THE LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

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

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

Page 159, line 18, for "in the gaping rustics" read "to the gaping rustics."

169, line 3, for "commissator" read "comissator."

237, line 7, for "Midas" read "Minos."

Theocritus.
THE
LAST DAYS OF POMPEII.

BOOK III.

$\text{Theocritus.}$
THE LAST DAYS
OF
POMPEII.

CHAPTER I.

THE FORUM OF THE POMPEIANS;—THE FIRST RUDE MACHINERY BY WHICH THE NEW ERA OF THE WORLD WAS WROUGHT.

It was early noon, and the forum was crowded alike with the busy and the idle. As at Paris at this day, so at that time in the cities of Italy, men lived almost wholly out of doors—the public buildings—the forum—the porticos—the baths—the temples themselves—might be considered their real homes; it was no wonder that they decorated so gorgeously these favourite places of resort, they felt for them a sort of domestic affection as well as a public pride. And animated was indeed the aspect of the Forum of Pompeii at that time! Along
its broad pavement, composed of large flags of marble, were assembled various groups conversing in that energetic fashion which appropriates a gesture to every word, and which is still the characteristic of the people of the South. Here, in seven stalls on one side the colonnade, sate the money-changers, with their glittering heaps before them, and merchants and seamen in various costumes crowding round their stalls. On one side, several men in long togas* were seen bustling rapidly up to a stately edifice where the magistrates administered justice—these were the lawyers—active, chattering, joking, and punning, as you may find them at this day in Westminster. In the centre of the space, pedestals supported various statues, of which the most remarkable was the stately form of Cicero. Around the court ran a regular and symmetrical colonnade of Doric architecture, and there several, whose business drew them early to the place, were taking the slight morning repast which made an Italian breakfast, talking vehemently on the earthquake

* For the lawyers, and the clients when attending on their patrons, retained the toga after it had fallen into disuse among the rest of the citizens.
of the preceding night, as they dipped pieces of bread in their cups of diluted wine. In the open space, too, you might perceive various petty traders exercising the arts of their calling. Here one man was holding out ribands to a fair dame from the country; another man was vaunting to a stout farmer, the excellence of his shoes; a third, a kind of stall-restaurateur, still so common in the Italian cities, was supplying many a hungry mouth with hot messes from his small and itinerant stove. While—contrast strongly typical of the mingled bustle and intellect of the time—close by, a schoolmaster was expounding to his puzzled pupils the elements of the Latin grammar.* A gallery above the portico, which was ascended by small wooden staircases, had also its throng, though, as here the immediate business of the place was mainly carried on, its groups wore a more quiet and serious air.

* In the Museum at Naples is a picture little known, but representing one side of the forum at Pompeii as then existing, to which I am much indebted in the present description. It may afford a learned consolation to my younger readers to know that the ceremony of hoisting (more honoured in the breach than the observance) is of high antiquity, and seems to have been performed with all legitimate and public vigour in the forum of Pompeii.
Every now and then the crowd below respectfully gave way as some senator swept along to the temple of Jupiter, (which filled up one side of the forum, and was the senators' hall of meeting,) nodding with ostentatious condescension to such of his friends or clients as he distinguished amongst the throng. Mingling amidst the gay dresses of the better orders you saw the hardy forms of the neighbouring farmers, as they made their way to the public granaries. Hard by the temple you caught a view of the Triumphal Arch and the long street beyond swarming with inhabitants; in one of the niches of the arch a fountain played, cheerily sparkling in the sunbeams; and above its cornice, strongly contrasting the gay summer skies, gloomed the bronzed and equestrian statue of Caligula. Behind the stalls of the money-changers was that building now called the Pantheon, and a crowd of the poorer Pompeians passed through the small vestibule which admitted to the interior, with panniers under their arms, pressing on towards a platform, placed between two columns, where such provisions as the priests had rescued from sacrifice were exposed for sale.
At one of the public edifices appropriated to the business of the city, workmen were employed upon the columns, and you heard the noise of their labour every now and then rising above the hum of the multitude;—the columns are unfinished to this day!

All, then, united, nothing could exceed in variety the costumes, the ranks, the manners, the occupations of the crowd; nothing could exceed the bustle, the gaiety, the animation, the flow and flush of life all around. You saw there all the myriad signs of a heated and feverish civilization; where pleasure and commerce, idleness and labour, avarice and ambition, mingled in one gulf their motley, rushing, yet harmonious streams.

Facing the steps of the temple of Jupiter, with folded arms and a knit and contemptuous brow, stood a man of about fifty years of age. His dress was remarkably plain, not so much from its material, as from the absence of all those ornaments which were worn by the Pompeians of every rank, partly from the love of show, partly also because they were chiefly wrought into those shapes deemed most efficacious in resisting the assaults of magic
and the influence of the evil eye. (a) His forehead was high and bald, the few locks that remained at the back of the head were concealed by a sort of cowl, which made a part of his cloak, to be raised or lowered at pleasure, and was now drawn half-way over the head, as a protection from the rays of the sun. The colour of his garments was brown, no popular hue with the Pompeians; all the usual admixtures of scarlet or purple seemed carefully excluded. His belt, or girdle, contained a small receptacle for ink, which hooked on to the girdle, a stylus (or implement of writing), and tablets of no ordinary size. What was rather remarkable, the cincture held no purse, which was the almost indispensable appurtenance of the girdle.—even when that purse had the misfortune to be empty!

It was not often that the gay and egotistical Pompeians busied themselves with observing the countenances and actions of their neighbours; but there was that in the lip and eye of this bystander so remarkably bitter and disdainful, as he surveyed the religious procession sweeping up the stairs of the temple, that it could not fail to arrest the notice of many.
"Who is yon cynic?" asked a merchant of his companion, a jeweller.

"It is Olinthus," replied the jeweller, "a reputed Nazarene."

The merchant shuddered. "A dread sect!" said he, in a whispered and fearful voice. "It is said that, when they meet at nights they always commence their ceremonies by the murder of a newborn babe: they profess a community of goods too—the wretches!—a community of goods! what would become of merchants or jewellers either, if such notions were in fashion?"

"That is very true," said the jeweller; "besides, they wear no jewels—they mutter imprecations when they see a serpent, and at Pompeii all our ornaments are serpentine."

"Do but observe," said a third, who was a fabricant of bronze, "how yon Nazarene scowls at the piety of the sacrificial procession. He is murmuring curses on the temple, be sure. Do you know, Celsinus, that this fellow, passing by my shop the other day, and seeing me employed on a statue of Minerva, told me, with a frown, that, had it been marble, he would have broken it; but the
bronze was too strong for him. 'Break a goddess!' said I. 'A goddess!' answered the atheist, 'it is a
demon, an evil spirit.' Then he passed on his
way, cursing. Are such things to be borne?
What marvel that the earth heaved so fearfully
last night, anxious to reject the atheist from her
bosom. An atheist do I say? worse still—a
scorner of the fine arts!—Woe to us fabricants of
bronze, if such fellows as this give the law to
society!"

"These are the incendiaries that burnt Rome,
under Nero," groaned the jeweller.

While such were the friendly remarks provoked
by the air and faith of the Nazarene, Olinthus him-
self became sensible of the effect he was producing;
he turned his eyes round, and observed the in-
tent faces of the accumulating throng, whispering
as they gazed; and surveying them for a moment
with an expression, first of defiance and afterwards
of compassion, he gathered his cloak round him,
and passed on, muttering audibly, "Deluded idol-
aters!—did not last night's convulsion warn ye?
Alas! how will ye meet the Last Day!"

The crowd that heard these boding words gave
them different interpretations, according to their different shades of ignorance and of fear; all, however, concurred in imagining them to convey some awful imprecation. They regarded the Christian as the enemy of mankind; the epithets they lavished upon him, of which 'Atheist' was the most favoured and frequent, may serve, perhaps, to warn us, believers of that same creed now triumphant, how we indulge the persecution of opinion Olinthus then underwent, and how we apply to those whose notions differ from our own, the terms, at that day prodigalized on the fathers of our faith.

As Olinthus stalked through the crowd, and gained one of the more private places of egress from the forum, he perceived gazing upon him a pale and earnest countenance, which he was not slow to recognize.

Wrapped in a pallium that partially concealed his sacred robes, the young Apæcides surveyed the disciple of that new and mysterious creed, to which at one time he had been half a convert.

"Is he too an impostor? Does this man, so plain and simple in life, in garb, in mien—does he too, like Arbaces, make austerity the robe of the
sensualist? Does the veil of Vesta hide the vices of the prostitute?"

Olinthus, accustomed to men of all classes, and combining with the enthusiasm of his faith a profound experience of his kind, guessed, perhaps by the index of the countenance, something of what passed within the breast of the priest. He met the survey of Apæcides with a steady eye, and a brow of serene and open candour.

"Peace be with thee!" said he, saluting Apæcides.

"Peace!" echoed the priest, in so hollow a tone, that it went at once to the heart of the Nazarene.

"In that wish," continued Olinthus, "all good things are combined—without virtue thou canst not have peace. Like the rainbow, Peace rests upon the earth, but its arch is lost in heaven! Heaven bathes it in hues of light—it springs up amidst tears and clouds,—it is a reflection of the Eternal Sun,—it is an assurance of calm, it is the sign of a great covenant between Man and God. Such peace, O young man! is the smile of the
soul; it is an emanation from the distant orb of immortal light. Peace be with you!"

"Alas!" began Apæcides, when he caught the gaze of the curious loiterers, inquisitive to know what could possibly be the theme of conversation between a reputed Nazarene and a priest of Isis. He stopped short, and then added in a low tone—"We cannot converse here, I will follow thee to the banks of the river; there, is a walk which at this time is usually deserted and solitary."

Olinthus bowed assent. He passed through the streets with a hasty step, but a quick and observant eye. Every now and then he exchanged a significant glance, a slight sign, with some passenger, whose garb usually betokened the wearer to belong to the humbler classes. For Christianity was in this the type of all other and less mighty revolutions—the grain of mustard-seed was in the hearts of the lowly. Amidst the huts of poverty and labour, the vast stream which afterwards poured its broad waters beside the cities and palaces of earth, took its neglected source.
CHAPTER II.

THE NOONDAY EXCURSION ON THE CAMPANIAN SEAS.

"But tell me, Glaucus," said Ione, as they glided down the rippling Sarnus in their boat of pleasure, "how camest thou with Apæcides to my rescue from that bad man?"

"Ask Nydia yonder," answered the Athenian, pointing to the blind girl, who sate at a little distance from them, leaning pensively over her lyre —"She must have thy thanks, not we. It seems that she came to my house, and finding me from home, sought thy brother in his temple; he accompanied her to Arbaces; on their way they encountered me, with a company of friends whom thy kind letter gave me a spirit cheerful enough to join. Her quick ear detected my voice—a few words sufficed to make me the companion of Apæcides; I told not
my associates why I left them—could I trust thy name to their light tongues and gossiping opinion? —Nydia led us to the garden gate, by which we afterwards bore thee—we entered, and were about to plunge into the mysteries of that evil house, when we heard thy cry in another direction. Thou knowest the rest!"

Ione blushed deeply. She then raised her eyes to those of Glaucus, and he felt all the thanks she could not utter. "Come hither, my Nydia," said she tenderly to the Thessalian. "Did I not tell thee thou shouldst be my sister and friend? Hast thou not already been more—my guardian, my preserver!"

"It is nothing," answered Nydia coldly, and without stirring.

"Ah! I forgot," continued Ione, "I should come to thee;" and she moved along the benches till she reached the place where Nydia sate, and flinging her arms caressingly round her, covered her cheeks with kisses.

Nydia was that morning paler than her wont, and her countenance grew even more wan and colourless as she submitted to the embrace of the beautiful
Neapolitan. "But how comest thou, Nydia," whispered Ione, "to surmise so faithfully the danger I was exposed to. Didst thou know aught of the Egyptian?"

"Yes, I knew of his vices."

"And how?"

"Noble Ione, I have been a slave to the vicious—those whom I served were his minions."

"And thou hast entered his house, since thou knewest so well that private entrance?"

"I have played on my lyre to Arbaces," answered the Thessalian with embarrassment.

"And thou hast escaped the contagion from which thou hast saved Ione?" returned the Neapolitan, in a voice too low for the ear of Glaucus.

"Noble Ione, I have neither beauty nor station; I am a child, and a slave, and blind. The despicable are ever safe."

It was with a pained, and proud, and indignant tone that Nydia made this humble reply, and Ione felt that she only wounded Nydia by pursuing the subject. She remained silent, and the bark now floated into the sea.

"Confess that I was right, Ione," said Glaucus,
"in prevailing on thee not to waste this beautiful noon in thy chamber—Confess that I was right."

"Thou wert right, Glaucus," said Nydia abruptly.

"The dear child speaks for thee," returned the Athenian. "But permit me to move opposite to thee, or our light boat will be overbalanced."

So saying, he took his seat exactly opposite to Ione, and leaning forward, he fancied that it was her breath, and not the winds of summer, that flung fragrance over the sea.

"Thou wert to tell me," said Glaucus, "why for so many days thy door was closed to me?"

"Oh, think of it no more!" answered Ione quickly; "I gave my ear to what I now know was the malice of slander."

"And my slanderer was the Egyptian?"

Ione's silence assented to the question.

"His motives are sufficiently obvious."

"Talk not of him," said Ione, covering her face with her hands, as if to shut out his very thought.

"Perhaps, he may be already by the banks of the slow Styx," resumed Glaucus, "yet in that case we should probably have heard of his death. Thy brother, methinks, hath felt the dark in-
fluence of his gloomy soul. When we arrived last night at thy house, he left me abruptly. Will he ever vouchsafe to be my friend?"

"He is consumed with some secret care," answered Ione tearfully. "Would that we could lure him from himself! Let us join in that tender office."

"He shall be my brother," returned the Greek.

"How calmly," said Ione, rousing herself from the gloom into which her thoughts of Apæcides had plunged her—"How calmly the clouds seem to repose in heaven; and yet you tell me, for I knew it not myself, that the earth shook beneath us last night."

"It did, and more violently, they say, than it has done since the great convulsion sixteen years ago: the land we live in yet nurses mysterious terror, and the reign of Pluto, which spreads beneath our burning fields, seems rent with unseen commotion. Didst thou not feel the earth quake, Nydia, where thou wert seated last night, and was it not the fear it occasioned thee that made thee weep?"

"I felt the soil creep and heave beneath me.
"like some monstrous serpent," answered Nydia, "but as I saw nothing, I did not fear; I imagined the convulsion to be a spell of the Egyptian's. They say he has power over the elements."

"Thou art a Thessalian, my Nydia," replied Glauce, "and hast a national right to believe in magic."

"Magic—who doubts it?" answered Nydia, simply, "dost thou?"

"Until last night, (when a necromantic prodigy did indeed appal me,) methinks I was not credulous in any other magic save that of love!" said Glauce, in a tremulous voice, and fixing his eyes on Ione.

"Ah!" said Nydia, with a sort of shiver, and she woke mechanically a few pleasing notes from her lyre: the sound suited well the tranquillity of the waters, and the sunny stillness of the noon.

"Play to us, dear Nydia," said Glauce—"play, and give us one of thine old Thessalian songs; whether it be of magic or not, as thou wilt—let it, at least, be of love!"

"Of love!" repeated Nydia, raising her large, wandering eyes, that ever thrilled those who saw them with a mingled fear and pity; you could
never familiarize yourself to their aspect; so strange did it seem, that those dark, wild orbs were ignorant of the day, and either so fixed was their deep, mysterious gaze, or so restless and perturbed their glance, that you felt, when you encountered them, that same vague, and chilling, and half-preternatural impression, which comes over you in the presence of the insane,—of those who, having a life outwardly like your own, have a life within life—dissimilar—unsearchable—unguessed!

"Will you that I should sing of love?" said she, fixing those eyes upon Glaucus.

"Yes!" replied he, looking down.

She moved a little way from the arm of Ione, still cast round her, as if that soft embrace embarrassed; and placing her light and graceful instrument on her knee, after a short prelude, she sang the following strain:

**Nydia's Love-song.**

1.

The Wind and the Beam loved the Rose,

And the Rose loved one;

For who recks the wind where it blows?

Or loves not the sun?
None knew whence the humble Wind stole.

Poorest sport of the skies—
None dreamt that the Wind had a soul,
In its mournful sighs!

Oh! happy Beam—how canst thou prove,
That bright love of thine?
In thy light is the proof of thy love,
Thou hast but—to shine!

How its love can the Wind reveal?
Unwelcome its sigh;
Mute—mute to its Rose let it steal—
Its proof is—to die!

"Thou singest but sadly, sweet girl," said Glaucus; "thy youth only feels as yet the dark shadow of love; far other inspiration doth he wake, when he himself bursts and brightens upon us."

"I sing as I was taught," replied Nydia, sighing.
"Thy master was love-crossed then—- try thy
hand at a gayer air. Nay, girl, give the instrument to me.” As Nydia obeyed, her hand touched his, and, with that slight touch, her breast heaved—her cheek flushed. Ione and Glauclus, occupied with each other, perceived not those signs of strange and premature emotions, which preyed upon a heart that, nourished by imagination, dispensed with hope.

And now, broad, blue, bright before them, spread that halcyon sea, fair as at this moment, seventeen centuries from that date, I behold it rippling on the same divinest shores. Clime, that yet enervates with a soft and Circean spell—that moulds us insensibly, mysteriously into harmony with thyself, banishing the thought of austerer labour, the voices of wild ambition, the contests and the roar of life;—filling us with gentle and subduing dreams, making necessary to our nature that which is its least earthly portion, so that the very air inspires us with the yearning and thirst of love! Whoever visits thee, seems to leave earth and its harsh cares behind—to enter by the Ivory Gate into the Land of Dreams. The young and laughing Hours of the present—the Hours,
those children of Saturn, which he hungers ever to devour, seem snatched from his grasp. The past—the future—are forgotten; we enjoy but the breathing time. Flower of the world's garden—Fountain of Delight—Italy of Italy—beautiful, benign Campania!—vain were, indeed, the Titans, if, on this spot, they yet struggled for another heaven! Here, if God meant this working-day life for a perpetual holyday, who would not sigh to dwell for ever—asking nothing, hoping nothing, fearing nothing, while thy skies shone over him—while thy seas sparkled at his feet—while thine air brought him sweet messages from the violet and the orange—and while the heart, resigned to—beating with—but one emotion, could find the lips and the eyes, that flatter it (vanity of vanities!) that love can defy custom, and be eternal?

It was then in this clime—on those seas, that the Athenian gazed upon a face that might have suited the nymph, the spirit of the place; feeding his eyes on the changeful roses of that softest cheek, happy beyond the happiness of common life, loving, and knowing himself beloved.

In the tale of human passion, in past ages, there
is something of interest even in the remoteness of the time. We love to feel within us the bond which unites the most distant eras—men, nations, customs, perish; the affections are immortal!—they are the sympathies which unite the ceaseless generations. The past lives again, when we look upon its emotions—it lives in our own! That which was, ever is! The magician's gift, that revives the dead—that animates the dust of forgotten graves, is not in the author's skill, it is in the heart of the reader!

Still vainly seeking the eyes of Ione, as half downcast, half averted, they shunned his own, the Athenian, in a low and soft voice, thus expressed the feelings inspired by happier thoughts than those which had coloured the song of Nydia.

**THE SONG OF GLAUCUS.**

1.

As the bark floateth on o'er the summer-lit sea,

Floats my heart o'er the deeps of its passion for thee;

All lost in the space, without terror it glides,

For, bright with thy soul is the face of the tides.
Now heaving, now hush'd, is that passionate ocean
   As it catches thy smile, or thy sighs;
And the twin-stars* that shine on the wanderer's devotion,
   Its guide and its god—are thine eyes!

2.
The bark may go down, should the cloud sweep above,
For its being is bound to the light of thy love.
As thy faith and thy smile are its life and its joy,
So thy frown or thy change are the storms that destroy.
Ah! sweeter to sink while the sky is serene,
   If time hath a change for thy heart!
If to live be to weep over what thou hast been,
   Let me die while I know what thou art!

As the last words of the song trembled over the sea, Ione raised her looks, they met those of her lover. Happy Nydia!—happy in thy affliction,

* In allusion to the Dioscuri, or twin-stars, the guardian deity of the seaman.
that thou couldst not see that fascinated and charmed gaze, that said so much—that made the eye, the voice of the soul—that promised the impossibility of change!

But, though the Thessalian could not detect that gaze, she divined its meaning by their silence—by their sighs. She pressed her hands tightly across her breast, as if to keep down its bitter and jealous thoughts; and then she hastened to speak—for that silence was intolerable to her.

"After all, O Glaucus!" said she, "there is nothing very mirthful in your strain?"

"Yet I meant it to be so, when I took up thy lyre, pretty one. Perhaps happiness will not permit us to be mirthful."

"How strange is it!" said Ione, changing a conversation that oppressed her while it charmed; "that for the last several days yonder cloud has hung motionless over Vesuvius, yet not indeed motionless, for sometimes it changes its form; and now methinks it looks like some vast giant, with an arm outstretched over the city. Dost thou see the likeness—or is it only to my fancy?"
"Fair Ione! I see it also. It is astonishingly distinct. The giant seems seated on the brow of the mountain, the different shades of the cloud body forth a white and sweeping robe over its vast breast and limbs; it seems to gaze with a steady face upon the city below, to point with one hand, as thou sayest, over its glittering streets, and to raise the other (dost thou note it?) towards the higher heaven. It is like the ghost of some huge Titan brooding over the beautiful world he lost, sorrowful for the past—yet with something of menace for the future."

"Could that mountain have any connection with the last night's earthquake? They say that ages ago, almost in the earliest era of tradition, it gave forth fires as Ætna still. Perhaps the flames yet lurk and dart beneath."

"It is possible," said Glaucus, musingly.

"Thou sayest thou art slow to believe in magic?" said Nydia, suddenly. "I have heard that a potent witch dwells amongst the scorched caverns of the mountain, and yon cloud may be the dim shadow of the demon she confers with."
"Thou art full of the romance of thy native Thessaly," said Glaucus, "and a strange mixture of sense and all conflicting superstitions."

"We are ever superstitious in the dark," replied Nydia. "Tell me," she added, after a slight pause, "tell me, O Glaucus! do all that are beautiful resemble each other; they say you are beautiful, and Ione also. Are your faces then the same? I fancy not, yet it ought to be so!"

"Fancy no such grievous wrong to Ione," answered Glaucus, laughing. "But we do not, alas! resemble each other as the homely and the beautiful sometimes do. Ione's hair is dark, mine light; Ione's eyes are—what colour, Ione, I cannot see, turn them to me? Oh, are they black? No, they are too soft. Are they blue? no, they are too deep; they change with every ray of the sun—I know not their colour; but mine, sweet Nydia, are grey, and bright only when Ione shines on them! Ione's cheek is——"

"I do not understand one word of thy description," interrupted Nydia, peevishly. "I comprehend only that you do not resemble each other, and I am glad of it."
"Why, Nydia?" said Ione.

Nydia coloured slightly. "Because," she replied coldly, "I have always imagined you under different forms, and one likes to know one is right."

"And what hast thou imagined Glaucus to resemble?" asked Ione, softly.

"Music!" replied Nydia, looking down.

"Thou art right," thought Ione.

"And what likeness hast thou ascribed to Ione?"

"I cannot tell yet," answered the blind girl; "I have not yet known her long enough to find a shape and sign for my guesses."

"I will tell thee, then," said Glaucus, passionately; "she is like the sun that warms—like the wave that refreshes."

"The sun sometimes scorches, and the wave sometimes drowns," answered Nydia.

"Take then these roses," said Glaucus, "let their fragrance suggest to thee Ione."

"Alas, the roses will fade!" said the Neapolitan, archly.

Thus conversing they wore away the hours,
the lovers conscious only of the brightness and smiles of love; the blind girl feeding only its darkness—its tortures;—the fierceness of jealousy and its woe!

And now, as they drifted on, Glaucus once more resumed the lyre, and woke its strings with a careless hand to a strain, so wildly and gladly beautiful, that even Nydia was aroused from her reverie, and uttered a cry of admiration.

"Thou seest, my child," cried Glaucus, "that I can yet redeem the character of love's music, and that I was wrong in saying happiness could not be gay. Listen, Nydia! listen, dear Ione! and hear

**THE BIRTH OF LOVE.**

1.
Like a Star in the seas above,
Like a Dream to the waves of sleep—
Up—up—THE INCARNATE LOVE—
She rose from the charmed deep!
And over the Cyprian Isle
The skies shed their silent smile;

* Suggested by a picture of Venus rising from the sea, taken from Pompeii, and now in the Museum at Naples.
And the Forest's green heart was rise
With the stir of the gushing life—
The life that had leapt to birth,
In the veins of the happy earth!

Hail! oh, hail!
The dimmest sea-cave below thee,
The farthest sky-arch above,
In their innermost stillness know thee,
Hurrah! for the Birth of Love!

Gale! soft Gale!
Thou com'st on thy silver winglets,
From thy home in the tender west;*
Now fanning her golden ringlets,
Now hushed on her heaving breast.
And afar on the murmuring sand,
The Seasons wait hand in hand
To welcome thee, Birth Divine,
To the Earth, which is henceforth thine.

2.

Behold! how she kneels in the shell,
Bright pearl in its floating cell!

* According to the ancient mythologists, Venus rose from the sea near Cyprus, to which island she was wafted by the Zephyrs. The Seasons waited to welcome her on the sea-shore.
Behold! how the shell's rose-hues
The cheek and the breast of snow,
And the delicate limbs suffuse
Like a blush, with a bashful glow.
Sailing on, slowly sailing
O'er the wild water;
All hail! as the fond Light is hailing
Her daughter,
All hail!
We are thine, all thine evermore,
Not a leaf on the laughing shore,
Not a wave on the heaving sea,
Nor a single sigh
In the boundless sky,
But is vowed evermore to thee:

And thou, my beloved one—thou,
As I gaze on thy soft eyes now,
Methinks from their depths I view
The holy Birth born anew;
Thy lids are the gentle cell
    Where the young Love blushing lies;
See! she breaks from the mystic shell,
    She comes from thy tender eyes!
Hail!—all hail!
She comes, as she came from the sea
To my soul as it looks on thee:
    She comes, she comes!
She comes, as she came from the sea
To my soul as it looks on thee!
    Hail—all hail!
CHAPTER III.

THE CONGREGATION.

Followed by Apæcides, the Nazarene gained the side of the Sarnus;—that river, which now has shrunk into a petty stream, then rushed gaily into the sea, covered with countless vessels, and reflecting on its waves the gardens, the vines, the palaces, and the temples of Pompeii. From its more noisy and frequented banks, Olinthus directed his steps to a path which ran amidst a shady vista of trees, at the distance of a few paces from the river. This walk was in the evening a favourite resort of the Pompeians, but during the heat and business of the day was seldom visited, save by some groups of playful children, some meditative poet, or some disputative philosophers. At the side farthest from the river, frequent copses of box interspersed the more delicate and evanescent fo-
liage, and these were cut into a thousand quaint shapes, sometimes into the forms of fauns and satyrs, sometimes into the mimicry of Egyptian pyramids, sometimes into the letters that composed the name of a popular or eminent citizen. Thus the false taste is equally ancient as the pure; and the retired traders of Hackney and Paddington, a century ago, were little aware, perhaps, that in their tortured yews and sculptured box, they found their models in the most polished period of Roman antiquity, in the gardens of Pompeii, and the villas of the fastidious Pliny.

This walk now, as the noon-day sun shone perpendicularly through the chequered leaves, was, entirely deserted; at least no other forms than those of Olinthus and the priest infringed upon the solitude. They sate themselves on one of the benches, placed at intervals between the trees, and facing the faint breeze that came languidly from the river, whose waves danced and sparkled before them;—a singular and contrasted pair!—the believer in the latest—the priest of the most ancient—worship of the world!

"Since thou leftst me so abruptly," said Olinthus,
"hast thou been happy? has thy heart found contentment under these priestly robes? hast thou, still yearning for the voice of God, heard it whisper comfort to thee from the oracles of Isis? That sigh, that averted countenance, give me the answer my soul predicted."

