the commonwealth might be deemed safe—should it absolve them, by that weakness, the republic must be lost.

And on the turn of a die did that question seem to hang.

Decius Junius Silanus, whose opinion was first asked, spoke briefly, but strenuously and to the point, and as became the Consul elect, soon to be the first magistrate of that great empire. He declared for the capital punishment of all those named above, and of four others, Lucius Cassius, Publius Furius, Publius Umbrenus, and Quintus Annius, if they should be thereafter apprehended.

Several others of the high Patrician family followed on the same side; and no one had as yet ventured openly to urge the impunity of the parricides, although Tiberius Nero had recommended a delay in taking the question, and the casting of the prisoners meanwhile into actual incarceration under the safeguard of a military force.

But it had now come to the turn of Caius Julius Cæsar,

the great leader then of the Democratic faction, the great captain that was to be in after days, and the first Emperor of subjugated Rome.

An orator second, if second, to Cicero alone, ardent, impassioned, yet bland, clement, easy; liberal both of hand and council; averse to Cicero from personal pique, as well as from party opposition; an eager candidate for popular applause and favor, it was most natural that he should take side with the conspirators.

Still, his name having been coupled obscurely with their infamous designs, although Cicero had positively refused to suffer his accusation or impeachment, it required so much boldness, so much audacity indeed, to enable him to stand forward as their open champion, that many men disbelieved that he would venture on a step so hazardous.

The greatest possible anxiety was manifested, therefore, in the house, when that distinguished Senator arose, and began in low, deep, harmonious tones, and words which rolled forth like a gentle river in an easy and silvery flow.

"It were well," he said, "Conscript Fathers, that all men who debate on dubious matters, should be unbiassed in opinion by hate or friendship, clemency or anger. When passions intervene, the mind can rarely perceive truth; nor hath at one time any man obeyed his interests and his pleasures. The intellect there prevails, where most it is exerted. If passion governs it, passion hath the sole sway; reason is powerless. It were an easy task for me, Conscript Fathers, to quote instances in which kings and nations, impelled by enmity or pity, have taken unadvised and evil counsels; but I prefer to cite those, wherein our ancestors, defying the influence of passion, have acted well and wisely. During the Macedonian war which we waged against King Perseus, the state of Rhodes, splendid then and stately, which had been built up by the aid and opulence of Rome, proved faithless to us, and a foe. Yet, when, the war being ended, debate was had concerning her, our fathers suffered her citizens to go unpunished, in order that no men might infer that Rome had gone to war for greed, and not for just resentment. Again, in all the Punic wars, although the Carthaginians repeatedly committed outrages against them, in violation both of truce and treaties, never once did they follow that example, con-

sidering rather what should seem worthy of themselves, than what might be inflicted justly on their foes.

“This same consideration you should now take, Conscript Fathers; having care that the crimes of Publius Lentulus and his fellows weigh not upon your minds with greater potency, than your own dignity and honor; and that ye obey not rather the dictates of resentment, than the teachings of your old renown. For if a punishment worthy their crimes can be discovered, I approve of it, of how new precedent soever; but if the enormity of their guilt overtop the invention of all men, then, I shall vote that we abide by the customs, prescribed by our laws and institutions.

“Many of those who have already spoken, have dilated in glowing and set phrases on the perils which have menaced the republic. They have descanted on the horrors of warfare, on the woes which befall the vanquished. The rape of virgins; the tearing of children from parental arms; the ransacking of human homes and divine temples; the subjecting of matrons to the brutal will of the conquerors; havoc and conflagration, and all places filled with arms and corpses, with massacre and misery—But, in the name of the immortal Gods! to what do such orations tend? Do they aim at inflaming your wrath against this conspiracy? Vain, vain were such intent; for is it probable that words will inflame the mind of any one, if such and so atrocious facts have failed to inflame it? That is indeed impossible! Nor hath any man, at any period, esteemed his own injuries too lightly. Most persons, on the contrary, hold them more heavy than they are. But consequences fall not equally on all men, Conscript Fathers. They who in lowly places pass their lives in obscurity, escape the censure of the world, if they err on occasion under the influences of passion. Their fortunes and their fame are equal. They who, endowed with high commands, live in exalted stations, perform every action of their lives in the full gaze of all men. Thus to the greatest fortunes, the smallest licence is conceded. The great man must in no case consult his affections, or his anger. Least of all, must he yield to passion. That which is styled wrath in the lowly-born, becomes tyranny and cruel pride in the high and noble.

“ I indeed think, with those who have preceded me, that every torture is too small for their atrocity and crime. But it is human nature’s trick to remember always that which occurs the last in order. Forgetful of the criminal’s guilt, the world dwells ever on the horror of his punishment, if it lean never so little to the side of severity. Well sure am I, that the speech of Decius Silanus, a brave and energetic man, was dictated by his love for the republic—that in a cause so weighty he is moved neither by favor nor resentment. Yet his vote to my eyes appears, I say not cruel—for what could be cruel, inflicted on such men?—but foreign to the sense of our institutions. Now it is clear, Silanus, that either fear of future peril, or indignation at past wrong, impelled you to vote for an unprecedented penalty! Of fear it is needless to speak farther; when through the active energy of that most eminent man, our consul, such forces are assembled under arms! concerning the punishment of these men we must speak, however, as the circumstances of the case require. We must admit that in agony and wo death is no penalty, but rather the repose from sorrow. Death alone is the refuge from every mortal suffering—in death alone there is no place for joy or grief. But if this be not so, wherefore, in the name of the Gods! have ye not added also to your sentence, that they be scourged before their execution? Is it, that the Porcian law forbids? That cannot be—since other laws as strenuously prohibit the infliction of capital punishment on condemned citizens, enjoining that they be suffered to go into exile. Is it, then, that to be scourged is more severe and cruel than to be slain? Not so—for what can be too severe or too cruel for men convicted of such crime. If on the other hand it be less severe, how is it fitting to obey that law in the lesser, which you set at naught in the greater article? But, you will ask me perchance, who will find fault with any punishment inflicted upon the paricides of the republic? Time—future days—fortune, whose caprice governs nations! True, these men merit all that can befall them; but do ye, Conscript Fathers, pause on the precedent which you establish against others? Never did bad example arise but from a good precedent—only when the reins of empire have fallen from wise hands into ignorant or wicked guidance, that good exam-

ple is perverted from grand and worthy to base and unworthy ends. The men of Lacedemon, when they had conquered Athens, set thirty tyrants at the helm who should control the commonwealth. They at the first began to take off the guiltiest individuals, wretches hated by all, without form of trial. Thereat the people were rejoiced, and cried out that their deaths were just and merited. Ere long, when license had gained ground, they slew alike the virtuous and the guilty, and governed all by terror. Thus did that state, oppressed by slavery, rue bitterly its insane mirth. Within our memory, when victorious Sylla commanded Damasippus and his crew, who had grown up a blight to the republic, to be put to the sword's edge, who did not praise the deed? Who did not exclaim earnestly that men, factious and infamous, who had torn the republic by their tumults, were slain justly? And yet that deed was the commencement of great havoc. For, when one envied the city mansion or the country farm, nay, but the plate or garment of another, he strove with all his energy to have him on the lists of the proscription. Therefore, they who exulted at the death of Damasippus were themselves, ere long, dragged to execution; nor was there an end put to the massacre, until Sylla had satiated all his men with plunder. These things, indeed, I fear not under Marcus Tullius, nor at this day; but in a mighty state there are many and diverse dispositions. It may be at another time, under another consul, who shall perhaps hold an army at his back, that the wrong shall be taken for the right. If it be so when—on this precedent, by this decree, of this Senate—that consul shall have drawn the sword, who will compel him to put it back into the scabbard, who moderate his execution? Our ancestors, O Conscript Fathers, never lacked either wisdom in design, or energy in action; nor did their pride restrain them from copying those institutions of their neighbors, which they deemed good and wise. Their arms offensive and defensive they imitated from the Samnites—most of the ensigns of their magistracies they borrowed of the Tuscans. In a word, whatsoever they observed good and fitting, among their allies or their foes, they followed up with the greatest zeal at home. They chose to imitate, rather than envy, what was good. But in those days, after the fashion of the

Greeks, they punished citizens with stripes; they took the lives of condemned criminals. As the republic grew in size, and party strife arose among its multitudinous citizens, innocent persons were taken off under the pretext of the law, and many wrongful deeds were committed with impunity. Then was the Porcian Law enacted, with others of like tenor, permitting convicts to depart into exile. This I esteem, O Conscript Fathers, the first great cause wherefore this novel penalty be not established as a precedent. The wisdom and the valor of our ancestors who from a small beginning created this vast empire, were greater far than we, who scarcely can retain what they won so nobly. Would I have, therefore, you will ask, these men suffered to go at large, and so to augment the hosts of Catiline? Far from it. But I shall vote thus, that their property be confiscated, and they themselves detained in perpetual fetters, in those municipalities of Italy which are the wealthiest and the strongest. That the Senate never again consider their case, or bring their cause before the people—and that whosoever shall speak for them, be pronounced, of the Senate, an enemy to his country, and to the common good of all men."

This specious and artful oration, in which, while affecting to condemn what he dared not defend openly, he had more than insinuated a doubt of the legality of sentencing the traitors, was listened to by all present, with deep attention; and by the secret partizans of the conspiracy with joy and exultation. So sure did they esteem it that, in the teeth of this insidious argument, the Senate would not venture to inflict capital punishment on their friends, that they evinced their approbation by loud cheers; while many of the patrician party were shaken in their previous convictions; and many of those who perceived the fallacy of his sophistical reasoning, and detected his latent determination to screen the parricides of the state, felt the hazard and difficulty of proceeding as the exigencies of the case required.

Cicero's brow grew dark; as Silanus avowed openly that he had altered his opinion, and should vote for the motion of Tiberius Nero, to defer judgment.

Then Cicero himself arose, and in the noblest perhaps of all his orations, exerted himself strenuously to controvert

the arguments and abolish the evil influence of the noble demagogue.

He did not, indeed, openly urge the death of the traitors; but he dwelt with tremendous force on the atrocious nature of the crimes, and on the consequence of their success. He showed the fallacy of Cæsar's insinuation, that death was a less severe enactment than perpetual imprisonment. He pointed out the impossibility and injustice of compelling the municipalities to take charge of the prisoners—the insecurity of those towns, as places of detention—the almost entire certainty, that the men would ere long be released, either by some popular tumult, or some party measure; and he concluded with a forcible and earnest peroration, appealing to the Senators, by their love of life, of their families, of their country, to take counsel worthily of themselves, and of their common mother; entreating them to decree firmly, and promising that he would execute their sentence, be it what it might, fearlessly.

As he sat down, the order was agitated like a sea in the tumultuous calm, which succeeds to the wrath and riot created by a succession of gales blowing from different quarters. Murmurs of approbation and encouragement were mixed with groans and loud evidences of displeasure.

The passions of the great concourse were aroused thoroughly, and the debate waxed wild and stormy.

Senator arose after Senator, advocating some the death, some the banishment, and some, emboldened by Cæsar's remarks, even proposing the enlargement of the conspirators.

At length, when all arguments appeared to be exhausted, and no hope left of anything like an unanimous decision being adopted, Marcus Portius Cato arose from his seat, stern, grave, composed, and awful from the severe integrity of his grand character.

The turbulent assembly was calm in a moment. All eyes were fixed on the harsh features of the stoic; all ears hung rivetted in expectation, on his deep guttural intonations, and short vigorous sentences. It was evident, almost ere he began to speak, that his opinion would sway the votes of the order.

“My mind is greatly different,” he said, “Conscript Fathers, when I consider the perils of our case, and recall to

my memory the speeches of some whom I have heard to-day. Those Senators, it seems to me, have descanted on the punishment of the men who have levied war against their country and their parents, against their hearths and their altars. But the facts of the case require not punishment of their crimes, but defence from their assaults.—Other crimes you may punish after their commission—unless you prevent this from being done, when it is done, vainly shall ye ask for judgment. The city stormed, nothing remains to the vanquished. Now, in the name of the immortal Gods! I call upon you, *you* who have always set more store on your mansions, your farms, your statues and your pictures, than on the interests of the state, if you desire to retain these things, be they what they may, to which you cling so lovingly, if you desire to give yourselves leisure for your luxuries, arouse yourselves, now or never, and take up the commonwealth! It is no question now of taxes! No question of plundering our allies! The lives, the liberties of every one of us, are hanging on your doubtful decision. Oftentimes, Conscript Fathers, have I spoken at length in this assembly. Oftentimes have I inveighed against the luxury and avarice of our citizens, and, therefore, have I many men my enemies. I, who have never pardoned my own soul even for any trivial error, could not readily excuse in others the lusts which result in open criminality. But, although you neglected those crimes as matters of small moment, still the republic, by its stability and opulence, sustained the weight cast on it by your negligence. Now, however, we ask not whether we shall live, corrupt or virtuous; we ask not how we shall render Rome most great, and most magnificent; we ask this—whether we ourselves, and with ourselves all that we possess whatsoever, shall be yielded up to the enemy? Who here will speak to me of clemency and pity? Long, long ago have we cast away the true names of things; for now to be lavish of the goods of others is termed liberality; audacity in guilt is denominated valor. Into such extremity has the republic fallen. Let Senators, therefore, since such are their habitudes and morals, be liberal of the fortunes of our allies, be merciful to the pilferers of the treasury; but let them not be lavish in bestowing our blood upon them! Let them not, in pity for a few scoundrels,

send all good citizens to perdition. Caius Cæsar spoke a while since, eloquently and in set terms, in this house, concerning life and death; esteeming those things false, I presume, which are believed by most men of a future state that the wicked, I mean, journey on a different road from the righteous, and inhabit places aloof from them, dark horrid, waste, and fearful.

“He hath declared his intent, therefore, to vote for the confiscation of their property; and the detention of themselves in the borough towns in close custody. Fearing, forsooth, that if they be kept in Rome, they may be rescued forcibly, either by the confederates in their plot, or by a hireling rabble. Just as if there were only rogues and villains in this city, and none throughout all Italy.—Just as if audacity cannot effect the greatest things there, where the means of defence are the smallest. Wherefore his plan is absurd, if he fear peril from these men. And if he alone, in the midst of consternation so general, do not fear, the more need is there that you and I do fear them. Wherefore, when you vote on the fate of Publius Lentulus and the rest, hold this assured, that you are voting also on the fate of Catiline’s army, on the fate of the whole conspiracy. With the more energy you act, the more will their courage fail them. If they shall see you falter but a little, all at once they will fall on fiercely. Be far from believing that our ancestors raised this republic from a small state to a great empire, by dint of arms alone. Had it been so, much greater should we have rendered it, who have much greater force than they, of citizens and of allies, of arms and of horses. But there were other things which made them great, which we lack altogether. At home, industry, abroad justice! A mind free to take counsel, unbiassed by crime or passion. Instead of these things we possess luxury and avarice. Public need, private opulence. We praise wealth, and practice indolence. Between righteous and guilty we make no distinction. Ambition gains all the rewards of virtue. Nor is this strange, when separately every one of you takes counsel for himself alone. When at home, you are slaves to pleasure; here in the Senate house, to bribery or favor. Thence it arises that a general charge is made from all quarters against the helpless commonwealth.

“ But this I will pass over.

“ The noblest of our citizens have conspired to put the torch to the republic. They have called to their aid, in open war, the Gallic nation most hostile to the name of Roman. The chief of your enemy is thundering above your very heads; and are you hesitating even now what you shall do with enemies taken within your very walls?— Oh! you had better pity them, I think—the poor young men have only erred a little, misled by ambition—you had better send them away in arms! I swear that, should they once take those arms, that clemency and mercifulness of yours will be changed into woe and wailing. Forsooth, it is a desperate crisis; and yet you fear it not. Yea, by the Gods! but you do fear it vehemently. Yet, in your indolence and feebleness of mind, waiting the one upon the other, you hesitate, relying, I presume, on the protection of the Immortals, who have so many times preserved this republic in its greatest dangers. The aid of the Gods is not gained by prayers or womanish supplication. To those who watch, who act, who take counsel, wisely, all things turn out successful. Yield yourselves up to idleness and sloth, and in vain you shall implore the Gods—they are irate and hostile.

“ In the time of our forefathers, Titus Manlius Torquatus during the Gallic war commanded his own son to be slain, because he had fought against orders; and that illustrious youth suffered the penalty of his immoderate valor.—Do ye know this, and delay what ye shall decide against the cruellest parricides? Is it forsooth that the lives of these men are in their character repugnant to this guilt.— Oh! spare the dignity of Lentulus, if he have ever spared his own modesty, his own good report; if he have ever spared any man or any God! Oh! pardon the youth of Cethegus, if this be not the second time that he has waged war on his country. For wherefore should I speak of Gabinius, Statilius or Cæparius?—who if they ever felt any care for the republic, would never have taken these councils. To conclude, Conscript Fathers, if there were any space for a mistake, I would leave you right willingly, by Hercules, to be corrected by facts, since you will not be warned by words! But we are hemmed in on all sides. Catiline with his army is at our very throats—others of our foes are within our walls

in the bosom of the state. Nothing can be prepared, nor any counsel taken, so privately but they must know it.—Wherefore I shall vote thus, seeing that the republic is plunged into most fearful peril by the guilty plot of atrocious citizens, seeing that these men are convicted on the evidence of Titus Volturcius, and of the ambassadors of the Allobroges, and seeing that they have confessed the intent of murder, conflagration, and other foul and barbarous crimes, against their fellow citizens and native country—I shall vote, I say, that execution, according to the custom of our ancestors, be done upon them having thus confessed, as upon men manifestly convicted of capital treason.”

The stern voice ceased. The bitter irony, which had stung so many souls to the quick, the cutting sarcasm, which had demolished Cæsar’s sophistry, the clear reasoning, which had so manifestly found the heart of the mystery, were silent. And, folding his narrow toga closely about him, the severe patriot resumed his seat, he alone unexcited and impassive.

But his words had done their work. The guilty were smitten into silence; even the daring eloquence and high heart of the ambitious Cæsar, were subdued and mute.—The friends of their country were encouraged to shake off their apathy.

With one voice, unanimous, the consulars of Rome cried out for the question, applauding loudly the energy and fearlessness of Cato, and accusing one another of timidity and weakness.

A great majority of the Senate, likewise, exclaimed aloud that they required no more words, but were prepared to vote.

And convinced that the time had arrived for striking, Cicero put it to the vote, according to the regular form, requiring those who thought with Marcus Porcius Cato, to pass over to the right of the curule chair.

The question was not in doubt a moment; for above three-fourths of the whole body arose, as a single man, and passed over to the right of the chair, and gathered about the seat of Cato; while very few joined themselves openly to Julius Cæsar, who sat, somewhat crest-fallen and scarcely able to conceal his disappointment, immediately on the left of the consul.

Rallying, however, before the vote of the Senate had been taken, the factious noble sprang to his feet and loudly called upon the tribunes in general, and upon Lucius Bestia, in particular, a private friend of Catiline, and understood by all to be one of the conspirators, to interpose their VETO.

That was too much, however, even for tribunician daring. No answer was made from the benches of the popular magistrates, for once awed into patriotic silence.

But a low sneering laugh ran through the crowded ranks of the Patricians, and the vote was taken, now nearly unanimous; for many men disgusted by that last step, who had believed the measure to be unconstitutional, passed across openly from Cæsar's side to that of Cato.

A decree of the Senate was framed forthwith, and committed to writing by the persons appointed, in presence of Marcus Porcius Cato and Decius Julius Silanus, as authorities or witnesses of the act, empowering the consul to see execution done upon the guilty, where and when it should to him seem fitting.

Thus was it that Cicero and Cato for a while saved the commonwealth, and checked the future Dictator in his first efforts to subvert the liberties of Rome, happy for him and for his country if it had been his last.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TULLIANUM.

To be, or not be, that is the question.

HAMLET.

NIGHT was at hand.

The Roman Senate might not sit after the sun had set.

Although the Tribunes had failed, in the consternation of the moment, to respond to the call of Cæsar, there was no doubt, that, if one night should intervene, those miscalled magistrates would check the course of justice.

Confined, apart one from the other, in free custody, the traitors had not failed to learn all that was passing, almost ere it passed.

Their hopes had been high, when the rabble were alert and thundering at the prison gates—nor when the charge of the knights had beaten back the multitude, did they despair; for simultaneously with those evil tidings, they learned the effect of Cæsar's speech; and shortly afterward the news reached them that Cicero's reply had found few willing auditors.

Confined, apart one from the other, they had eaten and drunken, and their hearts were ("jocund and sublime"; the eloquence of Cæsar, the turbulence of the tribunes, were their predominant ideas. Confined, apart one from the other, one thought was common to them all,—immediate liberation, speedy vengeance.

And, in truth, immediate was the liberation; speedy the vengeance.

Night was at hand.

The Triumvirs, whose duty it was to superintend all capital punishments—a thing almost unknown in Rome—had been instructed to prepare whatever should be needful.

Lentulus sat alone in an inner chamber of the house of Publius Lentulus Spintherus, an Ædile at that time. There was, it is true, a guard at the door, and clients under arms in the atrium; but in his own apartment the proud conspirator was still master of himself indeed, soon to be master of Rome, in his own frantic fantasy.

Bright lights were burning in bronze candelabra; rich wines were before him; his own favorite freedman leaned on the back of his ivory arm chair, and jested lightly on the discomfiture of *noble* Cicero, on the sure triumph of *democratic* Cæsar.

“Fill up the glass again, my Phormio,” cried the exhilarated parricide; “this namesake of my own hath good wine, at the least—we may not taste it again shortly—fill up, I say; and do not spare to brim your own. What if our boys were beaten in the streets to-day. Brave Cæsar was not beaten in the Senate.”

“By Hercules! no!” cried the wily Greek, base inheritor of a superb name—“and if he had been checked, there are the tribunes.”

“But he was *not* checked, Phormio?” asked the conspirator in evident anxiety.

“By your head, no! You shall yet be the **THIRD CORNELIUS!**”—

“**WHO SHALL RULE ROME!**”—

The door of the small room was suddenly thrown open, and the tall form of Cicero stood in the shadow of the entrance. The gleam of the lamps fell full on his white robes, and glittered on his ivory sceptre; but behind him it showed the grim dark features of the Capital Triumvirs, and flickered on the axe-heads of the lictors.

The glass fell from the hand of Lentulus, the wine untasted; and so deep was the silence of that awful moment, that the gurgling of the liquor as it trickled from the shattered fragments of the crystal goblet, was distinctly audible.

There was a silent pause—no word, no motion followed

the entrance of the Consul. Face to face, he stood with the deadliest of his foes, Catiline absent. Face to face, he stood with his overthrown and subdued enemy. And yet on his broad tranquil brow there was no frown of hatred; on his calm lip there there was no curl of gratified resentment, of high triumph.

Raising his hand, with a slow but very solemn gesture, he uttered in his deep harmonious accents, accents which at that moment spoke in almost an unnatural cadence, this one word—

“Come.”