"Alas!" answered Apæcides, sadly, "thou seest before thee a wretched and distracted man! From my childhood upward I have idolized the dreams of virtue; I have envied the holiness of men, who, in caves and lonely temples, have been admitted to the companionship of beings above the world; my days have been consumed with feverish and vague desires; my nights with mocking but solemn visions. Seduced by the mystic prophecies of an impostor, I have indued these robes;—my nature—(I confess it to thee frankly) —my nature has revolted at what I have seen and been doomed to share in! Searching after truth, I have become but the minister of falsehoods. On the evening in which we last met, I was buoyed by hopes, created by that same impostor, whom I ought already to have better known. I have—no matter —no matter!—suffice it, I have added perjury and
sin to rashness and to sorrow. The veil is now rent for ever from my eyes—I behold a villain where I obeyed a demi-god; the earth darkens in my sight—I am in the deepest abyss of gloom; I know not if there be gods above—if we are the things of chance—if beyond the bounded and melancholy present, there is annihilation or an hereafter—tell me, then, thy faith; solve me these doubts, if thou hast indeed the power?"

"I do not marvel," answered the Nazarene, "that thou hast thus erred, or that thou art thus sceptic. Eighty years ago, there was no assurance to man of God, or of a certain and definite future beyond the grave. New laws are declared to him who has ears—a heaven, a true Olympus, is revealed to him who has eyes—heed then, and listen."

And with all the earnestness of a man believing ardently himself, and zealous to convert, the Nazarene poured forth to Apæcides the assurances of scriptural promise. He spoke first of the sufferings and miracles of Christ—he wept as he spoke; he turned next to the glories of the Saviour's ascension—to the clear predictions of Revelation. He
described that pure and unsensual Heaven destined to the virtuous—those fires and torments that were the doom of guilt.

The doubts which spring up to the mind of later reasoners, in the immensity of the sacrifice of God to man, were not such as would occur to an early heathen. He had been accustomed to believe that the gods had lived upon earth, and taken upon themselves the forms of men, had shared in human passions, in human labours, and in human misfortunes. What was the travail of his own Alemaena's son, whose altars now smoked with the incense of countless cities, but a toil for the human race? Had not the great Dorian Apollo expiated a mystic sin by descending to the grave? Those who were the deities of heaven had been the lawgivers or benefactors on earth, and gratitude had led to worship. It seemed, therefore, to the heathen, a doctrine neither new nor strange, that Christ had been sent from heaven, that an immortal had induced mortality, and tasted the bitterness of death: And the end for which he thus toiled, and thus suffered—how far more glorious did it seem to Apæcides than that for
which the deities of old had visited the nether world, and passed through the gates of death! Was it not worthy of a God, to descend to these dim valleys, in order to clear up the clouds gathered over the dark mount beyond—to satisfy the doubts of sages—to convert speculation into certainty—by example to point out the rules of life—by revelation, to solve the enigma of the grave—and to prove that the soul did not yearn in vain, when it dreamed of an immortality? In this last was the great argument of those lowly men destined to convert the earth. As nothing is more flattering to the pride and the hopes of man, than the belief in a future state, so nothing could be more vague and confused than the notions of the heathen sages upon that mystic subject.

Apæcides had already learned that the faith of the philosophers was not that of the herd; that if they secretly professed a creed in some diviner power, it was not the creed which they thought it wise to impart to the community. He had already learned, that even the priest ridiculed what he preached to the people—that the notions of the few and the many were never united. But, in
this new faith, it seemed to him that philosopher, priest, and people, the expounders of the religion and its followers, were alike accordant: they did not speculate and debate upon immortality, they spake of it as a thing certain, and assured; the magnificence of the promise dazzled him—its consolations soothed. For the Christian faith made its early converts among sinners! many of its fathers and its martyrs were those who had felt the bitterness of vice, and who were therefore no longer tempted by its false aspect from the paths of an austere and uncompromising virtue. All the assurances of this healing faith invited to repentance—they were peculiarly adapted to the bruised and sore of spirit; the very remorse which Apæcides felt for his late excesses, made him incline to one who found holiness in that remorse, and who whispered of the joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.

"Come," said the Nazarene, as he perceived the effect he had produced, "come to the humble hall in which we meet—a select and a chosen few; listen there to our prayers; note the sincerity of our repentant tears; mingle in our simple sacrifice
—not of victims, nor of garlands, but offered by white-robed thoughts upon the altar of the heart: the flowers that we lay there are imperishable—they bloom over us when we are no more; nay, they accompany us beyond the grave, they spring up beneath our feet in heaven, they delight us with an eternal odour, for they are of the soul, they partake its nature; these offerings are temptations overcome, and sins repented. Come, oh come! lose not another moment; prepare already for the great, the awful journey, from darkness to light, from sorrow to bliss, from corruption to immortality! This is the day of the Lord the Sun, a day that we have set apart for our devotions. Though we meet usually at night, yet some amongst us are gathered together even now. What joy, what triumph, will be with us all, if we can bring one stray lamb into the sacred fold!"

There seemed to Apæcides, so naturally pure of heart, something ineffably generous and benign in that spirit of conversion which animated Olinthus—a spirit that found its own bliss in the happiness of others—that sought in its wide sociality to make companions for eternity. He was touched, soft-
ened, and subdued. He was not in that mood which can bear to be left alone; curiosity, too, mingled with his purer stimulants—he was anxious to see those rites of which so many dark and contradictory rumours were afloat. He paused a moment, looked over his garb, thought of Arbaces, shuddered with horror, lifted his eyes to the broad brow of the Nazarene, intent, anxious, watchful—but for his benefit, for his salvation! He drew his cloak round him, so as wholly to conceal his robes, and said, "Lead on, I follow thee."

Olinthus pressed his hand joyfully, and then descending to the river-side, hailed one of the boats that plyed there constantly; they entered it, an awning overhead, while it sheltered them from the sun, skreened also their persons from observation: they rapidly skimmed the wave. From one of the boats that passed them, floated a soft music, and its prow was decorated with flowers—it was gliding towards the sea.

"So," said Olinthus sadly, "unconscious and mirthful in their delusions, sail the votaries of luxury into the great ocean of storm and shipwreck;
we pass them, silent and unnoticed, to gain the land."

Apæcides, lifting his eyes, caught through the aperture in the awning a glimpse of the face of one of the inmates of that gay bark—it was the face of Ione.—The lovers were embarked on the excursion to which we have been made present. The priest sighed, and once more sunk back upon his seat. They reached the shore where, in the suburbs, an alley of small and mean houses stretched towards the bank; they dismissed the boat, landed, and Olinthus, preceding the priest, threaded the labyrinth of lanes, and arrived at last at the closed door of a habitation somewhat larger than its neighbours. He knocked thrice—the door was opened and closed again, as Apæcides followed his guide across the threshold.

They passed a deserted atrium, and gained an inner chamber of moderate size, which, when the door was closed, received its only light from a small window cut over the door itself. But, halting at the threshold of this chamber, and knocking at the door, Olinthus said, "Peace be with you!"
a voice from within returned, "Peace with whom?" "The faithful!" answered Olinthus, and the door opened; twelve or fourteen persons were sitting in a semicircle, silent, and seemingly absorbed in thought, and opposite to a crucifix rudely carved in wood.

They lifted up their eyes when Olinthus entered, without speaking; the Nazarene himself, before he accosted them, knelt suddenly down, and by his moving lips, and his eyes fixed steadfastly on the crucifix, Apæcides saw that he prayed inly. This rite performed, Olinthus turned to the congregation—"Men and brethren," said he, "start not to behold amongst you a priest of Isis; he hath sojourned with the blind, but the Spirit hath fallen on him—he desires to see, to hear, and to understand."

"Let him," said one of the assembly; and Apæcides beheld in the speaker a man still younger than himself, of a countenance equally worn and pallid, of an eye which equally spoke of the restless and fiery operations of a working mind.

"Let him," repeated a second voice, and he who thus spoke was in the prime of manhood; his
bronzed skin and Asiatic features bespoke him a son of Syria—he had been a robber in his youth.

"Let him," said a third voice; and the priest, again turning to regard the speaker, saw an old man with a long grey beard, whom he recognized as a slave to the wealthy Diomed.

"Let him," repeated simultaneously the rest—men who, with two exceptions, were evidently of the inferior rank. In these exceptions, Apæcides noted an officer of the guard, and an Alexandrian merchant.

"We do not," recommenced Olinthus—"we do not bind you to secrecy; we impose on you no oaths, (as some of our weaker brethren would do,) not to betray us. It is true, indeed, that there is no absolute law against us, but the multitude, more savage than their rulers, thirst for our lives. So, my friends, when Pilate would have hesitated, it was the people who shouted, 'Christ to the cross!' But we bind you not to our safety—no! Betray us to the crowd—impeach, calumniate, malign us if you will:—we are above death, we should walk cheerfully to the den of the lion, or the rack of the torturer—we can trample down the darkness of the
grave, and what is death to a criminal is eternity to the Christian."

A low and applauding murmur ran through the assembly.

"Thou comest amongst us an examiner, mayest thou remain a convert! Our religion? you behold it! You cross our sole image, you scroll the mysteries of our Cære and Eleusis! Our morality? it is in our lives—sinners we all have been; who now can accuse us of a crime? we have baptized ourselves from the Past. Think not that this is of us, it is of God. Approach, Medon," beckoning to the old slave who had spoken third for the admission of Apaecides, "thou art the sole man amongst us who is not free. But in heaven, the last shall be first: so with us. Unfold your scroll, read, and explain."

Useless would it be for us to accompany the lecture of Medon, or the comments of the congregation. Familiar now are those doctrines then strange and new. Eighteen centuries have left us little to expound upon the lore of scripture or the life of Christ. To us, too, there would seem little congenial in the doubts that occurred to a
heathen priest, and little learned in the answers they received from men, uneducated, rude, and simple, possessing only the knowledge that they were greater than they seemed.

There was one thing that greatly touched the Neapolitan; when the lecture was concluded, they heard a very gentle knock at the door; the password was given, and replied to; the door opened, and two young children, the eldest of whom might have told its seventh year, entered timidly; they were the children of the master of the house, that dark and hardy Syrian, whose youth had been spent in pillage and bloodshed. The eldest of the congregation (it was that old slave) opened to them his arms; they fled to the shelter—they crept to his breast—and his hard features smiled as he caressed them. And then these bold and fervent men, nursed in vicissitude, beaten by the rough winds of life—men of mailed and impervious fortitude, ready to affront a world, prepared for torment and armed for death—men, who presented all imaginable contrast to the weak nerves, the light hearts, the tender fragility of childhood; crowded round the infants, smoothing their rug-
ged brows, and composing their bearded lips to kindly and fostering smiles: and then the old man opened the scroll, and he taught the infants to repeat after him that beautiful prayer, which we still dedicate to the Lord, and still teach to our children; and then he told them, in simple phrase, of God's love to the young, and how not a sparrow falls but His eye sees it. This lovely custom of infant initiation was long cherished by the early church, in memory of the words which said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;" and was perhaps the origin of the superstitious calumny which ascribed to the Nazarenes the crime which the Nazarene, when victorious, attributed to the Jew, viz: the decoying children to hideous rites, at which they were secretly immolated.

And the stern paternal penitent seemed to feel in the innocence of his children a return into early life—life ere yet it sinned: he followed the motion of their young lips with an earnest gaze; he smiled, as they repeated, with hushed and reverent looks, the holy words; and when the lesson was done, and they ran, released, and gladly to his knee, he
clasped them to his breast, kissed them again and again, and tears flowed fast down his cheek—tears, of which it would have been impossible to trace the source, so mingled they were with joy and sorrow, penitence and hope, remorse for himself and love for them!

Something, I say, there was in this scene which peculiarly affected Apæcides; and, in truth, it is difficult to conceive a ceremony more appropriate to the Religion of Benevolence, more appealing to the household and every-day affections, striking a more sensitive chord in the human breast.

It was at this time that an inner door opened gently, and a very old man entered the chamber, leaning on a staff. At his presence, the whole congregation rose; there was an expression of deep affectionate respect upon every countenance; and Apæcides, gazing on his countenance, felt attracted towards him by an irresistible sympathy. No man ever looked upon that face without love; for there had dwelt the smile of the Deity, the Incarnation of divinest Love;—and the glory of the smile had never past away!

"My children, God be with you!" said the old
man, stretching his arms; and as he spoke, the
infants ran to his knee. He sate down, and they
nestled fondling to his bosom. It was beautiful
to see! that mingling of the extremes of life—the
rivers gushing from their early source—the majestic
stream gliding to the ocean of eternity. As the
light of declining day seems to mingle earth and
heaven, making the outline of each scarce visible,
and blending the harsh mountain-tops with the
sky; even so did the smile of that benign old age
appear to hallow the aspect of those around, to blend
together the strong distinctions of varying years,
and to diffuse over infancy and manhood the light
of that heaven into which it must so soon vanish
and be lost.

"Father," said Olinthus, "thou on whose form
the miracle of the Redeemer worked; thou who
wert snatched from the grave to become the
living witness of His mercy and His power;
behold! a stranger in our meeting—a new Lamb
gathered to the fold!"

"Let me bless him," said the old man; the
throng gave way. Apæcides approached him as
by an instinct; he fell on his knees before him—
the old man laid his hand on the priest's head, and blessed him, but not aloud. As his lips moved, his eyes were upturned, and tears—those tears that good men only shed in the hope of happiness to another—flowed fast down his cheeks.

The children were on either side of the convert; his heart was as theirs—he had become as one of them—to enter into the kingdom of heaven!
CHAPTER IV.

THE STREAM OF LOVE RUNS ON.—WHITHER?

Days are like years in the love of the young, when no bar, no obstacle, is between their hearts—when the sun shines, and the course runs smooth—when their love is prosperous and confest. Tone no longer concealed from Glaucus the attachment she felt for him, and their talk now was only of their love. Over the rapture of the present, the hopes of the future glowed, like the heaven, above the gardens of spring. They went in their trustful thoughts far down the stream of time—they laid out the chart of their destiny to come—they suffered the light of to-day to suffuse the morrow. In the youth of their hearts, it seemed as if care, and change, and death, were as things unknown. Perhaps they loved each other the
more, because the condition of the world left to Glauceus no aim and no wish but love;—because the distractions common in free states to men's affection, existed not for the Athenian—because his country wooed him not to the bustle of civil life—because ambition furnished no counterpoise to love: And, therefore, over their schemes and their projects, love only reigned. In the iron age, they imagined themselves of the golden, doomed only to live and to love.

To the superficial observer who interests himself only in characters strongly marked and broadly coloured, both the lovers may seem of too slight and commonplace a mould: in the delineation of characters purposely subdued, the reader sometimes imagines that there is a want of character; perhaps, indeed, I wrong the real nature of these two lovers, by not painting more impressively their stronger individualities. But in dwelling so much on their bright and birdlike existence, I am influenced almost insensibly by the forethought of the changes that await them, and for which they were so ill prepared. It was this very softness and gaiety of life that contrasted most strongly
the vicissitudes of their coming fate. For the oak without fruit or blossom, whose hard and rugged heart is fitted for the storm, there is less fear than for the delicate branches of the myrtle, and the laughing clusters of the vine.

They had now entered far upon August—the next month their marriage was fixed, and the threshold of Glaucus was already wreathed with garlands; and nightly, by the door of Ione, he poured forth the rich libations. He existed no longer for his gay companions; he was ever with Ione. In the mornings they beguiled the sun with music; in the evenings they forsook the crowded haunts of the gay, for excursions on the water, or along the fertile and vine-clad plains that lay beneath the fatal mount of Vesuvius. The earth shook no more; the lively Pompeians forgot even that there had gone forth so terrible a warning of their approaching doom. Glaucus imagined that convulsion, in the vanity of his heathen religion, an especial interposition of the gods, less in behalf of his own safety, than that of Ione. He offered up the sacrifices of gratitude at the temples of his faith; and even the altar of Isis was covered
with his votive garlands:—as to the prodigy of the animated marble, he blushed at the effect it had produced on him. He believed it, indeed, to have been wrought by the magic of man; but the result convinced him, that it betokened not the anger of a goddess.

Of Arbaces, they heard only that he still lived; stretched on the bed of suffering, he recovered slowly from the effect of the shock he had sustained—he left the lovers unmolested—but it was only to brood over the hour and the method of revenge.

Alike in their mornings at the house of Ione, and in their evening excursions, Nydia was usually their constant, and often their sole, companion. They did not guess the secret fires which consumed her:—the abrupt freedom with which she mingled in their conversation—her capricious and often her peevish moods, found ready indulgence in the recollection of the service they owed her, and their compassion for her affliction. They felt, perhaps, the greater and more affectionate interest for her, from the very strangeness and waywardness of her nature, her singular alternations of passion and softness—the mixture of ignorance
and genius—of delicacy and rudeness—of the quick
humours of the child, and the proud calmness of
the woman. Although she refused to accept of
freedom, she was constantly suffered to be free;
she went where she listed; no curb was put
either on her words or actions; they felt for one
so darkly fated, and so susceptible of every
wound, the same pitying and compliant indul-
gence the mother feels for a spoiled and sickly
child,—dreading to impose authority, even where
they imagined it for her benefit. She availed
herself of this licence, by refusing the companion-
ship of the slave, whom they wished to attend
her. With the slender staff by which she guided
her steps, she went now, as in her former unpro-
tected state, along the populous streets; it was
almost miraculous to perceive how quickly and
how dexterously she threaded every crowd, avoid-
ed every danger, and could find her benighted
way through the most intricate windings of the
city. But her chief delight was still in visiting
the few feet of ground which made the garden of
Glaucus;—in tending the flowers that at least re-
payed her love. Sometimes she entered the cham-
ber where he sat, and sought a conversation, which she nearly always broke off abruptly—for conversation with Glaucus only tended to one subject—\textit{Ione}; and that name from his lips inflicted agony upon her. Often she bitterly repented the service she had rendered to Ione; often she said inly, "If she had fallen, Glaucus could have loved her no longer!" and then dark and fearful thoughts crept into her breast.

She had not experienced fully the trials that were in store for her, when she had been thus generous. She had never been present when Glaucus and Ione were together; she had never heard that voice so kind to her so much softer to another. The shock that crushed her heart with the tidings that Glaucus loved, had at first only saddened and benumbed;—by degrees, jealousy took a wilder and fiercer shape; it partook of hatred—it whispered revenge. As you see the wind only agitate the green leaf upon the bough, while the leaf which has lain withered and seared on the ground, bruised and trampled upon, till the sap and life are gone, is suddenly whirled aloft—now here—now there—without stay—and without rest;
so the love which visits the happy and the hopeful, hath but freshness on its wings; its violence is but sportive: But the heart that hath fallen from the green things of life, that is without hope, that hath no summer in its fibres, is torn and whirled by the same wind that but caresses its brethren;—it hath no bough to cling to—it is dashed from path to path—till the winds fall, and it is crushed into the mire for ever.

The friendless childhood of Nydia had hardened prematurely her character; perhaps, the heated scenes of profligacy through which she had passed, seemingly unscathed, had ripened her passions, though they had not sullied her purity. The orgies of Burbo might only have disgusted, the banquets of the Egyptian might only have terrified, at the moment; but, perhaps, those winds of pollution left seeds in the breast over which they passed so lightly. As darkness too favours the imagination, so, perhaps, her very blindness contributed to feed with wild and delirious visions the love of the unfortunate girl. The voice of Glaucus had been the first that had sounded musically to her ear; his kindness made a deep impression upon her mind; when he
had left Pompeii in the former year, she had treasured up in her heart every word he had uttered; and when any one told her, that this friend and patron of the poor flower girl was the most brilliant and the most graceful of the young revellers of Pompeii, she had felt a pleasing pride in nursing his recollection. Even the task which she imposed upon herself, of tending his flowers, served to keep him in her mind; she associated him with all that was most charming to her impressions; and when she had refused to express what image she fancied Ione to resemble, it was partly, perhaps, that whatever was bright and soft in nature she had already combined with the thought of Glaucus. If any of my readers ever loved at an age which they would now smile to remember—an age in which fancy forestalled the reason; let them say whether that love, among all its strange and complicated delicacies, was not above all other and later passions susceptible of jealousy? I seek not here the cause; I know that it is commonly the fact.

When Glaucus returned to Pompeii, Nydia had told another year of life; that year, with its
sorrows, its loneliness, its trials, had greatly developed her mind and heart; and when the Athenian drew her unconsciously to his breast, deeming her still in soul as in years, a child—when he kissed her smooth cheek, and wound his arm round her trembling frame, Nydia felt suddenly, and as by revelation, that those feelings she had long and innocently cherished, were of love. Doomed to be rescued from tyranny by Glaucus—doomed to take shelter under his roof—doomed to breathe, but for so brief a time, the same air, and doomed, in the first rush of a thousand happy, grateful, delicious sentiments of an overflowing heart, to hear that he loved another; to be commissioned to that other, the messenger, the minister; to feel all at once that utter nothingness which she was—which she ever must be, but which, till then, her young mind had not taught her,—that utter nothingness to him who was all to her; what wonder, that in her wild and passionate soul, all the elements jarred discordant; that if love reigned over the whole, it was not the love which is born of the more sacred
and soft emotions. Sometimes she dreaded only lest Glaucus should discover her secret; sometimes she felt indignant that it was not suspected; it was a sign of contempt — could he imagine that she presumed so far? Her feelings to Ione ebbed and flowed with every hour; now she loved her because he did; now she hated her for the same cause. There were moments when she could have murdered her unconscious mistress; moments when she could have laid down life for her. These fierce and tremulous alternations of passion were too severe to be borne long. Her health gave way, though she felt it not — her cheek paled — her step grew feeble — tears came to her eyes more often, and relieved her less.

One morning, when she repaired to her usual task in the garden of the Athenian, she found Glaucus under the columns of the peristyle, with a merchant of the town; he was selecting jewels for his destined bride. He had already fitted up her apartment; the jewels he bought that day were placed also within it — they were never fated to grace the fair form of Ione, they may be seen at this day
among the disinterred treasures of Pompeii, in the chambers of the studio at Naples.*

"Come hither, Nydia, put down thy vase, and come hither. Thou must take this chain from me—stay—there I have put it on—There, Servilius, does it not become her?"

"Wonderfully!" answered the jeweller—for jewellers were well-bred and flattering men, even at that day.—"But when these ear-rings glitter in the ears of the noble Ione, then, by Bacchus! you will see whether my art adds anything to beauty."

"Ione?" repeated Nydia, who had hitherto acknowledged by smiles and blushes the gift of Glaucus.

"Yes," replied the Athenian, carelessly toying with the gems; "I am choosing a present for Ione, but there are none worthy of her."

He was startled as he spoke by an abrupt gesture of Nydia; she tore the chain violently from her neck, and dashed it on the ground.

"How is this? What, Nydia, dost thou not like the bauble? art thou offended?"

* Several bracelets, chains, and jewels, were found in the house.
"You treat me ever as a slave and as a child," replied the Thessalian, with a breast heaving with ill-suppressed sobs, and she turned hastily away to the opposite corner of the garden.

Glaucus did not attempt to follow; or to soothe; he was offended; he continued to examine the jewels and to comment on their fashion—to object to this and to praise that, and finally to be talked by the merchant into buying all; the safest plan for a lover, and one that any one will do right to adopt, provided—always that he can obtain an Ione!

When he had completed his purchase, and dismissed the jeweller, he retired into his chamber, dressed, mounted his chariot, and went to Ione. He thought no more of the blind girl, or her offence; he had forgotten both the one and the other.

He spent the forenoon with his beautiful Neapolitan, repaired thence to the baths, supped (if, as we have said before, we can justly so translate the three o'clock cena of the Romans) alone, and abroad, for Pompeii had its restaurateurs:—and returning home to change his dress ere he again repaired to the house of Ione, he passed the peristyle, but with the
absorbed reverie and absent eyes of a man in love, and did not note the form of the poor blind girl, bending exactly in the same place where he had left her. But though he saw her not, her ear recognized at once the sound of his step. She had been counting the moments to his return. He had scarcely entered his favourite chamber which opened on the peristyle, and seated himself musingly on his couch, when he felt his robe timorously touched, and turning he beheld Nydia kneeling before him, and holding up to him a handful of flowers—a gentle and an appropriate peace-offering; — her eyes, darkly upheld to his own, streamed with tears.

"I have offended thee," said she, sobbing, "and for the first time. I would die rather than cause thee a moment's pain—say that thou wilt forgive me. See! I have taken up the chain, I have put it on; I will never part from it, it is thy gift."

"My dear Nydia," returned Glaucus, and raising her, he kissed her forehead; "think of it no more! But why, my child, wert thou so suddenly angry; I could not divine the cause!"

"Do not ask!" said she, colouring violently; "I am a thing full of faults and humours; you know I
am but a child, you say so often; is it from a child that you can expect a reason for every folly?"

"But, prettiest, you will soon be a child no more; and if you would have us treat you as a woman, you must learn to govern these singular impulses and gales of passion. Think not I chide; no, it is for your happiness only I speak."

"It is true," said Nydia, "I must learn to govern myself; I must hide, I must suppress, my heart. This is a woman's task and duty; methinks her virtue is hypocrisy."

"Self-control is not deceit, my Nydia," returned the Athenian, "and that is the virtue necessary alike to man and to woman; it is the true senatorial toga, the badge of the dignity it covers."

"Self-control, self-control! Well, well, what you say is right! When I listen to you, Glauce, my wildest thoughts grow calm and sweet, and a delicious serenity falls over me. Advise, ah! guide me ever, my preserver!"

"Thy affectionate heart will be thy best guide, Nydia, when thou hast learned to regulate its feelings."
"Ah! that will be never," sighed Nydia, wiping away her tears.

"Say not so, the first effort is the only difficult one."

"I have made many first efforts," answered Nydia, innocently. "But you, my mentor, do you find it so easy to control yourself? Can you conceal—can you even regulate—your love for Ione?"

"Love, dear Nydia, ah! that is quite another matter," answered the young preceptor.

"I thought so!" returned Nydia, with a melancholy smile. "Glaucus, wilt thou take my poor flowers? Do with them as thou wilt—thou canst give them to Ione, if thou wilt," added she with a little hesitation.

"Nay, Nydia," answered Glaucus kindly, divining something of jealousy in her language, though he imagined it only the jealousy of a vain and susceptible child; "I will not give thy pretty flowers to any one. Sit here and weave them into a garland; I will wear it this night; it is not the first those delicate fingers have woven for me."

The poor girl delightedly sat down beside Glaucus. She drew from her girdle a ball of the many-coloured threads, or rather slender ribands, used in
the weaving of garlands, and which (for it was her professional occupation) she carried constantly with her, and began quickly and gracefully to commence her task. Upon her young cheeks the tears were already dried, a faint but happy smile played round her lips;—childlike indeed, she was sensible only of the joy of the present hour: she was reconciled to Glaucus: he had forgiven her—she was beside him—he played caressingly with her silken hair—his breath fanned her cheek,—Ione, the cruel Ione, was not by—none other demanded, divided, his care. Yes, she was happy and forgetful; it was one of the few moments in her brief and troubled life that it was sweet to treasure, to recall. As the butterfly, allured by the winter sun, basks for a little while in the sudden light, ere yet the wind awakes and the frost comes on, which shall blast it before the eve,—she rested beneath a beam, which, by contrast with the wonted skies, was not chilling;—and the instinct which should have warned her of its briefness, bade her only gladden in its smile.

"Thou hast beautiful locks," said Glaucus.
"They were once, I ween well, a mother's delight."
Nydia sighed; it would seem that she had not been born a slave; but she ever shunned the mention of her parentage, and whether obscure or noble, certain it is that her birth was never known by her benefactors, or by any one in those distant shores, even to the last. The child of sorrow and of mystery, she came and went as some bird that enters our chamber for a moment; we see it flutter while before us, we know not whence it flew or to what region it escapes.

Nydia sighed, and after a short pause, without answering the remark, said:

"But do I weave too many roses in thy wreath, Glaucus? they tell me it is thy favourite flower."

"And ever favoured, my Nydia, be it by those who have the soul of poetry—it is the flower of love, of festivals; it is also the flower we dedicate to Silence and to Death; it blooms on our brows in life, while life be worth the having; it is scattered above our sepulchre when we are no more."

"Ah! would," said Nydia, "instead of this perishable wreath, that I could take thy web from the hand of the Fates, and insert the roses there!"

"Pretty one! thy wish is worthy of a voice so
attuned to song, it is uttered in the spirit of song, and whatever my doom, I thank thee."

"Whatever thy doom! is it not already destined to all things bright and fair? My wish was vain. The Fates will be as tender to thee as I should."

"It might not be so, Nydia, were it not for love! While youth lasts, I may forget my country for a while. But what Athenian, in his graver manhood, can think of Athens as she was, and be contented that he is happy, while she is fallen—fallen, and for ever."

"And why for ever?"

"As ashes cannot be rekindled—as love once dead never can revive, so freedom departed from a people is never regained. But talk we not of these matters unsuited to thee?"

"To me, oh! thou errest. I, too, have my sighs for Greece; my cradle was rocked at the feet of Olympus; the gods have left the mountain, but their traces may be seen—seen in the hearts of their worshippers, seen in the beauty of their clime; they tell me it is beautiful, and I have felt its airs, to which even these are harsh—its sun, to which these skies are chill. Oh! talk to me of Greece! Poor fool that I am, I can comprehend thee! and
methinks, had I yet lingered on those shores, had I been a Grecian maid, whose happy fate it was to love and to be loved, I myself could have armed my lover for another Marathon, a new Plataea. Yes, the hand that now weaves the roses, should have woven thee the olive crown!"

"If such a day could come!" said Glaucus, catching the enthusiasm of the blind Thessalian, and half rising.—"But no! the sun has set, and the night only bids us be forgetful,—and in forgetfulness be gay;—weave still the roses!"

But it was with a melancholy tone of forced gaiety that the Athenian uttered the last words, and sinking into a gloomy reverie, he was only wakened from it, a few minutes afterwards, by the voice of Nydia, as she sang in a low tone the following words which he had once taught her.

THE APOLOGY FOR PLEASURE.

1.

Who will assume the bays
That the hero wore?
Wreaths on the Tomb of Days
Gone evermore!
Who shall disturb the Brave,  
Or one leaf on their holy grave?  
The laurel is vowed to them,  
Leave the bay on its sacred stem!  
But this, the rose, the fading rose.  
Alike for slave and freeman grows!

2.
If Memory sits beside the dead  
With tombs her only treasure;  
If Hope is lost and Freedom fled,  
The more excuse for Pleasure.
Come, weave the wreath, the roses weave,  
The rose at least is ours;  
To feeble hearts our fathers leave,  
In pitying scorn, the flowers!

3.
On the summit, worn and hoary,  
Of Phyle's solemn hill,  
The tramp of the brave is still!  
And still in the saddening Mart,  
The pulse of that mighty Heart  
Whose very blood was glory!
Glaucopis forsakes her own,
    The angry gods forget us,
But yet, the blue streams along,
Walk the feet of the silver Song.
And the night-bird wakes the moon;
And the bees in the blushing noon
    Haunt the heart of the old Hymettus!
We are fallen, but not forlorn,
    If something is left to cherish;
As Love was the earliest born,
    So Love is the last to perish.

4.

Wreath then the roses, wreath!
    The Beautiful still is ours,
While the stream shall flow, and the sky shall glow,
    The Beautiful still is ours!
Whatever is fair, or soft, or bright,
In the lap of day or the arms of night,
Whispers our soul of Greece—of Greece,
And hushes our care with a voice of peace.
    Wreath then the roses, wreath!
They tell me of earlier hours,
And I hear the heart of my Country breathe
    From the lips of the Stranger's flowers.
CHAPTER V.

NYDIA ENCOUNTERS JULIA.—INTERVIEW OF THE HEATHEN SISTER AND CONVERTED BROTHER. — AN ATHENIAN'S NOTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

"What happiness to Ione! what bliss to be ever by the side of Glaucus, to hear his voice—and she too can see him!"

Such was the soliloquy of the blind girl, as she walked alone and at twilight to the house of her new mistress, whither Glaucus had already preceded her. Suddenly she was interrupted in her fond thoughts by a female voice—

"Blind flower girl, whither goest thou? there is no panier under thine arm; hast thou sold all thy flowers?"

The person thus accosting Nydia, was a lady of a handsome, but a bold and unmaiden countenance; it was Julia, the daughter of Diomed. Her veil was half raised as she spoke; she was accompanied
by Diomed himself, and by a slave carrying a lantern before them—the merchant and his daughter were returning home from a supper at one of their neighbours.

"Dost thou not remember my voice?" continued Julia; "I am the daughter of Diomed the wealthy."

"Ah! forgive me; yes, I recall the tones of your voice. No, noble Julia, I have no flowers to sell!"

"I heard that thou wert purchased by the beautiful Greek, Glaucus; is that true, pretty slave?" asked Julia.

"I serve the Neapolitan, Ione," replied Nydia, evasively.

"Ha! and it is true then—"

"Come! come!" interrupted Diomed, with his cloak up to his mouth, "the night grows cold, I cannot stay here while you prate to that blind girl; come, let her follow you home, if you wish to speak to her."

"Do, child," said Julia, with the air of one not accustomed to be refused; "I have much to ask of thee; come."
"I cannot this night, it grows late," answered Nydia; "I must be at home; I am not free, noble Julia."

"What, the meek Ione will chide thee? ay, I doubt not she is a second Thalestris. But, come then to-morrow: do — remember, I have been thy friend of old."

"I will obey thy wishes," answered Nydia — and Diomed again impatiently summoned his daughter; she was obliged to proceed, with the main question she had desired to put to Nydia unasked.

Meanwhile, we return to Ione. The interval of time that had elapsed that day between the first and second visit of Glaucus, had not been too gaily spent; she had received a visit from her brother. Since the night he had assisted in saving her from the Egyptian, she had not before seen him.

Occupied with his own thoughts—thoughts of so serious and intense a nature, the young priest had thought little of his sister; in truth, men perhaps of that fervent order of mind which is ever aspiring above earth, are but little prone to the earthlier affections; and it had been long since
Apæcides had sought those soft and friendly interchanges of thought, those sweet confidences, which in his earlier youth had bound him to Ione, and which are so natural to that endearing connexion which existed between them.

Ione, however, had not ceased to regret his estrangement; she attributed it, at present, to the engrossing duties of his severe fraternity. And often, amidst all her bright hopes, and her new attachment to her betrothed—often when she thought of her brother's brow prematurely furrowed, his unsmiling lip, and bended frame, she sighed to think that the service of the gods could throw so deep a shadow over that earth which the gods created.

But this day, when he visited her, there was a strange calmness on his features, a more quiet and self-possessed expression in his sunken eyes than she had marked for years. This apparent improvement was but momentary—it was a false calm, which the least breeze could ruffle.

"May the gods bless thee, my brother!" said she, embracing him.
"The gods! Speak not thus vaguely; perchance there is but one God!"

"My brother!"

"What if the sublime faith of the Nazarene be true? What if God be a monarch—One—Indisvisible—Alone? What if these numerous—countless deities, whose altars fill the earth, be but evil demons, seeking to wean us from the true creed? This may be the case, Ione!"

"Alas! can we believe it? or if we believed, would it not be a melancholy faith?" answered the Neapolitan. "What! all this beautiful world made only human!—the mountain disenchanted of its Oread—the waters of their Nymph—that beautiful prodigality of faith, which makes everything divine, consecrating the meanest flowers, bearing celestial whispers in the faintest breeze—wouldst thou deny this, and make the earth mere dust and clay? No, Apæcides; all that is brightest in our hearts, is that very credulity which peoples the universe with gods."

Ione answered as a believer in the poesy of the old mythology would answer. We may judge by
that reply how obstinate and hard the contest which Christianity had to endure among the heathens. The Graceful Superstition was never silent; every, the most household, action of their lives was entwined with it—it was a portion of life itself, as the flowers are a part of the thyrsus. At every incident they recurred to a god, every cup of wine was prefaced by a libation; the very garlands on their thresholds were dedicated to some divinity; their ancestors themselves, made holy, presided as Lares over their hearth and hall. So abundant was belief with them, that in their own climes, at this hour, idolatry has never thoroughly been out-rooted; it changes but its objects of worship; it appeals to innumerable saints where once it resorted to divinities; and it pours its crowds, in listening reverence, to oracles at the shrines of St. Januarius or St. Dominic, instead of to those of Isis or Apollo.

But these superstitions were not to the early Christians the object of contempt so much as of horror. They did not believe with the quiet scepticism of the heathen philosopher, that the gods were inventions of the priests, nor even with
the vulgar, that, according to the dim light of history, they had been mortals like themselves. They imagined the heathen divinities to be evil spirits—they transplanted to Italy and to Greece the gloomy demons of India and the East; and in Jupiter or in Mars they shuddered at the representative of Moloch or of Satan.*

Apæcides had not yet adopted formally the Christian faith, but he was already on the brink of it. He already participated the doctrines of Olinthus—he already imagined that the lively imaginations of the heathen were the suggestions of the arch enemy of mankind. The innocent and natural answer of Ione made him shudder. He hastened to reply vehemently, and yet so confusedly, that Ione feared for his reason, more than she dreaded his violence.

* In Pompeii, a rough sketch of Pluto delineates that fearful deity in the shape we at present ascribe to the Devil, and decorates him with the paraphernalia of horns and a tail. But, in all probability, it was from the mysterious Pan—the haunter of solitary places—the inspirer of vague and soul-shaking terrors—that we took the vulgar notion of the outward likeness of the fiend; it corresponds exactly to the cloven-footed Satan. And in the lewd and profligate rites of Pan, Christians might well imagine they traced the deceptions of the Devil.
"Ah, my brother!" said she, "these hard duties of thine have shattered thy very sense. Come to me, Apæcides, my brother, my own brother; give me thy hand, let me wipe the dew from thy brow; chide me not now, I understand thee not; think only that Ione could not offend thee."

"Ione," said Apæcides, drawing her towards him and regarding her tenderly, "can I think that this beautiful form, this kind heart, may be destined to an eternity of torment?"

"Dii meliora! the gods forbid!" said Ione, in the customary form of words by which her cotemporaries thought an omen might be averted.

The words, and still more the superstition they implied, wounded the ear of Apæcides. He rose muttering to himself, turned from the chamber, then stopping halfway, gazed wistfully on Ione, and extended his arms;

Ione flew to them in joy, he kissed her earnestly, and then he said:

"Farewell, my sister, when we next meet, thou mayest be to me as nothing; take thou, then, this embrace; full yet of all the tender reminiscences of childhood, when faith and hope, creeds, customs,
interests, objects, were the same to us. Now, the tie is to be broken!"

With these strange words he left the house.

The great and severest trial of the primitive Christians was indeed this; their conversion separated them from their dearest bonds. They could not associate with beings whose commonest actions, whose commonest forms of speech, were impregnated with idolatry. They shuddered at the blessing of love, to their ears it was uttered in a demon's name. This, their misfortune, was their strength; if it divided them from the rest of the world, it was to unite them proportionally to each other. They were men of iron who wrought forth the Word of God, and verily the bonds that bound them were of iron also!

Glaucus found Ione in tears; he had already assumed the sweet privilege to console. He drew from her a recital of her interview with her brother; but in her confused account of language, itself so confused to one not prepared for it, he was equally at a loss with Ione to conceive the intentions or the meaning of Apæcides.

"Hast thou ever heard much," asked she, "of
this new sect of the Nazarenes, of which my brother spoke."

"I have often heard enough of the votaries," returned Glaucus, "but of their exact tenets know I nought, save that in their doctrine there seemeth something preternaturally chilling and morose. They live apart from their kind; they affect to be shocked even at our simple uses of garlands; they have no sympathies with the cheerful amusements of life; they utter awful threats of the coming destruction of the world: they appear, in one word, to have brought their unsmilng and gloomy creed out of the cave of Trophonius. Yet," continued Glaucus, after a slight pause, "they have not wanted men of great power and genius, nor converts even among the Areopagites of Athens. Well do I remember to have heard my father speak of one strange guest at Athens many years ago; methinks his name was Paul. My father was one amongst a mighty crowd, that gathered on one of our immemorial hills to hear this sage of the East expound; through the wide throng there rang not a single murmur!—the jest and the roar, with which our native orators are received, were hushed for him;—and
when on the loftiest summit of that hill, raised above the breathless crowd below, stood this mysterious visitor, his mien and his countenance awed every heart even before a sound left his lips. He was a man, I have heard my father say, of no tall stature, but of noble and impressive mien; his robes were dark and ample; the declining sun, for it was evening, shone aslant upon his form, as it rose aloft, motionless and commanding; his countenance was much worn and marked, as of one who had braved alike misfortune and the sternest vicissitude of many climes; but his eyes were bright with an almost unearthly fire; and when he raised his arm to speak, it was with the majesty of a man into whom the Spirit of a God hath rushed!

"'Men of Athens!' he is reported to have said, 'I find amongst ye an altar with this inscription—

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Ye worship in ignorance the same deity I serve. To you unknown till now, to you be it now revealed.'

"Then declared that solemn man how this great Maker of all things, who had appointed unto man his several tribes and his various homes— the Lord of earth and the universal heaven, dwelt not in
temples made with hands; that His presence, His spirit, was in the air we breathed;—our life and our being was with Him. 'Think you,' he cried, 'that the Invisible is like your statues of gold and marble? Think you that He needeth sacrifice from you: He who made heaven and earth?' Then spake he of fearful and coming times, of the end of the world, of a second rising of the dead, whereof an assurance had been given to man in the resurrection of the mighty Being whose religion he came to preach.

"When he thus spoke, the long pent murmur went forth, and the philosophers that were mingled with the people muttered their sage contempt; there might you have seen the chilling frown of the Stoic, and the Cynic's sneer;—and the Epicurean who believeth not even in our own Elysium, muttered a pleasant jest, and swept laughing through the crowd; but the deep heart of the People was touched and thrilled; and they trembled, though they knew not why, for verily the stranger had the voice and majesty of a man to whom 'The Unknown God' had committed the preaching of His faith."

I lone listened with rapt attention, and the seri-
ous and earnest manner of the narrator betrayed the impression that he himself had received from one who had been amongst the audience, that on the hill of the Heathen Mars had heard the first tidings of the word of Christ!
CHAPTER VI.

THE PORTER.—THE GIRL.—AND THE GLADIATOR.

The door of Diomed's house stood open, and Medon, the old slave, sat at the bottom of the steps by which you ascended to the mansion. That luxurious mansion of the rich merchant of Pompeii is still to be seen just without the gates of the city, at the commencement of the Street of Tombs; it was a gay neighbourhood, despite the dead. On the opposite side, but at some yards nearer the gate, was a spacious hostelry, at which those brought by business or by pleasure to Pompeii often stopped to refresh themselves. In the space before the entrance of the inn now stood waggon, and carts, and chariots, some just arrived, some just quitting, in all the bustle of an animated and popular resort of public entertainment. Before the
door, some farmers, seated on a bench by a small circular table, were talking, over their morning cups, on the affairs of their calling. On the side of the door itself was painted gaily and freshly the eternal sign of the chequers.* By the roof of the inn stretched a terrace, on which some females, wives of the farmers abovementioned, were, some seated, some leaning over the railing, and conversing with their friends below. In a deep recess, at a little distance, was a covered seat, in which some two or three poorer travellers were resting themselves, and shaking the dust from their garments. On the other side stretched a wide space, originally the burial ground of a more ancient race than the present denizens of Pompeii, and now converted into the Ustrinum, or place for the burning of the dead. Above this rose the terraces of a gay villa, half hid by trees. The tombs themselves, with their graceful and varied shapes, the flowers and the foliage that surrounded them, made no melancholy feature in the prospect. Hard by the gate of the city, in a small niche, stood the still form of the well-disciplined Roman sentry, the sun shining brightly on his polished crest and

* There is another inn within the walls similarly adorned.
the lance on which he leant. The gate itself was divided into three arches, the centre one for vehicles, those at the side for the foot-passengers, and on either side rose the massive walls which girt the city, composed, patched, repaired at a thousand different epochs, according as war, time, or the earthquake had shattered that vain protection. At frequent intervals rose square towers, whose summits broke in picturesque rudeness the regular line of the wall, and contrasted well with the modern buildings gleaming whitely by.

The curving road, which in that direction leads from Pompeii to Herculaneum, wound out of sight amidst hanging vines, above which frowned the sullen majesty of Vesuvius.

"Hast thou heard the news, old Medon?" said a young woman with a pitcher in her hand, as she paused by Diomed's door to gossip a moment with the slave, ere she repaired to the neighbouring inn to fill the vessel, and coquet with the travellers.

"The news, what news?" said the slave, raising his eyes moodily from the ground.

"Why, there passed through the gate this morn-
ing, no doubt ere thou wert well awake, such a visiter to Pompeii!"

"Per Hercle!" said the slave indifferently.

"Yes, a present from the noble Pomponianus."

"A present! I thought thou saidst a visiter?"

"It is both visiter and present. Know, O dull and stupid! that it is a most beautiful young tiger for our approaching games in the amphitheatre. Hear you that, Medon. Oh, what pleasure! I declare I shall not sleep a wink till I see it; they say it has such a roar!"

"Poor fool!" said Medon sadly and cynically.

"Fool me no fool, old churl! It is a pretty thing, a tiger, especially if we could but find somebody for him to eat. We have now a lion and a tiger; only consider that, Medon! and for want of two good criminals, perhaps we shall be forced to see them eat each other. By the by, your son is a gladiator, a handsome man and a strong, can you not persuade him to fight the tiger? Do now, you would oblige me mightily; nay, you would be a benefactor to the whole town."

"Vah, vah!" said the slave with great as-
perity: "think of thine own danger, ere thou thus pratest of my poor boy's death."

"My own danger!" said the girl, frightened and looking hastily round - "Avert the omen! let thy words fall on thine own head!" And the girl as she spoke touched a talisman suspended round her neck. "'Thine own danger!' what danger threatens me?"

"Had the earthquake but a few nights since no warning?" said Medon. "Has it not a voice? Did it not say to us all 'Prepare for Death, the end of all things is at hand?'"

"Bah, stuff!" said the young woman, settling the folds of her tunic. "Now thou talkest as they say the Nazarenes talk—methinks thou art one of them. Well, I can prate with thee, grey croaker, no more, thou growest worse and worse—Vale! O Hercules, send us a man for the lion—and another for the tiger!"

"Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show,
With a forest of faces in every row!
Lo the swordsmen, bold as the son of Alcmæna,
Sweep, side by side, o'er the hushed arena;
Talk while you may—you will hold your breath
When they meet in the grasp of the glowing death.
Tramp, tramp, how gaily they go!
Ho! ho! for the merry, merry show!"

Chanting in a silver and clear voice this feminine ditty, and holding up her tunic from the dusty road, the young woman stepped lightly across to the crowded hostelry.

“My poor son!” said the slave, half aloud, “is it for things like this thou art to be butchered? Oh! faith of Christ, I could worship thee in all sincerity, were it but for the horror which thou inspirest for these bloody lists.”

The old man’s head sank dejectedly on his breast. He remained silent and absorbed, but every now and then with the corner of his sleeve he wiped his eyes. His heart was with his son; he did not see the figure that now approached from the gate with a quick step, and a somewhat fierce and reckless gait and carriage. He did not lift his eyes till the figure paused opposite the place where he sat, and with a soft voice addressed him by the name of
"Father!"

"My boy, my Lydon, is it indeed thou?" said the old man joyfully. "Ah! thou wert present to my thoughts."

"I am glad to hear it, my father," said the gladiator, respectfully touching the knees and beard of the slave; "and soon may I be always present with thee, not in thought only."

"Yes, my son,—but not in this world," replied the slave mournfully.

"Talk not thus, O my sire! look cheerfully, for I feel so—I am sure that I shall win the day, and then, the gold I gain buys thy freedom. Oh! my father, it was but a few days since, that I was taunted, by one too whom I would gladly have undeceived, for he is more generous than the rest of his equals. He is not Roman—he is of Athens—by him I was taunted with the lust of gain—when I demanded what sum was the prize of victory. Alas! he little knew the soul of Lydon!"

"My boy! my boy!" said the old slave, as, slowly ascending the steps, he conducted his son to his own little chamber, communicating with the entrance hall, (which in this villa was the peristyle, not the atrium;)—you may see it now; it is the
third door to the left on entering. (The first door conducts to the staircase; the second is but a false recess, in which there stood a statue of bronze.) — "Generous, affectionate, pious as are thy motives," said Medon, when they were thus secured from observation, "thy deed itself is guilt—thou art to risk thy blood for thy father's freedom—that might be forgiven; but the prize of victory is the blood of another. Oh, that is a deadly sin; no object can purify it. Forbear! forbear! rather would I be a slave for ever, than purchase liberty on such terms!"

"Hush! my father!" replied Lydon, somewhat impatiently; "thou hast picked up in this new creed of thine, of which I pray thee not to speak to me, for the gods that gave me strength denied me wisdom, and I understand not one word of what thou often preachest to me,—thou hast picked up, I say, in this new creed, some singular phantasies of right and wrong. Pardon me, if I offend thee: but reflect! Against whom shall I contend? Oh! couldst thou know those wretches with whom, for thy sake, I assort, thou wouldst think I purified earth by removing one of them.
Beasts, whose very lips drop blood; things all savage, unprincipled in their very courage; ferocious, heartless, senseless; no tie of life can bind them: they know not fear, it is true—but neither know they gratitude, or charity, or love; they are made but for their own career, to slaughter without pity, to die without dread! Can thy gods, whosoever they be, look with wrath on a conflict with such as these, and in such a cause? Oh, my father, wherever the Powers above gaze down on earth, they behold no duty so sacred, so sanctifying, as the sacrifice offered to an aged parent by the piety of a grateful son!"

The poor old slave, himself deprived of the lights of knowledge, and only late a convert to the Christian faith, knew not with what arguments to enlighten an ignorance at once so dark, and yet so beautiful in its error. His first impulse was to throw himself on his son's breast—his next to start away—to wring his hands; and in the attempt to reprove, his broken voice lost itself in weeping.

"And if," resumed Lydon, "if thy Deity (me-thinks thou wilt own but one?) be indeed that benevolent and pitying power which thou assertest
Him to be, He will know also that thy very faith in Him first confirmed me in that determination thou blamest."

"How! what mean you?" said the slave.

"Why, thou knowest that I, sold in my childhood as a slave, was set free at Rome by the will of my master, whom I had been fortunate enough to please. I hastened to Pompeii to see thee—I found thee, already aged and infirm, under the yoke of a capricious and pampered lord—thou hadst lately adopted this new faith, and its adoption made thy slavery doubly painful to thee; it took away all the softening charm of custom, which reconciles us so often to the worst. Didst thou not complain to me, that thou wert compelled to offices that were not odious to thee as a slave, but guilty as a Nazarene? Didst thou not tell me that thy soul shook with remorse, when thou wert compelled to place even a crumb of cake before the Lares that watch over yon impluvium? that thy soul was torn by a perpetual struggle? Didst thou not tell me, that even by pouring wine before the threshold, and calling on the name of some Grecian deity, thou didst fear
thou wert incurring penalties worse than those of Tantalus—an eternity of torture more terrible than those of the Tartarian fields? Didst thou not tell me this? I wondered—I could not comprehend! nor, by Hercules—can I now; but I was thy son, and my sole task was to compassionate and relieve. Could I hear thy groans, could I witness thy mysterious horrors, thy constant anguish, and remain inactive? No! by the immortal gods! the thought struck me like light from Olympus; I had no money, but I had strength and youth—these were thy gifts—I could sell these in my turn for thee! I learned the amount of thy ransom—I learned that the usual prize of a victorious gladiator would doubly pay it. I became a gladiator—I linked myself with those accursed men, scorning, loathing, while I joined—I acquired their skill—blessed be the lesson!—it shall teach me to free my father!"

"Oh, that thou couldst hear Olinthus!" sighed the old man, more and more affected by the virtue of his son, but not less strongly convinced of the criminality of his purpose.

"I will hear the whole world talk, if thou wilt,"
answered the gladiator gaily; "but not till thou art a slave no more. Beneath thy own roof, my father, thou shalt puzzle this dull brain all day long; ay, and all night too, if it give thee pleasure. Oh, such a spot as I have chalked out for thee!—it is one of the nine hundred and ninety-nine shops of old Julia Felix, in the sunny part of the city, where thou mayest bask before the door in the day—and I will sell the oil and the wine for thee, my father—and then, please Venus, (or if it does not please her, since thou lovest not her name, it is all one to Lydon;)—then I say, perhaps thou mayest have a daughter too, to tend thy grey hairs, and hear shrill voices at thy knee, that shall call thee 'Lydon's father!' Ah! we shall be so happy—the prize can purchase all. Cheer thee! cheer up, my sire!—And now I must away—day wears—the lanista waits me. Come! thy blessing."

As Lydon thus spoke, he had already quitted the dark chamber of his father; and speaking eagerly, though in a whispered tone, they now stood at the same place in which we introduced the porter at his post.

"O bless thee! bless thee! my brave boy,"
said Medon fervently; "and may the great Power that reads all hearts see the nobleness of thine, and forgive its error!"

The tall shape of the gladiator passed swiftly down the path; the eyes of the slave followed its light, but stately steps, till the last glimpse was gone; and then sinking once more on his seat, his eyes again fastened themselves on the ground. His form, mute and unmoving, as a thing of stone. His heart!—who, in our happier age, can even imagine its struggles—its commotion!

"May I enter?" said a sweet voice; "is thy mistress Julia within?"

The slave mechanically motioned to the visitor to enter, but she who addressed him could not see the gesture—she repeated her question timidly, but in a louder voice.

"Have I not told thee?" said the slave, peevishly; "enter."

"Thanks," said the speaker, plaintively; and the slave, roused by the tone, looked up, and recognised the blind flower girl. Sorrow can sympathise with affliction—he raised himself, and
guided her steps to the head of the adjacent staircase, (by which you descended to Julia's apartment,) where, summoning a female slave, he consigned to her the charge of the blind girl.
CHAPTER VII.

THE DRESSING-ROOM OF A POMPEIAN BEAUTY.—IMPORTANT CONVERSATION BETWEEN JULIA AND NYDIA.

The elegant Julia sat in her chamber with her slaves around her:—like the cubiculum which adjoined it, the room was small—but much larger than the usual apartments appropriated to sleep, which were generally so diminutive, that few who have not seen the bedchambers, even in the gayest mansions, can form any notion of the petty pigeon-holes in which the citizens of Pompeii evidently thought it desirable to pass the night. But, in fact, "bed" with the ancients was not that grave, serious, and important part of domestic mysteries, which it is with us. The couch itself was more like a very narrow and small sofa, light enough to be transported easily, and by the occupant himself,* from

* "Take up thy bed and walk," was (as Sir W. Gell somewhere observes) no metaphorical expression.
place to place; and it was, no doubt, constantly shifted from chamber to chamber, according to the caprices of the inmate, or the changes of the season. For that side of the house, which was crowded in one month, might, perhaps, be carefully avoided in the next; so susceptible were the inhabitants of the most beautiful climate in the world of those alternations of sun and breeze, which to our hardier frame, inured to the harsh skies of the north, would be scarcely perceptible. There was also among the Italians of that period, a singular and fastidious apprehension of too much daylight; their darkened chambers, which at first appear to us the result of a negligent architecture, were the effect of the most elaborate study. In their porticos and gardens, they courted the sun whenever it so pleased their luxurious tastes. In the interior of their houses, they sought rather the coolness and the shade.

Julia's apartment at that season was in the lower part of the house, immediately beneath the state rooms above, and looking upon the garden, with which it was on a level. The wide door, which was glazed, alone admitted the morning rays; yet her
eye, accustomed to a certain darkness, was sufficiently acute to perceive exactly what colours were the most becoming—what shade of the delicate rouge gave the brightest beam to her dark glance, and the most youthful freshness to her cheek.

On the table before which she sate, was a small and circular mirror, of the most polished steel—round which, in precise order, were ranged the cosmetics and the unguents—the perfumes and the paints—the jewels and the combs—the ribands and the gold pins, which were destined to add to the natural attractions of beauty, the assistance of art and the capricious allurements of fashion. Through the dimness of the room glowed brightly the vivid and various colourings of the wall in all the dazzling frescos of Pompeian taste. Before the dressing-table, and under the feet of Julia, was spread a carpet, woven from the looms of the East. Near at hand, on another table, was a silver basin and ewer—an extinguished lamp, of most exquisite workmanship, in which the artist had represented a Cupid reposing under the spreading branches of a myrtle tree; and a small roll of papyrus, containing the softest elegies of Tibullus. Before the
door, which communicated with the cubiculum, hung a curtain, richly broidered with gold flowers. Such was the dressing-room of a beauty eighteen centuries ago.

The fair Julia leaned indolently back on her seat, while the ornatrix (i.e. hair-dresser) slowly piled one above the other a mass of small curls; dexterously weaving the false with the true, and carrying the whole fabric to a height that seemed to place the head rather at the centre than the summit of the human form.