And calm, and proud, as the Consul, the degraded Senator, the fallen Consul replied, with a question,

“To death, Consul?”

“Come!”

“Give me my toga, Phormio.”

And robing himself, with an air as quiet and an expression as unconcerned as if he had been setting forth to a banquet, the proud Epicurean gazed with a calmer eye upon the Consul, than that good man could fix upon his victim.

“This signet to Sempronia—that sword to—no! no!—this purse to thyself, Phormio! Consul, precede. I follow.”

And the step of the convicted Traitor, as he descended from the portico, of that mansion, for the last time, was firmer, statelier, prouder, than that of his conductor.

The streets were thronged—the windows crowded—the housetops heaped—with glaring mute spectators.

Some twenty knights, no more, unarmed, with the exception of their swords, composed the Consul’s escort. Lentulus knew them, man by man, had drunk with them, played with them, lent money to them, borrowed of them.

He looked upon them.

They were the handful leading him to death! What made them break the ties which bound them to their brother noble? What made them forget mutual pleasures enjoyed, mutual perils incurred, mutual benefits accepted?

They were the nobles, true to their order.

He looked upon the thronged streets—upon the crowded windows—upon the heaped housetops, he saw myriads, myriads who had fed on his bounty, encouraged his infa-

my, hoped from his atrocity, urged him to his crime, myriads who now frowned upon him—cursed him—howled at him—or—more cowardly—were silent. Myriads, who might have saved him, and did not.

Wherefore ?

They were the people, false to their leader.

He looked from the handful to the myriad—and shook himself, as a lion in his wrath ; and stamped the dust from his sandals.

Cicero saw the movement, and read its meaning. He met the glance, not humiliated, but prouder for the mob's reprobation ; and said, what he would not have said had the glance been conscious—

“Thou seest!—Hearest!”

“The voice of the People!” answered the traitor with a bitter sneer.

“The voice of God!” replied the Consul, looking upward.

“That voice of God shall shout for joy at thy head on the rostrum! Such is the fate of all who would serve the people!”

The eloquent tongue, stabbed with the harlot's bodkin, the head and the hand, nailed on the beaked column in after days, showed which best knew the people, their savior, or their parricide.

There is a place in Rome—there *is* a place—reader, thou mayest have seen it—on the right hand as thou goest up the steps of the Asylum ascending from the forum to the capitol.

“There *is* a place,” wrote Sallust, some nineteen hundred years ago—“There *is* a place, within the prison, which is called Tullianum, after you have ascended a little way to the left, about twelve feet underground. It is built strongly with walls on every side, and arched above with a stone vaulting. But its aspect is foul and terrible from neglect, darkness, and stench.”

It is there *now*—thou mayest have seen it, reader. Men call it the Mamertine Prison. It was then called Tullianum, because it was so antique at that time, that vague tradition only told of its origin long centuries before, built by the fabulous King Tullius.

The Tullianum—The Mamertine Prison.

The *bath*, which Jugurtha found very cold, when the earrings had been torn from his bleeding ears, and, stript of his last vestment, he was let down to die by the hangman's noose.

The prison, in which, scarce one century later, Saint Paul was held in durance, what time "Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, had he not appealed unto *Cæsar*."

Unto *Cæsar*?

Cæsar the third Emperor, the third tyrant of the Roman people.

Lentulus *had* appealed unto *Cæsar*, and was cast likewise into the Tullianum.

The voice of the people, is the voice of God.

Whether of the twain slew Lentulus? whether of the twain set free Paul, from the Tullianum?

In those days, there was a tall and massive structure above that sordid and tremendous vault, on the right hand as you go up towards the capitol.

The steps of the asylum were lined on either side by legionaries in full armor; and as the Consul walked up with his victim, side by side, each soldier faced about, and, by a simple movement, doubling their files, occupied the whole space of the steep ascent with a solid column; while all the heights above, and the great capitol itself, bristled with spears, and flashed with tawny light from the dense ranks of brazen corslets.

The Capital Triumvirs received the Consul at the door; and with his prisoner he passed inward.

It was in perfect keeping with the Roman character, that a man, hopeless of success, should die without an effort; and to the fullest, Lentulus acted out that character.

Impassive and unmoved, he went to his death. He disgraced his *evil* life by no cowardice in death; by no fruitless call upon the people for assistance, by no vain cry to the nobles for mercy.

But it was the impassibility of the Epicurean, not of the Stoic, that sustained him.

He went to die, like his brother democrats of France, with the madness of Atheism in his heart, the mirth of Perdition on his tongue.

They two, the Convict and the Consul, ascended a little,

two or three steps, to the left, and entered a large apartment, paved, walled, and roofed with stone; but in the centre of the floor there was a small round aperture.

There were a dozen persons in that guard-room, four of whom were his fellow-traitors—Gabinius, Statilius, Cæparius, and Cethegus—two prætors, four legionaries, and two Moorish slaves composed the group, until with the Triumvirs, and his twelve lictors, Cicero entered.

“Ha! my Cæparius!” exclaimed Lentulus, who had not seen him since the morning of his arrest. “We have met again. But I slept my sleep out. Thou might’st as well have slept too; for we are both met here”—

“To die! to die! Great Gods! to die!” cried Cæparius utterly overcome, and almost fainting with despair.

“Great Gods indeed!” replied Lentulus with his accustomed half-sardonic, half-indolent sneer. “They must be great, indeed, to let such a puppet as that,” and he pointed to Cicero, as he spoke, “do as he will with us. To die! to die! Tush—what is that but to sleep? to sleep without the trouble of awaking, or the annoyance of to-morrow? What sayest thou, my Cethegus?”

“That thou art a sluggard, a fool, and a coward; curses! curses! curses upon thee!” And he made an effort to rush against his comrade, as if to strike him; and, when the guards seized him and dragged him back, he shook his fist at Cicero, and gnashed his teeth, and howling out, “Thou too! thou too shalt die proscribed, and thy country’s foe!” by a sudden effort cast off the men who held him, and crying, “Slaves and dastards, see how a Roman noble dies,” rushed, with his head down, at the solid wall, as a buffalo rushes blindly against an elephant.

He fell as if he were dead, the blood gushing from eyes, nose, and mouth, and lay senseless.

Lentulus thought he was killed, gazed on him for a moment tranquilly, and then said with a quiet laugh—

“He was a fool always—a rash fool!” Then turning to Cicero, he added—“By Hercules! this is slow work. I am exceeding hungry, and somewhat dry; and, as I fancy I shall eat nothing more to-day, nor drink, I would fain go to sleep.”

“Would’st thou drink, Lentulus?” asked one of the Triumvirs.

“Would I not, had I wine?”

“Bring wine,” said the magistrate to one of the Moorish slaves; who went out and returned in an instant with a large brazen platter supporting several goblets.

Lentulus seized one quickly, and swallowed it at a mouthful—there is a hot thirst in that last excitement—but as the flavor reached his palate, when the roughness of the harsh draught had passed away, he flung the cup down scornfully and said,

“Finish it! Take this filthy taste from my lips! Let me rest!”

And with the words, he advanced to the Moors who stood beside the well-like aperture, and without a word suffered them to place the rope under his arms, and lower him into the pit.

Just as his head, however, was disappearing, he cast his eyes upward, and met the earnest gaze of the Consul.

“The voice of the people! the man of the people!” he cried sarcastically. “Fool! fool! *they* shall avenge me! Think upon me near Formiæ!”

Was that spite, or a prophecy?

The eyes of the dying sometimes look far into futurity.

The haughty traitor was beyond the sight, before his words had ceased to ring in the ears of the spectators.

There was a small low sound heard from below—not a groan, not a struggle—but a rustle, a sob, a flutter—silence.

‘So did* that Patrician, of the most noble house of the Cornelii, who once held consular dominion in Rome, meet his end, merited by his course of life, and his overt actions.’

Cethegus perished senseless, half dead by his own deed.

Cæparius died sullen; Gabinius weak and almost fainting; Statilius struggling and howling. All by a hard and slavish death, strangled by the base noose of a foreign hangman.

An hour afterward, their corpses were hurled down the Gemonian Stairs, among the shouts and acclamations of the drunken slavish rabble.

An hour afterward, Cicero stood on the rostrum, near the Libonian well—that rostrum whereon, at a later day

* Sallust.

Lentulus' prophecy was fulfilled—and called out, in a voice as solemn and almost as deep as thunder,

“THEY WERE!”

And the voice of the people yelled out its joy, because they *were* no longer; and hailed their slayer the Savior and Father of his country.

A few years afterward, how did they not hail Anthony?

CHAPTER XV.

THE CAMP IN THE APPENNINES.

With that he gave his able horse the head.

HENRY IV.

THERE is a wild gorge in the very summit of the Appennines, not quite midway between Florence and Pistoia, the waters of which, shed in different directions, flow on the one hand tributaries to the Po, and on the other to the Arno, swelling the Adriatic, and the Mediterranean seas.

The mountains rise abruptly in bare crags, covered here and there by a low growth of myrtle and wild olives, on either hand this gorge, quite inaccessible to any large array of armed men, though capable of being traversed by solitary foresters or shepherds. Below, the hills fall downward in a succession of vast broken ridges, in places rocky and almost perpendicular, in places swelling into rounded knolls, feathered with dark rich forests of holm oak and chesnut.

In the highest part of this gorge, where it spreads out into a little plain, perched like the eyry of some ravenous bird of prey, the camp of Catiline was pitched, on the second evening after the execution of his comrades.

Selected with rare judgment, commanding all the lower country, and the descent on one hand into the Val d'Arno and thence to Rome, on the other into the plain of the Po and thence into Cisalpine Gaul, the whole of which was ripe for insurrection, that camp secured to him an advance

upon the city, should his friends prove successful, or a retreat into regions where he could raise new levies in case of their failure.

A Roman camp was little less than a regular fortification, being formed mostly in an oblong square, with a broad ditch and earthen ramparts garnished by a stockade, with wooden towers at the gates, one of which pierced each side of the intrenchment.

And to such a degree of perfection and celerity had long experience and the most rigid discipline brought the legions, that it required an incredibly short time to prepare such a camp for any number of men; a thing which never was omitted to be done nightly even during the most arduous marches and in the face of an enemy.

Catiline was too able and too old a soldier to neglect such precaution under any circumstances; and assuredly he would not have done so now, when the consul Antonius lay with two veteran legions within twenty miles distance in the low country east of Florence, while Quintus Metellus Celer, at the head of a yet larger force, was in the Picene district on his rear, and not so far off but he might have attempted to strike a blow at him.

His camp, capable of containing two full legions, the number of which he had completed, all free-born men and Roman citizens, for he had refused the slaves who flocked at first to his standard in great force, was perfectly defended, and provided with all the usual tents and divisions; so that every cohort, manipule, and century, nay every man, knew his own station.

The sun had just sunk beneath the horizon and the night watches had been set by sound of trumpets, the horsemen had been appointed for the rounds, and an outpost of light-armed soldiers pushed forward in front of all the gates.

There was a rosy tinge still lingering in the sky, and a few slant rays were shot through the gaps in the mountain ridge, gilding the evergreen foliage of the holm-oaks with bright lustre, and warming the cold grey stones which cumbered the sides and summits of the giant hills; but all the level country at their feet was covered with deep purple shadow.

Catiline sat alone in his *prætorium*, as the general's pavilion was entitled, situated on a little knoll nearly in the

centre of the camp between the tents of the tribunes, and the quarters of the extraordinary horse.

He was completely armed, all but his head, and wore a rich scarlet cloak above his panoply, his helmet and buckler lying upon the ground beside him in easy reach of his hand. A pen was in his fingers, and a sheet of parchment was stretched on the board before him; but he was not writing, although there were several lines scrawled on it in a bold coarse hand.

His face was paler and more livid than usual, and his frame thinner, almost indeed emaciated, yet every sinew and muscle was hard as tempered steel.

But now there was a strange expression in his features; it was not doubt nor hesitation, much less fear; and consisted perhaps rather in the absence of his wonted characteristics, the unquiet and quick changes, the passionate restlessness, the fell deadly sneer, and the blighting flash of the dark eye, than in any token of peculiar meaning.—There was a cold and almost vacant expression in his gaze; and an impassive calmness in all his lineaments, that were in singular contrast with the character of the man; and he sat, a thing most unusual for him, perfectly motionless, buried in deep thought.

The night was very cold, and, without, a heavy hoar frost was falling; so that a fire of charcoal had been kindled in a bronze brazier, and as the light of the sky died away strange lurid gleams and fantastic shadows rose and fell, upon the walls of the large tent, rendered more fickle and grotesque by the wavering of the canvass in the gusty night air. There was wine with several goblets upon the board, at which he sat, with his eyes fixed straight before him; and at his elbow there stood a tall brazen tripod supporting a large lamp with several burners; but none of these were lighted, and, but for the fitful glare of the charcoal, the tent would have been completely dark.

Still he called not to any slave, nor appeared to observe the growing obscurity, but sat gloomily pondering—on what?

Once or twice he drew his hand across his eyes, and then glared still more fixedly upon the dark and waving shadows, as if he saw something more than common in their uncertain outlines.

Suddenly he spoke, in a hoarse altered voice—"This is strange," he said, "very strange! Now, were I one of these weak fools who believe in omens, I should shake. But tush! tush! how should there be omens? for who should send them? there must be Gods, to have omens! and that is too absurd for credence! Gods! Gods!" he repeated half dubiously—"Yet, if there should—ha! ha! art thou turned dotard, Catiline? There are *no* Gods, or why sleep their thunders? Aye! there it is again," he added, gazing on vacancy. "By my right hand! it is very strange! three times last night, the first time when the watch was set, and twice afterward I saw him! And three times again to-night, since the trumpet was blown. Lentulus, with his lips distorted, his face black and full of blood, his eyes starting from their sockets, like a man strangled! and he beckoned me with his pale hand! I saw him, yet so shadowy and so transparent, that I might mark the waving of the canvass through his figure!—But tush! tush! it is but a trick of the fancy. I am worn out with this daily marching; and the body's fatigue hath made the mind weak and weary. And it is dull here too, no dice, no women, and no revelling. I will take some wine," he added, starting up and quaffing two or three goblets' full in quick succession, "my blood is thin and cold, and wants warming. Ha! that is better—It is right old Setinian too; I marvel whence Manlius had it." Then he rose from his seat, and began to stride about the room impatiently. After a moment or two he dashed his hand fiercely against his brow, and cried in a voice full of anguish and perturbation, "Tidings! tidings! I would give half the world for tidings! Curses! curses upon it! that I began this game at all, or had not brave colleagues! It is time! can it be that their hearts have failed them? that they have feared or delayed to strike, or have been overthrown, detected?—Tidings, tidings! By Hades! I must have tidings! What ho!" he exclaimed, raising his voice to a higher pitch, "Ho, I say, ho! Chærea!"

And from an outer compartment of the tent the Greek freedman entered, bearing a lighted lamp in his hand.

"Chærea, summon Manlius hither, and leave the lamp, have been long in the darkness!"

"Wert sleeping, Catiline?"

“Sleeping!” exclaimed the traitor, with a savage cry, hoarse as the roar of a wounded lion—“sleeping, thou idiot! Do men sleep on volcanoes? Do men sleep in the crisis of their fortunes? I have not slept these six nights. Get thee gone! summon Manlius!” and then, as the freedman left the room, he added; “perchance I shall sleep no more until—I sleep for ever! I would I could sleep, and not see those faces; they never troubled me till now. I would I knew if *that* sleep is dreamless. If it were so—perhaps, perhaps! but no! no! By all the Furies! no! until my foot hath trodden on the neck of Cicero.”

As he spoke, Manlius entered the room, a tall dark sinister-looking scar-seamed veteran, equipped in splendid armor, of which the helmet alone was visible, so closely was he wrapped against the cold in a huge shaggy watch-cloak.

As his subordinate appeared, every trace of the conflict which had been in progress within him vanished, and his brow became as impassive, his eye as hard and keen as its wont.

“Welcome, my Caius,” he exclaimed. “Look you, we have present need of council. The blow must be stricken before this in Rome, or must have failed altogether. If it have been stricken, we should be nearer Rome to profit by it—if it have failed, we must destroy Antonius’ army, before Metellus join him. I doubt not he is marching hitherward even now. Besides, we must, we *must* have tidings—we *must* know all, and all truly!”

Then, seeing that Manlius doubted, “Look you,” he continued. “Let us march at daybreak to-morrow upon Fæsulæ, leaving Antonius in the plain on our right. Marching along the crest of the hills, he cannot assail our flank. We can outstrip him too, and reach Arretium ere the second sunset. He, thinking we have surely tidings from our friends in the city, will follow in disordered haste; and should we have bad news, doubling upon him on a sudden we may overpower him at one blow. It is a sure scheme either way—think’st thou not so, good friend? nay more, it is the only one.”

“I think so, Sergius,” he replied. “In very deed I think so. Forage too is becoming scarce in the camp, and the baggage horses are dying. The men are murmuring also

for want of the pleasures, the carouses, and the women of the cities. They will regain their spirits in an hour, when they shall hear of the march upon Rome."

"I prithee, let them hear it, then, my Caius; and that presently. Give orders to the tribunes and centurions to have the tents struck, and the baggage loaded in the first hour of the last night-watch. We will advance at—ha!" he exclaimed, interrupting himself suddenly, and listening with eager attention. "There is a horse tramp crossing from the gates. By the Gods! news from Rome! Tarry with me, until we hear it."

Within five minutes, Chærea re-entered the tent, introducing a man dressed and armed as a light-horseman, covered with mudstains, travelworn, bending with fatigue, and shivering with cold, the hoar-frost hanging white upon his eyebrows and beard.

"From Rome, good fellow?" Catiline inquired quickly. "From Rome, Catiline!" replied the other, "bearing a letter from the noble Lentulus."

"Give—give it quick!" and with the word he snatched the scroll from the man's hand, tore it violently open, and read aloud as follows.

"Who I may be, you will learn from the bearer. All things go bravely. The ambassadors have lost their suit, but we have won ours. They return home to-morrow, by the Flaminian way, one Titus of Crotona guiding them, who shall explain to you our thoughts and hopes—but, of this doubt not, thoughts shall be deeds, and hopes success, before this hour to-morrow."

"By all the Gods!" cried Catiline with a shout of joy. "Ere this time all is won! Cicero, Cicero, I have triumphed, and thou, mine enemy, art nothing;" then turning to the messenger, he asked, "When didst leave Rome, with these joyous tidings? when sawest the noble Lentulus?"

"On the fourth* day before the nones, at sunset."

"And we are now in the sixth† before the Ides. Thou hast loitered on the way, Sirrah."

"I was compelled to quit my road, Catiline, and to lie hid four days among the hills to avoid a troop of horse

* The second of December. † The eighth of December.

which pursued me, seeing that I was armed; an advanced guard, I think, of Antonius' army."

"Thou didst well. Get thee gone, and bid them supply thy wants. Eat, drink, and sleep—we march upon Rome at day-break to-morrow."

The man left the apartment, and looking to Manlius with a flushed cheek and exulting aspect, Catiline exclaimed,

"Murmuring for pleasure, and for women, are they? Tell them, good friend, they shall have all the gold of Rome for their pleasure, and all its patrician dames for their women. Stir up their souls, my Manlius, kindle their blood with it matters not what fire! See to it, my good comrade, I am weary, and will lay me down, I can sleep after these good tidings."

But it was not destined that he should sleep so soon.

He had thrown himself again into a chair, and filled himself a brimming goblet of the rich wine, when he repeated to himself in a half musing tone—

"Murmuring for their women? ha!—By Venus! I cannot blame the knaves. It is dull work enough without the darlings. By Hercules! I would Aurelia were here; or that jade Lucia! Pestilent handsome was she, and then so furious and so fiery! By the Gods! were she here, I would bestow one caress on her at the least, before she died, as die she shall, in torture by my hand! Curses on her, she has thwarted, defied, foiled me! By every fiend and Fury! ill shall she perish, were she ten times my daughter!"

Again there was a bustle without the entrance of the pavilion, and again Chærea introduced a messenger.

It was Niger, one of the swordsmith's men. Catiline recognized him in an instant.

"Ha! Niger, my good lad, from Caius Crispus, ha?"—

"From Caius Crispus, praying succor, and that swift, lest it be too late."

"Succor against whom? succor where, and wherefore?"

"Against a century of Antonius' foot. They came upon us unawares, killed forty of our men, and drove the stout smith for shelter into a ruined watch-tower, on the hill above the cataract, near to Usella, which happily afforded him a shelter. They have besieged us there these two days; but cannot storm us until our arrows fail, or

they bring up engines. But our food is finished, and our wine wakes low, and Julia"—

"Who? Julia?" shouted Catiline, scarce able to believe his ears, and springing from his chair in rapturous agitation—"By your life! speak! what Julia?"—

"Hortensia's daughter, whom"—

"Enough! enough! Chærea"—he scrawled a few words on a strip of parchment—"this to Terentius the captain of my guard. Three hundred select horsemen to be in arms and mounted within half an hour. Let them take torches, and a guide for Usella. Saddle the black horse Erebus. Get me some food and a watch-cloak. Get thee away. Now tell me all, good fellow."

The man stated rapidly, but circumstantially, all that he knew of the occurrences of Julia's seizure, of the capture of Aulus, and of their journey; and then, his eyes gleaming with the fierce blaze of excited passion and triumphant hatred, Catiline cross-questioned him concerning the unhappy girl. Had she been brought thus far safely and with unblemished honor? Had she suffered from hunger or fatigue? Had her beauty been impaired by privation?

And, having received satisfactory replies to all his queries, he gave himself up to transports of exultation, such as his own most confidential freedman never before had witnessed.

Dismissing the messenger, he strode to and fro the hut, tossing his arms aloft and bursting into paroxysms of fierce laughter.

"Ha! ha! too much!—it is too much for one night! Ha! ha! ha! ha! Love, hatred, passion, triumph, rage, revenge, ambition, all, all gratified! Ha! ha! Soft, gentle Julia—proud, virtuous one that did despise me, thou shalt writhe for it—from thy soul shalt thou bleed for it! Ha! ha! Arvina—liar! fool! perjurer! but this will wring thee worse than Ixion's wheel, or whips of scorpions!—Ha! ha! Cicero! Cicero!—No! no! Chærea. There are no Gods! no Gods who guard the innocent! no Gods who smile on virtue! no gods! I say, no Gods! no Gods, Chærea!"—

But, as he spoke, there burst close over head an appa!

ing crash of thunder, accompanied by a flash of lightning so vivid and pervading that the whole tent seemed to be on fire. The terrified Greek fell to the earth, stunned and dazzled; but the audacious and insane blasphemer, tossing his arms and lifting his front proudly, exclaimed with his cynical sneer, "If ye be Gods! strike! strike! I defy your vain noise! your harmless thunder!"

For ten minutes or more, blaze succeeded blaze, and crash followed crash, with such tremendous rapidity, that the whole heavens, nay, the whole atmosphere, appeared incandescent with white, sulphureous, omnipresent fire; and that the roar of the volleyed thunder was continuous and incessant.