Her tunic, of a deep amber, which well set off her dark hair and somewhat embrowned complexion, swept in ample folds to her feet, which were cased in slippers, fastened round the slender ankle by white thongs; while a profusion of pearls were embroidered in the slipper itself, which was of purple, and turned slightly upward, as do the Turkish slippers at this day. An old slave, skilled by long experience in all the arcana of the toilette, stood beside the hair-dresser, with the broad and studded girdle of her mistress over her arm, and giving from time to time, (mingled with judicious flattery to the lady herself,) instructions to the mason of the ascending pile.
"Put that pin rather more to the right—lower—stupid one! Do you not observe how even those beautiful eyebrows are?—One would think you were dressing Corinna, whose face is all of one side. Now put in the flowers—what, fool!—not that dull pink—you are not suiting colours to the dim cheek of Chloris—it must be the brightest flowers that can alone suit the cheek of the young Julia."

"Gently!" said the lady, stamping her small foot violently; "you pull my hair as if you were plucking up a weed."

"Dull thing!" continued the directress of the ceremony, "do you not know how delicate is your mistress?—you are not dressing the coarse horse-hair of the widow Fulvia. Now, then, the riband—that's right. Fair Julia, look in the mirror—saw you ever anything so lovely as yourself?"

When, after innumerable comments, difficulties, and delays, the intricate tower was at length completed, the next preparation was that of giving to the eyes the soft languish produced by a dark powder applied to the lids and brows—a small patch cut in the form of a crescent, skilfully
placed by the rosy lips, attracted attention to their
dimples, and to the teeth, to which already every
art had been applied in order to heighten the dazzle
of their natural whiteness.

To another slave, hitherto idle, was now con-
signed the charge of arranging the jewels—the
earrings of pearl, (two to each ear,) the massive
bracelets of gold—the chain formed of rings of the
same metal, to which a talisman cut in crystals
was attached—the graceful buckle on the left
shoulder, in which was set an exquisite cameo
of Psyche—the girdle of purple riband richly
wrought with threads of gold, and clasped by in-
terlacing serpents, and lastly, the various rings
fitted to every joint of the white and slender fin-
gers. The toilette was now arranged, according
to the last mode of Rome. The fair Julia regard-
ed herself with a last gaze of complacent vanity,
and reclining again upon her seat, she bade the
youngest of her slaves, in a listless tone, read to
her the enamoured couplets of Tibullus. This
lecture was still proceeding, when a female slave
admitted Nydia into the presence of the lady of
the place.
"Salve, Julia," said the flower girl, arresting her steps within a few paces from the spot where Julia sat, and crossing her arms upon her breast; "I have obeyed your commands."

"You have done well, flower girl," answered the lady; "approach, you may take a seat."

One of the slaves placed a stool by Julia, and Nydia seated herself.

Julia looked hard at the Thessalian for some moments in rather an embarrassed silence. She then motioned her attendants to withdraw, and to close the door. When they were alone, she said, looking mechanically from Nydia, and forgetful that she was with one who could not observe her countenance,

"You serve the Neapolitan, Ione."

"I am with her, at present," answered Nydia.

"Is she as handsome as they say?"

"I know not," replied Nydia, "how can I judge?"

"Ah! I should have remembered, but thou hast ears if not eyes. Do thy fellow slaves tell
thee she is handsome? Slaves talking with one another, forget to flatter even their mistress."

"They tell me that she is beautiful."

"Hem!—say they that she is tall?"

"Yes."

"Why, so am I—Dark-haired?"

"I have heard so."

"So am I. And doth Glaucus visit her much?"

"Daily," returned Nydia, with a half-suppressed sigh.

"Daily, indeed! Does he find her handsome?"

"I should think so, since they are so soon to be wedded."

"Wedded!" cried Julia, turning pale even through the false roses on her cheek, and starting from her couch; Nydia did not of course perceive the emotion she had caused. Julia remained a long time silent; but her heaving breast and flashing eyes would have betrayed to one who could have seen, the wound her vanity sustained.

"They tell me thou art a Thessalian," said she, at last breaking silence.
“And truly!”

“Thessaly is the land of magic and of witches—of talismans and of love philters,” said Julia.

“It has ever been celebrated for its sorcerers:” returned Nydia timidly.

“Knowest thou then, blind Thessalian, of any love-charms?”

“I!” said the flower girl, colouring, “I! how should I? No, assuredly not.”

“The worse for thee; I could have given thee gold enough to have purchased thy freedom hadst thou been more wise.”

“But what,” asked Nydia, “can induce the beautiful and wealthy Julia to ask that question of her servant? Has she not money and youth, and loveliness? Are they not love charms enough to dispense with magic!”

“To all but one person in the world,” answered Julia haughtily; “but methinks thy blindness is infectious—and—but no matter.”

“And that one person?” said Nydia eagerly.

“Is not Glaucus,” replied Julia, with the customary deceit of her sex. “Glaucus—no!”
Nydia drew her breath more freely, and, after a short pause Julia recommenced—

"But talking of Glaucus and his attachment to this Neapolitan, reminded me of the influence of love-spells, which, for aught I know or care, she may have exercised upon him. Blind girl, I love, and—shall Julia live to say it?—am loved not in return! This humbles—nay not humbles—but it stings my pride. I would see this ingrate at my feet—not in order that I might raise, but that I might spurn him. When they told me thou wert Thessalian, I imagined thy young mind might have learned the dark secrets of thy clime."

"Alas! no," murmured Nydia, "would it had!"

"Thanks, at least, for that kindly wish," said Julia, unconscious of what was passing in the breast of the flower girl.

"But tell me, thou hearest the gossip of slaves, always prone to these dim beliefs—always ready to apply to sorcery for their own low loves,—hast thou ever heard of any Eastern magician in this city who possesses the art of which thou art igno-
rant? No vain chiromancer, no juggler of the market-place, but some more potent and mighty magician of India or of Egypt!"

"Of Egypt, yes;" said Nydia, shuddering: "what Pompeian has not heard of Arbaces!"

"Arbaees, true!" replied Julia, grasping at the recollection. "They say he is a man above all the petty and false impostures of dull pretenders—that he is versed in the learning of the stars, and the secrets of the ancient Nox; why not in the mysteries of love?"

"If there be one magician living, whose art is above that of others, it is that dread man," answered Nydia, and she felt her talisman while she spoke.

"He is too wealthy to divine for money!" continued Julia sneeringly; "can I not visit him?"

"It is an evil mansion for the young and the beautiful," replied Nydia. "I have heard too that he languishes in——"

"An evil mansion," said Julia, catching only the first sentence. "Why so?"

"The orgies of his midnight leisure are impure and polluted—at least so says rumour."
“By Ceres, by Pan, and by Cybele, thou dost but provoke my curiosity instead of exciting my fears,” returned the wayward and pampered Pompeian. “I will seek and question him of his love. If to these orgies love be admitted—why the more likely that he knows its secrets.”

Nydia did not answer.

“I will seek him this very day,” resumed Julia; “nay, why not this very hour?”

“At day-light, and in his present state, thou hast assuredly the less to fear,” answered Nydia, yielding to her own sudden and secret wish to learn if the dark Egyptian were indeed possessed of those spells to rivet and attract love, of which the Thessalian had so often heard.

“And who would dare insult the rich daughter of Diomed?” said Julia, haughtily. “I will go.”

“May I visit thee afterwards to learn the result?” asked Nydia, anxiously.

“Kiss me for thy interest in Julia’s honour,” answered the lady. “Yes, assuredly. This eve we sup abroad—come hither at the same hour to-morrow and thou shalt know all; I may have to employ thee, too, but enough for the present.
Stay, take this bracelet for the new thought thou hast inspired me with; remember if thou servest Julia, she is grateful and she is generous."

"I cannot take thy present," said Nydia, putting aside the bracelet; "but young as I am I can sympathize unbought with those who love—and love in vain."

"Sayest thou so?" returned Julia; "thou speakest like a free woman—and thou shalt yet be free—farewell!"
JULIA SEEKS ARBACES—THE RESULT OF THAT INTERVIEW.

Arbaces was seated in a chamber, which opened on a kind of balcony or portico that fronted his garden. His cheek was pale and worn with the sufferings he had endured, but his iron frame had already recovered from the severest effects of that accident which had frustrated his fell designs in the moment of victory. The air that came fragrantly to his brow revived his languid senses, and the blood circulated more freely than it had done for days through his shrunken veins.

"So, then," thought he, "the storm of Fate has broken and blown over—the evil which my love predicted, threatening life itself, has chanced—and yet I live! It came as the stars foretold—and now the long, bright, and prosperous career which was to succeed that evil, if I survived it,
smiles beyond—I have passed—I have subdued the latest danger of my destiny. Now I have but to lay out the gardens of my future fate—untarried and secure. First, then, of all my pleasures—even before that of love—shall come revenge! This boy Greek—who has crossed my passion—thwarted my designs—baffled me even when the blade was about to drink his accursed blood—shall not a second time escape me. But for the method of my vengeance? Of that let me ponder well! Oh, Até, if thou art indeed a goddess, fill me with thy fullest inspiration!" The Egyptian sank into an intent reverie, which did not seem to present to him any clear or satisfactory suggestions. He changed his position restlessly as he revolved scheme after scheme, which no sooner occurred than it was dismissed; several times he struck his breast and groaned aloud, with the desire of vengeance, and a sense of his impotence to accomplish it. While thus absorbed, a boy slave timidly entered the chamber.

"A female, evidently of rank from her dress, and that of the single slave who attended her,
waited below and sought an audience with Arbaces."

"A female!" his heart beat quick. "Is she young?"

"Her face is concealed by her veil; but her form is slight yet round, as that of youth."

"Admit her," said the Egyptian; for a moment his vain heart dreamt the stranger might be Ione.

The first glance of the visitor now entering the apartment, sufficed to undeceive so erring a fancy. True, she was about the same height as Ione, and perhaps the same age—true, she was finely and richly formed—but where was that undulating and ineffable grace which accompanied every motion of the peerless Neapolitan—the chaste and decorous garb, so simple even in the care of its arrangement—the dignified, yet bashful step—the majesty of womanhood and its modesty?

"Pardon me that I rise with pain," said Arbaces, gazing on the stranger; "I am still suffering from recent illness."

"Do not disturb thyself, O great Egyptian!" returned Julia, seeking to disguise the fear she
already experienced, beneath the ready resort of flattery; "and forgive an unfortunate female who seeks consolation from thy wisdom."

"Draw near, fair stranger," said Arbaces, "and speak without apprehension or reserve."

Julia placed herself on a seat beside the Egyptian, and wonderingly gazed round an apartment whose elaborate and costly luxuries shamed even the ornate enrichment of her father's mansion; fearfully, too, she regarded the hieroglyphical inscriptions on the walls—the faces of the mysterious images, which at every corner gazed upon her—the tripod at a little distance—and, above all, the grave and remarkable countenance of Arbaces himself; a long white robe, like a veil, half covered his raven locks, and flowed to his feet; his face was made even more impressive by its present paleness, and his dark and penetrating eyes seemed to pierce the shelter of her veil, and explore the secrets of her vain and unfeminine soul.

"And what," said his low deep voice, "brings thee, O maiden! to the house of the eastern stranger?"

"His fame," replied Julia.
"In what?" said he, with a strange and slight smile.

"Canst thou ask, O wise Arbaces? Is not thy knowledge the very gossip theme of Pompeii?"

"Some little lore have I, indeed, treasured up," replied Arbaces; "but in what can such serious and sterile secrets benefit the ear of beauty?"

"Alas!" said Julia, a little cheered by the accustomed accents of adulation; "does not sorrow fly to wisdom for relief, and they who love unrequitedly, are not they the chosen victims of grief?"

"Ha!" said Arbaces, "can unrequited love be the lot of so fair a form, whose modelled proportions are visible even beneath the folds of thy graceful robe. Deign, O maiden! to lift thy veil, that I may see at least if the face correspond in loveliness with the form."

Not unwilling, perhaps, to exhibit her charms, and thinking they were likely to interest the magician in her fate, Julia, after some slight hesitation, raised her veil, and revealed a beauty which, but for art, had been indeed attractive to the fixed gaze of the Egyptian.

"Thou comest to me for advice in unhappy love,"
said he; "well, turn that face on the ungrateful one, what other love-charm can I give thee?"

"Oh, cease these courtesies!" said Julia; "it is a love-charm, indeed, that I would ask from thy skill!"

"Fair stranger," replied Arbaces, somewhat scornfully; "love-spells are not among a portion of the secrets I have wasted the midnight oil to attain."

"Is it indeed so? Then pardon me, great Arbaces, and farewell!"

"Stay," said Arbaces, who, despite his passion for Ione, was not unmoved by the beauty of his visitor; and had he been in the flush of a more assured health, might have attempted to console the fair Julia by other means than those of supernatural wisdom;

"Stay, although I confess that I have left the witchery of philters and potions to those whose trade is in such knowledge, yet am I myself not so dull to beauty but that in earlier youth I may have employed them in my own behalf. I may give thee advice at least, if thou wilt be candid with me; tell me then, first, art thou unmarried, as thy dress betokens?"
"Yes," said Julia.

"And being unblest with fortune, wouldst thou allure some wealthy suitor?"

"I am richer than he who disdains me."

"Strange and more strange; and thou lovest him who loves not thee?"

"I know not if I love him," answered Julia haughtily; "but I know that I would see myself triumph over a rival—I would see him who rejected me, my suitor—I would see her whom he has preferred, in her turn despised."

"A natural ambition and a womanly," said the Egyptian, in a tone too grave for irony: "yet more, fair maiden; wilt thou confide to me the name of thy lover? Can he be Pompeian, and despise wealth, even if blind to beauty?"

"He is of Athens," answered Julia, looking down.

"Ha!" cried the Egyptian impetuously, as the blood rushed to his cheek; "there is but one Athenian, young and noble, in Pompeii. Can it be Glaucus of whom thou speakest?"

"Ah! betray me not—so indeed they call him."

The Egyptian sunk back, gazing vacantly on
the averted face of the merchant’s daughter, and
muttering inly to himself—this conference with
which he had hitherto only trifled, amusing him-
self at the credulity and vanity of his visiter—
might it not minister to his revenge?

“I see thou canst assist me not,” said Julia,
offended by his continued silence; “guard at
least my secret—Once more, farewell!”

“Maiden,” said the Egyptian, in an earnest
and serious tone; “thy suit hath touched me
—I will minister to thy will. Listen to me; I
have not myself dabbled in these lesser mysteries
—but I know one who hath. At the base of
Vesuvius, less than a league from the city, there
dwells a powerful witch; beneath the rank dews
of the new moon, she has gathered the herbs which
possess the virtue to chain love in eternal fetters.
Her art can bring thy lover to thy feet. Seek
her, and mention to her the name of Arbaees;
she fears that name, and will give thee her most
potent philters.”

“Alas!” answered Julia, “I know not the road
to the home of her whom thou speakest of: the
way, short though it be, is long to traverse for
a girl who leaves, unknown, the house of her father. The country is entangled with wild vines, and dangerous with precipitous caverns. I dare not trust to mere strangers to guide me—the reputation of women of my rank is easily tarnished—and though I care not who knows that I love Glaucus, I would not have it imagined that I obtained his love by a spell."

"Were I but three days advanced in health," said the Egyptian, rising and walking (as if to try his strength) across the chamber, but with irregular and feeble steps; "I myself would accompany thee.—Well, thou must wait."

"But Glaucus is soon to wed that hated Neapolitan."

"Wed!"

"Yes, in the early part of next month."

"So soon; art thou well advised of this?"

"From the lips of her own slave."

"It shall not be!" said the Egyptian, impetuously; "fear nothing, Glaucus shall be thine. Yet how, when thou obtainest it, canst thou administer to him this potion?"

"My father has invited him, and, I believe, the
Neapolitan also, to a banquet, on the day following to-morrow; I shall then have the opportunity to administer it."

"So be it!" said the Egyptian, with eyes flashing such fierce joy, that Julia's gaze sank tremblingly beneath them.

"To-morrow eve, then, order thy litter; thou hast one at thy command?"

"Surely — yes," returned the purse-proud Julia.

"Order thy litter—at two miles' distance from the city is a house of entertainment, frequented by the wealthier Pompeians, from the excellence of its baths, and the beauty of its gardens. There canst thou pretend only to shape thy course—there, ill or dying, I will meet thee by the statue of Silenus, in the copse that skirts the garden; and I, myself, will guide thee to the witch. Let us wait till, with the evening star, the goats of the herdsman are gone to rest—when the dark twilight conceals us, and none shall cross our steps. Go home, and fear not. By Hades! swears Arbaces, the sorcerer of Egypt, that Ione shall never wed with Glaucus!"
"And that Glauceus shall be mine?" added Julia, filling up the incomellected sentence.

"Thou hast said it!" replied Arbaces—and Julia, half frightened at this unhallowed appointment, but urged on by jealousy and the pique of rivalship, even more than love, resolved to fulfil it.

Left alone, Arbaces burst forth—

"Bright stars that never lie, ye already begin the execution of your promises—success in love, and victory over foes, for the rest of my smooth existence! In the very hour when my mind could devise no clue to the goal of vengeance, have ye sent this fair fool for my guide!"—He paused in deep thought.—"Yes," said he again, but in a calmer voice; "I could not myself have given to her the poison that shall be indeed a philter!—his death might be thus tracked to my door. But the witch—ay, there is the fit, the natural, agent of my designs!"

He summoned one of his slaves, bade him hasten to track the steps of Julia, and acquaint himself with her name and condition. This done, he stepped forth into the portico. The skies were serene and clear—but he, deeply read in the signs
of their various change, beheld in one mass of cloud, far on the horizon, which the wind began slowly to agitate, that a storm was brooding above.

"It is like my vengeance," said he, as he gazed; "the sky is clear, but the cloud moves on."
CHAPTER IX.

A STORM IN THE SOUTH.—THE WITCH'S CAVERN.

It was when the heats of noon died gradually away from the earth, that Glauceus and Jone went forth to enjoy the cooled and grateful air. At that time various carriages were in use among the Romans; the one most used by the richer citizens, when they required no companion in their excursions, was the biga, already described in the early portion of this work; that appropriated to the matrons, was termed carpentum,* which had commonly two wheels; the Ancients used also a sort of litter, a vast sedan-chair, more commodiously arranged than the modern, inasmuch as the occupant thereof could lie down at

* For public festivals and games, they used one more luxurious and costly, called pilentum, with four wheels.
ease, instead of being perpendicularly and stiffly jostled up and down.* There was another carriage used both for travelling and for excursions in the country; it was commodious, containing three or four persons with ease, having a covering which could be raised at pleasure; and, in short, answering very much the purpose of (though very different in shape from) the modern britska. It was a vehicle of this description, that the lovers, accompanied by one female slave of Ione, now used in their excursion. About ten miles from the city, there was at that day an old ruin, the remains of a temple, evidently Grecian; and, as for Glaucus and Ione everything Grecian possessed an interest, they had agreed to visit these ruins—it was thither they were now bound.

Their road lay among vines and olive groves; till, winding more and more towards the higher ground of Vesuvius, the path grew rugged—the mules moved slowly, and with labour—and at every opening in the wood, they beheld those grey and horrent caverns indenting the parched rock, which Strabo has described; but which the various revo-

* But they had also the sella, or sedan, in which they sate as we do.
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Lutions of time and the volcano, have removed from the present aspect of the mountain. The sun, sloping towards his descent, cast long and deep shadows over the mountain; here and there they still heard the rustic reed of the shepherd amongst copses of the beechwood and wild oak. Sometimes they marked the form of the silk-haired and graceful capella, with its wreathing horn and bright grey eye—which, still beneath Ausonian skies, recalls the eclogues of Maro, browsing halfway up the hills; and the grapes, already purple with the smiles of the deepening summer, glowed out from the arched festoons, which hung pendent from tree to tree. Above them, light clouds floated in the serene heavens, sweeping so slowly athwart the firmament, that they scarcely seemed to stir; while, on their right, they caught, ever and anon, glimpses of the waveless sea, with some light bark skimming its surface; and the sunlight breaking over the deep in those countless and softest hues so peculiar to that delicious sea.

"How beautiful," said Glauceus, in a half-whispered tone, "is that epithet by which we call Earth our Mother! With what a kindly and
equal love she pours her blessings upon her children; and even to those sterile spots to which Nature has denied beauty, she yet contrives to dispense her smiles; witness the arbutus and the vine, which she wreathes over the arid and burning soil of yon extinct volcano. Ah! in such an hour and scene as this!—well might we imagine that the laughing face of the faun should peep forth from those green festoons; or, that we might trace the steps of the mountain nymph through the thickest mazes of the glade. But the nymphs ceased—beautiful Ione, when thou wast created!

There is no tongue that flatters like a lover's; and yet in the exaggeration of his feelings flattery seems to him commonplace. Strange and prodigal exuberance, which soon exhausts itself by overflowing! They tell us, that the esteem which follows passion, is happier than passion itself:—it may be true—the springs of fancy—of hope—of ambition—all urged into one channel, return to their natural streams. Love is a revolution—there is no harmony—no order—there is, therefore, no settled happiness while it lasts; but when the re-
volution is over—we are astonished at our past frenzy: we may love still—we may be beloved—but we are in love no more! For my part, I think, there are some kinds of imperfect happiness, which are better than the perfect. Take away desire from the heart, and you take the air from the earth.

They arrived at the Ruins: they examined them with that fondness with which we trace the hallowed and household vestiges of our own ancestry—they lingered there till Hesperus appeared in the rosy heavens; and then returning homeward in the twilight, they were more silent than they had been—for in the shadow and beneath the stars, they felt more oppressively their mutual love.

It was at this time that the storm which the Egyptian had predicted began to creep visibly over them. At first, a low and distant thunder gave warning of the approaching conflict of the elements; and then rapidly rushed above, the dark ranks of the serried clouds. The suddenness of storms in that climate is something almost preternatural, and might well suggest to early superstition the notion
of a divine agency—a few large drops broke heavily among the boughs that half overhung their path, and then, swift and intolerably bright, the forked lightning darted across their very eyes and was swallowed up by the increasing darkness.

"Swifter, good carrucarius," cried Glaucus to the driver; "the tempest comes on apace."

The slave urged on the mules—they went swift over the uneven and stony road—the clouds thickened, near and more near broke the thunder, and fast rushed the dashing rain.

"Dost thou fear?" whispered Glaucus, as he sought excuse in the storm to come nearer to Ione.

"Not with thee," said she softly.

At that instant the carriage—fragile and ill-contrived (as, despite their graceful shapes, were, for practical uses, most of such inventions at that time)—struck violently into a deep rut, over which lay a log of fallen wood; the driver with a curse stimulated his mules yet faster for the obstacle, the wheel was torn from the socket, and the carriage suddenly overset.

Glaucus quickly extricating himself from the vehicle, hastened to assist Ione, who was fortu-
nately unhurt; with some difficulty they raised the carruca (or carriage), and found that it ceased any longer even to afford them shelter; the springs that fastened the covering were snapped asunder, and the rain poured fast and fiercely into the interior.

In this dilemma, what was to be done? They were yet some distance from the city—no house, no aid seemed near.

"There is," said the slave, "a smith about a mile off; I could seek him, and he might fasten at least the wheel to the carruca—but, Jupiter! how the rain beats! my mistress will be wet before I come back."

"Run thither at least," said Glaucus; "we must find the best shelter we can till you return."

The lane was overshadowed with trees, beneath the amplest of which Glaucus drew lone. He endeavoured, by stripping his own cloak, to shield her yet more from the rapid rain; but it descended with a fury that broke through all puny obstacles; and suddenly, while Glaucus was yet whispering courage to his beautiful charge, the lightning struck one of the trees immediately before them, and split with a mighty crash its
huge trunk in twain. This awful incident apprised them of the danger they braved in their present shelter, and Glaucus looked anxiously round for some less perilous place of refuge. "We are now," said he, "halfway up the ascent of Vesuvius; there ought to be some cavern, or hollow in the vine-clad rocks, could we but find it, in which the deserting nymphs have left a shelter." While thus saying, he moved from the trees, and looking wistfully towards the mountain, discovered through the advancing gloom, a red and tremulous light at no considerable distance. "That must come," said he, "from the hearth of some shepherd, or vine-dresser—it will guide us to some hospitable retreat. Wilt thou stay here, while I—yet no—that would be to leave thee to danger."

"I will go with you cheerfully," said Ione; "open as the space seems, it is better than the treacherous shelter of these boughs."

Half leading, half carrying Ione, Glaucus accompanied by the trembling slave, advanced towards the light which yet burned blue and steadfastly. At length, the space was no longer open; wild
vines entangled their steps, and hid from them, save by imperfect intervals, the guiding beam.

But faster and fiercer came the rain, and the lightning assumed its most deadly and blasting form; they were still, therefore, impelled onward, hoping at last, if the light eluded them, to arrive at some cottage, or some friendly cavern. The vines grew more and more intricate—the light was entirely snatched from them; but a narrow path, which they trod with labour and pain, guided only by the constant and long lingering flashes of the storm, continued to lead them towards its direction. The rain ceased suddenly; precipitous and rough crags of scorched lava frowned before them, rendered more fearful by the lightning that illumined the dark and dangerous soil. Sometimes the blaze lingered over the iron-grey heaps of scoria, covered in part with ancient mosses or stunted trees, as if seeking in vain for some gentler product of earth, more worthy of its ire; and sometimes leaving the whole of that part of the scene in darkness, the lightning, broad and sheeted, hung redly over the ocean tossing far below until its waves seemed glowing into fire; and so intense was the blaze,
that it brought vividly into view even the sharp outline of the more distant windings of the bay, from the eternal Misenum, with its lofty brow, to the beautiful Sorrentum and the giant hills behind.

Our lovers stopped in perplexity and doubt, when suddenly, as the darkness that gloomed between the fierce flashes of lightning once more wrapped them round, they saw near, but high, before them, the mysterious light. Another blaze, in which heaven and earth were reddened, made visible to them the whole expanse; no house was near, but just where they had beheld the light, they thought they saw in the recess of a cavern the outline of a human form. The darkness once more returned; the light, no longer paled beneath the fires of heaven, burnt forth again: they resolved to ascend towards it; they had to wind their way among vast fragments of stone, here and there overhung with wild bushes; but they gained nearer and nearer to the light, and at length they stood opposite the mouth of a kind of cavern, apparently formed by huge splinters of rock that had fallen transversely athwart each other: And, looking into
the gloom, each drew back involuntarily with a superstitious fear and chill.

A fire burned in the far recess of the cave—and over it was a small caldron; on a tall and thin column of iron stood a rude lamp; over that part of the wall, at the base of which burned the fire, hung in many rows, as if to dry, a profusion of herbs and weeds. A fox, couched before the fire, gazed upon the strangers with its bright and red eye—its hair bristling—and a low growl stealing from between its teeth; in the centre of the cave was an earthen statue, which had three heads of a singular and fantastic cast; they were formed by the real skulls of a dog, a horse, and a boar; a low tripod stood before this wild representation of the popular Hecate.

But it was not these appendages and appliances of the cave that thrilled the blood of those who gazed fearfully therein—it was the face of its inmate. Before the fire, with the light shining full upon her features, sate a woman of considerable age. Perhaps in no country are there seen so many hags as in Italy—in no country does beauty
so awfully change, in age, to hideousness the most appalling and revolting. But the old woman now before them was not one of these specimens of the extreme of human ugliness; on the contrary—her countenance betrayed the remains of a regular but high and aquiline order of feature;—with stony eyes turned upon them—with a look that met and fascinated theirs—they beheld in that fearful countenance the very image of a corpse!—the same, the glazed and lustreless regard—the blue and shrunken lips—the drawn and hollow jaw—the dead—lank hair—of a pale grey—the livid—green—ghastly skin—which seemed all surely tinged and tainted by the grave!

"It is a dead thing!" said Glauceus.

"Nay—it stirs—it is a ghost or larva," faltered Ione, as she clung to the Athenian's breast.

"Oh, away—away!"—groaned the slave; "it is the Witch of Vesuvius."

"Who are ye?" said a hollow and ghostly voice. "And what do ye here?"

The sound, terrible and death-like as it was—suiting well the countenance of the speaker—and seeming rather the voice of some bodiless wan-
derer of the Styx, than living mortal—would have made Ione shrink back into the pitiless fury of the storm—but Glaucus—though not without some misgiving—drew her into the cavern.

"We are storm-beaten wanderers from the neighbouring city," said he, "and, decoyed hither by yon light, we crave shelter and the comfort of your hearth."

As he spoke, the fox rose from the ground, and advanced towards the strangers, showing from end to end its white teeth—and deepening in its menacing growl.

"Down, slave!" said the witch; and at the sound of her voice the beast dropped at once, covering its face with its brush, and keeping only its quick, vigilant eye fixed upon the invaders of its repose. "Come to the fire, if ye will!" said she, turning to Glaucus and his companions. "I never welcome living thing—save the owl, the fox, the toad, and the viper—so I cannot welcome ye; but come to the fire without welcome—why stand upon form?"

The language in which the hag addressed them was a strange and barbarous Latin, interlarded
with many words of some more rude and ancient dialect. She did not stir from her seat, but gazed stonily upon them as Glaucus now released Ione of her outer wrapping garments, and making her place herself on a log of wood, which was the only other seat he perceived at hand—fanned with his breath the embers into a more glowing flame. The slave, encouraged by the boldness of her superiors, divested herself also of her long *palla*, and crept timorously to the opposite corner of the hearth.

"We disturb you, I fear," said the silver voice of Ione in conciliation.

The witch did not reply—she seemed like one who has awakened for a moment from the dead, and then relapsed once more into the eternal slumber.

"Tell me," said she suddenly, and after a long pause, "are ye brother and sister?"

"No;" said Ione, blushing.

"Are ye married?"

"Not so;" replied Glaucus.

"Ho, lovers!—ha—ha—ha!" and the witch
laughed so loud and so long, that the caverns rang again.

The heart of Ione stood still at that strange mirth. Glaucus muttered a rapid counterspell to the omen—and the slave turned as pale as the cheek of the witch herself.

"Why dost thou laugh—old crone?" said Glaucus, somewhat sternly, as he concluded his invocation.

"Did I laugh?" said the hag absently.

"She is in her dotage," whispered Glaucus; as he said thus—he caught the glance of the hag, who fixed upon him a malignant and vivid glare.

"Thou liest!" said she abruptly.

"Thou art an uncourteous welcomer," returned Glaucus.

"Hush! provoke her not, dear Glaucus!" whispered Ione.

"I will tell thee why I laughed, when I discovered ye were lovers," said the old woman.

"It was because it is a pleasure to the old and withered to look upon young hearts like yours—"
and to know the time will come when ye will loathe each other—loathe—loathe—ha—ha—ha!"

It was now Ione's turn to pray against the unpleasing prophecy.

"Dii, avertite omen—the gods forbid!" said she. "Yet, poor woman, thou knowest little of love, or thou wouldst know that it never changes."

"Was I young once, think ye?" returned the hag, quickly; "and am I old and hideous and deathly now. Such as is the form, so is the heart." With these words she sank again into a stillness profound and fearful, as if the cessation of life itself.

"Hast thou dwelt here long?" said Glauceus—after a pause—feeling uncomfortably oppressed beneath a silence so appalling.

"Ah, long!—yes."

"It is but a drear abode."

"Ha! thou mayst well say that—Hell is beneath us!" replied the hag, pointing her bony finger to the earth. "And, I will tell thee a secret—the dim things below are preparing wrath for ye above—you, the young—and the thoughtless—and the beautiful."
"Thou utterest but evil words, ill becoming the hospitable," said Glaucus; "and in future I will brave the tempest rather than thy welcome."

"Thou wilt do well. None should ever seek me—save the wretched!"

"And why the wretched?" asked the Athenian.

"I am the witch of the mountain," replied the sorceress, with a ghastly grin; "my trade is to give hope to the hopeless; for the crossed in love, I have philters; for the avaricious, promises of treasure; for the malicious, potions of revenge; for the happy and the good, I have only what life has—curses!—Trouble me no more."

With this the grim tenant of the cave relapsed into a silence so obstinate and sullen, that Glaucus in vain endeavoured to draw her into farther conversation. She did not evince by any alteration of her locked and rigid features, that she even heard him. Fortunately, however, the storm, which was brief as violent, began now to relax; the rain grew less and less fierce—and at last—as the clouds parted, the moon burst forth in the purple opening of heaven—and streamed clear and full into that desolate abode. Never had she shone,
perhaps, on a group more worthy of the painter's art. The young—the all beautiful Ione—seated by that rude fire—her lover, already forgetful of the presence of the hag, at her feet—gazing upward to her face, and whispering sweet words—the pale and affrighted slave at a little distance—and the ghastly hag resting her deadly eyes upon them: Yet seemingly serene and fearless—(for the companionship of love hath such power)—were these beautiful beings—things of another sphere—in that dark and unholy cavern with its gloomy quaintness of appurtenance. The fox regarded them from his corner with his keen and glowing eye—and as Glaucus now turned towards the witch—he perceived, for the first time, just under her seat, the bright gaze and crested head of a large snake—whether it was that the vivid colouring of the Athenian cloak, thrown over the shoulders of Ione, attracted the reptile's anger—its crest began to glow and rise, as if menacing and preparing itself to spring upon the Neapolitan:—Glaucus caught quickly at one of the half-burned logs upon the hearth—and, as if enraged at the action, the snake came forth from its shelter, and
with a loud hiss raised itself on end till its height nearly approached that of the Greek.

"Witch!" cried Glaucus, "command thy creature, or thou wilt see it dead."

"It has been despoiled of its venom!" said the witch, aroused at his threat; but ere the words had left her lip, the snake had sprung upon Glaucus: quick and watchful, the agile Greek leapt lightly aside, and struck so fell and dexterous a blow on the head of the snake, that it fell prostrate and writhing among the embers of the fire.

The hag sprang up—and stood confronting Glaucus with a face which would have besitted the fiercest of the Furies, so utterly dire and wrathful was its expression—yet even in horror and ghastliness preserving the outline and trace of beauty—and utterly free from that coarse grotesque at which the imaginations of the North have sought the source of terror.

"Thou hast," said she in a slow and steady voice—which belied the expression of her face, so much was it passionless and calm—"thou hast had shelter under my roof, and warmth at my hearth—thou hast returned evil for good—thou
hast smitten and haply slain the thing that loved me and was mine—nay more—the creature, above all others, consecrated to gods and deemed venerable by man*—now hear thy punishment. By the moon—who is the guardian of the sorceress—by Orcus—who is the treasurer of wrath—I curse thee! and thou art curst! May thy love be blasted—may thy name be blackened—may the infernals mark thee—may thy heart wither and scorch—may thy last hour recall to thee the prophet voice of the Saga of Vesuvius. And thou," she added, turning sharply towards Ione—and raising her right arm—when Glaucus burst impetuously on her speech.

"Hag!" cried he, "forbear! Me thou hast cursed, and I commit myself to the gods—I defy and scorn thee: but breathe but one word against yon maiden, and I will convert the oath on thy foul lips to thy dying groan—beware!"

"I have done," replied the hag—laughing wildly—"for in thy doom is she who loves thee accursed. And not the less, that I heard her lips

* A peculiar sanctity was attached by the Romans (as indeed by perhaps, every ancient people) to serpents, which they kept tame in their houses, and often introduced at their meals.
breathe thy name, and know by what word to commend thee to the daemons. *Glaucus*—thou art doomed!" So saying, the witch turned from the Athenian, and kneeling down beside her wounded favourite, which she dragged from the hearth, she turned to them her face no more.

"O, Glaucus!" said Ione, greatly terrified—"what have we done?—let us hasten from this place!—the storm has ceased. Good mistress, forgive him—recall thy words—he meant but to defend himself—accept this peace-offering to unsay the said;" and Ione stooping, placed her purse on the hag's lap.

"Away!" said she bitterly—"away! The oath once woven the Fates only can untie—away!"

"Come, dearest!" said Glaucus, impatiently. "Thinkest thou that the gods above us or below hear the impotent ravings of dotage?—come!"

Long and loud rang the echoes of the cavern with the dread laugh of the saga—she deigned no farther reply.

The lovers breathed more freely when they gained the open air—yet the scene they had wit-
nessed—the words and the laughter of the witch—still fearfully dwelt with Ione—and even Glaucus could not thoroughly shake off the impression they bequeathed. The storm had subsided—save now and then a low thunder muttered at the distance amidst the darker clouds, or a momentary flash of lightning affronted the sovereignty of the moon. With some difficulty they regained the road—where they found the vehicle already sufficiently repaired for their departure—and the carrucarius, calling loudly upon Hercules to tell him where his charge had vanished.

Glaucus vainly endeavoured to cheer the exhausted spirits of Ione; and scarce less vainly to recover the elastic tone of his own natural gaiety. They soon arrived before the gate of the city; as it opened to them, a litter borne by slaves impeded the way.

"It is too late for egress," cried the sentinel to the inmate of the litter.

"Not so," said a voice, which the lovers started to hear; it was a voice they well recognized. "I am bound to the villa of Marcus Polybius. I shall return shortly. I am Arbaces, the Egyptian."
The scruples of him of the gate were removed, and the litter passed close beside the carriage that bore the lovers.

"Arbaees, at this hour! — scarce recovered too, methinks,—whither and for what can he leave the city?" said Glaucus.

"Alas!" replied Ione, bursting into tears, "my soul feels still more and more the omen of evil. Preserve us, O ye gods! or at least," she murmured inly, "preserve my Glaucus!"
CHAPTER X.

THE LORD OF THE BURNING BELT AND HIS MINION—
FATE WRITES HER PROPHECY IN RED LETTERS, BUT
WHO SHALL READ THEM?

Arbaces had tarried only till the cessation of
the tempest allowed him, under cover of night, to
seek the Saga of Vesuvius. Borne by those of his
trustier slaves, in whom in all more secret expedi-
tions he was accustomed to confide, he lay ex-
tended along his litter, and resigning his sanguine
heart to the contemplation of vengeance gratified
and love possessed. The slaves in so short a jour-
ney moved very little slower than the ordinary
pace of mules; and Arbaces soon arrived at the
commencement of a narrow path, which the lovers
had not been fortunate enough to discover; but
which, skirting the thick vines, led at once to the
habitation of the witch. Here he arrested the
litter; and bidding his slaves conceal themselves and the vehicle among the vines, from the observation of any chance passenger, he mounted alone, with steps still feeble but supported by a long staff, the drear and sharp ascent.

Not a drop of rain fell from the tranquil heaven; but the moisture dripped mournfully from the laden boughs of the vine, and now and then collected in tiny pools in the crevices and hollows of the rocky way.

"Strange passions these for a philosopher," thought Arbaces, "that lead one like me just new from the bed of death, and lapped even in health amidst the roses of luxury, across such nocturnal paths as this—but Passion and Vengeance treading to their goal can make an Elysium of a Tartarus." High, clear, and melancholy shone the moon above the road of that dark wayfarer, glassing herself in every pool that lay before him, and sleeping in shadow along the sloping mount. He saw before him the same light that had guided the steps of his intended victims, but, no longer contrasted by the blackened clouds, it shone less redly clear.
He paused, as at length he approached the mouth of the cavern, to recover breath, and then with his wonted collected and stately mien, he crossed the unhallowed threshold.

The fox sprang up at the ingress of this new comer, and by a long howl announced another visiter to his mistress.

The witch had resumed her seat, and her aspect of grave-like and grim repose. By her feet, upon a bed of dry weeds which half covered it, lay the wounded snake; but the quick eye of the Egyptian caught its scales glittering in the reflected light of the opposite fire, as it writhed—now contracting, now lengthening, its folds, in pain and unsated anger.

"Down, slave!" said the witch, as before, to the fox; and, as before, the animal dropped to the ground—mute, but vigilant.

"Rise, servant of Nox and Erebus," said Arbaces commandingly; "a superior in thine art salutes thee! rise and welcome him."

At these words the hag turned her gaze upon the Egyptian's towering form and dark features. She looked long and fixedly upon him, as he stood
before her in his oriental robe, and folded arms, and steadfast and haughty brow. "Who art thou!" she said at last, "that callest thyself greater in art than the Saga of the Burning Fields, and the daughter of the perished Etrurian race?"

"I am he," answered Arbaces, "from whom all cultivators of magic, from north to south, from east to west, from the Ganges and the Nile to the vales of Thessaly and the shores of the yellow Tiber—have stooped to learn."

"There is but one such man in these places," answered the witch, "whom the men of the outer world, unknowing his higher attributes and more secret fame, call Arbaces, the Egyptian: to us of a higher nature and deeper knowledge, his rightful appellation is Hermes of the Burning Girdle."

"Look again," returned Arbaces; "I am he."

As he spake, he drew aside his robe and revealed a cincture seemingly of fire, that burnt around his waste, clasped in the centre by a plate wherein was engraven some sign apparently vague and unintelligible, but which was evidently not unknown to the saga. She rose hastily, and threw herself at the feet of Arbaces. "I have seen, then," said she,
in a voice of deep humility, "the Lord of the Mighty Girdle—vouchsafe my homage."

"Rise," said the Egyptian—"I have need of thee."

So saying, he placed himself on that same log of wood on which Ione had rested before, and motioned to the witch to resume her seat.

"Thou sayest," said he, as she obeyed, "that thou art a daughter of the ancient Etrurian tribes; the mighty walls of whose rock-built cities yet frown above the robber race that hath seized upon their ancient reign. Partly came those tribes from Greece, partly were they exiles from a more burning and primeval soil. In either case art thou of Egyptian lineage, for the Grecian masters of the aboriginal helot were among the restless sons the Nile banished from her bosom. Equally then, O saga! art thou of ancestors that swore allegiance to mine own. By birth as by knowledge art thou the subject of Arbaces. Hear me then, and obey!"

The witch bowed her head.

* The Etrurians (it may be superfluous to mention) were celebrated for their enchantments.
"Whatever art we possess in sorcery," continued Arbaces, "we are sometimes driven to natural means to attain our object. The ring* and the crystal;† the ashes‡ and the herbs.§ do not give unerring divinations; neither do the higher mysteries of the moon yield even the possessor of the girdle a dispensation from the necessity of employing ever and anon human measures for a human object: mark me, then; thou art deeply skilled, methinks, in the secrets of the more deadly herbs; thou knowest those which arrest life, which burn and scorch the soul from out her citadel, or freeze the channels of young blood into that ice which no sun can melt. Do I overrate thy skill? speak, and truly!"

"Mighty Hermes, such lore is indeed mine own. Deign to look at these ghostly and corpse-like features; they have waned from the hues of life, merely by watching over the rank herbs which simmer night and day in yon caldron."

The Egyptian moved his seat from so unblest or so unhealthful a vicinity, as the witch spoke.

* Δακτυλομαντία. † Κρυσταλλομαντία. ‡ Τεφρομαντία. § Βοτανομαντία.
"It is well," said he, "thou hast learnt that maxim of all the deeper knowledge which saith: 'Despise the body to make wise the mind.' But to thy task; there cometh to thee by to-morrow's starlight a vain maiden, seeking of thine art a love-charm to fascinate from another the eyes that should utter but soft tales to her own; instead of thy philters, give the maiden one of thy most powerful poisons. Let the lover breathe his vows to the Shades."

The witch trembled from head to foot.

"Oh pardon! pardon! dread master," said she falteringly, "but this I dare not. The law in these cities is sharp and vigilant; they will seize, they will slay me."

"For what purpose, then, thy herbs and thy potions, vain saga?" said Arbaces sneeringly.

The witch hid her loathsome face with her hands.

"Oh! years ago," said she in a voice unlike her usual tones, so plaintive was it, and so soft, "I was not the thing that I am now,—I loved, I fancied myself beloved."

"And what connection hath thy love, witch, with my commands?" said Arbaces impetuously.
"Patience," resumed the witch, "patience, I implore. I loved! another and less fair than I—yes, by Nemesis! less fair; allured from me my chosen. I was of that dark Etrurian tribe to whom most of all were known the secrets of the gloomier magic. My mother was herself a saga: she shared the resentment of her child; from her hands I received the potion that was to restore me his love; and from her also, the poison that was to destroy my rival. Oh crush me, dread walls! my trembling hands mistook the phials, my lover fell indeed at my feet; but, dead! dead! Since then, what has been life to me? I became suddenly old, I devoted myself to the sorceries of my race; still by an irresistible impulse I curse myself with an awful penance; still I seek the most noxious herbs; still I concoct the poisons; still I imagine that I am to give them to my hated rival; still I pour them into the phial; still I fancy that they shall blast her beauty to the dust; still I wake and see the quivering body, the foaming lips, the glazing eyes of my Aulus—murdered, and by me."

The skeleton frame of the witch shook beneath strong convulsions.
Arbaces gazed upon her with a curious though contemptuous eye.

"And this foul thing has yet human emotions," thought he; "she still cowers over the ashes of the same fire that consumes Arbaces—such are we all! Mystic is the tie of those mortal passions that unite the greatest and the least."

He did not reply till she had somewhat recovered herself—and now sate rocking herself to and fro in her seat, with glassy eyes, fixed on the opposite flame, and large tears rolling down her livid cheeks.

"A grievous tale is thine in truth," said Arbaces; "but these emotions are fit only for our youth—age should harden our hearts to all things but ourselves—as every year adds a scale to the shell-fish, so should each year wall and encrust the heart. Think of those frenzies no more! And now, listen to me again! By the revenge that was dear to thee, I command thee to obey me! it is for vengeance that I seek thee! This youth whom I would sweep from my path, has crossed me—despite my spells;—this thing of purple and broidery—of smiles and glances—soulless
and mindless—with no charm but that of beauty—accursed be it!—this insect—this Glaucus—I tell thee, by Orcus and by Nemesis, he must die!"

And working himself up at every word, the Egyptian—forgetful of his debility—of his strange companion—of everything but his own vindictive rage, strode, with large and rapid steps, the gloomy cavern.

"Glaucus! saidst thou, mighty master?" said the witch, abruptly; and her dim eye glared at the name with all that fierce resentment at the memory of small affronts so common amongst the solitary and the shunned.

"Ay, so he is called; but what matter the name? Let it not be heard as that of a living man, three days from this date!"

"Hear me!" said the witch, breaking from a short reverie into which she was plunged after this last sentence of the Egyptian. "Hear me! I am thy thing and thy slave; spare me! If I give to the maiden thou speakest of that which would destroy the life of Glaucus, I shall be surely detected—the dead ever find avengers. Nay, dread
man! if thy visit to me be tracked—if thy hatred to Glaucus be known—thou mayest have need of thy archest magic to protect thyself!"

"Ha!" said Arbaces, stopping suddenly short—and as a proof of that blindness with which passion darkens the eyes even of the most acute—this was the first time—when the risk that he himself run by this method of vengeance had occurred to a mind ordinarily wary and circumspect.

"But," continued the witch, "if instead of that which shall arrest the heart, I give that which shall sear and blast the brain—which shall make him who quaffs it unfit for the uses and career of life—an abject, raving, benighted thing—smiting sense to drivelling, youth to dotage—will not thy vengeance be equally sated—thy object equally attained?"

"Oh, witch! no longer the servant, but the sister—the equal of Arbaces—how much brighter is woman's wit even in vengeance than ours! how much more exquisite than death is such a doom!"

"And," continued the hag—gloating over her fell scheme—"in this is but little danger—for by ten thousand methods, which men forbear to seek,
can our victim become mad. He may have been among the vines and seen a nymph*—or the vine itself may have had the same effect—ha—ha! they never inquire too scrupulously into these matters—in which the gods may be agents. And let the worst arrive—let it be known that it is a love-charm—why madness is a common effect of philters—and even the fair she that gave it finds indulgence in the excuse. Mighty Hermes, have I ministered to thee cunningly?"

"Thou shalt have twenty years’ longer date for this," returned Arbaces,—"I will write anew the epoch of thy fate on the face of the pale stars—thou shalt not serve in vain the master of the Flaming Belt. And here, saga, carve thee out—by these golden tools—a warmer cell in this dreary cavern—one service to me shall countervail a thousand divinations by sieve and shears in the gaping rustics." So saying, he cast upon the floor a heavy purse, which clinked not unmusically to the ear of the hag, who loved the consciousness of possessing the means to purchase comforts she

* To see a nymph was to become mad, according to classic and popular superstition.
disdained. "Farewell!" said Arbaces—"fail not—outwatch the stars in concocting thy beverage—thou shalt lord it over thy sisters at the Walnut-tree,* when thou tellest them that thy patron and thy friend is Hermes the Egyptian. To-morrow night we meet again."

He stayed not to hear the valediction or the thanks of the witch; with a quick step he passed into the moon-lit air, and hastened down the mountain.

The witch, who followed his steps to the threshold, stood long at the entrance of the cavern—gazing fixedly on his receding form, and as the sad moonlight streamed upon her shadowy form and death-like face, emerging from the dismal rocks—it seemed as if one gifted indeed by supernatural magic had escaped from the dreary Orcus: and, the foremost of its ghostly throng, stood at its black portals—vainly summoning his return, or vainly sighing to rejoin him. The hag then slowly

* The celebrated and immemorial rendezvous of the witches, at Benevento. The winged serpent attached to it, long an object of idolatry in those parts, was probably consecrated by Egyptian superstitions.
re-entering the cave, picked groaningly up the heavy purse, took the lamp from its stand, and passing to the remotest depth of her cell—a black and abrupt passage, which was not visible, save at a near approach, closed round as it was with jutting and sharp crags—yawned before her; she went several yards along this gloomy path, which sloped gradually downwards, as if towards the bowels of the earth, and, lifting a stone, deposited her treasure in a hole beneath, which, as the lamp pierced its secrets, seemed already to contain coins of various value, wrung from the credulity or gratitude of her visitors.

"I love to look at you," said she, apostrophizing the monies; "for when I see you I feel that I am indeed of power. And I am to have twenty years' longer life to increase your store! O thou great Hermes!"

She replaced the stone, and continued her path onward for some paces, when she stopped before a deep irregular fissure in the earth. Here as she bent—strange, rumbling, hoarse, and distant sounds might be heard, while ever and anon—with a loud and grating noise which, to use a homely but faith-
ful simile, seemed to resemble the grinding of steel upon wheels—volumes of steaming and dark smoke issued forth—and rushed spirally along the cavern.

"The Shades are noisier than their wont," said the hag, shaking her grey locks; and, looking into the cavity, she beheld, far down, glimpses of a long streak of light, intensely but darkly red. "Strange!" she said, shrinking back; "it is only within the last two days that dull, deep light hath been visible—what can it portend?"

The fox, who had attended the steps of his fell mistress, uttered a dismal howl, and ran cowering back to the inner cave—a cold shuddering seized the hag herself at the cry of the animal, which, causeless as it seemed, the superstitions of the time considered deeply ominous. She muttered her placatory charm, and tottered back into her cavern, where, amidst her herbs and incantations, she prepared to execute the orders of the Egyptian.

"He called me dotard," said she, as the smoke curled from the hissing caldron—"when the jaws drop—and the grinders fall—and the heart scarce beats—it is a pitiable thing to dote; but when,"
she added with a savage and exulting grin—"the young, and the beautiful, and the strong are suddenly smitten into idiotcy—ah, that is terrible! Burn flame—simmer herb—swelter toad—I cursed him, and he shall be cursed!"

On that night, and at the same hour which witnessed the dark and unholy interview between Arbaces, and the saga,—Apæcides was baptised.
CHAPTER XI.

EVENTS PROGRESS.—THE PLOT THICKENS.—THE WEB IS WOVEN, BUT THE NET CHANGES HANDS.

"And you have the courage then, Julia, to seek the Witch of Vesuvius this evening, in company too with that fearful man?"

"Why, Nydia," replied Julia timidly; "dost thou really think there is anything to dread? These old hags, with their enchanted mirrors—their trembling sieves, and their moon-gathered herbs, are, I imagine, but crafty impostors—who have learnt, perhaps, nothing but the very charm for which I apply to their skill; and which is drawn but from the knowledge of the field's herbs and simples. Wherefore should I dread?"

"Dost thou not fear thy companion?"

"What, Arbaces? By Dian, I never saw
lover more courteous than that same magician! And were he not so dark, he would be even handsome."

Blind as she was, Nydia had the penetration to perceive that Julia's mind was not one that the gallantries of Arbaces were likely to terrify. She, therefore, dissuaded her no more; but nursed, in her excited heart, the wild and encreasing desire to know if sorcery had indeed a spell to fascinate love to love.

"Let me go with thee, noble Julia," said she, at length; "my presence is no protection, but I should like to be beside thee to the last."

"Thine offer pleases me much," replied the daughter of Diomed. "Yet how canst thou contrive it—we may not return until late—they will miss thee."

"Ione is indulgent," replied Nydia. "If thou wilt permit me to sleep beneath thy roof, I will say that thou, an early patroness and friend, hast invited me to pass the day with thee, and sing thee my Thessalian songs; her courtesy will readily grant to thee so light a boon."

"Nay, ask for thyself!" said the haughty
Julia, "I stoop to request no favour from the Neapolitan!"

"Well, be it so; I will take my leave now; make my request, which I know will be readily granted, and return shortly."

"Do so; and thy bed shall be prepared in my own chamber."

With that Nydia left the fair Pompeian.

On her way back to Ione she was met by the chariot of Glaucus, on whose fiery and curveting steeds was riveted the gaze of the crowded street.

He kindly stopped for a moment to speak to the flower girl.

"Blooming as thine own roses, my gentle Nydia, and how is thy fair mistress?—recovered, I trust, from the effects of the storm."

"I have not seen her this morning," answered Nydia, "but—"

"But what? draw back—the horses are too near thee."

"But, think you Ione will permit me to pass the day with Julia, the daughter of Diomed—she wishes it, and was kind to me when I had few friends."
"The gods bless thy grateful heart! I will answer for Ione's permission."

"Then I may stay over the night and return tomorrow?" said Nydia, shrinking from the praise she so little merited.

"As thou and fair Julia please. Commend me to her;—and, harkye, Nydia, when thou hearest her speak, note the contrast of her voice with that of the silver-toned Ione.—Vale."

His spirits entirely recovered from the effect of the past night—his locks waving in the wind—his joyous and elastic heart bounding with every spring of his Parthian steeds—a very prototype of his country's god—full of youth and of love—Glaucus was borne rapidly to his mistress.

Enjoy while ye may the present—who can read the future!

As the evening darkened, Julia, reclined within her litter, which was capacious enough also to admit her blind companion, took her way to the rural baths, indicated by Arbaces: to her natural levity of disposition, her enterprise brought less of terror than of pleasurable excitement; above all, she
glowed at the thought of her coming triumph over the hated Neapolitan.

A small but gay group was collected round the door of the villa, as her litter passed by it to the private entrance of the baths apportioned to the women.

"Methinks, by this dim light," said one of the by-standers, "I recognize the slaves of Diomed."

"True, Clodius," said Sallust, "it is probably the litter of his daughter Julia. She is rich, my friend; why dost thou not proffer thy suit to her?"

"Why, I had once hoped that Glaucus would have married her. She does not disguise her attachment; and then, as he gambles freely and with ill-success—"

"The sesterces would have passed to thee, wise Clodius; a wife is a good thing—when it belongs to another man!"

"But," continued Clodius, "as Glaucus is, I understand, to wed the Neapolitan, I think I must even try my chance with the rejected maid. After all, the lamp of Hymen will be gilt, and the vessel will reconcile one to the odour of the flame."
I shall only protest, my Sallust, against Diomed's making thee trustee to his daughter's fortune.*"

"Ha! ha! let us within, my commissator; the wine and the garlands wait us."

Dismissing her slaves to that part of the house set apart for their entertainment, Julia entered the baths with Nydia, and declining the offers of the attendants, passed by a private door into the garden behind.

"She comes by appointment, be sure," said one of the slaves.

"What is that to thee?" said a superintendant sourly; "she pays for the baths and does not waste the saffron. Such appointments are the best part of the trade. Hark! do you not hear the widow Fulvia clapping her hands! run fool—run!"

Julia and Nydia, avoiding the more public part of the garden—arrived at the place specified by the Egyptian. In a small circular plot of grass—the stars gleamed upon the statue of Silenus:—the

* It was an ancient Roman law, that no one should make a woman his heir. This law was evaded by the parent's assigning his fortune to a friend in trust for his daughter, but the trustee might keep it if he liked. The law had, however, fallen into disuse before the date of this story.
merry god reclined upon a fragment of rock—the lynx of Bacchus at his feet—and over his mouth he held with extended arm a bunch of grapes—which he seemingly laughed to welcome, ere he devoured.

"I see not the magician," said Julia, looking round—when, as she spoke, the Egyptian slowly emerged from the neighbouring foliage, and the light fell palely over his sweeping robes.

"Salve, sweet maiden! but ha! whom hast thou here? we must have no companions!"

"It is but the blind flower girl, wise magician," replied Julia, "herself a Thessalian."

"Oh! Nydia!" said the Egyptian, "I know her well."

Nydia drew back and shuddered.

"Thou hast been at my house, methinks!" said he, approaching his voice to Nydia's ear; "thou knowest the oath!—silence and secrecy, now as then, or beware!"