Still the fierce traitor blenched not. Crime and success had maddened him. His heart was hardened, his head frenzied, to his own destruction.

But the winter storm in the mountains was as brief as it was sudden, and tremendous; and it ceased as abruptly as it broke out unexpectedly. A tempest of hail came pelting down, the grape-shot as it were of that heavenly artillery, scourging the earth with furious force during ten minutes more; and then the night was as serene and tranquil as it had been before that elemental uproar.

As the last flash of lightning flickered faintly away, and the last thunder roll died out in the sky, Catiline stirred the freedman with his foot.

"Get up, thou coward fool. Did I not tell thee that there are no Gods? lo! you now! for what should they have roused this trumpery pother, if not to strike me? Tush, man, I say, get up!"

"Is it thou, Sergius Catiline?" asked the Greek, scarce daring to raise his head from the ground. "Did not the bolt annihilate thee? art thou not indeed dead?"—

"Judge if I be dead, fool, by this, and this, and this!"—

And, with each word, he kicked and trampled on the grovelling wretch with such savage violence and fury, that he bellowed and howled for mercy, and was scarce able to creep out of the apartment, when he ceased stamping upon him, and ordered him to begone speedily and bring his charger.

Ere many minutes had elapsed, the traitor was on horseback.

And issuing from the gates of his camp into the calm and starry night, he drove, with his escort at his heels, with the impetuosity and din of a whirlwind, waking the mountain echoes by the clang of the thundering hoofs, and the clash of the brazen armor and steel scabbards, down the steep defile toward Usella.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WATCHTOWER OF USELLA.

Our castle's strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn.

MACBETH.

THE watchtower in which Caius Crispus and his gang had taken refuge from the legionaries, was one of those small isolated structures, many of which had been perched in the olden time on the summits of the jutting crags, or in the passes of the Appennines, but most of which had fallen long before into utter ruin.

Some had been destroyed in the border wars of the innumerable petty tribes, which, ere the Romans became masters of the peninsula, divided among themselves that portion of Italy, and held it in continual turmoil with their incessant wars and forays.

Some had mouldered away, by the slow hand of ruthless time; and yet more had been pulled down for the sake of their materials, which now filled a more useful if less glorious station, in the enclosures of tilled fields, and the walls of rustic dwellings.

From such a fate the watchtower of Usella had been saved by several accidents. Its natural and artificial strength had prevented its sack or storm during the earlier period of its existence—the difficulty of approaching it had saved its solid masonry from the cupidity of the rural proprietors—and, yet more, its formidable situation, commanding one of the great hill passes into Cisalpine Gaul, had induced the Roman government to retain it in use, as

a fortified post, so long as their Gallic neighbors were half subdued only, and capable of giving them trouble by their tumultuous incursions.

Although it had consisted, therefore, in the first instance, of little more than a rude circular tower of that architecture called Cyclopean, additions had been made to it by the Romans of a strong brick wall with a parapet, enclosing a space of about a hundred feet in diameter, accessible only by a single gateway, with a steep and narrow path leading to it, and thoroughly commanded by the tower itself.

In front, this wall was founded on a rough craggy bank of some thirty feet in height, rising from the main road traversing the defile, by which alone it could be approached; for, on the right and left, the rocks had been scarped artificially; and, in the rear, there was a natural gorge through which a narrow but impetuous torrent raved, between precipices a hundred feet in depth, although an arch of twenty foot span would have crossed the ravine with ease.

Against the wall at this point, on the inner side, the Romans had constructed a small barrack with three apartments, each of which had a narrow window overlooking the bed of the torrent, no danger being apprehended from that quarter.

Such was the place into which Crispus had retreated, under the guidance of one of the Etruscan conspirators, after the attack of the Roman infantry; and, having succeeded in reaching it by aid of their horses half an hour before their pursuers came up, they had contrived to barricade the gateway solidly with some felled pine trees; and had even managed to bring in with them a yoke of oxen and a mule laden with wine, which they had seized from the peasants in the street of the little village of Usella, as they galloped through it, goading their blown and weary animals to the top of their speed.

It was singularly characteristic of the brutal pertinacity, and perhaps of the sagacity also, of Caius Crispus, that nothing could induce him to release the miserable Julia, who was but an incumbrance to their flight, and a hindrance to their defence.

To all her entreaties, and promises of safety from his

captors, and reward from her friends, if he would release her, he had replied only with a sneer; saying that he would ensure his own safety at an obolus' fee, and that, for his reward, he would trust noble Catiline.

"For the rest," he added, "imagine not that you shall escape, to rejoice the heart of that slave Arvina. No! minion, no! We will fight 'till our flesh be hacked from our bones, ere they shall make their way in hither; and if they do so, they shall find thee—dead and dishonored! Pray, therefore, if thou be wise, for our success."

Such might in part indeed have been his reasoning; for he was cruel and licentious, as well as reckless and audacious; but it is probable that, knowing himself to be in the vicinity of Catiline's army, he calculated on finding some method of conveying to him information of the prize that lay within his grasp, and so of securing both rescue and reward.

If he had not, however, in the first instance thought of this, it was not long ere it occurred to him; when he at once proceeded to put it into execution.

Within half an hour of the entrance of the little party into this semi-ruinous strong-hold, the legionary foot came up, about a hundred and fifty men in number, but without scaling ladders, artillery, or engines.

Elated by their success, however, they immediately formed what was called the *tortoise*, by raising their shields and overlapping the edges of them above their heads, in such a manner as to make a complete penthouse, which might defend them from the missiles of the besieged; and, under cover of this, they rushed forward dauntlessly, to cut down the palisade with their hooks and axes.

In this they would have probably succeeded, for the arrows and ordinary missiles of the defenders rebounded and rolled down innocuous from the tough brass-bound bull-hides; and the rebels were already well nigh in despair, when Caius Crispus, who had been playing his part gallantly at the barricade, and had stabbed two or three of the legionaries with his pilum, in hand to hand encounter, through the apertures of the grating, rushed up to the battlements, covered with blood and dust, and shouting—

"Ho! by Hercules! this will never do, friends. Give me yon crow-bar—So! take levers, all of you, and axes!

We must roll down the coping on their heads,"—applied his own skill and vast personal strength to the task. In an instant the levers were fixed, and grasping his crow-bar with gigantic energy, he set up his favorite chaunt, as cheerily as he had done of old in his smithy on the Sacred Way—

“Ply, ply, my boys, now ply the lever!
Heave at it, heave at it, all! Together!
Great Mars, the war God, watches ye laboring
Joyously. Joyous watches”—

But his words were cut short by a thundering crash; for, animated by his untamed spirit, his fellows had heaved with such a will at the long line of freestone coping, that, after tottering for a few seconds, and reeling to and fro, it all rushed down with the speed and havoc of an avalanche, drowning all human sounds with the exception of one piercing yell of anguish, which rose clear above the confused roar and clatter.

“Ho! by the Thunderer! we have smashed them beneath their tortoise, like an egg in its shell! Now ply your bows, brave boys! now hurl your javelins! Well shot! well shot indeed, my Niger! You hit that high-crested centurion full in the mouth, as he called on them to rally, and nailed his tongue to his jaws. Give me another pilum, Rufus! This,” he continued, as he poised and launched it hurtling through the air, “This to the ensign-bearer!” And, scarce was the word said, ere the ponderous missile alighted on his extended shield, pierced its tough fourfold bull-hide, as if it had been a sheet of parchment; drove through his bronze cuirass, and hurled him to the ground, slain outright in an instant. “Ha! they have got enough of it! Shout, boys! Victoria! Victoria!”

And the wild cheering of the rebels pealed high above the roar of the torrent, striking dismay into the soul of the wretched Julia.

But, although the rebels had thus far succeeded, and the legionaries had fallen back, bearing their dead and wounded with them, the success was by no means absolute or final; and this no man knew better than the sword-smith.

He watched the soldiers eagerly, as they drew off in or-

derly array into the hollow way, and after a short consultation, posting themselves directly in front of the gate with sentinels thrown out in all directions, lighted a large watch fire in the road, with the intention, evidently, of converting the storm into a blockade.

A few moments afterward, he saw a soldier mount the horse of the slain centurion, and gallop down the hill in the direction of Antonius' army, which was well known to be lying to the south-eastward. Still a few minutes later a small party was sent down into the village, and returned bringing provisions, which the men almost immediately began to cook, after having posted a chain of videttes from one bank to the other of the precipitous ravine, so as to assure themselves that no possibility of escape was left to the besieged in any direction, by which they conceived escape to be practicable.

"Ha!" exclaimed Crispus, as he watched their movements, "they will give us no more trouble to-night, but we will make sure of them by posting one sentinel above the gate, and another on the head of the watch-tower. Then we will light us a good fire in the yard below, and feast there on the beef and wine of those brute peasants. The legionaries fancy that they can starve us out; but they know not how well we are provided. Hark you, my Niger. Go down and butcher those two beeves, and when they are flayed and decapitated, blow me a good loud trumpet blast and roll down the heads over the battlements. Long ere we have consumed our provender, Catiline will be down on them in force! I go to look around the place, and make all certain."

And, with the words, he ascended to the summit of the old watch-tower and stood there for many minutes, surveying the whole conformation of the country, and all the defences of the place, with a calm and skilful eye.

The man was by no means destitute of certain natural talents, and an aptitude for war, which, had it been cultivated or improved, might possibly have made him a captain. He speedily perceived, therefore, that the defences were tenable so long only as no ladders or engines should be brought against them; which he was well assured would be done, within twenty-four hours at the latest. He knew also that want of provisions must compel him to surrender

at discretion before many days; and he felt it to be very doubtful whether, without some strong effort on their part Catiline would hear at all of their situation, until it should be entirely too late.

He began, therefore, at once, to look about him for means of despatching an envoy, nothing doubting that succor would be sent to him instantly, could the arch traitor be informed, that the lovely Julia was a prisoner awaiting his licentious pleasure.

Descending from the battlements, he proceeded at once to the barrack rooms in the rear, hoping to find some possibility of lowering a messenger into the bed of the stream, or transporting him across the ravine, unseen by the sentinels of the enemy.

Then, casting open a door of fast decaying wood-work, he entered the first of the low mouldering unfurnished rooms; and, stepping across the paved floor with a noiseless foot, thrust his head out of the window and gazed anxiously up and down the course of the ravine.

He became satisfied at once that his idea was feasible; for the old wall was built, at this place, in salient angles, following the natural line of the cliffs; and the window of the central room was situated in the bottom of the recess, between two jutting curtains, in each of which was another embrasure. It was evident, therefore, that a person lowered by the middle window, into the gorge beneath, would be screened from the view of any watchers, by the projection of the walls; and Crispus nothing doubted but that, once in the bottom of the ravine, a path might be found more or less difficult by which to reach the upper country.

Beyond the ravine rose many broken knolls covered with a thick undergrowth of young chesnut hollies, wild laurels, and the like; and through these, a winding road might be discovered, penetrating the passes of the hills, and crossing the glen at a half mile's distance below on a single-arched brick bridge, by which it joined the causeway occupied by the legionaries.

Having observed so much, Caius Crispus was on the point of withdrawing his head, forgetting all about his prisoner, who, on their entrance into this dismantled hold, had been thrust in hither, as into the place where she

would be most out of harm's way, and least likely to escape.

But just as he was satisfied with gazing, the lovely face of Julia, pale as an image of statuary marble, with all her splendid auburn hair unbound, was advanced out of the middle window; evidently looking out like himself for means of escape. But to her the prospect was not, as to him, satisfactory; and uttering a deep sigh she shook her head sadly, and wrung her hands with an expression of utter despair.

"Ha! ha! my pretty one, it is too deep, I trow!" cried Crispus, whom she had not yet observed, with a cruel laugh, "Nothing, I swear, without wings can descend that abyss; unless like Sappho, whom the poets tell us of, it would put an end to both love and life together. No! no! you cannot escape thus, my pretty one; and, on the outside, I will make sure of you. For the rest I will send you some watch cloaks for a bed, some supper, and some wine. We will not starve you, my fair Julia, and no one shall harm you here, for I will sleep across your door, myself, this night, and ere to-morrow's sunset we shall be in the camp with Catiline."

He was as good as his word, for he returned almost immediately, bringing a pile of watch-cloaks, which he arranged into a rude semblance of a bed, with a pack saddle for the pillow, in the innermost recess of the inner room, with some bread, and beef broiled hastily on the embers, and some wine mixed with water, which last she drank eagerly; for fear and anxiety had parched her, and she was faint with thirst.

Before he went out, again he looked earnestly from the unlatticed window, in order to assure himself that she had no means of escape. Scarce was he gone, before she heard the shrill blast of the Roman trumpets blown clearly and scientifically, for the watch-setting; and, soon afterward, all the din and bustle, which had been rife through the livelong day, sank into silence, and she could hear the brawling of the brook below chafing and raving against the rocks which barred its bed, and the wind murmuring against the leafless treetops.

Shortly after this, it became quite dark; and after sitting musing awhile with a sad and despairing heart, and putting

up a wild prayer to the Gods for mercy and protection, she went once more and leaned out of the window, gazing wistfully on the black stones and foamy water.

"Nothing," she said to herself sadly, repeating Caius Crispus' words, "could descend hence, without wings, and live. It is too true! alas! too true!—" she paused for a moment, and then, while a flash of singular enthusiastic joy irradiated all her pallid lineaments, she exclaimed, "but the Great Gods be praised? one can leap down, and die! Let life go! what is life? since I can thus preserve my honor!" She paused again and considered; then clasped her hands together, and seemed to be on the point of casting herself into that awful gulf; but she resisted the temptation, and said, "Not yet! not yet! There is hope yet, on earth! and I will live awhile, for hope and for Paullus. I can do this at any time—of this refuge, at least, they cannot rob me. I will live yet awhile!" And with the words she turned away quietly, went to the pile of watch-cloaks, and lying down forgot ere long her sorrows and her dread, in calm and innocent slumber.

She had not been very long asleep, however, when a sound from without the door aroused her; and, as she started to her feet, Caius Crispus looked into the cell with a flambeau of pine-wood blazing in his right hand, to ascertain if she was still within, and safe under his keeping.

"You have been sleeping, ha!" he exclaimed. "That is well, you must be weary. Will you have more wine?"

"Some water, if you will, but no wine. I am athirst and feverish."

"You shall have water."

And thrusting the flambeau into the earth, between the crevices in the pavement, he left the room abruptly.

Scarce was he gone, leaving the whole apartment blazing with a bright light which rendered every object within clearly visible to any spectator from the farther side of the ravine, before a shrill voice with something of a feminine tone, was heard on the other brink, exclaiming in suppressed tones—

"Hist! hist! Julia?"

"Great Gods! who calls on Julia?"

"Julia Serena, is it thou?"

“Most miserable I!” she made answer. “But who calls me?”

“A friend—be wary, and silent, and you shall not lack aid.”

But Julia heard the heavy step of the swordsmith approaching, and laying her finger on her lips, she sprang back hastily from the window, and when her gaoler entered, was busy, apparently, in arranging her miserable bed.

It was not long that he tarried; for after casting one keen glance around him, to see that all was right; he freed her of his hated presence, taking the torch along with him, and leaving her in utter darkness.

As soon as his footstep had died away into silence, she hurried back to the embrasure, and gazed forth earnestly; but the moon had not yet risen, and all the gulf of the ravine and the banks on both sides were black as night, and she could discern nothing.

She coughed gently, hoping to attract the attention of her unknown friend, and to learn more of her chances of escape; but no farther sound or signal was made to her; and, after watching long in hope deferred, and anxiety unspeakable, she returned to her sad pallet and bathed her pillow with hot tears, until she wept herself at length into unconsciousness of suffering, the last refuge of the wretched, when they have not the christian’s hope to sustain them.

She was almost worn out with anxiety and toil, and she slept soundly, until the blowing of the Roman trumpets in the pass again aroused her; and before she had well collected her thoughts so as to satisfy herself where she was and wherefore, the shouts and groans of a sudden conflict, the rattling of stones and javelins on the tiled roof, the clang of arms, and all the dread accompaniments of a mortal conflict, awoke her to a full sense of her situation.

The day lagged tediously and slow. No one came near her, and, although she watched the farther side of the gorge, with all the frantic hope which is so near akin to despair, she saw nothing, heard nothing, but a few wood-pigeons among the leafless tree-tops, but the sob of the torrent and the sigh of the wintry wind.

At times indeed the long stern swell of the legionary trumpets would again sound for the assault, and the din of

warfare would follow it; but the skirmishes were of shorter and shorter duration, and the tumultuous cheering of the rebels at the close of every onslaught, proved that their defence had been maintained at least, and that the besiegers had gained no advantage.

It was, perhaps, four o'clock in the afternoon; and the sun was beginning to verge to the westward, when, just after the cessation of one of the brief attacks—by which it would appear that the besiegers intended rather to harass the garrison and keep them constantly on the alert, than to effect anything decided—the sound of armed footsteps again reached the ears of Julia.

A moment afterward, Caius Crispus entered the room hastily, accompanied by Niger and Rufus, the latter bearing in his hand a coil of twisted rope, manufactured from the raw hide of the slaughtered cattle, cut into narrow stripes, and ingeniously interwoven.

“Ha!” he exclaimed, starting for a moment, as he saw Julia. “I had forgotten you. We have been hardly pressed all day, and I have had no time to think of you; but we shall have more leisure now. Are you hungry, Julia?”

For her only reply she pointed to the food yet untouched, which he had brought to her on the previous evening, and shook her head sadly; but uttered not a word.

“Well! well!” he exclaimed, “we have no time to talk about such matters now; but eat you shall, or I will have you crammed, as they stuff fat-livered geese! Come, Niger, we must lose no minute. If they attack again, and miss me from the battlements, they will be suspecting something, and will perhaps come prying to the rear.—Have you seen any soldiers, girl, on this side? I trow you have been gazing from the window all day long in the hope of escaping, but I suppose you will not tell me truly.”

“If I tell you not truly, I shall hold my peace. But I will tell you, that I have seen no human being, no living thing, indeed; unless it be a thrush, and three wood pigeons, fluttering in the treetops yonder.”

“That is a lie, I dare be sworn!” cried Niger. “If it had been the truth she would not have breathed a word of it to us. Beside which, it is too cool altogether!”

“By Mulciber my patron! if I believed so, it should go

hardly with her; but it matters not. Come, we must lose no time."

And passing into the central room of the three, they made one end of the rope fast about the waist of Niger, and the other to an upright mullion in the embrasure, which, although broken half way up, afforded ample purchase whereby to lower him into the chasm.

This done, the man clambered out of the window very coolly, going backward, as if he were about to descend a ladder; but, when his face was on the point of disappearing below the sill, as he hung by his hands alone, having no foothold whatever, he said quietly, "If I shout, Caius Crispus, haul me up instantly. I shall not do so, if there be any path below. But if I whistle, be sure that all is right. Lower away. Farewell."

"Hold on! hold on, man!" replied Crispus quickly, "turn yourself round so as to bring your back to the crag's face, else shall the angles of the rock maim, and the dust blind you. That's it; most bravely done! you are a right good cragsman."

"I was born among the crags, at all events," answered the other, "and I think now that I am going to die among them. But what of that? One must die some day! Fewer words! lower away, I say, I am tired of hanging here between Heaven and Tartarus!"

No words were spoken farther, by any of the party; but the smith with the aid of Rufus paid out the line rapidly although steadily, hand under hand, until the whole length was run out with the exception of some three or four feet.

Just at this moment, when Crispus was beginning to despair of success, and was half afraid that he had miscalculated the length of the rope, the strain on it was slackened for a moment, and then ceased altogether.

The next instant a low and guarded whistle rose from the gorge, above the gurgling of the waters, but not so loud as to reach any ears save those for which it was intended.

A grim smile curled the swordsmith's lip, and his fierce eye glittered with cruel triumph. "We are safe now.—Catiline will be here long before daybreak. Your prayers have availed us, Julia; for I doubt not," he added, with malicious irony, "that you have prayed for us."

Before she had time to reply to his cruel sarcasm, a fresh swell of the besiegers' trumpets, and a loud burst of shouts and warcries from the battlement announced a fresh attack. The smith rushed from the room instantly with Rufus at his heels, and Julia had already made one step toward the window, intending to attempt the perilous descent, alone and unaided, when Crispus turned back suddenly, crying,

"The Rope! the Rope! By the Gods! do not leave the rope! She hath enough of the Amazon's blood in her to attempt it—"

"Of the *Roman's* blood, say rather!" she exclaimed, springing toward the casement, half maddened in perceiving her last hope frustrated.

Had she reached it, she surely would have perished; for no female head and hands, how strong and resolute so ever, could have descended that frail rope, and even if they could, the ruffian, rather than see her so escape, would have cut it asunder, and so precipitated her to the bottom of the rocky chasm.

But she did not attain her object; for Caius Crispus caught her with both arms around the waist and threw her so violently to the after end of the room, that, her head striking the angle of the wall, she was stunned for the moment, and lay almost senseless on the floor, while the savage, with a rude brutal laugh at her disappointment, rushed out of the room, bearing the rope along with him.

Scarce had he gone, however, when, audible distinctly amid the dissonant danger of the fray, the same feminine voice, which she had heard on the previous night, again aroused her, crying "Hist! hist! hist! Julia."

She sprang to her feet, and gained the window in a moment, and there, on the other verge of the chasm, near twenty feet distant from the window at which she stood, she discovered the figure of a slender dark-eyed and dark-complexioned boy, clad in a hunter's tunic, and bearing a bow in his hand, and a quiver full of arrows on his shoulder.

She had never seen that boy before; yet was there something in his features and expression that seemed familiar to her; that sort of vague resemblance to something well known and accustomed, which leads men to suppose that they must have dreamed of things which mysteri-

ously enough they seem to remember on their first occurrence.

The boy raised his hand joyously, and cried aloud, without any fear of being heard, well knowing that all eyes and ears of the defenders of the place were turned to the side when the fight was raging, "Be of good cheer; you are saved, Julia. Paullus is nigh at hand, but ere he come, *I will save you!* Be of good courage, watch well these windows, but seem to be observing nothing."

And with the words, he turned away, and was lost to her sight in an instant, among the thickly-set underwood. Ere long, however, she caught a glimpse of him again, mounted upon a beautiful white horse, and galloping like the wind down the sandy road, which wound through the wooded knolls toward the bridge below.

Again she lost him; and again he glanced upon her sight, for a single second, as he spurred his fleet horse across the single arch of brick, and dashed into the woods on the hither side of the torrent.

Two weary hours passed; and the sun was nigh to his setting, and she had seen, heard nothing more. Her heart, sickening with hope deferred, and all her frame trembling with terrible excitement, she had almost begun to doubt, whether the whole appearance of the boy might not have been a mere illusion of her feverish senses, a vain creation of her distempered fancy.