"Yet," he added musingly to himself, "why confide more than is necessary, even in the blind?—Julia, canst thou trust thyself alone with me? Be-
lieve me, the magician is less formidable than he seems."

As he spoke, he gently drew Julia aside.

"The witch loves not many visiters at once," said he; "leave Nydia here till your return; she can be of no assistance to us: and, for protection—your own beauty suffices—your own beauty and your own rank—yes, Julia, I know thy name and birth. Come! trust thyself with me, fair rival of the youngest of the Naiads!"

The vain Julia was not, as we have seen, easily affrighted; she was moved by the flattery of Ar-baces, and she readily consented to suffer Nydia to await her return; nor did Nydia press her presence. At the sound of the Egyptian's voice, all her terror of him seemed to return; she felt a sentiment of pleasure at learning she was not to travel in his companionship.

She returned to the house, and in one of the private chambers waited their return. Many and bitter were the thoughts of this wild girl as she sate there in her eternal darkness. She thought of her own desolate fate, far from her native land,
far from the bland cares that once assuaged the April sorrows of childhood;—deprived of the light of day, with none but strangers to guide her steps—accursed by the one soft feeling of her heart—loving and without hope, save the dim and unholy ray which shot across her mind, as her Thessalian fancies questioned of the force of spells and the gifts of magic!

Nature had sown in the heart of this poor girl the seeds of virtue never destined to ripen. The lessons of adversity are not always salutary—sometimes they soften and amend, but as often they indurate and pervert. If we consider ourselves more harshly treated by fate than those around us, and do not acknowledge in our own deeds the equity of the severity, we become too apt to deem the world our enemy, to case ourselves in defiance, to wrestle against our softer self, and to indulge the darker passions which are so easily fermented by the sense of injustice. Sold early into slavery — sentenced to a sordid task-master — exchanging her situation, only yet more to embitter her lot, the kindlier feelings, naturally profuse in the breast of Nydia, were nipped and blighted.
Her sense of right and wrong was confused by a passion to which she had so madly surrendered herself; and the same intense and tragic emotions, which we read of in the women of the classic age—a Myrrha—a Medea—which hurried and swept away the whole soul when once delivered to love—ruled, and rioted in, her breast.

Time passed; a light step entered the chamber where Nydia yet indulged her gloomy meditations.

"O thanked be the immortal gods!" said Julia, "I have returned, I have left that terrible cavern: come, Nydia! let us away forthwith!"

It was not till they were seated in the litter, that Julia again spoke.

"Oh!" said she, tremblingly, "such a scene! such fearful incantations! and the dead face of the hag! but, let us talk not of it! I have obtained the potion—she pledges its effect. My rival shall be suddenly indifferent to his eye; and I, I alone, the idol of Glauceus!"

"Glauceus!" exclaimed Nydia.

"Ay! I told thee, girl, at first, that it was not the Athenian whom I loved—but I see now that
I may trust thee wholly—it is the beautiful Greek!"

What then were Nydia's emotions! she had connived, she had assisted in tearing Glaucus from Ione; but only to transfer, by all the power of magic, his affections yet more hopelessly to another. Her heart swelled almost to suffocation—she gasped for breath—in the darkness of the vehicle, Julia did not perceive the agitation of her companion; she went on rapidly dilating on the promised effect of her acquisition, and on her approaching triumph over Ione, every now and then abruptly digressing to the horror of the scene she had quitted—the unmoved mien of Arbaces, and his authority over the dreadful saga.

Meanwhile Nydia recovered her self-possession; a thought flashed across her; she slept in the chamber of Julia—she might possess herself of the potion.

They arrived at the house of Diomed, and descended to Julia's apartment, where the night's repast awaited them.

"Drink, Nydia, thou must be cold; the air was chill to-night; as for me, my veins are yet ice."
And Julia unhesitatingly quaffed deep draughts
of the spiced wine.

"Thou hast the potion," said Nydia; "let me
hold it in my hands—how small the phial is! of
what colour is the draught?"

"Clear as crystal," replied Julia as she retook
the philter; "thou couldst not tell it from this
water. The witch assures me it is tasteless. Small
though the phial, it suffices for a life's fidelity: it is
to be poured into any liquid; and Glaucus will
only know what he has quaffed by the effect."

"Exactly like this water in appearance?"

"Yes, sparkling and colourless as this. How
bright it seems! it is as the very essence of moon-
lit dews. Bright thing! how thou shinest on my
hopes through thy crystal vase!"

"And how is it sealed?"

"But by one little stopper—withdraw it now—
the draught gives no odour. Strange, that that
which speaks to neither sense, should thus com-
mand all!"

"Is the effect instantaneous?"

"Usually;—but sometimes it remains dormant
for a few hours."
"O how sweet this perfume!" said Nydia suddenly, as she took up a small bottle on the table, and bent over its fragrant contents.

"Thinkest thou so? the bottle is set with gems of some value—thou wouldst not have the bracelet yester morn—wilt thou take the bottle?"

"It ought to be such perfumes as these that should remind one who cannot see of the generous Julia.—If the bottle be not too costly—"

"Oh! I have a thousand costlier ones; take it, child!"

Nydia bowed her gratitude, and placed the bottle in her vest.

"And the draught would be equally efficacious, whoever administers it?"

"If the most hideous hag beneath the sun bestowed it, such is its asserted virtue, that Glaucus would deem her beautiful, and none but her!"

Julia, warmed by wine and the re-action of her spirits, was now all animation and delight; she laughed loud, and talked on a hundred matters—nor was it till the night had advanced far to-
wards morning, that she summoned her slaves, and undressed.

When they were dismissed, she said to Nydia—

"I will not suffer this holy draught to quit my presence till the hour comes for its uses. Lie under my pillow, bright spirit, and give me happy dreams!"

So saying, she placed the potion under her pillow.—Nydia's heart beat violently.

"Why dost thou drink that unmixed water, Nydia? take the wine by its side."

"I am fevered," replied the blind girl, "and the water cools me—I will place this bottle by my bed-side, it refreshes in these summer nights, when the dews of sleep fall not on our lips. Fair Julia, I must leave thee very early—so Ione bids—perhaps before thou art awake: accept, therefore, now my congratulations."

"Thanks—when next we meet, you may find Glauceus at my feet."

They had retired to their couches, and Julia, worn out by the excitement of the day, soon slept; but anxious and burning thoughts rolled over the
mind of the wakeful Thessalian. She listened to the calm breathing of Julia; and her ear, accustomed to the finest shades of sound, speedily assured her of the deep slumber of her companion.

"Now, befriend me, Venus!" said she softly.

She rose gently, and poured the perfume from the gift of Julia upon the marble floor—she rinsed it several times carefully with the water that was beside her, and then easily finding the bed of Julia, (for night to her was as day,) she pressed her trembling hand under the pillow and seized the potion.—Julia stirred not, her breath regularly fanned the burning cheek of the blind girl. Nydia then, opening the phial, poured its contents into the bottle, which easily contained them; and then, refilling the former reservoir of the potion with that limpid water which Julia had assured her it so resembled, she once more placed the phial in its former place. She then stole again to her couch, and waited, with what thoughts! the dawning day.

The sun had risen—Julia slept still—Nydia noiselessly dressed herself, placed her treasure
carefully in her vest, took up her staff, and hastened to quit the house.

The porter, Medon, saluted her kindly as she descended the steps that led to the street; she heard him not, her mind was confused and lost in the whirl of tumultuous thought,—each thought a passion. She felt the pure morning air upon her cheek, but it cooled not her scorching veins.

"Glaucus," she murmured, "all the love-charms of the wildest magic could not make thee love me as I love thee—none!—ah, away hesitation! away remorse! Glaucus, my fate is in thy smile, and thine! O hope! O joy! O transport! —thy fate is in these hands!"
NOTE TO BOOK III.

(a) Page 8.—"The influence of the evil eye."

This superstition, to which I have more than once alluded throughout this work, still flourishes in Magna Græcia, with scarcely diminished vigour. I remember conversing at Naples with a lady of the highest rank, and of intellect and information very uncommon amongst the noble Italians of either sex, when I suddenly observed her change colour, and make a rapid and singular motion with her finger. "My God, that man!" she whispered tremulously.

"What man?"

"See! the Count * * * *! he has just entered."

"He ought to be much flattered to cause such emotion; doubtless he has been one of the Signora's admirers."

"Admirer! Heaven forbid! He has the evil eye. His look fell full upon me. Something dreadful will certainly happen."

"I see nothing remarkable in his eyes."

"So much the worse. The danger is greater for being disguised. He is a terrible man. The last time he looked upon my husband, it was at cards, and he lost half his income at a sitting; his ill-luck was miraculous. The Count met my little boy in the gardens, and the poor child broke his arm that evening. Oh! what shall I do! something dreadful will certainly happen—and, heavens! he is admiring my cap!"

"Does every one find the eyes of the Count equally fatal, and his admiration equally exciting?"

"Every one—he is universally dreaded; and,—what is very strange, he is so angry if he sees you avoid him!"
"That is very strange indeed! the wretch!"

At Naples, the superstition works well for the jewelers,—so many charms and talismans as they sell for the ominous fascination of the mal-occhio! In Pompeii, the talismans were equally numerous, but not always of so elegant a shape, nor of so decorous a character. But, generally speaking, a coral ornament was, as it now is, among the favourite averters of the evil influence. The Thebans, about Pontus, were supposed to have an hereditary claim to this charming attribute, and could even kill grown-up men with a glance. As for Africa, where the belief also still exists, certain families could not only destroy children, but wither up trees—they did this not with curses but praises. In our time, politicians have often possessed this latter faculty! and the moment they take to praising an institution, it is time to pray God for it! The malus oculus was not always different from the eyes of other people. But persons, especially of the fairer sex, with double pupils to the organ, were above all to be shunned and dreaded. The Illyrians were said to possess this fatal deformity. In all countries, even in the North, the eye has ever been held the chief seat of fascination; but now-a-days, ladies with a single pupil, manage the work of destruction pretty easily:—so much do we improve upon our forefathers!

END OF BOOK III.
BOOK IV.

"Philtra nocent animis, vimque furoris habent."

Ovid.
CHAPTER I.

REFLECTIONS ON THE ZEAL OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.—
TWO MEN COME TO A PERILOUS RESOLVE.—WALLS HAVE
EARS—PARTICULARLY SACRED WALLS!

Whoever regards the early history of Christianity, will perceive how necessary to its triumph was that fierce spirit of zeal, which, fearing no danger, accepting no compromise, inspired its champions and sustained its martyrs. In a dominant Church the genius of intolerance 

*betrays* its cause;—in a weak and a persecuted Church, the same genius mainly *supports*. It was necessary to scorn—to loathe—to abhor the creeds of other men, in order to conquer the temptations which they presented—it was necessary rigidly to believe not only that the gospel was the true faith, but the *sole* true faith that saved, in order to nerve
the disciple to the austerity of its doctrine, and to encourage him to the sacred and perilous chivalry of converting the Polytheist and the Heathen. The sectarian sternness which confined virtue and heaven to a chosen few, which saw demons in other gods, and the penalties of hell in another religion—made the believer naturally anxious to convert all to whom he felt the ties of human affection; and the circle thus traced by benevolence to man, was yet more widened by a desire for the glory of God. It was for the honour of the Christian faith that the Christian boldly forced his tenets upon the scepticism of some, the repugnance of others, the sage contempt of the philosopher, the pious shudder of the people;—his very intolerance supplied him with his fittest instruments of success; and the soft Heathen began at last to imagine there must indeed be something holy in a zeal wholly foreign to his experience, which stopped at no obstacle, dreaded no danger, and even at the torture, or on the scaffold, referred a dispute far other than the calm differences of speculative philosophy, to the tribunal of an Eter-
nal Judge. It was thus that the same fervour which made the Christian of the middle age a bigot without mercy, made the Christian of the early days a hero without fear.

Of these more fiery, daring, and earnest natures, not the least ardent was Olinthus. No sooner had Apæcides been received by the rites of baptism into the bosom of the Church, than the Nazarene hastened to make him conscious of the impossibility to retain the office and robes of priesthood. He could not, it was evident, profess to worship God, and continue even outwardly to honour the idolatrous altars of the Fiend.

Nor was this all; the sanguine and impetuous mind of Olinthus beheld in the power of Apæcides the means of divulging to the deluded people the juggling mysteries of the oracular Isis. He thought Heaven had sent this instrument of its design in order to disabuse the eyes of the crowd, and prepare the way, perchance, for the conversion of a whole city. He did not hesitate then to appeal to all the new-kindled enthusiasm of Apæcides, to
arouse his courage and to stimulate his zeal. They met, according to previous agreement, the evening after the baptism of Apaecides, in the grove of Cybele, which we have before described.

"At the next solemn consultation of the oracle," said Olinthus, as he proceeded in the warmth of his address, "advance yourself to the railing, proclaim aloud to the people the deception they endure—invite them to enter, to be themselves the witness of the gross but artful mechanism of imposture thou hast described to me. Fear not—the Lord, who protected Daniel, shall protect thee; we,—the community of Christians, will be amongst the crowd; we will urge on the shrinking; and in the first flush of the popular indignation and shame, I, myself, upon those very altars, will plant the palm-branch typical of the gospel—and to my tongue shall descend the rushing Spirit of the living God."

Heated and excited as he was, this suggestion was not unpleasing to Apaecides. He was rejoiced at so early an opportunity of distinguishing his faith in his new sect, and to his holier feelings
were added those of a vindictive loathing at the imposition he had himself suffered, and a desire to avenge it. In that sanguine and elastic overbound of obstacles (a necessary blindness to all who undertake venturous and lofty actions), neither Olinthus nor the proselyte perceived all the difficulties to the success of their scheme, which might be found in the reverent superstition of the people themselves, who would probably be loath, before the sacred altars of the great Egyptian goddess, to believe even the testimony of her priest against her power.

Apaecides then assented to this proposal with a readiness which delighted Olinthus. They parted with the understanding, that Olinthus should confer with the more important of his Christian brethren on this great enterprise, should receive their advice and the assurances of their support on the eventful day. It so chanced that one of the festivals of Isis was to be held on the second day after this conference. The festival proffered a ready occasion for the design. They appointed to meet once more on the next evening at the
same spot; and in that meeting was finally to be settled the order and details of the disclosure for the following day.

It happened that the latter part of this conference had been held near the sacellum, or small chapel, which I have described in the earlier part of this work; and so soon as the forms of the Christian and the priest had disappeared from the grove, a dark and ungainly figure emerged from behind the chapel.

"I have tracked you with some effect, my brother flamen," said the eavesdropper; "you, the priest of Isis, have not for mere idle discussion conferred with this gloomy Christian. Alas! that I could not hear all your precious plot: Enough! I find, at least, that you meditate revealing the sacred mysteries, and that to-morrow you meet again at this place to plan the how and the when. May Osiris sharpen my ears then, to detect the whole of your unheard-of audacity. When I have learnt more, I must confer at once with Arbaces. We will frustrate you, my friends, deep as you think
yourselves. At present, my breast is a locked treasury of your secret."

So saying, Calenus, for it was he, wrapped his robe round him, and strode thoughtfully homeward.
CHAPTER II.

A CLASSIC HOST, COOK, AND KITCHEN.—APÆCIDES SEeks IONE—THEIR CONVERSATION.

It was then the day for Diomed's banquet to the most select of his friends. The graceful Glaucus, the beautiful Ione, the official Pansa, the high-born Clodius, the immortal Fulvius, the exquisite Lepidus, the epicure Sallust, were not the only honourers of his festival. He expected also, an invalid senator from Rome, (a man of considerable repute and favour at court,) and a great warrior from Herculaneum, who had fought with Titus against the Jews, and having enriched himself prodigiously in the wars, was always told by his friends, that his country was eternally indebted to his disinterested exertions! The party, how-
ever, extended to a yet greater number: for, although, critically speaking, it was, at one time, thought inelegant among the Romans, to entertain less than three or more than nine at their banquets, yet this rule was easily disregarded by the ostentatious. And we are told, indeed, in history, that one of the most splendid of these entertainers usually feasted a select party of three hundred. Diomed, however, more modest, contented himself with doubling the number of the Muses. His party consisted of eighteen, no unfashionable number in the present day. 'The more the merrier,' says the proverb—for my part, at a dinner, I have always found it exactly the reverse!

It was the morning of Diomed's banquet; and Diomed himself, though he greatly affected the gentleman and the scholar, retained enough of his mercantile experience to know that a master's eye makes a ready servant. Accordingly, with his tunic ungirdled on his portly stomach, his easy slippers on his feet, a small wand in his hand, wherewith he now directed the gaze, and now
corrected the back, of some duller menial, he went from chamber to chamber of his costly villa.

He did not disdain even a visit to that sacred apartment, in which the priests of the festival prepare their offerings. On entering the kitchen, his ears were agreeably stunned by the noise of dishes and pans, of oaths and commands. Small as this indispensable chamber seems to have been in all the houses of Pompeii, it was, nevertheless, usually fitted up with all that amazing variety of stoves and shapes, stewpans and saucepans, cutters and moulds, without which a cook of spirit, no matter whether he be an ancient or a modern, declares it utterly impossible that he can give you anything to eat. And as fuel was then, as now, dear and scarce in those regions, great seems to have been the dexterity exercised in preparing as many things as possible with as little fire. An admirable contrivance of this nature may be still seen in the Neapolitan Museum, viz. a portable kitchen, about the size of a folio volume, containing stoves for four plats, and an apparatus for heating water
or other beverages. It would be an excellent appendage to our modern cheap libraries, containing as much food for the body as they do for the mind;—with this difference, you would satisfactorily recur to the first work much more frequently than you would to the last.

Across the small kitchen flitted many forms which the quick eye of the master did not recognise.

"Oh! oh!" grumbled he to himself, "that cursed Congrio hath invited a whole legion of cooks to assist him. They won't serve for nothing, and this is another item in the total of my day's expenses. By Bacchus! thrice lucky shall I be if the slaves do not help themselves to some of the drinking vessels—ready, alas! are their hands, capacious are their tunics—*me miserum!*

The cooks, however, worked on, seemingly heedless of the apparition of Diomed.

"Ho, Euclio, your egg-pan! What, is this the largest? it only holds thirty-three eggs: in the houses *I* usually serve, the smallest egg-pan holds fifty, if need be!"
"The unconscionable rogue," thought Diomed, "he talks of eggs as if they were a sesterce a hundred!"

"By Mercury!" cried a pert little culinary disciple, scarce in his noviciate; "who ever saw such antique sweetmeat shapes as these!—it is impossible to do credit to one's art with such rude materials. Why, Sallust's commonest sweetmeat shape represents the whole siege of Troy; Hector, and Paris, and Helen— with little Astyanax and the Wooden Horse into the bargain!"

"Silence, fool!" said Congrio, the cook of the house, who seemed to leave the chief part of the battle to his allies—"my master, Diomed—is not one of those expensive good-for-noughts who must have the last fashion, cost what it will."

"Thou liest, base slave!" cried Diomed, in a great passion—"and thou costest me already enough to have ruined Lucullus himself—come out of thy den, I want to talk to thee."

The slave, with a sly wink at his confederates, obeyed the command.
"Man of three letters,*" said Diomed, with a face of solemn anger—"how didst thou dare to invite all those rascals into my house?—I see thief written in every line of their faces."

"Yet, I assure you, master, that they are men of most respectable character—the best cooks of the place—it is a great favour to get them;—but for my sake—"

"Thy sake! unhappy Congrio"—interrupted Diomed—"and by what purloined monies of mine—by what reserved filchings from marketing—by what goodly meats converted into grease, and sold in the suburbs—by what false charges for bronzes marred, and earthenware broken—hast thou been enabled to make them serve thee for thy sake?"

"Nay, master,—Do not impeach my honesty—May the gods desert me if—"

"Swear not!"—again interrupted the choleric Diomed—"for then the gods will smite thee for a perjurer, and I shall lose my cook on the eve of dinner. But, enough of this at present—keep a

* The common witty objurgation, from the trilateral word "fur" (thief).
sharp eye on thy ill-favoured assistants—and tell me no tales to-morrow of vases broken, and cups miraculously vanished, or thy whole back shall be one pain—and hark thee! thou knowest thou hast made me pay for those Phrygian attagens*—enough, per Heracle, to have feasted a sober man for a year together—see that they be not one iota over-roasted. The last time, O Congrio, that I gave a banquet to my friends, when thy vanity did so boldly undertake the becoming appearance of a Melian crane—thou knowest it came up like a stone from Ætna—as if all the fires of Phlegethon had been scorching out its juices. Be modest this time, Congrio—wary and modest. Modesty is the nurse of great actions; and in all other things, as in this, if thou wilt not spare thy master's purse, at least consult thy master's glory."

"There shall not be such a cena seen at Pompeii, since the days of Hercules."

"Softly—softly—thy cursed boasting again.—

* The attagen of Phrygia or Ionia (the bird thus anglicised in the plural) was held in peculiar esteem by the Romans—"Attagen carnis suavissima"—(Athen. lib. ix. cap 8. and 9.) It was a little bigger than a partridge.
But, I say, Congrio—yon homunculus—yon pigmy assailant of my cranes—yon pert-tongued neophyte of the kitchen—was there aught but insolence on his tongue when he maligned the comeliness of my sweetmeat shapes? I would not be out of the fashion, Congrio.”

“It is but the custom of us cooks,” replied Congrio, gravely, “to undervalue our tools, in order to increase the effect of our art. The sweetmeat shape is a fair shape, and a lovely; but I would recommend my master, at the first occasion, to purchase some new ones of a—”

“That will suffice,” exclaimed Diomed, who seemed resolved never to allow his slave to finish his sentences—“Now, resume thy charge—shine—eclipse thyself—let men envy Diomed his cook—let the slaves of Pompeii style thee Congrio the Great! Go—yet stay—thou hast not spent all the monies I gave thee for the marketing?”

“All!”—alas! the nightingales’ tongues and the Roman tomacula,* and the oysters from Britain,

*A rich and delicate species of sausage.
and sundry other things, too numerous now to recite, are yet left unpaid for; but what matter—every one trusts the Archimagirus* of Diomed the wealthy!"

"O! unconscionable prodigal—what waste!—what profusion!—I am ruined—but go, hasten—inspect!—taste!—perform!—surpass thyself! Let the Roman senator not despise the poor Pompeian—Away, slave!—and remember, the Phrygian attagens."

The chief disappeared within his natural domain, and Diomed rolled back his portly presence to the more courtly chambers. All was to his liking—the flowers were fresh—the fountains played briskly—the mosaic pavements were smooth as mirrors.

"Where is my daughter Julia?" he asked.

"At the bath?"

"Ah! that reminds me!—time wanes—and I must bathe also."

Our story returns to Apæcides.—On awaking that day from the broken and feverish sleep which

* Archimagirus was the lofty title of the chief cook.
had followed his adoption of a faith so strikingly and sternly at variance with that in which his youth had been nurtured, the young priest could scarcely imagine that he was not yet in a dream; he had crossed the fatal river—the past was henceforth to have no sympathy with the future; the two worlds were distinct and separate,—that which had been, from that which was to be. To what a bold and adventurous enterprise he had pledged his life—to unveil the mysteries in which he had participated—to desecrate the altars he had served—to denounce the goddess whose ministering robe he wore! Slowly he became sensible of the hatred and the horror he should provoke amongst the pious even if successful; if frustrated in his daring attempt, what penalties might he not incur for an offence hitherto unheard of—for which no specific law, derived from experience, was prepared, and which, for that very reason, precedents, dragged from the sharpest armoury of obsolete and inapplicable legislation, would probably be distorted to meet! His friends,—the sister of his youth,—could he expect justice, though he might
receive compassion, from them?—this brave and heroic act would by their heathen eyes be regarded, perhaps, as a heinous apostasy—at the best, as a pitiable madness.

He dared—he renounced—everything in this world—in the hope of securing that eternity in the next, which had so suddenly been revealed to him. While these thoughts on the one hand invaded his breast, on the other hand, his pride, his courage, and his virtue, mingled with reminiscences of revenge for deceit, of indignant disgust at fraud, conspired to raise and to support him.

The conflict was sharp and keen; but his new feelings triumphed over his old: and a mighty argument in favour of wrestling with the sanctities of old opinions and hereditary forms, might be found in the conquest over both, achieved by that humble priest. Had the early Christians been more controlled by "the solemn plausibilities of custom"—less of democrats in the pure and lofty acceptance of that perverted word,—Christianity would have perished in its cradle!

As each priest in succession slept several nights
together in the chambers of the temple, the term imposed on Apæcides was not yet completed; and when he had risen from his couch, attired himself, as usual, in his robes, and left his narrow chamber, he found himself before the altars of the temple.

In the exhaustion of his late emotions, he had slept far into the morning, and the vertical sun already poured its fervid beams over the sacred place.

"Salve, Apæcides!" said a voice, whose natural asperity was smoothed by long artifice into an almost displeasing softness of tone. "Thou art late abroad; has the goddess revealed herself to thee in visions?"

"Could she reveal her true self to the People, Calenus, how incenseless would be these altars!"

"That," replied Calenus, "may possibly be true, but the deity is wise enough to hold commune with none but priests."

"A time may come, when she will be unveiled without her own acquiescence."

"It is not likely; she has triumphed for countless ages. And that which has so long stood the
test of time rarely succumbs to the lust of novelty. But hark ye, young brother! these sayings are indiscreet."

"It is not for thee to silence them," replied Apæcides haughtily.

"So hot!—yet I will not quarrel with thee. Why, my Apæcides, has not the Egyptian convinced thee of the necessity of our dwelling together in unity? Has he not convinced thee of the wisdom of deluding the people and enjoying ourselves? if not, oh! brother, he is not that great magician he is esteemed."

"Thou then hast shared his lessons," said Apæcides with a hollow smile.

"Ay! but I stood less in need of them than thou. Nature had already gifted me with the love of pleasure, and the desire of gain and power. Long is the way that leads the voluptuary to the severities of life; but it is only one step from pleasant sin to sheltering hypocrisy. Beware the vengeance of the goddess, if the shortness of that step be disclosed!"

"Beware, thou, the hour when the tomb shall be
rent and the rottenness exposed," returned Apæcides solemnly. "Vale!"

With these words he left the flamen to his meditations. When he got a few paces from the temple, he turned to look back. Calenus had already disappeared in the entry room of the priests, for it now approached the hour of that repast which, called prandium by the ancients, answers in point of date to the breakfast of the moderns. The white and graceful fane gleamed brightly in the sun. Upon the altars before it rose the incense and bloomed the garlands. The priest gazed long and wistfully upon the scene—it was the last time that it was ever beheld by him!

He then turned, and pursued his way slowly towards the house of Ione—for before, possibly, the last tie that united them was cut in twain—before the uncertain peril of the next day was incurred, he was anxious to see his last surviving relative, his fondest, as his earliest friend.

He arrived at her house, and found her in the garden with Nydia.
"This is kind, Apæcides," said Ione joyfully; "and how eagerly have I wished to see thee!—what thanks do I not owe thee! How churlish hast thou been to answer none of my letters—to abstain from coming hither to receive the expressions of my gratitude! Oh, thou hast assisted to preserve thy sister from dishonour. What! what can she say to thank thee, now thou art come at last?"

"My sweet Ione, thou owest me no gratitude, for thy cause was mine; let us avoid that subject, let us recur not to that impious man—how hateful to both of us! I may have a speedy opportunity to teach the world the nature of his pretended wisdom and hypocritical severity. But, let us sit down, my sister; I am wearied with the heat of the sun; let us sit in yonder shade, and, for a little while longer, be to each other what we have been."

Beneath a wide plane-tree, with the cistus and the arbutus clustering round them, the living fountain before, the green sward beneath their feet, the gay cicada, once so dear to Athens, rising
merrily ever and anon amidst the grass; the butterfly, beautiful emblem of the soul, dedicated to Psyche, and which has continued to furnish illustrations to the Christian bard, rich in the glowing colours caught from Sicilian skies,* hovering above the sunny flowers, itself like a winged flower—in this spot, and this scene, the brother and the sister sate together for the last time on earth. You may tread now on the same place; but the garden is no more, the columns are shattered, the fountain hath ceased to play. Let the traveller search amongst the ruins of Pompeii for the house of Ione. Its remains are yet visible; but I will not betray them to the gaze of common-place tourists. He who is more sensitive than the herd will discover them easily; when he has done so, let him keep the secret.

They sate down, and Nydia, glad to be alone, retired to the farther end of the garden.