Still, fiercer than before, the battle raged without, and now there was no intermission of the uproar; to which was added the crashing of the roofs beneath heavy stones, betokening that engines of some kind had been brought up from the host, or constructed on the spot.

At length, however, her close watch was rewarded. A slight stir among the evergreen bushes on the brink of the opposite cliff caught her quick eye, and in another moment the head of a man, not of the boy whom she had seen before, nor yet, as her hope suggested, of her own Paullus, but of an aquiline-nosed clean-shorn Roman soldier, with an intelligent expression and quick eye, was thrust forward.

Perceiving Julia at the window, he drew back for a second; and the boy appeared in his place, and then both

showed themselves together, the soldier holding in his hand the bow and arrows of the hunter youth.

"He is a friend," said the boy, "do all that he commands you."

But so fiercely was the battle raging now, that it was his signs, rather than his words, which she comprehended.

The next moment, a gesture of his hand warned her to withdraw from the embrasure; and scarcely had she done so before an arrow whistled from the bow and dropped into the room, having a piece of very slender twine attached to the end of it.

Perceiving the intention at a glance, the quick witted girl detached the string from the shaft without delay, and, throwing the latter out of the window lest it should betray the plan, drew in the twine, until she had some forty yards within the room, when it was checked from the other side, neither the soldier nor the youth showing themselves at all during the operation.

This done, however, the boy again stood forth, and pitched a leaden bullet, such as was used by the slingers of the day, into the window.

Perceiving that the ball was perforated, she secured it in an instant to the end of the clue, which she held in her hand, and, judging that the object of her friends was to establish a communication from their side, cast it back to them with a great effort, having first passed the twine around the mullion, by aid of which Crispus had lowered down his messenger.

The soldier caught the bullet, and nodded his approbation with a smile, but again receded into the bushes, suffering the slack of the twine to fall down in an easy curve into the ravine; so that the double communication would scarce have been perceived, even by one looking for it, in the gathering twilight.

The boy's voice once more reached her ears, though his form was concealed among the shrubbery. "Fear nothing, you are safe," he said. "But we can do no more until after midnight, when the moon shall give us light to rescue you. Be tranquil, and farewell."—

Be tranquil!—tranquil, when life or death—honor or infamy—bliss or despair, hung on that feeble twine, scarce thicker than the spider's web! hung on the chance of

every flying second, each one of which was bringing nigher and more nigh, the hoofs of Catiline's atrocious band.

When voice of man can bid the waves be tranquil, while the north-wester is tossing their ruffian tops, and when the billows slumber at his bidding, then may the comforter assay, with some chance of success, to still the throbbings of the human heart, convulsed by such hopes, such terrors, as then were all but maddening the innocent and tranquil heart of Julia.

Tranquil she could not be; but she was calm and self-possessed, and patient.

Hour after hour lagged away; and the night fell black as the pit of Acheron, and still by the glare of pale fires and torches, the lurid light of which she could perceive from her windows, reflected on the heavens, the savage combatants fought on, unwearied, and unsparing.

Once only she went again to that window, wherefrom hung all her hopes; so fearful was she, that Crispus might find her there, and suspect what was in process.

With trembling fingers she felt for the twine, fatal as the thread of destiny should any fell chance sever it; and in its place she found a stout cord, which had been quietly drawn around the mullion, still hanging in a deep double bight, invisible amid the gloom, from side to side of the chasm.

And now, for the first time, she comprehended clearly the means by which her unknown friends proposed to reach her. By hauling on one end of the rope, any light plank or ladder might be drawn over to the hither from the farther bank, and the gorge might so be securely bridged, and safely traversed.

Perceiving this, and fancying that she could distinguish the faint clink of a hammer among the trees beyond the forest knoll, she did indeed become almost tranquil.

She even lay down on her couch, and closed her eyes, and exerted all the power of her mind to be composed and self-possessed, when the moment of her destiny should arrive.

But oh! how day-long did the minutes seem; how more than year-long the hours.

She opened her curtained lids, and lo! what was that faint pale lustre, glimmering through the tree-tops on the

far mountain's brow?—all glory to Diana, chaste guardian of the chaste and pure! it was the signal of her safety! it was! it was the ever-blessed moon!—

Breathless with joy, she darted to the opening, and slowly, warily creeping athwart the gloomy void, she saw the cords drawn taut, and running stiffly, it is true, and reluctantly, but surely, around the mouldering stone mullion; while from the other side, ghost-like and pale, the skeleton of a light ladder, was advancing to meet her hand as if by magic.

Ten minutes more and she would be free! oh! the strange bliss, the inconceivable rapture of that thought! free from pollution, infamy! free to live happy and unblemished! free to be the beloved, the honored bride of her own Arvina.

Why did she shudder suddenly? why grew she rigid with dilated eyes, and lips apart, like a carved effigy of agonized surprise?—

Hark to that rising sound, more rapid than the rush of the stream, and louder than the wailing of the wind! thick pattering down the rocky gorge! nearer and nearer, 'till it thunders high above all the tumult of the battle! the furious gallop of approaching horse, the sharp and angry clang of harness!—

Lo! the hot glare, outfacing the pale moonbeam, the fierce crimson blaze of torches gleaming far down the mountain side, a torrent of rushing fire!

Hark! the wild cheer, "Catiline! Catiline!" to the skies! mixed with the wailing blast of the Roman trumpets, unwillingly retreating from the half-won watchtower!—

"Pull for your lives!" she cried, in accents full of horror and appalling anguish—"Pull! pull! if ye would not see me perish!"—

But it was all too late. Amid a storm of tumultuous acclamation, Catiline drew his panting charger up before the barricaded gateway, which had so long resisted the dread onset of the legionaries, and which now instantly flew open to admit him. Waving his hand to his men to pursue the retreating infantry, he sprang down from his horse, uttering but one word in the deep voice of smothered passion—"Julia!"—

His armed foot clanged on the pavement, ere the bridge was entirely withdrawn; for they, who manned the ropes, now dragged it back, as vehemently as they had urged forward a moment since.

“Back from the window, Julia!”—cried the voice—“If he perceive the ropes, all is lost! Trust me, we never will forsake you! Meet him! be bold! be daring! but defy him not!”—

Scarce had she time to catch the friendly admonition and act on it, as she did instantly, before the door of the outer room was thrown violently open; and, with his sallow face inflamed and fiery, and his black eye blazing with hellish light, Catiline exclaimed, as he strode in hot haste across the threshold,

“At last! at last, I have thee, Julia!”

CHAPTER XVII.

TIDINGS FROM ROME.

Time and the tide wear through the longest day.

SHAKSPEARE.

“ At last, I have thee, Julia !”

Mighty indeed was the effort of the mind, which enabled that fair slight girl to bear up with an undaunted lip and serene eye against the presence of that atrocious villain ; and hope, never-dying hope, was the spirit which nerved her to that effort.

It was strange, knowing as she did the character of that atrocious and bloodthirsty tyrant, that she should not have given way entirely to feminine despair and terror, or sought by tears and prayers to disarm his purpose.

But her high blood cried out from every vein and artery of her body ; and she stood calm and sustained by conscious virtue, even in that extremity of peril ; neither tempting assault by any display of coward weakness, nor provoking it by any show of defiance.

There is nothing, perhaps, so difficult to any one who is not a butcher or an executioner by trade, with sensibilities blunted by the force of habit, as to attack or injure any thing, which neither flies, nor resists, neither braves, nor trembles.

And Catiline himself, savage and brutal as he was, full of ungoverned impulse and unbridled passion, felt, though he knew not wherefore, this difficulty at this moment.

Had she fallen at his feet, trembling, and tearful, and

implored his mercy, he would have gloated on her terrors, laughed tears and prayers to scorn, yea! torn her from an altar's foot, to pour out upon her the vials of agony and foul pollution.

Had she defied, or braved his violence, his fury would have trampled her to the earth in an instant, and murder would have followed in the footsteps of worse violence.

But as she stood there, firm, cold, erect, and motionless as a statue of rare marble, with scarcely a pulse throbbing in her veins, and her clear azure eyes fixed on him with a cold and steady gaze, as if she would have fascinated him by their serene chaste influence, he likewise stood and gazed upon her with a strange mixture of impressions, wherein something akin to love and admiration were blent with what, in minds of better mould, should have been reverence and awe.

He felt, in short, that he lacked 'a spur to prick the sides of his intent,' a provocation to insult and aggression yet stronger than the passion and hot thirst of vengeance, which had been well nigh chilled by her severe and icy fortitude.

'Tis said that a lion will turn and flee,
From a maid in the pride of her purity;

and here a fiercer and more dangerous savage stood powerless and daunted for the moment, by the same holy influence of virtue, which, it is said, has potency to tame the pinched king of the desert.

It was not, however, in the nature of that man to yield himself up long to any influence, save that of his own passions, and after standing mute for perhaps a minute, during which the flush on his sallow cheek, and the glare of his fiery eye, were blanched and dimmed somewhat, he advanced a step or two toward her, repeating the words,

"I have thee; thou art mine, Julia."

"Thy prisoner, Catiline," she replied quietly—"if you make women prisoners."

"My slave, minion."

"I am free-born, and noble. A patrician of a house as ancient as thine own. My ancestors, I have heard say, fought side by side with Sergius Silo."

"The more cause, that their daughter should sleep side

side with Sergius Catiline!" he replied with bitter irony; but there was less of actual passion in his tones, than of a desire to lash himself into fury.

"The less cause that a free-born lady should be disgraced by the grandson of his comrade in arms, who gave her father being."

Thus far her replies had been conducted in the spirit most likely to control, if any thing could control, the demon that possessed him; but seeing that her words had produced more effect on him than she had deemed possible, she made an effort to improve her advantage, and added, looking him firmly in the eye,

"I have heard tell that thou art proud, Catiline, as thou art nobly born. Let, then, thine own pride"—

"Proud! Proud! Ha! minion! What have your *nobles* left, me that I should glory in—what of which I may still be proud? A name of the grandest, blasted by their base lies, and infamous! Service converted into shame, valor warped into crime! At home poverty, degradation, ruin! Abroad, debt, mockery, disgrace! Proud! proud! By Nemesis! fond girl. I am proud—to be the thing that they have made me, a terror, and a curse to all who call themselves patrician. For daring, remorseless! for brave, cruel! for voluptuous, sensual! for fearless, ruthless! for enterprising, reckless! for ambitious, desperate! for a man, a monster! for a philosopher, an atheist! Ha! ha! ha! ha! I am proud, minion, proud to be that I am—that which thou, Julia, shalt soon find me!"

She perceived, when it was too late, the error which she had made, and fearful of incensing him farther, answered nothing. But he was not so to be set at naught, for he had succeeded now in lashing himself into a fit of fury, and advancing upon her, with a face full of all hideous passions, a face that denoted his fell purpose, as plainly as any words could declare them.

"Dost hear me, girl, I say? Thou art mine, Julia."

"Thy prisoner, Catiline," she again repeated in the same steady tone as at first; but the charm had now failed of its effect, and it was fortunate for the sweet girl, that the fell wretch before whom she stood defenceless, had so much of the cat-like, tiger-like spirit in his nature, so much that prompted him to tantalize and torment before striking,

to teaze and harass and break down the mind, before doing violence to the body of his subject enemies, or of those whom he chose to deem such.

Had he suspected at this moment that any chance of succor was at hand, however remote, he lacked neither the will nor the occasion to destroy her. He fancied that she was completely at his mercy; and perceiving that, in despite of her assumed coolness, she writhed beneath the terrors of his tongue, he revelled in the fiendish pleasure of triumphing in words over her spirit, before wreaking his vengeance on her person.

“My slave! Julia. My slave, soul and body! my slave, here and for ever! Slave to my passions, and my pleasures! Wilt yield, or resist, fair girl? Resist, I do beseech thee! Let some fire animate those lovely eyes, even if it be the fire of fury—some light kindle those pallid cheeks, even if it be the light of hatred! I am weary of tame conquests.”

“Then wherefore conquer; or conquering, wherefore not spare?”—she answered.

“I conquer, to slake my thirst of vengeance. I spare not, for the wise man’s word to the fallen, is still, *VÆ VICTIS*. Wilt yield, or resist, Julia? wilt be the sharer, or the victim of my pleasures? speak, I say, speak!” he shouted savagely, perceiving that she sought to evade a direct answer. “Speak and reply, directly, or I will do to thee forthwith what most thou darest! and then wipe out thy shame by agonies of death, to which the tortures of old Regulus were luxury.”

“If I must choose, the victim!” she replied steadily. “But I believe you will not so disgrace your manhood.”

“Ha! you believe so, you shall feel soon and know. One question more, wilt thou yield or resist?”—

“Resist,” she answered, “to the last, and when dishonored, die, and by death, like Lucretia, win back greater honor! Lucretia’s death had witnesses, and her tale found men’s ears.”

“Thy death shall be silent, thy shame loud. I will proclaim the first my deed, the last thy voluntary ——.”

“Proclaim it!”—she interrupted him, with her eyes flashing bright indignation, and her lip curling with ineffable disdain; as she forgot all prudence in the scorn called

forth by his injurious words—"Proclaim it to the world! who will believe it?"—

"The world. Frailty's name is woman!"—

"And Falsehood's—Catiline!"—

"By Hades!"—and he sprang upon her with a bound like that of a tiger, and twined his arms about her waist, clasping her to his breast with brutal violence, and striving to press his foul lips on her innocent mouth; but she, endowed with momentary strength, infinitely unwonted and unnatural, the strength of despair and frenzy, caught his bare throat with both her hands, and writhing herself back to the full length of her arms, uttered a volume of shrieks, so awfully shrill and piercing, that they struck terror into the souls of the brutal rebels without, and harrowed up the spirits of her friends, who lay concealed within earshot, waiting, now almost in despair, an opportunity to aid her.

So strong was the clutch which her small hands had fixed upon his throat, that ere he could release himself, sufficiently to draw a full breath, he was compelled to let her go; and ere he fully recovered himself, she had made a spring back toward the window, with the evident purpose of throwing herself out into the yawning gulf below it.

But something caught her eye which apparently deterred her, and turning her back upon it quickly, she faced her persecutor once again.

At this moment, there was a loud and angry bustle in the outer court, immediately followed by a violent knocking at the door; but so terrible was the excitement of both these human beings, her's the excitement of innocence in trial, his of atrocity triumphant, that neither heard it, though it was sudden and strong enough to have startled any sleepers, save those of the grave.

"Ha! but this charms me! I knew not that you had so much of the Tigress to fit you for the Tiger's mate. But what a fool you are to waste your breath in yells and your strength in struggles, like to those, when there are none to hear, or to witness them."

"Witnesses are found to all crimes right early and avengers!" she exclaimed with the high mien of a prophetess; and still that vehement knocking continued, unheeded as the earthquake which reel'd unnoticed beneath the feet of the combatants at Thrasyimene.

“To this at least there are no witnesses! there shall be no avengers!”

“The Gods are my witnesses! shall be my avengers!”

“Tush! there are no Gods, Julia!”

And again he rushed on her and caught her in his arms.

But as he spoke those impious words, sprang to do that atrocious deed, a witness was found, and it might be an avenger.

Unnoticed by the traitor in the fierce whirlwind of his passion, that hunter boy stood forth on the further brink; revealed, a boy no longer; for the Phrygian bonnet had fallen off, and the redundant raven tresses of a girl flowed back on the wind. Her attitude and air were those of Diana as she bent her good bow against the ravisher Orion. Her right foot advanced firmly, her right hand drawn back to the ear, her fine eye glaring upon the arrow which bore with unerring aim full on the breast of her own corrupter, her own father, Catiline.

Who had more wrongs to avenge than Lucia?

Another second, and the shaft would have quivered in the heart of the arch villain, sped by the hand from which he deserved it the most dearly. The room within was brighter than day from the red torch light which filled it, falling full on the gaunt form and grim visage of the monster. Her hand was firm, her eye steady, her heart pitiless. But in the better course of her changed life, heaven spared her the dread crime of parricide.

Just as the chord was at the tightest, just as the feathers quivered, and the barb thrilled, about to leap from the tense string, the tall form of the soldier sprang up into the clear moonlight from the underwood, and crying “Hold! hold!” mastered her bowhand, with the speed of light, and dragged her down into the covert.

Well was it that he did so. For just as Catiline seized Julia the second time in his resistless grasp, and ere his lips had contaminated her sweet mouth, the giant Crispus, who had so long been knocking unheeded, rushed into the room, and seized his leader by the shoulder unseen, until he literally touched him.

“Another time for this;” he said, “Catiline. There are tidings from Rome; which—”

“To Tartarus with thy tidings! Let them tarry!”

“They will not tarry, Catiline,” replied the smith, who was as pale as a ghost and almost trembling—“least of all for such painted woman’s flesh as this is!”

“Get thee away! It were better, wiser, safer to stand between the Lion and his prey, than between Catiline and Julia.”

“Then have it!” shouted the smith. “All is discovered! all undone! Lentulus and Cethegus, Gabinius and Statilius, and Cæparius all dead by the hangman’s noose in the Tullianum!”

“The idiots! is that all? thy precious tidings! See! how I will avenge them.” And he struggled to shake himself free from the grasp of Crispus.

But the smith held him firmly, and replied, “It is not all, Catiline. Metellus Celer is within ten leagues of the camp, at the foot of the mountains. We have no retreat left into Gaul. Come! come! speak to the soldiers! You can deal with this harlotry hereafter.”

Catiline glared upon him, as if he would have stabbed him to the heart; but seeing the absolute necessity of enquiring into the truth of this report, he turned to leave the room.

“The Gods be praised! the Gods have spoken loud! The Gods have saved me!” cried Julia falling on her knees. “Are there no Gods now, O Catiline?”

“To Hades! with thy Gods!” and, striking the unhappy girl a coward blow, which felled her to the ground senseless, he rushed from the room with his confederate in crime, barring the outer door behind him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RESCUE.

Speed, Malise, speed, the dun deer's hide
 On fleeter foot was never tied.

LADY OF THE LAKE.

SCARCELY had the door closed behind Catiline, who rushed forth torch in hand, as if goaded by the furies of Orestes, when half a dozen stout men, sheathed in the full armor of Roman legionaries, sprang out of the brushwood on the gorge's brink, and seizing the ropes which had hung idle during that critical hour, hauled on them with such energetical and zealous power, that the ladder was drawn across the chasm with almost lightning speed.

The hooks, with which its outer end was garnished, caught in the crevices of the ruined wall, and a slender communication was established, although the slight structure which bridged the abyss was scarcely capable of supporting the weight of a human being.

The soldiers, accustomed, as all Roman soldiers were, to all the expediences and resources of warfare, had prepared planks which were to be run forward on the ladder, in order to construct a firm bridge. For the plan of the besiegers, until interrupted by Catiline's arrival, had been to take the stronghold in reverse, while a false attack in front should be in progress, and throwing ten or twelve stout soldiers into the heart of the place, to make themselves masters of it by a coup-de-main.

This well-devised scheme being rendered unfeasible by the sudden charge of Catiline's horse, and the rout of the

legionaries, the small subaltern's detachments which had been sent round under Lucia's guidance—for it was she who had discerned the means of passing the chasm, while lying in wait to assist Julia, and disclosed it to the centurion commanding—had been left alone, and isolated, its line of retreat cut off, and itself without a leader.

The singular scenes, however, which they had witnessed, the interest which almost involuntarily they had been led to take in the fate of the fair girl, her calm and dauntless fortitude, and above all the atrocious villainy of Cataline, had inspired every individual of that little band with an heroic resolution to set their lives upon a cast, in order to rescue one who to all of them was personally unknown.

In addition to this, the discovery of Lucia's sex—for they had believed her to be what she appeared, a boy—which followed immediately on the loss of her Phrygian bonnet, and the story of her bitter wrongs, which had taken wind, acted as a powerful incentive to men naturally bold and enterprising.

For it is needless to add, that with the revelation of her sex, that of her character as the arch-traitor's child and victim went, as it were, hand in hand.

They had resolved, therefore, on rescuing the one, and revenging the other of these women, at any risk to themselves whatsoever; and now having waited their opportunity with the accustomed patience of Roman veterans, they acted upon it with their habitual skill and celerity.

But rapid as were their movements, they were outstripped by the almost superhuman agility of Lucia, who, knowing well the character of the human fiend with whom they had to contend, his wondrous promptitude in counsel, his lightning speed in execution, was well assured that there was not one moment to be lost, if they would save Arvina's betrothed bride from a fate worse than many deaths.

As soon therefore as she saw the hooks of the scaling ladder catch firm hold of the broken wall, before a single plank had been laid over its frail and distant rungs, she bounded over it with the light and airy foot of a practised dancer—finding account at that perilous moment in one of those indelicate accomplishments in which she had been instructed for purposes the basest and most horrible.

Accustomed as they were to deeds of energy and rapid daring, the stout soldiers stood aghast; for, measuring the action by their own weight and ponderous armature, they naturally overrated its peril to one so slightly made as Lucia.

And yet the hazard was extreme, for not taking it into account that a single slip or false step must precipitate her into the abyss, the slender woodwork of the ladder actually bent as she alighted on it, from each of her long airy bounds.

It was but a second, however, in which she glanced across it, darted through the small embrasure, and was lost to the eyes of the men within the darkness of the old barrack.

Astonished though they were at the girl's successful daring, the soldiers were not paralyzed at all, nor did they cease from their work.

In less than a minute after she had entered the window, a board was thrust forward, running upon the framework of the ladder, and upon that a stout plank, two feet in breadth, capable of supporting, if necessary, the weight of several armed men.

Nor had this bridge been established many seconds before the soldier in command ran forward upon it, and met Lucia at the embrasure, bearing with strength far greater than her slight form and unmuscular limbs appeared to promise, the still senseless form of Julia.

Catching her from the arms of Lucia, the robust legionary cast the fainting girl across his shoulder as though she had been a feather; and rushed back with her toward his comrades, crying aloud in haste alarm—

“Quick! quick! follow me quick, Lucia. I hear footsteps, they are coming!”—

The caution was needless, for almost outstripping the heavy soldier, the fleet-footed girl stood with him on the farther bank.

Yet had it come a moment later, it would have come all too late.

For having with his wonted celerity ascertained the truth of these fatal tidings, and ordered the body of horse whom he had brought up with him, and who had returned from pursuing the infantry, on seeing a larger body com

ing up from Antonius' army, to return with all speed to the camp of Manlius, retaining only a dozen troopers as a personal escort, Catiline had come back to bear off his newly captive.

The clang of his haughty step had reached the ears of one legionary just as he drew poor Julia, unconscious of her rescue, through the barrack window; and as they stood on the brink of the ravine, thus far in safety, the red glare of the torches streaming through the embrasures, announced the arrival of their enemies, within almost arm's length of them.

The awful burst of imprecations which thundered from the lips of Catiline, as he perceived that his victim had been snatched from him, struck awe even into the hearts of those brave veterans.

A tiger robbed of its young is but a weak and poor example of the frantic, ungovernable, beast-like rage which appeared to prevail entirely above all senses, all consideration, and all reason.