"Ione, my sister," said the young convert, "place your hand upon my brow; let me feel your

* In Sicily are found, perhaps, the most beautiful varieties of the butterfly.
cool touch. Speak to me too, for your gentle voice is like a breeze that hath freshness as well as music. Speak to me, but forbear to bless me! Utter not one word of those forms of speech which our childhood was taught to consider sacred!"

"Alas! and what then shall I say? our language of affection is so woven with that of worship, that the words grow chilled and trite if I banish from them allusion to our gods."

"Our Gods!" murmured Apæcides, with a shudder: "thou slightest my request already."

"Shall I speak then only to thee of Isis?"

"The Evil Spirit! No; rather be dumb for ever, unless at least thou canst—but away—away this talk! Not now will we dispute and cavil; not now will we judge harshly of each other. Thou, regarding me as an apostate! and I all sorrow and shame for thee, as an idolater. No, my sister, let us avoid such topics and such thoughts. In thy sweet presence a calm falls over my spirit. For a little while I forget. As I thus lay my temples on thy bosom, as I thus feel thy gentle arm embrace me, I think that we are children
once more, and that the heaven smiles equally upon both. For oh! if hereafter, I escape, no matter what ordeal! and it be permitted me to address thee on one sacred and awful subject; should I find thine ear closed and thy heart hardened, what hope for myself could countervail the despair for thee? In thee, my sister, I behold a likeness made beautiful, made noble, of myself. Shall the mirror live for ever, and the form itself be broken as the potter's clay? Ah, no—no—thou wilt listen to me yet! Dost thou remember how we went into the fields by Baia, hand in hand together, to pluck the flowers of spring? even so, hand in hand, shall we enter the Eternal Garden, and crown ourselves with imperishable asphodel!"

Wondering and bewildered by words she could not comprehend, but excited even to tears by the plaintiveness of their tone, Ione listened to these out-pourings of a full and oppressed heart. In truth, Apaecides himself was softened much beyond his ordinary mood, which to outward seeming was usually either sullen or impetuous. For the noblest desires
are of a jealous nature—they engross, they absorb the soul, and often leave the splenetic humours stagnant and unheeded at the surface. Unheeding the petty things around us, we are deemed morose; —impatient at earthly interruption to the diviner dreams, we are thought irritable and churlish. For as there is no chimera vainer than the hope that one human heart shall find sympathy in another, so none ever interpret us with justice, and none, no, not our nearest and our dearest ties, forbear with us in mercy! When we are dead, and repentance comes too late, both friend and foe may wonder to think how little there was in us to forgive!

"I will talk to thee then of our early years," said Ione. "Shall yon blind girl sing to thee of the days of childhood? her voice is sweet and musical, and she hath a song on that theme which contains none of those allusions it pains thee to hear."

"Dost thou remember the words, my sister?" asked Apæcides.

"Methinks yes; for the tune, which is simple, fixed them on my memory."
"Sing to me then thyself. My ear is not in unison with unfamiliar voices; and thine, Ione, full of household associations, has ever been to me more sweet than all the hireling melodies of Lycia or of Crete. Sing to me!"

Ione beckoned to a slave that stood in the portico, and sending for her lute, sang, when it arrived, to a tender and simple air, the following verses:

A REGRET FOR CHILDHOOD.

1.

It is not that our earlier Heaven
Escapes its April showers,
Or that to Childhood's heart is given
No snake amidst the flowers.

Ah! twined with grief
Each brightest leaf

That's wreath'd us by the Hours!

Young though we be, the Past may sting,

The Present feed its sorrow;

But Hope shines bright on every thing
That waits us with the morrow.
Like sun-lit glades,
The dimmest shades,
Some rosy beam can borrow.

2.
It is not that our later years
Of cares are woven wholly;
But smiles less swiftly chase the tears,
And wounds are healed more slowly.
And Memory's vow
To lost ones now,
Makes joys too bright, unholy.
And ever fled the Iris-bow
That smiled when clouds were o'er us;
If storms should burst, uncheered we go,
A drearier waste before us;—
And, with the toys
Of childish joys,
We've broke the staff that bore us!

Wisely and delicately had Ione chosen that
song, sad though its burthen seemed, for when we
are deeply mournful, discordant above all others is
the voice of mirth; the fittest spell is that borrowed from melancholy itself, for dark thoughts can be softened down, when they cannot be brightened; and so they lose the precise and rigid outline of their truth, and their colours melt into the ideal. As the leech applies as a remedy to the internal sore some outward irritation, which, by a gentler wound, draws away the venom of that which is more deadly, thus, in the rankling festers of the mind, our art is to divert to a milder sadness on the surface the pain that gnaweth at the core. And so with Apaecides, yielding to the influence of the silver voice that reminded him of the Past, and told but of half the sorrow born to the Present, he forgot his more immediate and fiery sources of anxious thought. He spent hours in making Ione alternately sing to, and converse with, him. And when he rose to leave her, it was with a calmed and lulled mind.

"Ione," said he, as he pressed her hand, "should you hear my name blackened and maligned, will you credit the aspersion?"

"Never, my brother, never!"
"Dost thou not imagine, according to thy belief, that the evil-doer is punished hereafter and the good rewarded?"

"Can you doubt it?"

"Dost thou think, then, that he who is truly good should sacrifice every selfish interest in his zeal for virtue?"

"He who doth so is the equal of the gods."

"And thou believest that, according to the purity and courage with which he thus acts, shall be his portion of bliss beyond the grave?"

"So are we taught to hope."

"Kiss me, my sister. One question more—Thou art to be wedded to Glaucus; perchance that marriage may separate us more hopelessly—but not of this speak I now—thou art to be married to Glaucus,—dost thou love him? Nay, my sister, answer me by words."

"Yes!" murmured Ione, blushing.

"Dost thou feel that, for his sake, thou couldst renounce pride, brave dishonour, and incur death? I have heard that when women really love, it is to that excess."
"My brother, all this could I do for Glaucus, and feel that it were not a sacrifice. There is no sacrifice to those who love, in what is borne for the one we love."

"Enough! shall woman feel thus for man, and man feel less devotion to his God?"

He spoke no more—his whole countenance seemed instinct and inspired with a divine life—his chest swelled proudly,—his eyes glowed,—on his forehead was writ the majesty of a man who can dare be noble! He turned to meet the eyes of Ione—earnest, wistful, fearful;—he kissed her fondly, strained her warmly to his breast, and in a moment more he had left the house.

Long did Ione remain in the same place mute and thoughtful. The maidens again and again came to warn her of the deepening noon, and her engagement to Diomed's banquet. At length, she woke from her reverie, and prepared—not with the pride of beauty, but listless and melancholy—for the festival: one thought alone reconciled her to the promised visit—she should meet Glaucus—
she could confide to him her alarm and uneasiness for her brother.

Love! there is one blessing that distinguishes above all others thy chaste and sacred ties from thy guilty and illicit—the Eros from the Anteros;—to those alone whom we love without a crime, we impart the confidence of all our household and familiar cares. To the erring, love is only passion; there are but the mistress and the lover!—for the sinless, the bond embraces the fondness, the sanctity, and the faith of every other connection! It was not in the mouth of Helen, but Andromache, that Homer put those touching words, so true in sentiment, from the eldest to the latest time;

"And while my Hector still survives, I see
"My father, mother, brethren, all—in thee!"
CHAPTER III.

A FASHIONABLE PARTY AND A DINNER A LA MODE IN POMPEII.

Meanwhile Sallust and Glaucus were slowly strolling towards the house of Diomed. Despite the habits of his life, Sallust was not devoid of many estimable qualities. He would have been an active friend, an useful citizen, in short, an excellent man, if he had not taken it into his head to be a philosopher. Brought up in the schools in which Roman plagiarism worshipped the echo of Grecian wisdom, he had imbued himself with those doctrines by which the later Epicureans corrupted the simple maxims of their great master. He gave himself altogether up to pleasure, and imagined there was no sage like a boon companion. Still,
however, he had a considerable degree of learning, wit, and good nature; and the hearty frankness of his very vices seemed like virtue itself beside the utter corruption of Clodius and the prostrate effeminacy of Lepidus; and therefore Glauclus liked him the best of his companions; and he in turn, appreciating the nobler qualities of the Athenian, loved him almost as much as a cold muraena, or a bowl of the best Falernian.

"This is a vulgar old fellow, this Diomed," said Sallust, "but he has some good qualities—in his cellar!"

"And some charming ones—in his daughter."

"True, Glauclus—but you are not much moved by them, methinks. I fancy Clodius is desirous to be your successor."

"He is welcome.—At the banquet of her beauty, no guest, be sure, is considered a musca."

"You are severe—but she has, indeed, something of the Corinthian about her—they will be well-matched after all!—what good-natured fellows

* Unwelcome and uninvited guests were called muscae, or flies.
we are to associate with that gambling good-for-nought!"

"Pleasure unites strange varieties," answered Glaucus. "He amuses me—"

"And flatters;—but then he pays himself well! he powders his praise with gold-dust."

"You often hint that he plays unfairly—think you so really?"

"My dear Glaucus, a Roman noble has his dignity to keep up—dignity is very expensive—Clodius must cheat like a scoundrel, in order to live like a gentleman."

"Ha ha!—well, of late I have renounced the dice. Ah! Sallust—when I am wedded to Ione, I trust, I may yet redeem a youth of follies. We are both born for better things than those in which we sympathise now—born to render our worship in nobler temples than the styé of Epicurus."

"Alas!" returned Sallust, in rather a melancholy tone, "what do we know more than this?—life is short—beyond the grave all is dark. There is no wisdom like that which says 'enjoy.'"
"By Bacchus! I doubt sometimes if we do enjoy the utmost of which life is capable."

"I am a moderate man," returned Sallust, "and do not ask 'the utmost.' We are like malefactors, and intoxicate ourselves with wine and myrrh, as we stand on the brink of death; but, if we did not do so, the abyss would look very disagreeable. I own, that I was inclined to be gloomy, until I took so heartily to drinking—that is a new life, my Glaucus."

"Yes!—but it brings us next morning to a new death."

"Why, the next morning is unpleasant, I own; but then, if it were not so, one would never be inclined to read—I study betimes—because, by the gods! I am generally unfit for anything else till noon."

"Fie, Scythian!"

"Pshaw! the fate of Pentheus to him who denies Bacchus!"

"Well, Sallust, with all your faults, you are the best profligate I ever met; and verily, if I were in danger of life, you are the only man,
in all Italy, who would stretch out a finger to save me."

"Perhaps I should not, if it were in the middle of supper. But, in truth, we Italians are fearfully selfish."

"So are all men who are not free," said Glaucus, with a sigh.—"Freedom alone makes men sacrifice to each other."

"Freedom then must be a very fatiguing thing to an Epicurean," answered Sallust. "But here we are, at our host's."

As Diomed's villa is one of the most considerable in point of size of any yet discovered at Pompeii, and is, moreover, built much according to the specific instructions for a suburban villa, laid down by the Roman architect, it may not be uninteresting, briefly to describe the plan of the apartments through which our visitors passed.

They entered then by the same small vestibule at which we have before been presented to the aged Medon, and passed at once into a colonnade, technically termed the peristyle; for the main difference between the suburban villa and the
town mansion, consisted in placing in the first the said colonnade in exactly the same place as that which in the town mansion was occupied by the atrium. In the centre of the peristyle was an open court, which contained the impluvium.

From this peristyle descended a staircase to the offices, another narrow passage on the opposite side communicated with a garden; various small apartments surrounded the colonnade, appropriated probably to country visiters. Another door to the left on entering, communicated with a small triangular portico, which belonged to the baths, and behind was the wardrobe, in which were kept the vests of the holiday suits of the slaves, and, perhaps, of the master. Seventeen centuries afterwards, were found those relics of ancient finery, calcined and crumbling, kept longer, alas! than their thrifty lord foresaw.

Return we to the peristyle, and endeavour now to present to the reader a coup-d’œil of the whole suite of apartments, which immediately stretched before the steps of the visiters.
Let him then first imagine the columns of the portico, hung with festoons of flowers; the columns themselves in the lower part painted red, and the walls around glowing with various frescos; then looking beyond a curtain, three parts drawn aside, the eye caught the tablinum or saloon (which was closed at will by glazed doors, now slid back into the walls). On either side of this tablinum were small rooms, one of which was a kind of cabinet of gems; and these apartments, as well as the tablinum, communicated with a long gallery, which opened at either end upon terraces; and between the terraces, and communicating with the central part of the gallery, was a hall, in which the banquet was that day prepared. All these apartments, though almost on a level with the street, were one story above the garden; and the terraces communicating with the gallery, were continued into corridors, raised above the pillars, which, to the right and left, skirted the garden below.

Beneath, and on a level with the garden, ran the apartments we have already described as chiefly appropriated to Julia.
In the gallery then just mentioned, Diomed received his guests.

The merchant affected greatly the man of letters, and, therefore, he also affected a passion for everything Greek; he paid particular attention to Glaucus.

"You will see, my friend," said he, with a wave of his hand, "that I am a little classical here—a little Cecropian—Eh? The hall in which we shall sup is borrowed from the Greeks. It is an ΟΕευς Cyzicene. Noble Sallust! they have not, I am told, this sort of apartment in Rome."

"Oh!" replied Sallust, with a half smile, "you Pompeians combine all most eligible in Greece and in Rome; may you, Diomed, combine the viands as well as the architecture!"

"You shall see, you shall see, my Sallust," replied the merchant; "we have a taste at Pompeii,—and we have also money."

"They are two excellent things," replied Sallust. "But, behold, the lady Julia!"

A main difference, as I have before remarked, in the manner of life observed among the Athenians
and Romans, was, that with the first, the modest women rarely or never took part in entertainments; with the latter, they were the common ornaments of the banquet; but, when they were present at the feast, it usually terminated at an early hour.

Magnificently robed in white, interwoven with pearls and threads of gold, the handsome Julia entered the apartment.

Scarcely had she received the salutation of the two guests, ere Pansa and his wife, Lepidus, Clodius, and the Roman senator, entered almost simultaneously; then came the widow Fulvia; then the poet Fulvius, like to the widow in name if in nothing else; the warrior from Herculaneum, accompanied by his umbra, next stalked in; afterwards, the less eminent of the guests. None yet tarried.

It was the mode among the courteous ancients to flatter whenever it was in their power; accordingly it was a sign of ill-breeding to seat themselves immediately on entering the house of their host. After performing the salutation, which was...
usually accomplished by the same cordial shake of the right hand, which we ourselves retain, and sometimes by the yet more familiar embrace, they spent several minutes in surveying the apartment, and admiring the bronzes, the pictures, or the furniture, with which it was adorned. A mode very impolite according to our refined English notions, which place good-breeding in indifference; we would not for the world express much admiration at a man's house, for fear it should be thought we had never seen anything so fine before!

"A beautiful statue, this, of Bacchus!" said the Roman senator.

"A mere trifle!" replied Diomed.

"What charming paintings!" said Fulvia.

"Mere trifles!" answered the owner.

"Exquisite candelabra!" cried the warrior.

"Exquisite!" echoed his umbra.

"Trifles! trifles!" reiterated the merchant.

Meanwhile Glaucus found himself by one of the windows of the gallery which communicated with the terraces, and the fair Julia by his side.
"Is it an Athenian virtue, Glaucus," said the merchant's daughter, "to shun those whom we once sought?"

"Fair Julia—no!"

"Yet, methinks, it is one of the qualities of Glaucus."

"Glaucus never shuns a friend," replied the Greek, with some emphasis on the last word.

"May Julia rank among the number of his friends?"

"It would be an honour to the emperor to find a friend in one so lovely."

"You evade my question," returned the enamoured Julia; "but tell me, is it true that you admire the Neapolitan Ione?"

"Does not beauty constrain our admiration?"

"Ah! subtle Greek, still do you fly the meaning of my words. But say, shall Julia be indeed your friend?"

"If she will so favour me, blessed be the gods! The day in which I am thus honoured shall be ever marked in white."

"Yet even while you speak, your eye is rest-
less—your colour comes and goes—you move away involuntarily—you are impatient to join Ione.”

For at that moment Ione had entered, and Glaucus had indeed betrayed the emotion noticed by the jealous beauty.

“Can admiration to one woman make me unworthy the friendship of another? Sanction not so, O Julia, the libels of the poets on your sex.”

“Well, you are right—or I will learn to think so. Glaucus! yet one moment! you are to wed Ione, is it not so?”

“If the fates permit, such is my blessed hope.”

“Accept then from me, in token of our new friendship, a present for your bride. Nay, it is the custom of friends, you know, always to present to bride and bridegroom some such little marks of their esteem and favouring wishes.”

“Julia! I cannot refuse any token of friendship from one like you. I will accept the gift as an omen from Fortune herself.”

“Then after the feast, when the guests retire, you will descend with me to my apartment, and receive it from my hands.—Remember!” said
Julia, as she joined the wife of Pansa, and left Glaucus to seek Ione.

The widow Fulvia and the spouse of the ædile were engaged in high and grave discussion.

"O Fulvia! I assure you that the last account from Rome declares that the frizzling mode of dressing the hair is growing antiquated; they only now wear it built up in a tower like Julia's, or arranged as a helmet — the Galerian fashion, like mine, you see; it has a fine effect I think. I assure you, Vespius (Vespius was the name of the Herculaneum hero) admires it greatly."

"And nobody wears the hair like yon Neapolitan, in the Greek way?"

"What, parted in front, with the knot behind! Oh no! how ridiculous it is! it reminds one of a statue of Diana! Yet this Ione is handsome, eh?"

"So the men say, but then she is rich: she is to marry the Athenian, I wish her joy. He will not be long faithful I suspect; those foreigners are very faithless."

"Ho, Julia!" said Fulvia, as the merchant's
daughter joined them; "have you seen the tiger yet?"

"No!"

"Why all the ladies have been to see him. He is so handsome!"

"I hope we shall find some criminal or other for him and the lion," replied Julia; "your husband" (turning to Pansa's wife) "is not so active as he should be in this matter."

"Why, really, the laws are too mild," replied the dame of the helmet, "there are so few offences to which the punishment of the arena can be awarded; and then, too, the gladiators are growing effeminate. The stoutest bestiarii declare they are willing enough to fight a boar or a bull, but as for a lion or tiger, they think the game too much in earnest."

"They are worthy of a mitre,"* replied Julia in disdain.

* Mitres were worn sometimes by men, and considered a great mark of effeminacy — to be fit for a mitre was therefore to be fit for very little else! — It is astonishing how many modern opinions are derived from antiquity. Doubtless, it was this classical notion of mitres that incited the ardour of Mr. Ripon, to expel the bishops. There is a vast deal of wickedness in Latin!
"Oh! have you seen the new house of Fulvius, the dear poet?" said Pansa's wife.

"No, is it handsome?"

"Very, such good taste; but they say, my dear, that he has such improper pictures. He won't show them to the women, how ill-bred!"

"Those poets are always odd," said the widow.

"But he is an interesting man, what pretty verses he writes! we improve very much in poetry, it is impossible to read the old stuff now."

"I declare I am of your opinion," returned the lady of the helmet; "there is so much more force and energy in the modern school."

The warrior sauntered up to the ladies.

"It reconciles me to peace," said he, "when I see such faces."

"Oh! you heroes are ever flatterers," returned Fulvia, hastening to appropriate the compliment specially to herself.

"By this chain, which I received from the emperor's own hand," replied the warrior, playing with a short chain which hung round the neck like a collar, instead of descending to the breast,
according to the fashion of the peaceful—"By this chain you wrong me; I am a blunt man, a soldier should be so."

"How do you find the ladies of Pompeii generally?" said Julia.

"By Venus, most beautiful; they favour me a little it is true, and that inclines my eyes to double their charms."

"We love a warrior," said the wife of Pansa.

"I see it; by Hercules, it is even disagreeable to be too celebrated in these cities. At Herculaneum they climb the roof of my atrium to catch a glimpse of me through the compluvium; the admiration of one's citizens is pleasant at first, but burthen-some afterwards."

"True, true, O Vespius!" cried the poet, joining the group; "I find it so myself."

"You!" said the stately warrior, scanning the small form of the poet with ineffable disdain. "In what legion have you served?"

"You may see my spoils, my exuviae, in the Forum itself," returned the poet, with a significant glance at the women; "I have been among the
tent-companions, the *contubernales*, of the great Mantuan himself."

"I know no general from Mantua," said the warrior gravely; "what campaign have you served?"

"That of Helicon."

"I never heard of it."

"Nay, Vespius, he does but joke," said Julia laughing.

"Joke! By Mars, am I a man to be joked!"

"Yes; Mars himself was in love with the mother of jokes," said the poet a little alarmed.

"Know then, O Vespius! that I am the poet Fulvius. It is I who make warriors immortal."

"The gods forbid!" whispered Sallust to Julia.

"If Vespius were made immortal, what a specimen of tiresome braggadocio would be transmitted to posterity!"

The soldier looked puzzled; when, to the infinite relief of himself and his companions, the signal for the feast was given.

As we have already witnessed at the house of Glaucus the ordinary routine of a Pompeian entertainment, the reader is spared any second detail of
the courses, and the manner in which they were introduced.

Diomed, who was rather ceremonious, had appointed a nomenclator or appointer of places to each guest.

The reader understands that the festive board was composed of three tables; one at the centre, and one at each wing. It was only at the outer side of these tables that the guests reclined; the inner space was left untenanted for the greater convenience of the waiters or ministri. The extreme corner of one of the wings was appropriated to Julia as the lady of the feast, that next her to Diomed. At one corner of the centre table was placed the ædile; at the opposite corner, the Roman senator; these were the posts of honour. The other guests were arranged, so that the young (gentleman or lady) should sit next each other; and the more advanced in years be similarly matched. An agreeable provision enough, but one which must often have offended those who wished to be thought still young.

The chair of Ione was next to the couch of
Glaucus.* The seats were veneered with tortoiseshell, and covered with quilts stuffed with feathers, and ornamented with the costly embroideries of Babylon. The modern ornaments of epergne or plateau, were supplied by images of the gods, wrought in bronze, ivory, and silver. The sacred saltecellar and the familiar Lares were not forgotten. Over the table and the seats, a rich canopy was suspended from the ceiling. At each corner of the table were lofty candelabras, for though it was early noon, the room was darkened. While from tripods placed in different parts of the room distilled the odour of myrrh and frankincense; and upon the abacus, or sideboard, large vases and various ornaments of silver were ranged, much with the same ostentation (but with more than the same taste) that we find displayed at a modern feast.

The custom of grace was invariably supplied by that of libations to the gods; and Vesta, as queen

* In formal parties the women sate in chairs—the men reclined. It was only in the bosom of families, that the same ease was granted to both sexes—the reason is obvious.
of the household gods, usually received first that graceful homage.

This ceremony being performed, the slaves showered flowers upon the couches and the floor, and crowned each guest with rosy garlands, intricately woven with ribands, tied by the rind of the linden-tree, and each intermingled with the ivy and the amethyst, supposed preventives against the effect of wine: the wreaths of the women only were exempted from these leaves, for it was not the fashion for them to drink wine—*in public*. It was then that the president Diomed thought it advisable to institute a *basileus* or director of the feast—an important office, sometimes chosen by lot, sometimes, as now, by the master of the entertainment.

Diomed was not a little puzzled as to his election. The invalid senator was too grave and too infirm for the proper fulfilment of his duty; the ædile Pansa was adequate enough to the task; but then to choose the next in official rank to the senator, was an affront to the senator himself. While deliberating between the merits of the others, he
caught the mirthful glance of Sallust, and by a sudden inspiration, named the jovial epicure to the rank of director, or arbiter bibendi.

Sallust received the appointment with becoming humility.

"I shall be a merciful king," said he, "to those who drink deep; to a recusant, Midas himself shall be less inexorable—beware!"

The slaves handed round basins of perfumed water, by which lavation the feast commenced: and now the table groaned under the initiatory course.

The conversation, at first desultory and scattered, allowed Ione and Glaucus to carry on those sweet whispers, which are worth all the eloquence in the world. Julia watched them with flashing eyes.

"How soon shall her place be mine!" thought she.

But Clodius who sate in the centre table, so as to observe well the countenance of Julia, guessed her pique, and resolved to profit by it. He addressed her across the table in set phrases of gallantry; and as he was of high birth, and of a
showy person, the vain Julia was not so much in love as to be insensible to his attentions.

The slaves in the interim were constantly kept upon the alert by the vigilant Sallust, who chased one cup by another, with a celerity which seemed as if he were resolved upon exhausting those capacious cellars, which the reader may yet see beneath the house of Diomed. The worthy merchant began to repent his choice, as amphora after amphora was pierced and emptied. The slaves, all under the age of manhood, (the youngest being about ten years old — it was they who filled the wine; the eldest, some five years older, mingled it with water,) seemed to share in the zeal of Sallust; and the face of Diomed began to glow, as he watched the provoking complacency with which they seconded the exertions of the king of the feast.

"Pardon me, O senator," said Sallust, "I see you flinch; your purple hem cannot save you — drink!"

"By the gods!" said the senator, coughing, "my lungs are already on fire; you proceed with
so miraculous a swiftness, that Phaeton himself was nothing to you. I am infirm, O pleasant Sallust—you must exonerate me."

"Not I, by Vesta! I am an impartial monarch,—drink!"

The poor senator, compelled by the laws of the table, was forced to comply. Alas! every cup was bringing him nearer and nearer to the Stygian pool.

"Gently! gently! my king," groaned Diomed, "we already begin to —"

"Treason!" interrupted Sallust; "no stern Brutus here!—no interference with royalty!"

"But our female guests!"

"Love a toper!—Did not Ariadne dote upon Bacchus?"

The feast proceeded—the guests grew more talkative and noisy—the dessert, or last course, was already on the table; and the slaves bore round water with myrrh and hyssop for the finishing lavation. At the same time, a small circular table that had been placed in the space opposite the guests, suddenly, and as by magic, seemed to open
in the centre, and cast up a fragrant shower, sprinkling the table and the guests; while, as it ceased, the awning above them was drawn aside, and the guests perceived that a rope had been stretched across the ceiling, and that one of those nimble dancers, for which Pompeii was so celebrated, and whose descendants add so charming a grace to the festivities of Astley's or Vauxhall, was now treading his airy measures right over their heads.

This apparition, removed but by a cord from one's pericranium, and indulging the most vehement leaps, apparently with the intention of alighting upon that cerebral region, would probably be regarded with some terror by a party in May Fair; but our Pompeian revellers seemed to behold the spectacle with delighted curiosity, and applauded in proportion as the dancer appeared with the most difficulty to miss falling upon the head of whatever guest he particularly selected to dance above. He paid, indeed, the senator the peculiar compliment of literally falling from the rope, and catching it again with his hand, just as the whole party im-
agined the skull of the Roman was as much fractured as ever that of the poet whom the eagle took for a tortoise.

At length, to the great relief of at least Ione, who had not much accustomed herself to this entertainment, the dancer suddenly paused, as a strain of music was heard from without. He danced again still more wildly; the air changed, the dancer paused again; no, it could not dissolve the charm which was supposed to possess him! He represented one who by a strange disorder is compelled to dance, and whom only a certain air of music can cure.* At length the musician seemed to hit on the right tune, the dancer gave one leap, swung himself down from the rope, alighted on the floor, and vanished.

One art now yielded to another; and the musicians who were stationed without on the terrace, struck up a soft and mellow air, to which were sung the following words, made almost indistinct by the barrier between, and the exceeding lowness of the minstrelsy:

* A dance still retained in Campania.
"Hark! through these flowers our music sends its greeting
To your loved halls, where Psilas* shuns the day;
When the young god his Cretan Nymph was meeting,
He taught Pan's rustic pipe this gliding lay.
Soft as the dews of wine
Shed in this banquet-hour,
The rich libation of Sound's stream divine,
O reverent harp, to Aphrodite pour!

Wild rings the trump o'er ranks to glory marching;
Music's sublimer bursts for war are meet;
But sweet lips murmuring under wreaths o'er-arching,
Find the low whispers like their own most sweet.
Steal my lull'd music, steal,
Like woman's half-heard tone,
So that whoe'er shall hear, shall think to feel
In thee, the voice of lips that love his own.

* Bacchus.
How it was I know not, but at the end of that song Ione's cheek blushed more deeply than before, and Glaucus had contrived beneath the cover of the table to steal her hand.

"It is a pretty song," said Fulvius, patronizingly.

"Ah! if you would oblige us," murmured the wife of Pansa.

"Do you wish Fulvius to sing?" asked the king of the feast, who had just called on the assembly to drink the health of the Roman senator, a cup to each letter of his name.

"Can you ask?" said the matron, with a complimentary glance at the poet.