"May I perish ill! may I die crucified! may the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field devour me, if she so escape!" he shouted; and perceiving the means by which she had been carried off, he called loudly for his men to follow, and was in the very act of leaping out from the embrasure upon the bridge, which they had not time to withdraw, when one of the legionaries spurned away the frail fabric with his foot, and drawing his short falchion severed the cords which secured it, at a single blow.

Swinging off instantly in mid air, it was dashed heavily against the rocky wall of the precipice, and, dislodged by the shock, the planks went thundering down into the torrent, at the bottom of the gorge; while upheld by the hooks to the stone window sill, the ladder hung useless on Catiline's side of the chasm, all communication thus completely interrupted.

At the same moment three of the heavy pila, which were the peculiar missiles of the legion, were hurled by as many stout arms at the furious desperado; but it was not his fate so to perish. One of the ponderous weapons hurtled so close to his temple that the keen head razed the skin, the others, blunted or shattered against the sides or lintel of the window, fell harmless into the abyss.

"Thou fool!" cried the man who had rescued Lucia, addressing him who had cut away the bridge, "thou shouldst have let him reach the middle, ere thou didst strike that blow. Then would he have lain there now," and he pointed downward with his finger into the yawning gulf.

"I do not know," replied the other. "By the Gods! Catiline is near enough to me, when he is twenty paces distant."

"Thou art right, soldier, and didst well and wisely," said Lucia, hastily. "Hadst thou tarried to strike until he reached the middle, thou never wouldst have stricken at all. One foot without that window, he would have cleared that chasm, as easily as I would leap a furrow. But come! come! come! we must not loiter, nor lose one instant. He will not so submit to be thwarted. I have two horses by the roadside yonder. Their speed alone shall save us."

"Right! right!" replied the soldier, "lead to them quickly. It is for life or death! Hark! he is calling his men now to horse. We shall have a close run for it, by Hercules!"—

"And we?"—asked one of the veterans—

"Disperse yourselves among the hills, and make your way singly to the camp. He will not think of you, with us before him!"—

"Farewell! The Gods guide and guard thee!"—

"We shall much need, I fear, their guidance!" answered the legionary, setting off at a swift pace, still bearing Lucia, who was now beginning to revive in the fresh air, following hard on Lucia, who ran, literally like the wind, to the spot where she had tied her own beautiful white Ister, and another horse, a powerful and well-bred Thracian charger, to the stems of two chesnut trees, in readiness for any fortunes.

Rapidly as the soldier ran, still the light-footed girl outstripped him, and when he reached the sandy road, she had already loosened the reins from the trees to which they had been attached, and held them in readiness.

"Mount, mount," cried Lucia, "for your life! I will help you to lift her."

"I am better now," exclaimed Lucia—"Oh ye Gods! and safe too! I can help myself now! and in an instant

she was seated behind the stout man-at-arms, and clinging with both hands to his sword belt.

“If you see me no more, as I think you will not, Julia, tell Paullus, Lucia saved you, and — died, for love of him! Now—ride! ride! ride! for your life ride!”

And giving their good horses head they sprang forth, plying the rein and scourge, at headlong speed.

As they ascended the first little hillock, they saw the troopers of Catiline pouring out of the watch-tower gate, and thundering down the slope toward the bridge, with furious shouts, at a rate scarcely inferior to their own.

They had but one hope of safety. To reach the little bridge and pass it before their pursuers should gain it, and cut off their retreat toward their friends, whom they knew to be nigh at hand; but to do so appeared well nigh impossible.

It was a little in their favor that the steeds of Catiline's troopers had been harassed by a long and unusually rapid night march, while their own were fresh and full of spirit; but this advantage was neutralized at least by the double weight which impeded the progress and bore down the energies of the noble Thracian courser, bearing Julia and the soldier.

Again it was in their favor that the road on their side the chasm was somewhat shorter and much more level than that by which Catiline and his riders were straining every nerve, galloping on a parallel line with the tremulous and excited fugitives; but this advantage also was diminished by the fact that they must turn twice at right angles—once to gain the bridge, and once more into the high road beyond it—while the rebels had a straight course, though down a hill side so steep that it might well be called precipitous.

The day had by this time broken, and either party could see the other clearly, even to the dresses of the men and the colors of the horses, not above the sixth part of a mile being occupied by the valley of the stream dividing the two roads.

For life! fire flashed from the flinty road at every bound of the brave coursers, and blood flew from every whirl of the knotted thong; but gallantly the high-blooded beasts answered it. At every bound they gained a little on their

pursuers, whose horses foamed and labored down the abrupt descent, one or two of them falling and rolling over their riders, so steep was the declivity.

For life! Catiline had gained the head of his party, and his black horse had outstripped them by several lengths.

If the course had been longer the safety of the fugitives would have been now certain; but so brief was the space and so little did they gain in that awful race, that the nicest eye hardly could have calculated which first would reach the bridge.

So secure of his prize was Catiline, that his keen blade was already out, and as he bowed over his charger's neck, goring his flanks with his bloody spurs, he shouted in his hoarse demoniacal accents, "Victory and vengeance!"

Still, hopeful and dauntless, the stout legionary galloped on—"Courage!" he exclaimed, "courage, lady, we shall first cross the bridge!"—

Had Lucia chosen it, with her light weight and splendid horsemanship, she might easily have left Julia and the soldier, easily have crossed the defile in advance of Catiline, easily have escaped his vengeance. But she reined in white Ister, and held him well in hand behind the others, muttering to herself in low determined accents, "She shall be saved, but my time is come!"

Suddenly there was a hasty shout of alarm from the troopers on the other side, "Hold, Catiline! Rein up! Rein up!" and several of the foremost riders drew in their horses. Within a minute all except Catiline had halted.

"They see our friends! they are close at hand! We are saved! by the Immortal Gods! we are saved!" cried the legionary, with a cry of triumph.

But in reply, across the narrow gorge, came the hoarse roar of Catiline, above the din of his thundering gallop.—"By Hades! Death! or vengeance!"

"Ride! ride!" shrieked Lucia from behind, "Ride, I say, fool! you are *not* saved! He will not halt for a *hour*, when a revenge spurs him! For your life! ride!"

It was a fearful crisis.

The Thracian charger reached the bridge. The hollow arch resounded but once under his clanging hoofs—the second stride cleared it. He wheeled down the road, and Julia, pale as death, whose eyes had been closed in the ago-

ny of that fearful expectation, unclosed them at the legionary's joyous shout, but closed them again in terror and despair with a faint shriek, as they met the grim countenance of Catiline, distorted with every hellish passion, and splashed with blood gouts from his reeking courser's side, thrust forward parallel nearly to the black courser's foamy jaws—both nearly within arm's length of her, as it appeared to her excited fancy.

“We are lost! we are lost!” she screamed.

“We are saved! we are saved!” shouted the soldier as he saw coming up the road at a gallop to meet them, the bronze casques and floating horse-hair crests, and scarlet cloaks, of a whole squadron of legionary cavalry, arrayed beneath a golden eagle—the head of their column scarcely distant three hundred yards.

But they were not saved yet, nor would have been—for Catiline's horse was close upon their croupe and his uplifted blade almost flashed over them—when, with a wild cry, Lucia dashed her white Ister at full speed, as she crossed the bridge, athwart the counter of black Erebus.

The thundering speed at which the black horse came down the hill, and the superior weight of himself and his rider, hurled the white palfrey and the brave girl headlong; but his stride was checked, and, blown as he was, he stumbled, and rolled over, horse and man.

A minute was enough to save them, and before Lucia had regained her feet, the ranks of the new comers had opened to receive the fugitives, and had halted around them, in some slight confusion.

“The Gods be blessed for ever!” she exclaimed, clasping her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven. “I have saved her!”

“And lost thyself, thrice miserable fool!” hissed a hoarse well known voice in her ear, as a heavy hand seized her by the shoulder, and twisted her violently round.

She stood face to face with Catiline, and met his horrid glare of hate with a glance prouder than his own and brighter. She smiled triumphantly, as she said in a clear high voice,

“I have saved her!”

“For which, take thy reward, in this, and this, and this!”

And with the words he dealt her three stabs, the least of

which was mortal ; but, even in that moment of dread passion, with fiendish ingenuity he endeavored to avoid giving her a wound that should be directly fatal.

There writhe, and howl, 'till slow death relieve you !”

“ Meet end to such beginning !” cried the unhappy girl. “ Adulterous parent ! incestuous seducer ! kindred slayer ! ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !” and with a wild laugh she fell to the ground and lay with her eyes closed, motionless and for the moment senseless.

But he, with his child's blood smoking on his hand, shook his sword aloft fiercely against the legionaries, and leaping on his black horse which had arisen from the ground unhurt by its fall, galloped across the bridge ; and plunging through the underwood into the deep chesnut forest was lost to the view of the soldiers, who had spurred up in pursuit of him, that they abandoned it ere long as hopeless.

It was not long that Lucia lay oblivious of her sufferings. A sense of fresh coolness on her brow, and the checked flow of the blood, which gushed from those cruel wounds, were the first sensations of which she became aware.

But, as she opened her eyes, they met well known and loving faces ; and soft hands were busy about her bleeding gashes ; and hot tears were falling on her poor pallid face from eyes that seldom wept.

Julia was kneeling at her side, Paullus Arvina was bending over her in speechless gratitude, and sorrow ; and the stern cavaliers of the legion, unused to any soft emotions, stood round holding their chargers' bridles with frowning brows, and lips quivering with sentiments, which few of them had experienced since the far days of their gentler boyhood.

“ Oh ! happy,” she exclaimed, in a soft low tone, “ how happy it is so to die ! and in dying to see thee, Paullus.”

“ Oh ! no ! no ! no !” cried Julia, “ you must not, shall not die ! my friend, my sister ! O, tell her, Paullus, that she will not die, that she will yet be spared to our prayers, our love, our gratitude, our veneration.”

But Paullus spoke not ; a soldier, and a man used to see death in all shapes in the arena, he knew that there was no hope, and, had his life depended on it, he could not, at that moment have deceived her.

Little, however, cared the dying girl for that ; even if she had heard or comprehended the appeal. Her ears, her mind, were full of other thoughts, and a bright beautiful irradiation played over her wan lips and ashy features, as she cried joyously, although her voice was very tremulous and weak,

“ Paullus, do you hear that ? her friend ! her sister ! Paullus, Paullus, do you hear that ? Julia calls me her friend—me, me her sister ! me the disgraced—”

“ Peace ! peace ! Dear Lucia ! you must not speak such words !” said Paullus. Be your past errors what they may—and who am I, that I should talk of errors ?—this pure high love—this delicate devotion—this death most heroic and glorious no ! no ! I cannot—” and the strong man bowed his head upon his hands, and burst into an agony of tears and passion.

No revelation from on high had taught those poor Romans, that ‘ joy shall be in heaven, over the sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.’

Yet groping darkly on their way by the dim lights of nature and philosophy, they had perceived, at least, that it is harder far for one corrupted from her very childhood, corrupted by the very parents who should have guided, with all her highest qualities of mind and body perverted studiously till they had hardened into vices, to raise herself erect at once from the slough of sensuality and sin, and spring aloft, as the butterfly transmuted from the grub, into the purity and loveliness of virtue—than for one, who hath known no trial, suffered no temptation, to hold the path of rectitude unswerving.

And Julia, whose high soul and native delicacy were all incapable of comprehending the nature, much less the seductions, of such degradation, as that poor victim of parental villainy had undergone, saw clearly and understood at a glance, the difficulty, the gloriousness, the wonder of that beautiful regeneration.

“ No, no. Dear Lucia, dear sister, if you love that name,” she said in soothing tones, holding her cold hands clasped in her own quivering fingers, “ indeed, indeed you must not think or speak of yourself thus. Your sins, if you have sinned, are the sins of others, your virtues and

your excellence, all, all your own. I have heard many times of women, who have fallen from high virtue, in spite of noble teachings, in spite of high examples, and whom neither love nor shame could rescue from pollution—but never, never, did I hear of one who so raised herself, alone, unaided, in spite of evil teaching, in spite the atrocity of others, in spite of infamous examples, to purity, devotion such as thine! But, fear not, Lucia. Fear not, dearest girl, you shall not die, believe—”

“I do not fear, I desire it,” said the dying girl, who was growing weaker and fainter every moment. “To a life, and a love like mine, both guilty, both unhappy, death is a refuge, not a terror; and if there be, as you believe, who are so wise and virtuous, a place beyond the grave, where souls parted here on earth, may meet and dwell in serene and tranquil bliss, perhaps, I say, perhaps, Julia, this death may compensate that life—this blood may wash away the sin, the shame, the pollution.”

“Believe it, O believe it!” exclaimed Julia earnestly. “How else should the Gods be all-great and all-wise; since vice triumphs often *here*, and virtue pines in sorrow. Be sure, I say, be sure of it, there is a place hereafter, where all sorrows shall be turned to joy, all sufferings compensated, all inequalities made even. Be sure of that, dear Lucia.”

“I am sure of it,” she replied, a brighter gleam of pleasure crossing her features, on which the hues of death were fast darkening. “I am sure of it *now*. I think my mind grows clearer, as my body dies away. I see—I see—there is God! Julia—there is an hereafter—an eternity—rest for the weary, joy for the woful! yes! yes! I see—I feel it. We shall meet, Julia. We shall meet, Paullus, Paullus!” And she sank back fainting and overpowered upon Julia’s bosom.

In a moment or two, however, she opened her eyes again, but it was clear that the spirit was on the point of taking its departure.

“I am going!” she said in a very low voice. “I am going. His sword was more merciful than its master.—Bury me in a nameless grave. Let no stone tell the tale of unhappy, guilty Lucia. But come sometimes, Julia, Paullus, and look where I lie; and sometimes—will you not sometimes remember Lucia?”

"You shall live in our souls forever!" replied Julia, stooping down to kiss her.

"In your arms, Paullus, in your arms! will you not let me, Julia? 'Twere sweet to die in your arms, Paullus."—

"How can you ask?" cried Julia, who scarce could speak for the tears and sobs, which almost choked her.

"Here, Paullus, take her, gently, gently."

"Oh! sweet—oh! happy!" she murmured, as she leaned her head against his heart, and fixed her glazing eyes upon his features, and clasped his hand with her poor dying fingers. "She told you, Paullus, that for your love I died to save her!"

"She did—she did—dear, dearest Lucia!"—

"Kiss me," she whispered; "I am going very fast. Kiss me on the brow, Paullus, where years ago you kissed me, when I was yet an innocent child." Then, fancying that he hesitated, she cried, "you will let him kiss me, now, will you not, Julia? He is yours"—

"Oh! kiss her, kiss her, Paullus," exclaimed Julia eagerly, "how could you fancy, Lucia, that I should wish otherwise? kiss her lips, not her brow, Paullus Arvina."

"Kiss me first thou, dear Julia. I *may* call you dear."

"Dear Lucia, dearest sister!"

And the pure girl leaned over and pressed a long kiss on the cold lips of the unhappy, guilty, regenerated being, whose death had won for her honor, and life, and happiness.

"Now, Paullus, now," cried Lucia, raising herself from his bosom by a last feeble effort, and stretching out her arms, "now, ere it be too late!"—

He bowed down to her and kissed her lips, and she clasped her arms close about his neck, and returned that last chaste caress, murmuring "Paullus, mine own in death, mine own, own Paullus!"—

There was a sudden rigor, a passing tremulous spasm, which ran through her whole frame for a moment—her arms clasped his neck more tightly than before, and then released their hold, all listless and unconscious—her head fell back, with the eyes glazed and visionless, and the white lips half open.

"She is dead, Julia!" exclaimed Paullus, who was not

ashamed to weep at that sad close of so young and sorrowful a life, "dead for our happiness!"

"Hush! hush!" cried Julia, who was still gazing on the face of the dead—"There is a change—see! see! how beautiful, how tranquil!"—

And in truth a sweet placid smile had settled about the pallid mouth, and nothing can be conceived more lovely than the calm, holy, pure expression which breathed from every lineament of the lifeless countenance.

"She is gone, peace to her manes."

"She is at rest, now, Paullus, she is happy!" murmured Julia. "How excellent she was, how true, how brave, how devoted! Oh! yes! I doubt not, she is happy."

"The Gods grant it!" he replied fervently. "But I have yet a duty," and drawing his short straight sword he severed one long dark curl from the lifeless head, and raising it aloft in his left hand, while with the right he pointed heavenward the gleaming steel, "Ye Gods!" he cried, "supernal and infernal! and ye spirits and powers, shades of the mighty dead! Hear earth, and heaven, and thou Tartarus! by this good steel, by this right hand, in presence of this sacred dead, I swear, I devote Catiline and his hated head to vengeance! By this sword may he perish; may this hair be steeped in his lifeblood; may he know himself, when dying, the victim of my vengeance—may dogs eat his body—and his unburied spirit know neither Tartarus nor Elysium!"—

It was strange, but as he ceased from that wild imprecation, a faint flash of lightning veined the remote horizon, and a low clap of thunder rumbled afar off, echoing among the hills—perchance the last of a storm, unheard before and unnoticed by the distracted minds of the spectators of that scene.

But the superstitious Romans accepted it as an omen.

"Thunder!"—cried one.

"The Gods have spoken!"—

"I hail the omen!" exclaimed Paullus, sheathing his sword, and thrusting the tress of hair into his bosom. "By my hand shall he perish!"

And thenceforth, it was believed generally by the soldiers, that in the coming struggle Catiline was destined to fall, and by the hand of Paul Arvina.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE EVE OF BATTLE.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased.

MACBETH.

NEARLY a fortnight had elapsed since the rescue of Julia, and the sad death of Catiline's unhappy daughter, and yet the battle which was daily and hourly expected, had not been fought.

With rare ability and generalship, Catiline had avoided an action with the troops of Antonius, marching and countermarching among the rugged passes of the Appennines, now toward Rome, now toward Gaul, keeping the enemy constantly on the alert, harassing the consul's outposts, threatening the city itself with an assault, and maintaining with studious skill that appearance of mystery, which is so potent an instrument whether to terrify or to fascinate the vulgar mind.

During this period the celerity of his movements had been such that his little host appeared to be almost ubiquitous, and men knew not where to look for his descent, or how to anticipate the blow, which he evidently had it in contemplation to deliver.

In the meantime, he had given such of his adherents as fled from Rome immediately on the execution of the conspirators, an opportunity to join him, and many had in fact done so with their clients, and bands of gladiators.

The disaffected of the open country had all united themselves to him; and having commenced operations with a

force not exceeding two thousand men, he was now at the head of six times that number, whom he had formed into two complete legions, and disciplined them with equal assiduity and success.

Now, however, the time had arrived when it was for his advantage no longer to avoid an encounter with the troops of the commonwealth; for having gained all that he proposed to himself by his dilatory movements and Fabian policy, time namely for the concentration of his adherents, and opportunity to discipline his men, he now began to suffer from the inconveniences of the system.

Unsupplied with magazines, or any regular supply of provisions, his army like a flight of locusts had stripped the country bare at every halting place, and that wild hill country had few resources, even when shorn by the licentious band of his desperadoes, upon which to support an army. The consequence, therefore, of his incessant hurrying to and fro, was that the valleys of the mountain chain which he had made the theatre of his campaign, were now utterly exhausted; that his beasts of burthen were broken down and foundered; and that the line of his march might be traced by the carcasses of mules and horses which had given out by the wayside, and by the flights of carrion birds which hovered in clouds about his rear, prescient of the coming carnage.

His first attempt was to elude Metellus Celer, who had marched down from the Picene district on the Adriatic sea, with great rapidity, and taken post at the foot of the mountains, on the head waters of the streams which flow down into the great plain of the Po.

In this attempt he had been frustrated by the ability of the officer who was opposed to him, who had raised no less than three legions fully equipped for war.

By him every movement of the conspirator was anticipated, and met by some corresponding measure, which rendered it abortive. Nor was it, any longer, difficult for him to penetrate the designs of Catiline, since the peasantry and mountaineers, who had throughout that district been favorable to the conspiracy in the first instance, and who were prepared to favor any design which promised to deliver them from inexorable taxation, had been by this time so unmercifully plundered and harassed by that banditti,

that they were now as willing to betray Catiline to the Romans, as they had been desirous before of giving the Romans into his hands at disadvantage.

Fully aware of all these facts, and knowing farther that Antonius had now come up so close to his rear, with a large army, that he was in imminent danger of being surrounded and taken between two fires, the desperate traitor suddenly took the boldest and perhaps the wisest measure.

Wheeling directly round he turned his back toward Gaul, whither he had been marching, and set his face toward the city. Then making three great forced marches he came upon the army of Antonius, as it was in column of march, among the heights above Pistoria, and had there been daylight for the attack when the heads of the consul's cohorts were discovered, it is possible that he might have forced him to fight at disadvantage, and even defeated him.

In that case there would have been no force capable of opposing him on that side Rome, and every probability would have been in favor of his making himself master of the city, a success which would have gone far to insure his triumph.

It was late in the evening, however, when the hostile armies came into presence, each of the other, and on that account, and, perhaps, for another and stronger reason, Catiline determined on foregoing the advantages of a surprise.

Caius Antonius, the consul in command, it must be remembered, had been one of the original confederates in Catiline's first scheme of massacre and conflagration, which had been defeated by the unexpected death of Curius Piso.

Detached from the conspiracy only by Cicero's rare skill, and disinterested cession to him of the rich province of Macedonia, Antonius might therefore justly be supposed unlikely to urge matters to extremities against his quondam comrades; and it was probably in no small degree on this account that Catiline had resolved on trying the chances of battle rather against an old friend, than against an enemy so fixed, and of so resolute patrician principles as Metellus Celer.

He thought, moreover, that it was just within the calculation of chances that Antonius might either purposefully

mismancœuvre, so as to allow him to descend upon Rome without a battle, or adopt such tactics as should give him a victory.

He halted his army, therefore, in a little gorge of the hills opening out upon a level plain, flanked on the left by the steep acclivities of the mountain, which towered in that direction, ridge above ridge, inaccessible, and on the right by a rugged and rocky spur, jutting out from the same ridge, by which his line of battle would be rendered entirely unassailable on the flanks and rear.

In this wild spot, amid huge gray rocks, and hanging woods of ancient chesnuts and wild olive, as gray and hoary as the stones among which they grew, he had pitched his camp, and now lay awaiting in grim anticipation what the morrow should bring forth; while, opposite to his front, on a lower plateau of the same eminence, the great army of the consul might be descried, with its regular entrenchments and superb array of tents, its forests of gleaming spears, and its innumerable ensigns, glancing and waving in the cold wintry moonshine.

The mind of the traitor was darker and more gloomy than its wont. He had supped with his officers, Manlius and a nobleman of Fæsulæ, whose name the historian has not recorded, who held the third rank in the rebel army, but their fare had been meagre and insipid, their wines the thin vintage of that hill country; a little attempt at festivity had been made, but it had failed altogether; the spirits of the men, although undaunted and prepared to dare the utmost, lacked all that fiery and enthusiastic ardor, which kindles patriot breasts with a flame so pure and pervading, on the eve of the most desperate encounters.

Enemies of their country, enemies almost of mankind, these desperadoes were prepared to fight desperately, to fight unto the death, because to win was their only salvation, and, if defeated, death their only refuge.

But for them there was no grand heart-elevating spur to action, no fame to be won, no deathless name to be purchased—their names deathless already, as they knew too well, through black infamy!—no grateful country's praises, to be gained cheaply by a soldier's death!—no! there were none of these things.

All their excitements were temporal, sensual, earthy.

The hope to conquer, the lust to bask in the sunshine of power, the desire to revel at ease in boundless luxury and riot.

And against these, the rewards of victory, what were the penalties of defeat—death, infamy, the hatred and the scorn of ages.

The wicked have no friends. Never, perhaps, was this fact exemplified more clearly than on that battle eve. Community of guilt, indeed, bound those vicious souls together—community of interests, of fears, of perils, held them in league—yet, feeling as they did feel that their sole chance of safety lay in the maintenance of that confederation, each looked with evil eyes upon his neighbor, each almost hated the others, accusing them internally of having drawn them into their present perilous peril, of having failed at need, or of being swayed by selfish motives only.

So little truth there is in the principle, which Catiline had set forth in his first address to his banded parricides, “that the community of desires and dislikes constitutes, in one word, true friendship!”—

And now so darkly did their destiny lower on those depraved and ruined spirits, that even their recklessness, that last light which emanates from crime in despair, had burned out, and the furies of conscience,—that conscience which they had so often stifled, so often laughed to scorn, so often drowned with riot and debauch, so often silenced by fierce sophistry—now hunted them, harpies of the soul, worse than the fabulous Eumenides of parricide Orestes.

The gloomy meal was ended; the parties separated, all of them, as it would seem, relieved by the termination of those mock festivities which, while they brought no gaiety to the heart, imposed a necessity of seeming mirthful and at ease, when they were in truth disturbed by dark thoughts of the past, and terrible forebodings of the future.

As soon as his guests had departed and the traitor was left alone, he arose from his seat, according to his custom, and began to pace the room with vehement and rapid strides, gesticulating wildly, and muttering sentences, the terrible oaths and blasphemies of which were alone audible.

Just at this time a prolonged flourish of trumpets from without, announced the changing of the watch. It was

nine o'clock. "Ha! the third hour!" already, he exclaimed, starting as he heard the wild blast, "and Chærea not yet returned from Antonius. Can it be that the dog freedman has played me false, or can Antonius have seized him as a hostage?—I will go forth," he added, after a short pause, "I will go forth, and observe the night."

And throwing a large cloak over his armor, and putting a broad-brimmed felt hat upon his head, in lieu of the high crested helmet, he sallied out into the camp, carrying in addition to his sword a short massive javelin in his right hand.

The night was extremely dark and murky. The moon had not yet risen, and but for the camp-fires of the two armies, it would have been impossible to walk any distance without the aid of a torch or lantern. A faint lurid light was dispersed from these, however, over the whole sky, and thence was reflected weakly on the rugged and broken ground which lay between the entrenched lines of the two hosts.

For a while, concealed entirely by his disguise, Catiline wandered through the long streets of tents, listening to the conversation of the soldiers about the watch-fires, their strange superstitious legends, and old traditionary songs; and, to say truth, the heart of that desperate man was somewhat lightened by his discovery that the spirits of the men were alert and eager for the battle, their temper keen and courageous, their confidence in the prowess and ability of their chief unbounded.

"He is the best soldier, since the days of Sylla," said one gray-headed veteran, whose face was scarred by the Pontic scymetars of Mithridates.

"He is a better soldier in the field, than ever Sylla was, by Hercules!" replied another.

"Aye! in the field! Sylla, I have heard say, rarely unsheathed his sword, and never led his men to hand and hand encounter," interposed a younger man, than the old colonists to whom he spoke.

"It is the head to plan, not the hand to execute, that makes the great captain. Caius, or Marcus, Titus or Tullus, can any one of them strike home as far, perhaps farther, than your Syllas or your Catilines."

"By Mars! I much doubt it!" cried another. "I would

back Catiline with sword and buckler against the stoutest and the deftest gladiator that ever wielded blade. He is as active and as strong as a Libyan tiger."

"Aye! and as merciless."

"May the foe find him so to-morrow!"

"To-morrow, by the Gods! I wish it were to-morrow. It is cold work this, whereas, to-morrow night, I promise you, we shall be ransacking Antonius' camp, with store of choice wines, and rare viands."

"But who shall live to share them is another question."

"One which concerns not those who win."

"And by the God of Battles! we will do that to-morrow, let who may fall asleep, and who may keep awake to tell of it."

"A sound sleep to the slumberers, a merry rouse to the quick boys, who shall keep waking!" shouted another. and the cups were brimmed, and quaffed amid a storm of loud tumultuous cheering.

Under cover of this tumult, Catiline withdrew from the neighborhood, into which he had intruded with the stealthy pace of the beast to which the soldiers had compared him; and as he retired, he muttered to himself—"They are in the right frame of mind—of the right stuff to win—and yet—and yet—" he paused, and shook his head gloomily, as if he dared not trust his own lips to complete the sentence he had thus begun.

A moment afterward he exclaimed—"But Chærea! but Chærea! how long the villain tarries! By heaven! I will go forth and meet him."

And suiting the action to the word, he walked rapidly down the Quintana or central way to the Prætorian gate, there giving the word to the night-watch in a whisper, and showing his grim face to the half-astonished sentinel on duty, he passed out of the lines, alone and unguarded.

After advancing a few paces, he was challenged again by the pickets of the velites, who were thrust out in advance of the gates, and again giving the word was suffered to pass on, and now stood beyond the farthest outpost of his army.

Cautiously and silently, but with a swift step and determined air, he now advanced directly toward the front of the Roman entrenchments, which lay at a little more than

a mile's distance from his own lines, and ere long reached a knoll or hillock which would by daylight have commanded a complete view of the whole area of the consul's camp, not being much out of a sling's cast from the ramparts.

The camp of the consul lay on the slope of a hill, so that the rear was considerably higher than the front; Catiline's eye, as he stood on that little eminence, could therefore clearly discern all the different streets and divisions of the camp, by the long lines of lamps and torches which blazed along the several avenues, and he gazed anxiously and long, at that strange silent picture.

With the exception of a slight clash and clang heard at times on the walls, where the skirmishers were going on their rounds, and the neigh of some restless charger, there was nothing that should have indicated to the ear that nearly twenty thousand men were sleeping among those tented lines of light—sleeping how many of them their last natural slumber.

No thoughts of that kind, however, intruded on the mind of the desperado.

Careless of human life, reckless of human suffering, he gazed only with his enquiring glance of profound penetration, hoping to espy something, whereby he might learn the fate—not of his messenger, that was to him a matter of supreme indifference—but of his message to Antonius.

Nor was he very long in doubt on this head; for while he was yet gazing, there was a bustle clearly perceptible about the prætorium, lights were seen flitting to and fro, voices were heard calling and answering to one another, and then the din of hammers and sounds of busy preparation.

This might have lasted perchance half an hour, to the great amazement of the traitor, who could not conceive the meaning of that nocturnal hubbub, when the clang of harness succeeded by the heavy regular tramp of men marching followed the turmoil, and, with many torches borne before them, the spears and eagle of a cohort were seen coming rapidly toward the Prætorian Gate.

“By Hecate!” cried Catiline—“what may this mean, I wonder. They are too few for an assault, nay! even for

a false alarm. They have halted at the gate! By the Gods! they are filing out! they march hitherward! and lo! Manlius is aware of them. I will risk something to tarry here and watch them."

As he spoke, the cohort marched forward, straight on the hillock where he stood; and so far was it from seeking to conceal its whereabouts, that its trumpets were blown frequently and loudly, as if to attract observation.

Meantime the camp of Catiline was on the alert also, the ramparts were lined with torches, by the red glare of which the legionaries might be seen mustering in dense array with shields in serried order, and spear heads twinkling in the torch-light.

As the cohorts approached the hill, Catiline fell back toward his own camp a little, and soon found shelter in a small thicket of holleys and wild myrtle which would effectually conceal him from the enemy, while he could observe their every motion from its safe covert.

On the hillock, the cohort halted—one manipule stood to its arms in front, while the rest formed a hollow square, all facing outward around its summit. The torches were lowered, so that with all his endeavors, Catiline could by no means discover what was in process within that guarded space.

Again the din of hammers rose on his ear, mixed now with groans and agonizing supplications, which waxed at length into a fearful howl, the utterance of one, past doubt, in more than mortal agony.

A strange and terrible suspicion broke upon Catiline, and the sweat started in beadlike drops from his sallow brow. It was not long ere that suspicion became certainty.

The clang of the hammers ceased; the wild howls sank into a continuous weak pitiful wailing. The creak of pulleys and cordage, the shouts of men plying levers, and hauling ropes, succeeded, and slowly sullenly uprose, hardly seen in the black night air, a huge black cross. It reached its elevation, and was made fast in almost less time than it has taken to relate it, and instantly a pile of faggots which had been raised a short distance in front of it, and steeped in oil or some other unctuous matter, was set on fire.

A tall wavering snowwhite glare shot upward, and is-

vealed, writhing in agony, and wailing wofully, the naked form of Chærea, bleeding at every pore from the effects of the merciless Roman scourging, nailed on the fatal cross.

So near was the little thicket in which Catiline lay, that he could mark every sinew of that gory frame working in agony, could read every twitch of those convulsed features.

Again the Roman trumpets were blown shrill and piercing, and a centurion stepping forward a little way in front of the advanced manipule, shouted at the pitch of his voice,

“THUS PERISH ALL THE MESSENGERS OF PARRICIDES AND TRAITORS!”

Excited, almost beyond his powers of endurance, by what he beheld and heard, the fierce traitor writhed in his hiding place, not sixty paces distant from the speaker, and gnashed his teeth in impotent malignity. His fingers griped the tough shaft of his massive pilum, as if they would have left their prints in the close-grained ash.

While that ferocious spirit was yet strong within him, the wretched freedman, half frenzied doubtless by his tortures, lifted his voice in a wild cry on his master—

“Catiline! Catiline!” he shrieked so thrillingly that every man in both camps heard every syllable distinct and clear. “Chærea calls on Catiline. Help! save! Avenge! Catiline! Catiline!”

A loud hoarse laugh burst from the Roman legionaries, and the centurion shouted in derision.

But at that instant the desperate spectator of that horrid scene sprang to his feet reckless, and shouting, as he leaped into the circle of bright radiance,

“Catiline bears Chærea, and delivers,”—hurled his massive javelin with deadly aim at his tortured servant.

It was the first blow Catiline ever dealt in mercy, and mercifully did it perform its errand.

The broad head was buried in the naked breast of the victim, and with one sob, one shudder, the spirit was released from the tortured clay.

Had a thunderbolt fallen among the cohort, the men could not have been more stunned—more astounded. Before they had sufficiently recovered from their shock to cast a missile at him, much less to start forth in pursuit, he was half way toward his own camp in safety; and ere long a

prolonged burst, again and again reiterated, of joyous acclamations, told to the consular camp that the traitors knew and appreciated the strange and dauntless daring of this almost ubiquitous leader.

An hour afterward that leader was alone, in his tent, stretched on his couch, sleeping. But oh! that sleep—not gentle slumber, not nature's soft nurse—but nature's horrible convulsion! The eyes wide open, glaring, dilated in their sockets as of a strangled man—the brow beaded with black sweat drops—the teeth grinded together—the white lips muttering words too horrible to be recorded—the talon-like fingers clutching at vacancy.

It was too horrible to last. With a wild cry, "Lucia! Ha! Lucia! Fury! Avenger! Fiend!" he started to his feet, and glared around him with a bewildered eye, as if expecting to behold some ghastly supernatural visitant.

At length, he said, with a shudder—which he could not repress, "It was a dream! A dream—but ye Gods! what a dream! I will sleep no more—'till to-morrow. To-morrow," he repeated in a doubtful and enquiring tone, "to-morrow. If I should fall to-morrow, and such dreams come in that sleep which hath no waking, those dreams should be reality—that reality should be—HELL! I know not—I begin to doubt some things, which of yore I held certain! What if there should be Gods! avenging, everlasting torturers! If there should be a HELL! Ha! ha!" he laughed wildly and almost frantically. "Ha! ha! what matters it? Methinks this is a hell already!" and with the words he struck his hand heavily on his broad breast, and relapsed into gloomy and sullen meditation.

That night he slept no more, but strode backward and forward hour after hour, gnawing his nether lip till the blood streamed from the wounds inflicted by his unconscious teeth.

What awful and mysterious retribution might await him in the land of spirits, it is not for mortals to premise; but in this at least did he speak truth that night—conscience and crime may kindle in the human heart a Hell, which nothing can extinguish, so long as the soul live identical self-knowing, self-tormenting.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FIELD OF PISTORIA.

Make all our trumpets speak; give them all breath,
Those clamorous harbingers of blood and death.

MACBETH.

THE first faint streaks of day were scarcely visible in the east, when Catiline, glad to escape the horrors which he had endured through the dark solitude of the night watches, issued from his tent, armed at all points, and every inch a captain.

All irresolution, all doubt, all nervousness had passed away. Energy and the strong excitement of the moment had overpowered conscience; and looking on his high, haughty port, his cold hard eye, his resolute impassive face, one would have said that man, at least, never trembled at realities, far less at shadows.

But who shall say in truth, which are the shadows of this world, which the realities? Many a one, it may be, will find to his sorrow, when the great day shall come, that the hard, selfish, narrow fact, the reality after which his whole life was a chase, a struggle, is but the shadow of a shade; the unsubstantial good, the scholar's or the poet's dream, which he scorned as an empty nothing, is an immortal truth, an everlasting and immutable reality.

Catiline shook at shadows, whom not the 'substance of ten thousand soldiers armed in proof,' could move, unless it were to emulation and defiance.

Which were in truth more real, more substantial causes

of dismay, those shadows which appalled him, or those realities which he decried.

Ere that sun set, upon whose rising he gazed with an eye so calm and steadfast, that question, to him at least, was solved for ever—to us it is, perhaps, still a question.

But, at that moment, he thought nothing of the past, nothing of the future. The present claimed his whole undivided mind, and to the present he surrendered it, abstracted from all speculations, clear and unclouded, and pervading as an eagle's vision.

All his arrangements for the day had been made on the previous night so perfectly, that the troops were already filing out from the Prætorian gate in orderly array, and taking their ground on the little plain at the mouth of the gorge, in the order of battle which had been determined by the chiefs beforehand.

The space which he had selected whereon to receive the attack of Antonius' army, was indeed admirably chosen. Its front it was so narrow, that eight cohorts, drawn up in a line ten deep, according to the Roman usage, filled it completely; behind these, the twelve remaining cohorts, which completed the force of his two legions, were arrayed in reserve in denser and more solid order, the interval between the mountains on the left, and the craggy hill on the right, which protected his flanks, being much narrower as it ascended toward the gorge in which the rebel camp was pitched.

In front of the army, there was a small plain, perfectly level, lying in an amphitheatre, as it were, of rocks and mountains, with neither thicket, brake, nor hillock to mar its smooth expanse or hinder the shock of armies, and extending perhaps half a mile toward the consular army. Below this, the ground fell off in a long abrupt and rugged declivity, somewhat exceeding a second half mile in length, with many thickets and clumps of trees on its slope, and the hillock at its foot, whereon still frowned Chærea's cross with the gory and hideous carcase, already blackened by the frosty night wind, hanging from its rough timbers, an awful omen to that army of desperate traitors.

Beyond that hillock, the ground swelled again into a lofty ridge, facing the mouth of the gorge in which Cati-

line had arrayed his army, with all advantages of position, sun and wind in his favor.

The sun rose splendid and unclouded, and as his long rays streamed through the hollows in the mountain top, nothing can be conceived more wildly romantic than the mountain scene, more gorgeous and exciting than the living picture, which they illuminated.

The hoary pinnacles of the huge mountains with their crowns of thunder-splintered rocks, the eyries of innumerable birds of prey, gleaming all golden in the splendors of the dawn—their long abrupt declivities, broken with crags, feathered with gray and leafless forests, and dotted here and there with masses of rich evergreens, all bathed in soft and misty light—and at the base of them the mouth of the deep gorge, a gulf of massive purple shadow, through which could be descried indistinctly the lines of the deserted palisades and ramparts, whence had marched out that mass of living valor, which now was arrayed in splendid order, just where the broad rays, sweeping down the hills, dwelt in their morning glory.

Motionless they stood in their solid formation, as living statues, one mass, as it appeared, of gold and scarlet; for all their casques and shields and corslets were of bright burnished bronze, and all the cassocks of the men, and cloaks of the officers of the vivid hue, named from the flower of the pomegranate; so that, to borrow a splendid image of Xenophon describing the array of the ten thousand, the whole army lightened with brass, and bloomed with crimson.

And now, from the camp in the rear a splendid train came sweeping at full speed, with waving crests of crimson horse-hair dancing above their gleaming helmets, and a broad banner fluttering in the air, under the well-known silver eagle, the tutelary bird of Marius, the God of the arch-traitor's sacrilegious worship.

Armed in bright steel, these were the body guard of Catiline, three hundred chosen veterans, the clients of his own and the Cornelian houses, men steeped to the lips in infamy and crime, soldiers of fifty victories, Sylla's atrocious colonists.

Mounted on splendid Thracian chargers, with Catiline

at their head, enthroned like a conquering king on his superb black Erebus, they came sweeping at full gallop through the intervals of the foot, and, as they reached the front of the array, wheeled up at once into a long single line, facing their infantry, and at a single wafture of their leader's hand, halted all like a single man.

Then riding forward at a foot's pace into the interval between the horse and foot, Catiline passed along the whole line from end to end, surveying every man, and taking in with his rapid and instinctive glance, every minute detail in silence.

At the right wing, which Manlius commanded, he paused a moment or two, and spoke eagerly but shortly to his subordinate; but when he reached the extreme left he merely nodded his approbation to the Florentine, crying aloud in his deep tones the one word, "Remember!"

Then galloping back at the top of his horse's speed to the eagle which stood in front of the centre, he checked black Erebus so suddenly that he reared bolt-upright and stood for a second's space pawing the vacant air, uncertain if he could recover that rude impulse. But the rare horsemanship of Catiline prevailed, and horse and man stood statue-like and immoveable.

Then, pitching his voice so high and clear that every man of that dense host could hear and follow him, he burst abruptly into the spirited and stirring speech which has been preserved complete by the most elegant* of Roman writers.

"Soldiers, I hold it an established fact, that words cannot give valor—that a weak army cannot be made strong, nor a coward army brave, by any speech of their commander. How much audacity is given to each man's spirit, by nature, or by habit, so much will be displayed in battle. Whom neither glory nor peril can excite, you shall exhort in vain. Terror deafens the ears of his intellect. I have convoked you, therefore, not to exhort, but to admonish you in brief, and to inform you of the causes of my counsel. Soldiers, you all well know how terrible a disaster the cowardice and sloth of Lentulus brought on himself and us; and how, expecting reinforcements from

* Sallust.

the city, I was hindered from marching into Gaul. Now I would have you understand, all equally with me, in what condition we are placed. The armies of our enemy, two in number, one from the city, the other from the side of Gaul, are pressing hard upon us. In this place, were it our interest to do so, we can hold out no longer, the scarcity of corn and forage forbid that. Whithersoever we desire to go, our path must be opened by the sword. Wherefore I warn you that you be of a bold and ready spirit; and, when the battle have commenced, that ye remember this, that in your own right hand ye carry wealth, honor, glory, moreover liberty and your country. Victorious, all things are safe to us, supplies in abundance shall be ours, the colonies and free boroughs will open their gates to us. Failing, through cowardice, these self-same things will become hostile to us. Not any place nor any friend shall protect him, whom his own arms have not protected. However, soldiers, the same necessity doth not actuate us and our enemies. We fight for our country, our liberty, our life! To them it is supererogatory to do battle for the power of a few nobles. Wherefore, fall on with the greater boldness, mindful of your own valor. We might all of us, have passed our lives in utter infamy as exiles; a few of you, stripped of your property, might still have dwelt in Rome, coveting that of your neighbors. Because these things appeared too base and foul for men's endurance, you resolved upon this career. If you would quit it, you must perforce be bold. No one, except victorious, hath ever exchanged war for peace. Since to expect safety from flight, when you have turned away from the foe, that armor which defends the body, is indeed madness. Always in battle to who most fears, there is most peril. Valor stands as a wall to shield its possessor. Soldiers, when I consider you, and recall to mind your deeds, great hopes of victory possess me. Your spirit, age, and valor, give me confidence; moreover that necessity of conquest, which renders even cowards brave. As for the numbers of the enemy, the defiles will not permit them to surround you. And yet, should Fortune prove jealous of your valor, beware that ye lose not your lives unavenged; beware that, being captured, ye be not rather butch-

ered like sheep, than slain fighting like men, and leaving to your foes a victory of blood and lamentation."

He ceased, and what a shout went up, seeming to shake the earth-fast hill, scaring the eagles from their high nests, and rolling in long echoes, like reverberated thunder among the resounding hills. Twice, thrice, that soul fraught acclamation pealed up to heaven, sure token of resolution unto death, in the hardened hearts of that desperate banditti.

Catiline drank delighted inspiration from the sound, and cried in triumphant tones :

"Enough! your shout is prophetic! Soldiers, already we have conquered!"

Then leaping from his charger to the ground, he turned to his body-guard, exclaiming,

"To fight, my friends, we have no need of horses; to fly we desire them not! On foot we must conquer, or on foot die! In all events, our peril as our hope must be equal. Dismount then, all of ye, and leading your chargers to the rear slay them; so shall we all run equal in this race of death or glory!"

And, with the word, leading his superb horse through the intervals between the cohorts of the foot, he drew his heavy sword, and smote him one tremendous blow which clove through spine and muscle, through artery and vein and gullet, severing the beautiful head from the graceful and swanlike neck, and hurling the noble animal to the earth a motionless and quivering mass.

It was most characteristic of the ruthless and brutal temper of that parricidal monster, that he cut down the noble animal which had so long and so gallantly borne him, which had saved his life more than once by its speed and courage, which followed him, fed from his hand, obeyed his voice, like a dog, almost like a child, without the slightest show of pity or compunction.

Many bad, cruel, savage-hearted men, ruthless to their own fellows, have proved themselves not devoid altogether of humanity by their love to some faithful animal, but it would seem that this most atrocious of mankind lacked even the "one touch of nature which makes the whole world kin."

He killed his favorite horse, the only friend, perhaps,

that he possessed on earth, not only unreluctant, but with a sort of savage glee, and a sneering jest—

“If things go ill with us to day, I shall be fitly horsed on Erebus, by Hades !”

Then, hurrying to the van, he took post with his three hundred, and all the picked centurions and veterans of the reserve, mustered beneath the famous Cimbric Eagle, in the centre of the first rank, prepared to play out to the last his desperate and deadly game, the ablest chief, and the most daring soldier, that ever buckled blade for parricide and treason.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE BATTLE.

At least we'll die with harness on our back.

MACBETH.

It was indeed time that the last arrangements of the traitor were completed ; for, long since, from the gates of the Consular camp the great army of the enemy had been filing out, and falling into order, not a mile distant.

One third, at least, superior to the rebel host in numbers, the loyal soldiers were as high in spirit, as firm in resolution ; were better armed, better officered, and, above all, strong in a better cause.

Nor if those had the incentive of despair to spur them to great deeds, did these lack a yet stronger stimulus to action. There were bright eyes, and fair forms in their camp, dependent on their victory for life, and, yet dearer, honor. So great was the terror spread through those regions by the name of Catiline, and by the outrages committed already by his barbarous banditti, that all the female nobility of the provinces, wherein the war was waging, had fled to the Roman camp, as to their only place of safety.

For all that district was ripe for insurrection ; the borough towns awaited only the first sunshine of success, to join the rebellion ; the rural slaves were, to a man, false at heart ; and it was evident to all that the slightest check of the Consular forces would be the signal for tumult, massacre, and conflagration in the provincial towns, for all the horrors of a servile rising in the champaign.

Flight to Rome was impossible, since all the villainy and desperate crime of the land was afloat, and every where, beyond the outposts of Antonius' head quarters, the roads were infested with banditti, runaway slaves, and rustic robbers.

To the camp, therefore, had all the patricians of the district flocked, the men as volunteers, with such of their clients as they could trust, and such of their wealth as was portable; the women as suppliants, tearful and terrified, for Rome's powerful protection.

Meanwhile, for leagues around, by day the open country was seen blackened by numberless columns of smoke, by night flashing with numberless pyres of flame, the blaze of country seats and villas; and terror was on all sides, murder and rape, havoc and desolation.

The minds of the Roman soldiery were inflamed, therefore, to the utmost; the sight of the ravaged country, the charms, the tears, the terrors of the suppliant ladies, had kindled all that was patriotic, all that was generous, all that was manly in their nature; and it was with deep-recorded vows of vengeance that they had buckled on their armor, and grinded their thirsty swords for the conflict.

But throughout all that ardent host there was not one so determined, so calm in his resolved ire, so deadly bent on vengeance, as Paullus Arvina.

Julia was in the camp; for no means had occurred of sending her to Rome in safety, and her high counsels, her noble feminine courage, would have given birth alone to contagious valor in her lover's spirit, had he been weak and faltering as of old between his principles and his passions.

But it was not so. The stern trials to which his constancy had been subjected, the fearful strife of the hottest passions which had raged so long in his bosom, had hardened him like steel thrice tempered in the furnace, and he was now no longer the impulsive, enthusiastic, changeful stripling, in whom to-day's imagination swept away yesterday's resolve, but a cool, resolute, thoughtful man.

It is events, not years, which make men old or young. It is adversity and trial, not ease and prosperity, which make men, from dwarfs, giants.

And events had so crowded on the boy in the last few months, that those months had matured his wisdom more

than all the years of his previous life. Adversity and trial had so swelled his mental stature, that aged men might have been proud to cope with him in counsel, strong men to rival him in execution.

The sun was already high in heaven, when the cavalry of the seventh legion, which had been selected to act as the general's escort, in addition to the Prætorian cohort of infantry, swept forth from the gates, following Petreius, who, although holding the second rank only in the army, was actually in command; Antonius, on the pretext of a fit of the gout, having declined to lead that day.

The men were already marshalled at the base of the ascent, leading to the narrow plain on which, as in the amphitheatre, the fight was to be fought out hand to hand, with little room for generalship, or intricate manœuvring, but every opportunity for the display of mortal strength and desperate gallantry.

Here they had halted, on the verge of the broken ground, awaiting the arrival of their general in chief to reform their array, and complete their preparations, before advancing to the attack.

The lines of the enemy were concealed from them by the abrupt acclivity, and the level space on the top of the plateau, which intervened between the hosts; and it seemed probable that an officer of Catiline's intuitive eye and rapid resource, would not fail to profit by the difficulties of the ground, in order to assail the consular troops while struggling among the rocks and thickets which encumbered the ascent. It behoved, therefore, to hold the men well in hand, to fortify the heads of the advancing columns with the best soldiers, and to be ready with reinforcements at all points; and to this end Petreius had ordered a brief halt, before attacking.

So eager were the spirits of the men, however, and so hot for the encounter, that they were murmuring already almost angrily, and calling on their centurions and tribunes to lead them at once to the shock.

The fierce acclamations of the rebels, consequent on the address of Catiline, had kindled not daunted the brave indignation which possessed them; and stung, as it were, by some personal insult, each soldier of the array burned to be at it.

So stood the case, when, escorted by the magnificent array of the legionary horse, Petreius galloped through the ranks. A military man, by habit as by nature, who had served for more than thirty years as tribune, præfect of allies, commander of a legion, and lastly prætor, all with exceeding great distinction, he knew nearly all the men in his ranks by sight, was acquainted with their services and honors, had led them oftentimes to glory, and was their especial favorite.

He made no set speech, therefore, to his legions, but as he galloped through the lines called to this man or that by name, bidding him recollect this skirmish, or think upon that storm, fight as he did in this pitched battle, or win a civic crown as in that sally, and finally shouted to them all in a high voice, entreating them to remember that they were Roman soldiers, fighting against a rabble of unarmed banditti, for their country, their wives, their children, their hearths and their altars.

One full-mouthed shout replied to his brief address.

“Lead on! Petreius, we will conquer!”

He waved his hand toward the trumpeters, and nodded his high crested helmet; and instant there pealed forth that thrilling brazen clangor, “that bids the Romans close.”

Nor less sonorously did the war music of the rebels make reply, ringing among the hills their bold defiance.

Then onward rolled that bright array, with a long steady sweep, like that of an unbroken line of billows rushing in grand and majestic upon some sandy cape.

In vain did the sinuosities of the broken ground, in vain did crag and thicket, ravine and torrents’ bed impede their passage; closing their files or serrying them, as the nature of the ascent required, now wheeling into solid column, deploying now into extended line, still they rolled onward, unchecked, irresistible—

A long array of helmets bright,

A long array of spears.

The glorious eagles glittered above them in the unclouded sunshine, the proud initials, which had gleamed from their crimson banners over one half the world, shone out conspicuous, SPQR, as the broad folds streamed to their length upon the frosty air.

A solitary trumpet spoke at times, to order their slow

terrible advance; there was no hum of voices, no shout, no confusion; only the solemn and continuous tramp of their majestic march, shaking the earth like an incessant roll of thunder—only the clang of their brazen harness, as buckler clashed with buckler.

All the stern discipline, all the composed and orderly manœuvres, all the cold steadiness of modern war was there, combined with all the gorgeousness and glitter of the chivalric ages.

Contrary to all expectation, no opposition met them as they scaled that abrupt hill side. Fearful of exposing his flanks, Catiline wisely held his men back, collecting all their energies for the dread onset.

In superb order, regular and even, Petreius' infantry advanced upon the plateau, their solid front filling the whole space with a mass of brazen bucklers, ten deep, and thrice ten hundred wide, without an interval, or break, or bend in that vast line.

Behind these came the cavalry, about a thousand strong, and the Prætorian cohort, with the general in person, forming a powerful reserve, whereby he proposed to decide the day, so soon as the traitors should be shaken by his first onset.

Once more the line was halted; once more Petreius galloped to the van; and passed from left to right across the front, reconnoitering the dispositions of the enemy. Then taking post, at the right, he unsheathed his broadsword, and waved it slowly in the air, pointing to the impassive ranks of Catiline.

Then the shrill trumpets flourished once again, and the dense mass bore onward, steady and slow, the enemy still motionless and silent, until scarce sixty yards intervened between the steadfast ranks, and every man might distinguish the features and expression of his personal antagonist.

There was a pause. No word was given. No halt ordered. But intuitively, as if by instinct, every man stopped, and drew a deep breath, unconscious that he did so, collecting himself for the dread struggle.

The point was reached, from which it was customary to hurl the tremendous volley of ponderous steel-headed pila, which invariably preceded the sword charge of the legions,

and for the most part threw the first rank of the enemy into confusion, and left them an easy conquest to the short stabbing sword, and sturdy buckler.

But now not a javelin was raised on either side—the long stern swell of the trumpets, ordering the charge, was drowned by a deep solemn shout, which pealed wilder and higher yet into a terrible soul-stirring cheer; and casting down their heavy missiles, both fronts rushed forward simultaneously, with their stout shields advanced, and their short broadswords levelled to the charge.

From flank to flank, they met simultaneous, with a roar louder than that of the most deafening thunder, a shock that made the earth tremble, the banners flap upon their staves, the streams stand still, as if an earthquake had reeled under them.

Then rose the clang of blades on helm and buckler, clear, keen, incessant; and charging shouts and dying cries, and patriotic acclamations, and mad blasphemies; and ever and anon the piercing clangor of the screaming brass, lending fresh frenzy to the frantic tumult.

From right to left, the plain was one vast arena full of single combats—the whole first ranks on both sides had gone down at the first shock; the second and the third had come successively to hand to hand encounter; and still, as each man fell, stabbed to death by the pitiless sword, another leaped into his place; and still the lines, though bent on each side and waving like a bow, were steadfast and unbroken; and still the clang of brazen bucklers and steel blades rang to the skies, rendering all commands, all words, inaudible.

Officers fought like privates; skirmishers, hand to hand, like legionaries. Blood flowed like water; and so fierce was the hatred of the combatants, so deadly the nature of the tremendous stabbing broadswords of the Romans, that few wounds were inflicted, and few men went down 'till they were slain outright.

The dust stood in a solid mass over the reeling lines; nor could the wind, though it blew freshly, disperse the dense wreaths, so constantly did they surge upward from the trampling feet of those inveterate gladiators. At times, the waving of a banner would be seen, at times a gleamy brazen radiance, as some rank wheeled forward, or was

forced back in some desperate charge; but, for the most part, all was dim and dark, and the battle still hung balanced.

Wherever the fight was the fiercest, there rang the warshout "Catiline! Catiline!" to the darkened skies; and there ever would the Roman army waver, so furiously did he set on with his best soldiers, still bringing up reserves to the weakest points of his army, still stabbing down the fiercest of the consular host, fearless, unwearied, and unwounded.

But his reserves were now all engaged, and not one point of the Roman line was broken; Manlius had fallen in the front rank, playing a captain's and a soldier's part. The Florentine had fallen in the front rank, battling with gallantry worthy a better cause. All the most valiant officers, all the best veterans had fallen, in the first rank, all with their faces to the foe, all with their wounds in front, all lying on the spot which they had held living, grim-visaged, and still terrible in death.

"Paullus Arvina!" exclaimed Petreius, at this juncture, after having observed the equal strife long and intently, and having discerned with the eagle eye of a general's instinct what had escaped all those around him, that Catiline's last reserves were engaged. "The time is come; ride to the tribune of the horse, and bid him dismount his men. Horse cannot charge here! command the tribune of the Prætorian cohort to advance! We will strike full at the centre!"

"I go, Petreius!" and bowing his head, till his crimson crest mingled with his charger's mane, he spurred furiously to the rear, and had delivered his message and returned, while the shouts, with which the reserve had greeted the command to charge, were yet ringing in the air.

When he returned, the general had dismounted, and one of his freedmen was unbuckling the spurs from his steel greaves. His sword was out, and it was evident that he was about to lead the last onset in person.

"A boon, noble Petreius!" cried the youth, leaping from his horse—"By all the Gods! By all your hopes of glory! grant me one boon, Petreius."

"Ha! what?" returned the general quickly—"Speak out, be brief—what boon?"

“Be it mine to head the charge!”

“Art thou so greedy of fame, boy; or so athirst to die!”

“So greedy of Revenge, Petreius. I have a vow in Heaven, and in Hell, to slay that parricide. If he should die by any hand but mine, I am forsworn and infamous!”

“Thou, boy, and to slay Catiline!”

“Even I, Petreius.”

“Thou art mad to say it.”

“Not mad, not mad, indeed, Petreius ——.”

“He *will* slay him, Petreius,” cried an old veteran of Arvina’s troop. “The Gods thundered when he swore it. We all heard it. Grant his prayer, General; we will back him to the death. But be sure, he will slay him.”

“Be it so,” said Petreius, struck despite himself by the confidence of the youth, and the conviction of the veterans. “Be it so, if ye will. But, remember, when we have broken through the centre, wheel to the right with the dismounted horse—the Prætorians must charge to the left. Ho! we are all in line. Forward! Ho! Victory, and Rome!”—

And with the word, he rushed forward, himself a spear’s length in front of his best men, who, with a long triumphant shout, dashed after him.

Passing right through the wearied troops, who had sustained the shock and brunt of the whole day, and who now opened their ranks gladly to admit the reinforcement, these fresh and splendid soldiers fell like a thunderbolt upon the centre of Catiline’s army, weakened already by the loss of its best men; and clove their way clean through it, solid and unbroken, trampling the dead and dying under foot, and hurling a small body of the rebels, still combating in desperation, into the trenches of their camp, wherein they perished to a man refusing to surrender, and undaunted.

Then, wheeling to the left and right, they fell on the naked flanks of the reeling and disordered mass, while the troops whom they had relieved, re-forming themselves rapidly, pressed forward with tremendous shouts of victory, eager to share the triumph which their invincible steadiness had done so much to win.

It was a battle no longer; but a route; but a carnage.

Yet still not one of the rebels turned to fly; not one laid down his arms, or cried for quarter.

Broken, pierced through, surrounded, overwhelmed by numbers, they fought in single lines, in scattered groups, in twos or threes, back to back, intrepid to the last, and giving mortal wounds in their extreme agony.

More of the consular troops fell, after the field was won, than during all the previous combat. No lances, no long weapons, no missiles were at hand, wherewith to overwhelm the desperadoes; no horse wherewith to tread them under foot; hand to hand, man to man, it was fought out, with those short stabbing blades, against which the stoutest corslet was but as parchment, the hardest shield of brass-bound bull's hide, but as a stripling's wicker target.

Still in the front, abreast still with the bravest veterans shouting himself hoarse with cries of "To me! to me, Catiline, to me, Paul Arvina!" The young man had gone through the whole of that dreadful meleè; striking down a man at every blow, and filling the soldiers' mouths with wonder at the boy's exploits—he had gone through it all, without a scratch, unwounded.

More than once had his mortal enemy been almost within arm's length of him; their eyes had glared mutual hatred on each other, their blades had crossed once, but still the throng and rush of combatants and flyers had forced them asunder; and now the strife was almost ended, the tide of slaughter had receded toward the rebel camp, the ramparts of which the legionaries were already storming.

Weary and out of breath and disappointed, Paullus Arvina halted alone, among piles of the dying and the dead, with groans and imprecations in his ears, and bitterness and vexation at his heart.

His comrades had rushed away on the track of the retreating rebels; and their shouts, as they stormed the palisades, reached him, but failed to awake any respondent note of triumph in his spirit.

He had no share in the vulgar victory, he cared not to strike down and slaughter the commoners of the rebellion. Catiline was the quarry at which he flew, and with no game less noble could he rest contented. Ca-

tiline, it would seem, had escaped him for the moment; and he stood leaning on his red sword, doubtful.

Instinctively he felt assured that his enemy had not retreated. Almost he feared that his death had crowned some other hand with glory.

When suddenly, a mighty clatter arose in the rear, toward the Roman camp, and turning swiftly toward the sound, he perceived a desperate knot of rebels still charging frantically onward, although surrounded by thrice their numbers of inveterate and ruthless victors.

"By the Gods! he is there!" and with the speed of the hunted deer, he rushed toward the spot, bounding in desperate haste over the dying and the dead, blaspheming or unconscious.

He reached the *meleè*. He dashed headlong into the thick of it. The Romans were giving way before the fury of a gory madman, as he seemed, who bore down all that met him at the sword's point.

"Catiline! Catiline!" and at the cry, the boldest of the consular army recoiled. "Ho!—Romans! Ho! who will slay Sergius Catiline? Ho! Romans! Ho! His head is worth the winning! Who will slay Sergius Catiline?"

And, still at every shout, he struck down, and stabbed, and maimed, and trampled, even amid defeat and ruin victorious, unsubdued, a terror to his victors.

"Who will slay Sergius Catiline?"

And, as Arvina rushed upon the scene, the veteran who had so confidently announced his coming triumph, crossed swords with the traitor, and went down in a moment, stabbed a full span deep in his thigh.

"Ho! Romans! Ho! who will slay Sergius Catiline?"—

"Paullus Arvina!"—cried the youth, springing forward, and dealing him with the word a downright blow upon the head, which cleft his massive casque asunder.

"I will! I, even I, Paullus Arvina!"—

But he shouted too soon; and soon rued the imprudence of raising his arm to strike, when at sword's point with such a soldier.

As his own blow fell on the casque of the traitor, *his* shortened blade, aimed with a deadly thrust tore through

the sturdy shield, tore through the strong cuirass, and pierced his side with a ghastly wound.

Arvina staggered—he thought he had received his death blow ; and had not the blade of Catiline, bent by the violence of his own effort, stuck in the cloven shield, resisting every attempt to withdraw it, the next blow must have found him unprepared, must have destroyed him.

But ere the desperado could recover his weapon, Arvina rallied and closed with him, grasping him by the throat, and shouting “Lucia! Vengeance!”—

Brave as he was and strong, not for a single moment could Arvina have maintained that death-grapple, had his foe been unwounded.

But the arch traitor was bleeding at every pore ; gashed in every limb of his body ; he had received three mortal wounds already ; he was fast failing when Arvina grappled him, and at the name of his injured child, his conscience conquered. His sword at length came away, extricated when too late from the tough bull-hide ; but, ere he could nerve his arm to strike again, Arvina’s point had torn his thigh, had gored his breast, had pierced his naked throat, with three wounds, the least of them mortal.

But even in that agony he struck home ! He could not even curse, but he struck home, and a fierce joyous smile illuminated his wan face, as he saw his slayer stumble forward, and fall beside him on the bloody greensward.

In a moment, however, Paullus rallied, recovered his feet, drew from his bosom the long black ringlet of poor Lucia, and bathed it in the life blood of her slayer.

“Lucia! Ho! Lucia! Rejoice! my vow, my vow is kept! Thou art avenged, avenged! Ah! Lucia!—Julia!”—

And he fell sick and swooning upon the yet living bleeding body of his mortal foeman.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NIGHT OF HORROR.

Rider and horse, friend, foe, in one red burial blent.

CHILDE HAROLD.

THE battle was at an end ; the sun had set ; the calm and silvery moon was sailing through the azure skies ; as peaceful as though her pure light shone upon sights of happiness alone, and quiet. The army of the commonwealth had returned to their camp victorious, but in sadness, not triumph.

Of the magnificent array, which had marched out that morning from the Prætorian gate, scarce two-thirds had returned at sun-set.

And the missing were the best, the bravest, the most noble of the host ; for all the most gallant had fallen dead in that desperate struggle, or had sunk down faint, with wounds and bloodshed, beside the bodies of their conquered foemen.

Of the rebels there was not a remnant left ; some had escaped from that dread route ; and of that mighty power, which at the close of day was utterly exterminated, it is on record that neither in the combat, while it lasted, nor in the slaughter which followed it, was any free born citizen taken—a living captive.

For the numbers engaged on both sides it is probable that never in the annals of the world was there the like carnage ; nor is this wonderful, when the nature of the

ground, which rendered flight almost impossible to the vanquished, the nature of the weapons, which rendered almost every wound surely mortal, and the nature of the strife, which rendered the men of either party pitiless and desperate, are all taken into consideration.

In long ranks, like grass in the mower's swathes, the rebel warriors lay, with their grim faces, and glazed eyes, set in that terrible expression of ferocity which is always observed on the lineaments of those who have died from wounds inflicted by a stabbing weapon; and under them, or near them, in ghastly piles were heaped, scarce less in number, the corpses of their slaughtered conquerors. So equal was the havoc; so equal the value which the men had set on their own lives, and on those of their enemies.

Never perhaps had there been such, or so signal, a retribution. They who had taken to the sword had perished by the sword, not figuratively but in the literal meaning of the words. Stabbers by trade, they had fallen stabbed, by the hands of those whom they had destined to like massacre.

With the exception of the five chiefs who had already wrestled out their dark spirits, in the Tullianum, slavishly strangled, there was no traitor slain save by the steel blade's edge.

The field of Pistoria was the tribunal, the ruthless sword the judge and executioner, by which to a man the conspirators expiated their atrocious crimes.

No chains, no scaffolds followed that tremendous field. None had survived on whom to wreak the vengeance of the state. Never was victory so complete or final.

But in that victory there was no triumph, no joy, no glory to the victors.

So long, and so desperate had been the battle, so furiously contested the series of single combats into which it was resolved, after the final and decisive charge of the Prætorian cohort, that the shades of the early winter night were already falling over the crimson field, when, weak and shattered, sorrowful and gloomy, the Roman host was recalled by the wailing notes of the brazen trumpets from that tremendous butchery.

The watches were set, as usual, and the watch fires kindled; but no shouts of the exulting soldiers were to be

heard hailing their general "Imperator;" no songs of triumph pealed to the skies in honor of the great deeds done, the deathless glory won; no prizes of valor were distributed; no triumph—not an oration even—was to be hoped for by the victorious leader of that victorious host, which had conquered indeed for the liberties of Rome, but had conquered, not on foreign earth, in no legitimate warfare, against no natural foe, but on the very soil of the republic, at the very gates of Rome, in an unnatural quarrel, against Romans, citizens, and brothers.

The groans of the wounded, the lamentations of friends, the shrieks of women, went up the livelong night from that woful camp. To hear that grievous discord, one would have judged it rather the consequences of defeat than of victory, however sad and bloody.

No words can express the anguish of the ladies, with whom the camp was crowded, as rushing forth to meet the returning legions, they missed the known faces altogether, or met them gashed and pallid, borne home, perhaps to die after long suffering, upon the shields under which they had so boldly striven.

Enquiries were fruitless. None knew the fate of his next neighbor, save in so much as this, that few of those who went down in such a meleè, could be expected ever again to greet the sunrise, or hail the balmy breath of morning.

Averted heads and downcast eyes, were the sole replies that met the wives, the mothers, the betrothed maidens, widowed ere wedded, as with rent garments, and dishevelled hair, and streaming eyes, they rushed into the sorrowful ranks, shrieking, "Where are they," and were answered only by the short echo, "Where."

Such was the fate of Julia. No one could tell her aught of her Arvina; until at a late hour of the night, remembering her solitary situation and high birth, and taking a deep interest in her sorrows, Petreius himself visited her, not to instil false hope, but to console if possible her wounded spirit by praises of her lost lover's conduct.

"He fought beside my right hand, Julia, through the whole of that deadly struggle; and none with more valor, or more glory. He led the last bloody onset, and was the first who cut his way through the rebel centre. Julia, you

must not weep for him, you must not envy him such glory. Julia, he was a hero."

"*Was!*" replied the poor girl, with clasped hands and streaming eyes—"then he *is* no longer?"

"I do not know, but fear it," said the stout soldier; "He had vowed himself to slay Catiline with his own hands. Such vows are not easy, Julia, nor safe of performance."

"And Catiline?" asked Julia,—“the parricide—the monster?"

"Has not survived the strife. None of the traitors have survived it," replied Petreius. "But how he fell, or where, as yet we know not."

"Paullus hath slain him! my own, my noble Paullus."

"I think so, Julia," answered the general.

"I know it," she said slowly—"but what availeth that to me—to me who had rather hear one accent of his noble voice, meet one glance of his glorious eye—alas! alas! my Paullus! my Lord! my Life! But I will not survive him!"

"Hold, Julia, hold! I would not nurse you to false hopes, but he may yet be living; many are wounded doubtless, who shall be saved to-morrow—"

"To-morrow?" she exclaimed, a gleam of hope bursting upon her soul like the dayspring. "Why not to-night?—Petreius, I say, why not to-night?"

"It *is* impossible. The men are all worn out with wounds and weariness, and must have daylight to the task. Dear girl, it is impossible."

"I will go forth myself, alone, unaided, I will save him."

"You must not, Julia."

"Who shall prevent me? Who dare to part a betrothed maiden from her true lover,—true, alas! in death! in death!"

"I will," replied Petreius firmly. "You know not the perils of such a night as this. The gaunt wolves from the Appennines; the foul and carrion vultures; the plundering disbanded soldiers; the horrid unsexed women, who roam the field of blood more cruel than the famished wolf, more sordid than the loathsome vulture. I will prevent you, Julia. But with the earliest dawn to-morrow I will my-

self go with you. Fare you well, try to sleep, and hope, hope for the best, poor Julia."

And with a deep sigh at the futility of his consolation, the noble Roman left the tent, giving strict orders to the peasant girls who had been pressed into her service, and to Arvina's freedmen who were devoted to her, on no account to suffer her to leave the camp that night, and even, if need were, to use force to prevent her.

Meanwhile the frost wind had risen cold and cutting over the field of blood. Its chilly freshness, checking the flow of blood and fanning the brow of many a maimed and gory wretch, awoke him to so much at least of life, as to be conscious of his tortures; and loud groans, and piercing shrieks, and agonizing cries for water might be heard now on all sides, where, before the wind rose, there had been but feeble wailings and half-unconscious lamentations.

Then came a long wild howl from the mountain side, another, and another, and then the snarling fiendish cry of the fell wolf-pack.

Gods! what a scream of horrid terror rose from each helpless sufferer, unanimous, as that accursed sound fell on their palsied ears, and tortured them back into life.

But cries were of no avail, nor prayers, nor struggles, nor even the shouts, and trumpet blasts, and torches of the legionaries from the camp, who hoped thus to scare the bloodthirsty brutes from their living prey, of friend and foe, leal comrade and false traitor.

It was all vain, and ere long to the long-drawn howls and fierce snarls of the hungry wolves, battenning upon their horrid meal, were added the flapping wings and croaking cries of innumerable night birds flocking to the carnage; and these were blended still with the sharp outcries, and faint murmurs, that told how keener than the mortal sword were the beak and talon, the fang and claw, of the wild beast and the carrion fowl.

Such, conquerors, such a thing is glory!

That frost wind, among others awakened Paullus to new life, and new horrors. Though gashed and weak from loss of blood, none of his wounds were mortal, and yet he felt that, unaided, he must die there, past doubt, even if spared by the rending beak, and lacerating talon.

As he raised himself slowly to a sitting posture, and was feeling about for his sword, which had fallen from his grasp as he fainted, he heard his name called feebly by some one near him.

“Who calls Arvina?” he replied faintly. “I am here.”

“I, Caius Pansa,” answered the voice; it was that of the old legionary horseman, who had predicted so confidently the fall of Catiline by the hand of Paullus. “I feared thou wert dead.”

“We shall both be dead soon, Caius Pansa,” replied the young man. “Hark! to those wolves! It makes my very flesh creep on my bones! They are sweeping this way, too.”

“No! no! cheer up, brave heart,” replied the veteran. “We will not die this bout. By Hercules! only crawl to me, thou. My thigh is broken, and I cannot stir. I have wine here; a warming draught, in a good leather bottle. Trust to old Caius for campaigning! I have life enough in me to beat off these howling furies. Come, Paullus; come, brave youth. We will share the wine! You shall not die this time. I saw you kill that dog—I knew that you would kill him. Courage, I say, crawl hitherward.”

Cheered by the friendly voice, the wounded youth crept feebly and with sore anguish to the old trooper’s side, and shared his generously proffered cup; and, animated by the draught, and deriving fresh courage from his praises, endured the horrors of that awful night, until the day breaking in the east scared the foul beasts and night birds to their obscene haunts in the mountain peaks and caverns.

Many times the gory wings had flapped nigh to them, and the fierce wolf-howls had come within ten feet of where they sat, half recumbent, propped on a pile of dead, but still their united voices and the defensive show which they assumed drove off the savages, and now daylight and new hopes dawned together, and rescue was at hand and certain.

Already the Roman trumpets were heard sounding, and the shouts of the soldiers, as they discerned some friend living, or some leader of the rebels dead or dying, came swelling to their ears, laden with rapture, on the fresh morning air.

At this moment, some groans broke out, so terribly

acute and bitter, from a heap of gory carcasses hard by Arvina and the old trooper, that after calling several times in vain to enquire who was there, the veteran said,

“It were pity, Paullus, that after living out such a me-
leè as this, and such a night as the last, any poor fellow
should die now. Cannot you crawl to him with the flask,
and moisten his lips; try, my Paullus.”

“I will try, Caius, but I am stiffer than I was, and my
hurts shoot terribly, but I will try.”

And with the word, holding the leathern bottle in his
teeth, he crawled painfully and wearily toward the spot
whence the sounds proceeded; but ere he reached it,
creeping over the dead, he came suddenly on what seemed
a corpse so hideous, and so truculently savage, so horribly
distorted in the death pang, that involuntarily he paused to
gaze upon it.

It was Catiline, although at first he recognised him not,
so frightfully was his face altered, his nether lip literally
gnawed half-through, by his own teeth in the death agony,
and his other features lacerated by the beak and talons of
some half-gorged vulture.

But, while he gazed, the heavy lids rose, and the glazed
eyes stared upon him in ghastly recognition; Paullus knew
him at the same moment, and started back a little, draw-
ing a deep breath through his set teeth, and murmuring,
“Ah! Catiline!”

The dying traitor’s lips were convulsed by a fearful sar-
donic grin, and he strove hard to speak, but the words rat-
tled in his throat inarticulate, and a sharp ruckling groan
was the only sound that he uttered.

But with a mighty effort he writhed himself up from the
ground, and drove his sword, which he still clasped in his
convulsed fingers, by a last desperate exertion through
Paullus’ massive corslet, and deep into his bosom.

With a sharp cry the youth fell prone, and after two
or three struggles to arise, lay on his face motionless, and
senseless.

Catiline dropped back with a fiendish grin, and eyes
rolling in a strange mixed expression of agony and triumph;
while old Pansa, after crying, twice or thrice, “Paullus,
ho! noble Paullus!” exclaimed mournfully, “Alas! He is
dead! He is dead! And I it is who have slain him.”

Within half an hour, Petreius and his guards with several mounted officers, and a lady upon a white palfrey, came riding slowly toward the fatal spot, pausing from time to time to examine every pile of carcasses, and after causing his men to dismount and turn over the bodies, in the hope of finding him they sought.

Their search had hitherto been fruitless, and unrewarded even by the discovery of any wounded friends or comrades, for this was the place in which the battle had been most desperately contested, and few had fallen here but to die almost on the instant.

But now a weak voice was heard calling to the general.

"Petreius, he is here! here! He is here, noble Petreius!"

"The immortal Gods be praised!" cried Julia, interpreting the casual words at once to signify Arvina, and giving her palfrey the rein, she galloped to the spot, followed by Petreius shaking his head gloomily; for he was not so deceived.

"Who? who is here?" exclaimed the general. "Ha! my stout Pansa, right glad am I to find you living. See to him, quickly, Postumus, and Capito. But whom do you mean? Who is here?"

"Catiline! Paullus Arvina slew him!"—

"By all the Gods!" exclaimed Petreius, leaping down from his horse and gazing at the hideous mutilated carcass, still breathing a little, and retaining in its face that ferocity of soul which had distinguished it while living!

But swifter yet than he, Julia sprang from her saddle, and rushed heedless and unconscious, through pools of blood, ankle deep, treading on human corpses, in her wild haste, and cast herself down on the well known armor, the casque crested and the cloak embroidered by her own delicate hands, which could alone be distinguished of her lover's prostrate form.

"Aye! me! aye me! dead! dead! my own Arvina!"

"Alas! alas!"—cried Petreius, "Raise her up; raise them both, this is most lamentable!"—

"Never heed me!" said the veteran Pansa, eagerly, to the officers who were busy raising him from the ground. "Help the poor girl! Help the brave youth! He may be

living yet, though I fear me not. It is my fault, alas! that he is not living now!"

"Thy fault, old Pansa, how can that be, my friend?—who slew him?"

Once more the rigid features of Catiline relaxed into a horrid smile, the glaring eyes again opened, and starting half upright he shook his hand aloft, and with a frightful effort, half laugh, half groan, half words articulate, sneered fiendishly—"I! I. Ha! ha! I did. Ha! ha! ha! ha!"—

But at the same instant there was a joyous cry from the officers who had lifted Paullus, and a rapturous shriek from Julia.

"He is not dead!"

"His hurts are not mortal, lady, it is but loss of blood."

"He lives! he lives!"—

"Curses! cur—cur—ha! ha!—this—this is—Hades!"

The fierce sneer died from the lips, a look of horror glared from the savage eyes, the jaw gibbered and fell, a quick spasm shook the strong frame, and in a paroxysm of frustrated spite, and disappointed fury, the dark spirit, which had never spared or pitied, went to its everlasting home.

It was the dead of winter, when the flame of rebellion was thus quenched in rebel blood; Cicero still was consul. But it was blithesome springtide, and the great orator had long since sworn THAT HE HAD SAVED HIS COUNTRY, among the acclamations of a people for once grateful; had long since retired into the calm serenity of private life and literary leisure, when Paullus was sufficiently recovered from his wounds to receive the thanks of his friend and benefactor; to receive in the presence of the good and great Consular his best reward in the hand of his sweet Julia. It was balmy Italian June, and all in Rome was peace and prosperity, most suitable to the delicious season, when on the sacred day of Venus, * clad in her snow-white bridal robe, with its purple ribands and fringes, her blushing face concealed by the saffron-colored nuptial veil, the lovely girl was borne, a willing bride, over the threshold of her noble husband's mansion, amid the merry

* Friday.

blaze of waxen torches, and the soft swell of hymeneal music, and the congratulations of such a train of consuls, consulars, senators and patricians, as rarely had been seen collected at any private festival. In a clear voice, though soft and gentle, she addressed Paullus with the solemn formula—

“Where thou art Caius, I am Caia.”

Thenceforth their trials ceased, their happiness began; and thenceforth, they two were one for ever. And, for years afterward, when Roman maidens called blessings down upon a kindred bride, they had no fairer fate to wish her than to be happy as Arvina's Julia.

And how should any man be blessed, in this transitory life, if not by the love of such a girl as Julia, the friendship of such a man as Cicero, the fame of such a deed, as the death of **THE ROMAN TRAITOR.**

THE END.

NOTES TO THE ROMAN TRAITOR.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to state, that the oration of Cicero in the 37th page of the second volume, those of Cæsar and Cato in the 137th and 142d pages, and that of Catiline in the 217th page of the same, are all literal translations from the actual speeches delivered on those occasions, and recorded by Cicero and Sallust.

It was absolutely necessary for the truth and spirit of the romance, that these speeches should be inserted; and the author considered that it would be equally vain and absurd to attempt fictitious orations, when these master-pieces of ancient eloquence were extant.

This brief explanation made, no farther notes will, I believe, be found necessary; as the few Latin words which occur in the body of the work are explained therein; and the costumes and customs are described so much in detail, that they will be readily comprehended even by the unclassical reader.

A table is appended, containing the Roman and English Calendars of the three months during which all the events of the conspiracy occurred, illustrating the complicated and awkward mode of Roman computation; and this, I believe, is all that is needful in the way of simplifying or elucidating the narrative.

TABLE OF THE ROMAN CALENDAR

FOR THE MONTHS OF
OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, AND DECEMBER,
B.C. 63.

OCTOBER, B.C. 63.

Modern Reckoning.	Roman Reckoning.	Events.
1	CALENDS OF OCTOBER.	
2	VI	
3	V	} Days before the Nones.
4	IV	
5	III	
6	<i>Day before the Nones.</i>	
7	NONES OF OCTOBER.	
8	VIII	
9	VII	} Days before the Ides of October.
10	VI	
11	V	
12	IV	
13	III	
14	<i>Day before the Ides.</i>	
15	IDES OF OCTOBER.	
16	XVII	} Days before the Calends of November.
17	XVI	
18*	XV	
19	XIV	
20	XIII	
21†	XII	
22‡	XI	
23	X	
24	IX	
25	VIII	
26	VII	
27	VI	
28	V	
29	IV	
30	III	
31	<i>Day before the Calends of November.</i>	

* On this day the Consular elections should have been held, but were postponed by the Senate at the request of the consul, Cicero.

† Cicero delivered a speech (not one of the orations) against Catiline, disclosing the plan of the conspiracy.

‡ The Consular Elections were held, and Decius Junius Silanus and Lucius Licinius Muræna elected Consuls for the year ensuing.

|| Day originally appointed by Catiline for the murder of Cicero.

NOVEMBER, B.C. 63.

Modern Reckoning.	Roman Reckoning.	Events.
1*	CALENDS OF NOVEMBER.	* Day appointed by Cati
2	IV } Days before the	line for the seizure of the cita
3	III } Nones.	del of Præneste—now Pales
4	<i>Day before the Nones.</i>	trina.
5	NONES OF NOVEMBER.	
6†	VIII } Days before	† Second meeting of the
7†	VII } the Ides	Conspirators at the house of
8	VI } of November.	Marcus Portius Læca.
9	V }	‡ Cicero's murder attempt-
10	IV }	ed.
11	III }	Cicero delivered his first
12	<i>Day before the Ides.</i>	Oration in the Senate against
13	IDES OF NOVEMBER.	Catiline; and on the same
14	XVIII }	night Catiline fled to the camp
15	XVII }	of Caius Manlius, at Fæsulæ,
16	XVI }	now Fiesole, near Florence.
17	XV } Days before	On the following day Cicero
18	XIV } the	delivered the second oration,
19	XIII } Calends	justifying his conduct to the
20	XII }	whole people in the Forum.
21	XI }	
22	X }	
23	IX } of	
24	VIII }	
25	VII } December.	
26	VI }	
27	V }	
28	IV }	
29	III }	
30	<i>Day before the Calends</i> <i>of December.</i>	

DECEMBER, B.C. 63.

Modern Reckoning.	Roman Reckoning.	Events.
1	CALENDS OF DECEMBER.	
2	IV } Days before the	
3*	III } Nones.	* The conspirators arrested.
4	<i>Day before the Nones.</i>	
5†	NONES OF DECEMBER.	† Cicero delivers his third oration before the Senate, and his fourth before the people.
6‡	VIII)	‡ Execution of Lentulus, Cethegus, Gabinius, Statilius, and Cæparius.
7	VII)	
8	VI) Days before	
9	V) the Ides	
10	IV) of December.	
11	III)	
12	<i>Day before the Ides.</i>	
13	IDES OF DECEMBER.	
14	XVIII)	
15	XVII)	
16	XVI)	
17	XV) Days before	
18	XIV)	
19	XIII) the	
20	XII)	
21	XI) Calends	
22	X)	
23	IX) of	
24	VIII)	
25	VII) January.	
26	VI)	It is a matter of some question, whether the battle of Pistoria was fought, and Catiline slain, during the remainder of this month, or early in the following January.—The question being doubtful, for the sake of unity, I have assumed that it was fought on or about the 26th day of the month.
27	V)	
28	IV)	
29	III)	
30§	<i>Day before the Calends of January.</i>	§ Cicero abdicated the Consulship, and swore that he had saved his country.

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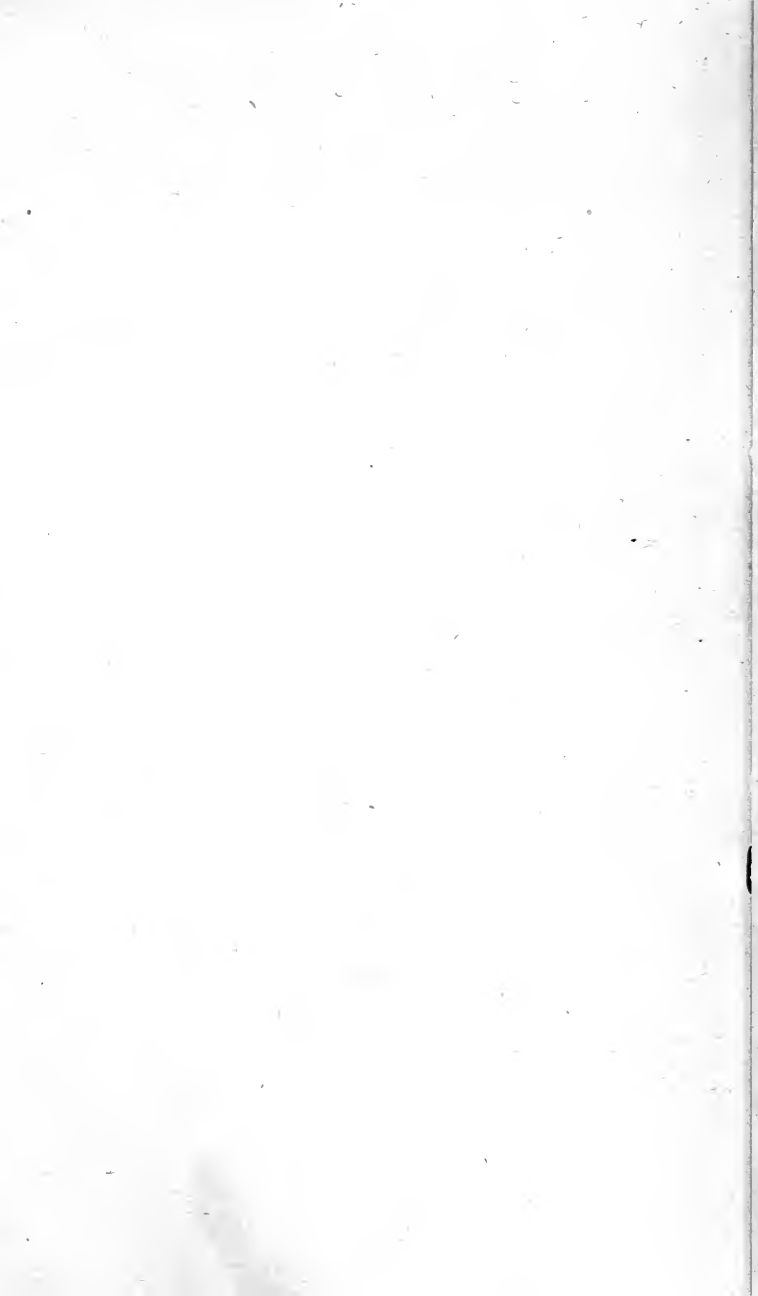
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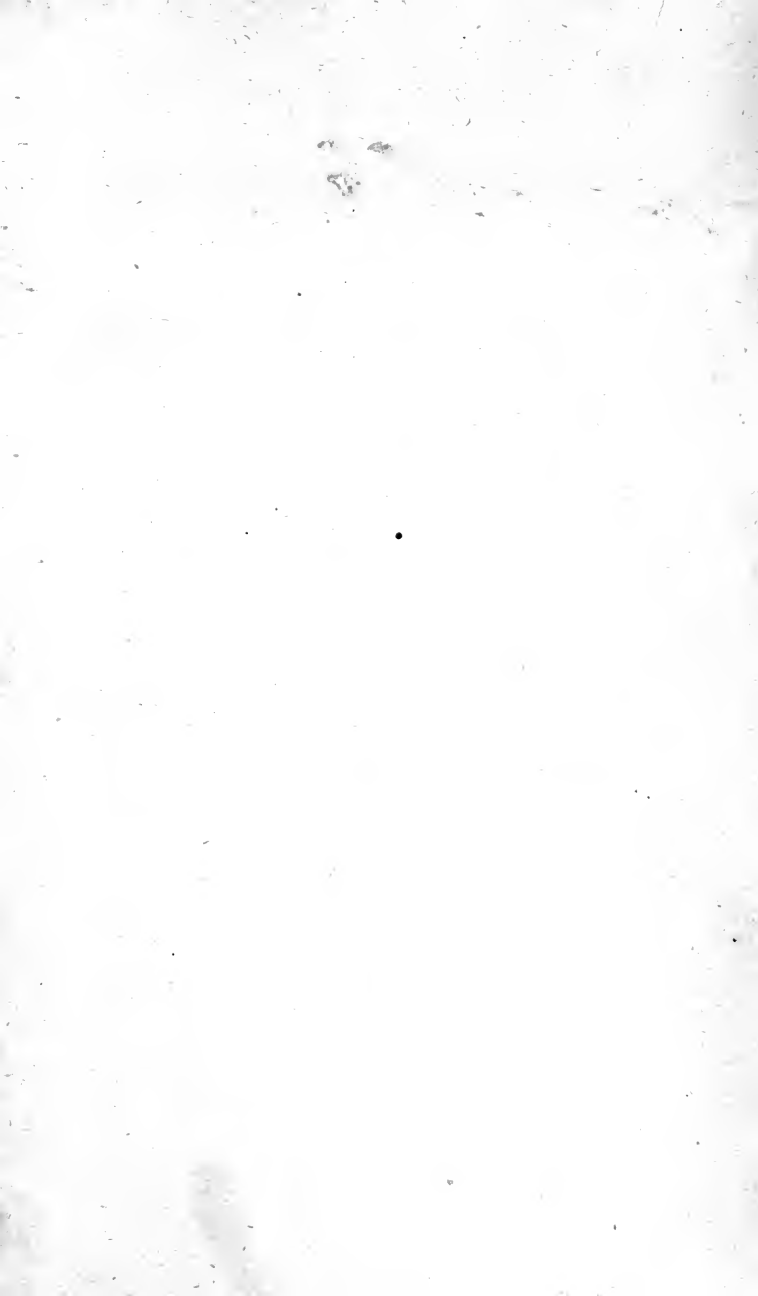






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