Sallust snapped his fingers, and, whispering the slave who came to learn his orders, the latter disappeared, and returned in a few moments with a small harp in one hand, and a branch of myrtle in the other.

The slave approached the poet, and with a low reverence presented to him the harp.

"Alas! I cannot play," said the poet.

"Then you must sing to the myrtle. It is a Greek fashion—Diomed loves the Greeks—I love
THE LAST DAYS OF

the Greeks— you love the Greeks— we all love the
Greeks — and between you and me this is not the
only thing we have stolen from them. However,
I introduce this custom— I, the king— sing; subject,
— sing.”

The poet with a bashful smile took the myrtle
in his hands, and after a short prelude, sang as
follows, in a pleasant and well-tuned voice:

THE CORONATION OF THE LOVES.*

1.

The merry Loves one holiday
    Were all at gambols madly,
But Loves too long can seldom play
    Without behaving sadly.

They laughed, they toyed, they romped about,
And then for change they all fell out.

    Fie, fie! how can they quarrel so,
    My Lesbia— ah, for shame, love!
    Methinks 'tis scarce an hour ago
    When we did just the same, love.

* Suggested by two Pompeian pictures in the Museum at Na-
ples, which represent a Dove and a Helmet enthroned by Cupids.
The Loves, 'tis thought, were free till then,
They had no king nor laws, dear;
But gods, like men, should subject be,
Say all the ancient saws, dear.
And so our crew resolved, for quiet,
To choose a king to curb their riot.
A kiss—ah! what a grievous thing
For both, methinks 'twould be, child,
If I should take some prudish king
And cease to be so free, child!

Among their toys a Casque they found,
It was the helm of Ares;
With horrent plumes the crest was crown'd,
It frightened all the Lares.
So fine a king was never known—
They placed the Helmet on the throne.
My girl, since Valour wins the world,
They chose a mighty master;
But thy sweet flag of smiles unfurl'd,
Would win the world much faster!
The Casque soon found the Loves too wild
A troop for him to school them;
For warriors know how one such child
Has, aye, contrived to fool them.
They plagued him so—that in despair
He took a wife the plague to share.
    If kings themselves thus find the strife
    Of Earth unshared, severe, girl;
Why just to halve the ills of life,
Come, take your partner here, girl.

Within that room the Bird of Love
The whole affair had eyed then;
The monarch hailed the royal dove,
And placed her by his side then:
What mirth amidst the Loves was seen,
'Long live,' they cried, 'our King and Queen!'
Ah! Lesbia, would that thrones were mine,
And crowns to deck that brow, love!
And yet I know that heart of thine,
For me is throne enow, love!
POMPEII.

6.

The urchins thought a milder mate

Their King could not have taken;
But when the Queen in judgment sate,

They found themselves mistaken.
The art to reign she'd learnt above,
And ne'er was despot like the Dove.

In thee I find the same deceit;—
Too late, alas! a learner!
For where a mien more gently sweet?
And where a tyrant sterner?

This song, which greatly suited the gay and lively fancy of the Pompeians, was received with considerable applause, and the widow insisted on crowning her namesake with the very branch of myrtle to which he had sung. It was easily twisted into a garland, and the immortal Fulvius was crowned amidst the clapping of hands and shouts of Io triumpe! The song and the harp now circulated round the party;—a new myrtle branch being
handed about, stopping at each person who could be prevailed upon to sing.*

The sun began now to decline, though the revellers, who had worn away several hours, perceived it not in their darkened chamber; and the senator who was tired, and the warrior who had to return to Herculaneum, rising to depart, gave the signal for the general dispersion.

"Tarry yet a moment, my friends," said Diomed; "if you will go so soon, you must at least take a share in our concluding game."

So saying, he motioned to one of the ministri, and whispering him, the slave went out and presently returned with a small bowl containing various tablets carefully sealed and apparently exactly similar. Each guest was to purchase one of these at the nominal price of the lowest piece of silver: and the sport of this lottery (which was the favourite diversion of Augustus, who introduced it)

* According to Plutarch (Sypos. lib. i.) it seems that the branch of myrtle or laurel was not carried round in order, but passed from the first person on one couch, to the first on another, and then from the second on the one to the second on the other, and so on.
consisted in the inequality and sometimes the incongruity of the prizes, the nature and amount of which were specified within the tablets. For instance, the poet, with a wry face, drew one of his own poems (no physician ever less willingly swallowed his own draught); the warrior drew a case of bodkins, which gave rise to certain novel witticisms relative to Hercules and the distaff; the widow Fulvia obtained a large drinking cup; Julia a gentleman's buckle, and Lepidus a ladies' patch-box. The most appropriate lot was drawn by the gambler Clodius, who reddened with anger* on being presented to a set of cogged dice:—A certain damp was thrown upon the gaiety which these various lots created, by an accident that was considered ominous; Glaucus drew the most valuable of all the prizes, a small marble statue of Fortune, of Grecian workmanship; on handing it to him, the slave suffered it to drop, and it broke in pieces.

* Several cogged dice were found in Pompeii. Some of the virtues may be modern — but it is quite clear that all the vices are ancient.
A shiver went round the assembly, and each voice cried spontaneously, "Dii avertite omen!"

Glaucus alone, though perhaps as superstitious as the rest, affected to be unmoved.

"Sweet Neapolitan," whispered he tenderly to Ione, who had turned pale as the broken marble itself; "I accept the omen. It signifies, that in obtaining thee, Fortune can give no more—she breaks her image when she blesses me with thine."

In order to divert the impression which this incident had occasioned in an assembly, which, considering the civilization of the guests, would seem miraculously superstitious, if at the present day in a country party we did not often see a lady grow hypochondriacal on leaving a room—last of thirteen,—Sallust now crowning his cup with flowers, gave the health of their host. This was followed by a similar compliment to the Emperor; and then with a parting cup to Mercury to send them pleasant slumbers, they concluded the entertainment by a last libation, and broke up the party.

Carriages were little used in Pompeii, partly
owing to the extreme narrowness of the streets,—partly to the convenient smallness of the city.

Most of the guests replacing their sandals, which they put off in the banquet-room, and inducing their cloaks, left the house on foot attended by their slaves.

Meanwhile, having seen Ione depart, Glaucus turning to the staircase which led down to the rooms of Julia, was conducted by a slave to an apartment in which he found the merchant's daughter already seated.

"Glaucus!" said she, looking down, "I see that you really love Ione—she is indeed beautiful."

"Julia is charming enough to be generous," replied the Greek. "Yes, I love Ione; amidst all the youth who court you, may you have one worshipper as sincere!"

"I pray the gods to grant it! See, Glaucus, these pearls are the present I destine to your bride: may Juno give her health to wear them!"

So saying, she placed a case in his hands, containing a row of pearls of some size and price. It was so much the custom for persons about to be
married to receive these gifts, that Glaucus could have little scruple in accepting the necklace, though the gallant and proud Athenian inly resolved to requite the gift by one of thrice its value. Julia then stopping short his thanks, poured forth some wine into a small bowl.

"You have drunk many toasts with my father," said she smiling,—"one now with me. Health and fortune to your bride!"

She touched the cup with her lips, and then presented it to Glaucus. The customary etiquette required that Glaucus should drain the whole contents; he accordingly did so. Julia, unknowing the deceit which Nydia had practised upon her, watched him with sparkling eyes: although the witch had told her that the effect might not be immediate, she yet sanguinely trusted to an expeditious operation in favour of her charms. She was disappointed when she found Glaucus coldly replace the cup, and converse with her in the same unmoved but gentle tone as before. And though she detained him as long as she decorously could do, no change took place in his manner.
But to-morrow," thought she, exultingly recovering her disappointment, "to-morrow, alas, for Glaucus!"

Alas, for him, indeed!
CHAPTER IV.

THE STORY HALTS FOR A MOMENT AT AN EPISODE.

Restless and anxious, Apæcides consumed the day in wandering through the most sequestered walks in the vicinity of the city. The sun was slowly setting as he paused beside a lonely part of the Sarnus, ere yet it wound amidst the evidences of luxury and power. Only through openings in the woods and vines were caught glimpses of the white and gleaming city, in which was heard in the distance no din—no sound—nor "busiest hum of men." Amidst the green banks crept the lizard and the grasshopper, and here and there in the brake some solitary bird burst into sudden song, as suddenly stilled. There was deep calm around, but not the calm of night; the air still breathed of the freshness and life of day; the
grass still moved to the stir of the insect-horde; and on the opposite bank the graceful and white capella passed browsing through the herbage, and paused at the wave to drink.

As Apaecides stood musingly gazing upon the waters, he heard beside him the low bark of a dog.

"Be still, poor friend," said a voice at hand, "the stranger's step harms not thy master." The convert recognised the voice, and, turning, he beheld the old mysterious man whom he had seen in the congregation of the Nazarenes.

The old man was sitting upon a fragment of stone covered with ancient mosses, beside him were his staff and scrip; at his feet lay a small shagged dog, the companion in how many a pilgrimage perilous and strange!

The face of the old man was as balm to the excited spirit of the neophyte; he approached, and craving his blessing, sate down beside him.

"Thou art provided as for a journey, father," said he: "wilt thou leave us yet?"

"My son," replied the old man, "the days in
store for me on earth are few and scanty; I employ them as becomes me, travelling from place to place, comforting those whom God has gathered together in his name, and proclaiming the glory of his Son, as testified to his servant."

"Thou hast looked, they tell me, on the face of Christ?"

"And the face revived me from the dead: know, young proselyte to the true faith, that I am he of whom thou readest in the scroll of the Apostle. In the far Judea and in the city of Nain, there dwelt a widow, humble of spirit and sad of heart; for of all the ties of life one son alone was spared to her. And she loved him with a melancholy love, for he was the likeness of the lost. And the son died. The reed on which she leant was broken, the oil was dried up in the widow's cruise. They bore the dead upon his bier; and near the gate of the city, when the crowd were gathered, there came a silence over the sounds of woe, for the Son of God was passing by. The mother, who followed the bier, wept not noisily, but all who looked upon her saw that her heart was
crushed. And the Lord pitied her, and He touched the bier, and said, 'I say unto thee, arise.' And the dead man woke and looked upon the face of the Lord. Oh, that calm and solemn brow—that unutterable smile—that care-worn and sorrowful face, lighted up with a God's benignity—it chased away the shadows of the grave! I rose—I spoke—I was living and in my mother's arms—yes, I am the dead revived! The people shouted—the funeral horns rang forth merrily—there was a cry 'God has visited his people!' I heard them not—I felt—I saw—nothing—but the face of the Redeemer!

The old man paused, deeply moved; and the youth felt his blood creep, and his hair stir. He was in the presence of one who had known the Mystery of Death!

"Till that time," renewed the widow's son, "I had been as other men, thoughtless—not abandoned;—taking no heed, but of the things of love and life; nay, I had inclined to the gloomy faith of the earthly Sadducee! But, raised from the dead, from awful and desert dreams, that
these lips never dare reveal—recalled upon earth, to testify the powers of Heaven—once more mortal, the witness of immortality; I drew a new being from the grave. Oh! fated—O, lost Jerusalem!—Him, from whom came my life, I beheld adjudged to the agonised and parching death!—Far in the mighty crowd, I saw the light rest and glimmer over the cross; I heard the hooting mob—I cried aloud—I raved—I threatened—none heeded me—I was lost in the whirl and the roar of thousands! But even then, in my agony and his own, methought, the glazing eye of the Son of Man sought me out—his lip smiled, as when it conquered death—it hushed me, and I became calm. He who defied the grave for another,—what was the grave to Him? The sun shone aslant the pale and powerful features, and then died away! Darkness fell over the earth; how long it endured, I know not. A loud cry came through the gloom—a sharp and bitter cry!—and all was silent.

"But who shall tell the terrors of the night? I walked along the city—the earth reeled to and
fro, and the houses trembled to their base—the living had deserted the streets, but not the Dead: through the gloom I saw them glide—the dim and ghastly shapes, in the cerements of the grave, —with horror and woe, and warning on their unmoving lips and lightless eyes!—they swept by me, as I passed—they glared upon me—I had been their brother; and they bowed their heads in recognition: —they had risen, to tell the living, that the dead can rise!"

Again the old man paused—and, when he resumed, it was in a calmer tone.

"From that night I resigned all earthly thought but that of serving Him. A preacher and a pilgrim I have traversed the remotest corners of the earth, proclaiming his divinity, and bringing new converts to his fold. I come as the wind, and, as the wind, depart. Sowing, as the wind sows, the seeds that enrich the world.

"Son, on earth we shall meet no more. Forget not this hour—what are the pleasures and the pomps of life? As the lamp shines, life glitters for an hour; but the soul's light is the
star that burns for ever, in the heart of illimitable space."

It was then that their converse fell upon the general and sublime doctrines of immortality; it soothed and elevated the young mind of the convert, which yet clung to many of the damps and shadows of that cell of faith which he had so lately left—it was the air of heaven breathing on the prisoner released at last. There was a strong and marked distinction between the Christianity of the old man and that of Olinthus; that of the first was more soft, more gentle, more divine. The hard heroism of Olinthus had something in it fierce and intolerant—it was necessary to the part he was doomed to play—it had in it more of the courage of the martyr, than the charity of the saint. It aroused, it excited, it neried, rather than subdued and softened. But the whole heart of that divine old man was bathed in love; the smile of the Deity had burned away from it the leaven of earthlier and coarser passions, and left to the energy of the hero all the meekness of the child.
"And now," said he, rising at length, as the sun's last ray died in the west; "now, in the cool of twilight, I pursue my way towards the Imperial Rome. There yet dwell some holy men, who like me have beheld the face of Christ; and them would I see before I die."

"But the night is chill for thine age, my father, and the way is long, and the robber haunts it; rest thee till to-morrow."

"Kind son, what is there in this scrip to tempt the robber?—and the Night and the Solitude—these make the ladder round which angels cluster, and beneath which my spirit can dream of God. Oh! none can know what the Pilgrim feels as he walks on his holy course; nursing no fear, and foreseeing no danger—for God is with him! He hears the winds murmur glad tidings;—the woods sleep in the shadow of Almighty wings;—the stars are the Scriptures of Heaven—the token of love—and the witness of immortality. Night is the Pilgrim's day."

With these words the old man pressed Apæcides to his breast, and taking up his staff and scrip, the
dog bounded cheerily before him, and with slow steps and downcast eyes, he went his way.

The convert stood watching his bended form, till the trees shut the last glimpse from his view; and then, as the stars broke forth, he woke from his musings with a start, reminded of his appointment with Olinthus.
CHAPTER V.

THE PHILTER—ITS EFFECT.

When Glaucus arrived at his own home, he found Nydia seated under the portico of his garden. In fact she had sought his house in the mere chance that he might return at an early hour: anxious, fearful, anticipative, she resolved upon seizing the earliest opportunity of availing herself of the love-charm, while at the same time she half hoped the opportunity might be deferred. Strange mixture of boldness and timidity, that when young we have all experienced: how often in our morning walks, or in the nightly crowd, in our first youth, have all of us at once sought and shunned the mistress of our heart,—gone miles in the hope of whispering one sweet word, and returned home, the word unsaid! Heaven be praised that we husband
our time better after a little experience, and when we have less of youth and of love to throw away!

It was then, in that fearful burning mood, her heart beating, her cheek flushing, that Nydia awaited the possibility of Glaucus's return before the night. He crossed the portico just as the first stars began to rise, and the heaven above had assumed its most purple robe.

"Ho, my child, wait you for me!"

"Nay; I have been tending the flowers, and did but linger a little while to rest myself."

"It has been warm," said Glaucus, placing himself also on one of the seats beneath the colonnade.

"Very."

"Wilt thou summon Davus? the wine I have drunk heats me, and I long for some cooling drink."

Here at once, suddenly and unexpectedly, the very opportunity that Nydia awaited presented itself; of himself, at his own free choice, he afforded to her that occasion. She breathed quick—"I will prepare for you myself," said she, "the sum-
mer draught that Ione loves, of honey and weak wine cooled in snow."

"Thanks," said the unconscious Glaucus; "if Ione loves it, enough; it would be grateful were it poison."

Nydia frowned, and then smiled; she withdrew for a few moments, and returned with the bowl containing the beverage. Glaucus took it from her hand. What would not Nydia have given then for one hour's prerogative of sight, to have watched her hopes ripening to effect;—to have seen the first dawn of the imagined love;—to have worshipped with more than Persian adoration the rising of that sun which her credulous soul believed was to break upon her dreary night! Far different, as she stood then and there, were the thoughts, the emotions of the blind girl, from those of the vain Pompeian under a similar suspense. In the last, what poor and frivolous passions had made up the daring whole! What petty pique, what small revenge, what expectation of a paltry triumph, had swelled the attributes of that sentiment she dignified with the name of love! but in the wild
heart of the Thessalian all was pure, uncontrolled, unmodified passion; — erring — unwomanly — frenzied — but debased by no elements of a more sordid feeling. Filled with love as with life itself, how could she resist the occasion of winning love in return!

She leant for support against the wall, and her face, before so flushed, was now white as snow, and with her delicate hands clasped convulsively together, her lips apart — her eyes on the ground — she waited the next words Glaucus should utter.

Glaucus had raised the cup to his lips, he had already drained about a fourth of its contents, when, his eye suddenly glancing upon the face of Nydia, he was so forcibly struck by its alteration, by its intense and painful and strange expression, that he paused abruptly, and still holding the cup near his lips, exclaimed —

"Why, Nydia, Nydia, I say, art thou ill, or in pain? nay, thy face speaks for thee. What ails my poor child." As he spoke, he put down the cup and rose from his seat to approach her,—when
a sudden pang shot coldly to his heart, and was followed by a wild, confused, dizzy sensation at the brain. The floor seemed to glide from under him—his feet seemed to move on air—a mighty and unearthly gladness rushed upon his spirit—he felt too buoyant for the earth—he longed for wings, nay, it seemed, in the buoyancy of his new existence, as if he possessed them. He burst involuntarily into a loud and thrilling laugh. He clapped his hands—he bounded aloft—he was as a Pytho-ness inspired; suddenly as it came, this preternatural transport passed, though only partially, away. He now felt his blood rushing loudly and rapidly through his veins; it seemed to swell—to exult—to leap along, as a stream that has burst its bounds, and hurries to the ocean. It throbbed in his ear with a mighty sound—he felt it mount to his brow—he felt the veins in the temples stretch and swell as if they could no longer contain the violent and increasing tide—then a kind of darkness fell over his eyes—darkness, but not entire; for through the dim shade, he saw the opposite walls glow out, and the figures painted thereon seemed, ghost-like.
to creep and glide. What was most strange, he did not feel himself ill—he did not sink or quail beneath the dread frenzy that was gathering over him. The novelty of the feelings seemed bright and vivid—he felt as if a younger health had been infused into his frame. He was gliding on to madness,—and he knew it not!

Nydia had not answered his first question—she had not been able to reply—his wild and fearful laugh had roused her from her passionate suspense: she could not see his fierce gesture—she could not mark his reeling and unsteady step as he paced unconsciously to and fro; but she heard the broken words, incoherent, insane, that gushed from his lips. She became terrified and appalled—she hastened to him, feeling with her arms until she touched his knees, and then falling on the ground she embraced them, weeping with terror and excitation.

"Oh, speak to me! speak! you do not hate me?—speak, speak!"

"By the bright goddess, a beautiful land, this
Cyprus! Ho! how they fill us with wine instead of blood! now they open the veins of the Faun yonder, to show how it bubbles and sparkles. Come hither, jolly old god! thou ridest on a goat, eh!—what long silky hair he has! He is worth all the coursers of Parthia. But a word with thee—this wine of thine is too strong for us mortals. Oh, beautiful! the boughs are at rest! the green waves of the forest have caught the Zephyr and drowned him! Not a breath stirs the leaves—and I view the Dreams sleeping with folded wings upon the motionless oak; and I look beyond, and I see a blue stream sparkle in the silent noon; a fountain—a fountain springing aloft. Ah! my fount, thou wilt not put out the rays of my Grecian sun, though thou triest ever so hard with thy nimble and silver arms. And now what form steals yonder through the boughs? she glides like a moon-beam!—she has a garland of oak-leaves on her head. In her hand is a vase upturned, from which she pours pink and tiny shells and sparkling waters. Oh! look on yon face! Man never before saw its like.
See! we are alone; only I and she in the wide forest. There is no smile upon her lips—she moves grave and sweetly sad. Ha! fly, it is a nymph—it is one of the wild Napææ. * Whoever sees her becomes mad—fly! see, she discovers me."

"Oh! Glaucus, Glaucus! do you not know me? rave not so wildly, or thou wilt kill me with a word."

A new change seemed now to operate upon the jarring and disordered mind of the unfortunate Athenian. He put his hands upon Nydia's silken hair; he smoothed the locks—he looked wistfully upon her face, and then, as in the broken chain of thought one or two links were yet unsevered, it seemed that her countenance brought its associations of lone; and with that remembrance, his madness became yet more powerful, and it was swayed and tinged by passion, as he burst forth—

"I swear by Venus, by Diana, and by Juno, that though I have now the world on my shoulders,

* Presiding over hills and woods.
as my countryman Hercules, (ah, dull Rome! whoever was truly great was of Greece; why, you would be godless if it were not for us!)—I say, as my countryman Hercules had before me, I would let it fall into chaos for one smile from Ione. Ah, Beautiful,—Adored,” he added in a voice inexpressibly fond and plaintive, “thou lovest me not. Thou art unkind to me. The Egyptian hath belied me to thee—thou knowest not what hours I have spent beneath thy casement—thou knowest not how I have out-watched the stars, thinking thou, my sun, wouldst rise at last,—and thou lovest me not, thou forsakest me! Oh! do not leave me now: I feel that my life will not be long, let me gaze on thee at least unto the last. I am of the bright land of thy fathers— I have trod the heights of Phyle— I have gathered the hyacinth and rose amidst the olive groves of Ilyssus. Thou shouldst not desert me, for thy fathers were brothers to my own. And they say this land is lovely, and these climes serene, but I will bear thee with me—Ho! dark form, why risest thou like a cloud between me and mine? Death sits calmly dread
upon thy brow — on thy lip is the smile that slays; thy name is Orcus, but on earth men call thee Arbaces. See, I know thee; fly, dim shadow, thy spells avail not."

"Glaucus! Glaucus!" murmured Nydia, releasing her hold and falling, beneath the excitement of her dismay, remorse, and anguish, insensible on the floor.

"Who calls?" said he, in a loud voice; "Ione, it is she! they have borne her off—we will save her — where is my stilus? Ha, I have it! I come, Ione, to thy rescue! I come! I come!"

So saying, the Athenian with one bound passed the portico, he traversed the house, and rushed with swift but vacillating steps, and muttering audibly to himself, down the star-lit streets. The direful potion burnt like fire in his veins, for its effect was made, perhaps, still more sudden from the wine he had drunk previously. Used to the excesses of nocturnal revellers, the citizens, with smiles and winks, gave way to his reeling steps; they naturally imagined him under the influence of the Bromian god, not vainly worshipped at Pompeii;
but they who looked twice upon his face, started in a nameless fear, and the smile withered from their lips. He passed the more populous streets—and, pursuing mechanically the way to Ione's house, he traversed a more deserted quarter, and entered now the lonely grove of Cybele, in which Apaecides had held his interview with Olinthus.
CHAPTER VI.

A RE-UNION OF DIFFERENT ACTORS. — STREAMS THAT FLOWED APPARENTLY APART RUSH INTO ONE GULF.

Impatient to learn whether the fell drug had yet been administered by Julia to his hated rival, and with what effect, Arbaces resolved, as the evening came on, to seek her house, and satisfy his suspense. It was customary, as I have before said, for men at that time to carry abroad with them the tablets and the stilus attached to their girdle; and with the girdle they were put off when at home. In fact, under the appearance of a literary instrument, the Romans carried about with them in that same stilus a very sharp and formidable weapon. It was with his stilus* that

* From this stilus may be derived the stiletto of the Italians.
Cassius stabbed Caesar in the senate-house. Indulging then his girdle and his cloak, Arbaces left his house, supporting his steps, which were still somewhat feeble, (though hope and vengeance had conspired greatly, with his own medical science, which was profound, to restore his natural strength) by his long staff, Arbaces took his way to the villa of Diomed.

And beautiful is the moonlight of the South! In those climes, the night so quickly glides into the day, that twilight scarcely makes a bridge between them. One moment of darker purple in the sky—of a thousand rose-hues in the water—of shade half victorious over light—and then burst forth at once the countless stars—the moon is up—Night has resumed her reign!

Brightly then, and softly bright, fell the moon-beams over the antique grove consecrated to Cybele—the stately trees, whose date went beyond tradition, cast their long shadows over the soil, while through the openings in their boughs the stars shone, still and frequent. The whiteness of the small sacellum in the centre of the grove.
amidst the dark foliage, had in it something abrupt and startling; it recalled at once the purpose to which the wood was consecrated,—its holiness and solemnity.

With a swift and stealthy pace, Calenus, gliding under the shade of the trees, reached the chapel, and gently putting back the boughs that completely closed around its rear, settled himself in his concealment; a concealment so complete, what with the fane in front and the trees behind, that no unsuspicious passenger could possibly have detected him. Again, all was apparently solitary in the grove; afar off you heard faintly the voices of some noisier revellers, or the music that played cheerily to the groups that then, as now in those climates, during the nights of summer, lingered in the streets, and enjoyed, in the fresh air and the liquid moonlight, a milder day.

From the height on which the grove was placed, you saw through the intervals of the trees, the broad and purple sea, rippling in the distance, the white villas of Stabiae in the curving shore, and the dim Lactianian hills, mingling with the
delicious sky. Presently, the tall figure of Arbaces, in his way to the house of Diomed, entered the extreme end of the grove; and at the same instant Apæcides, also bound to his appointment with Olinthus, crossed the Egyptian's path.

"Hem! Apæcides," said Arbaces, recognising the priest at a glance; "when last we met, you were my foe. I have wished since then to see you, for I would have thee still my pupil and my friend."

Apæcides started at the voice of the Egyptian; and halting abruptly, gazed upon him with a countenance full of contending, bitter, and scornful emotions.

"Villain and impostor!" said he at length; "thou hast recovered then from the jaws of the grave. But think not again to weave around me thy guilty meshes. — Retiarius, I am armed against thee!"

"Hush!" said Arbaces, in a very low voice—but his pride, which in that descendant of kings was great, betrayed the wound it received from the insulting epithets of the priest, in the quiver of his lip and the flush of his tawny brow.
"Hush! more low! thou mayest be overheard, and if other ears than mine had drunk those sounds—why—"

"Dost thou threaten?—what if the whole city had heard me?—"

"The manes of my ancestors would not have suffered me to forgive thee. But, hold, and hear me. Thou art enraged that I would have offered violence to thy sister—Nay, peace, peace, but one instant I pray thee. Thou art right, it was the frenzy of passion and of jealousy—I have repented bitterly of my madness. Forgive me; I who never implored pardon of living man, beseech thee now to forgive me. Nay, I will atone the insult— I ask thy sister in marriage;—start not, consider,—what is the alliance of yon holyday Greek compared to mine? Wealth unbounded—birth that in its far antiquity leaves your Greek and Roman names the things of yesterday—science—but that thou knowest! Give me thy sister, and my whole life shall atone a moment's error."

"Egyptian, were even I to consent, my sister loathes the very air thou breathest; but I have
my own wrongs to forgive—I may pardon thee that thou hast made me a tool to thy deceits, but never that thou hast seduced me to become the abettor of thy vices—a polluted and a perjured man. Tremble!—even now I prepare the hour in which thou and thy false gods shall be unveiled. Thy lewd and Circean life shall be dragged to day—thy mumming oracles disclosed—the fane of the idol Isis shall be a by-word and a scorn—the royal name of Arbaces a mark for the hooting hisses of execration. Tremble!"

The flush on the Egyptian's brow was succeeded by a livid paleness. He looked behind, before, around, to feel assured that none was by, and then he fixed his dark and dilating eye on the priest, with such a gaze of wrath and menace, that one, perhaps, less supported than Apæcides by the fervent daring of a divine zeal, could not have faced with unflinching look that lowering aspect. As it was, however, the young convert met it unmoved, and returned it with an eye of proud defiance.

"Apæcides," said the Egyptian, in a tremulous
and inward tone, "beware! What is it thou wouldst meditate? speakest thou—reflect, pause, before thou repliest—from the hasty influences of wrath, as yet divining no settled purpose, or from some fixed design?"

"I speak from the inspiration of the True God, whose servant I now am," answered the Christian boldly; "and in the knowledge that by his grace human courage has already fixed the date of thy hypocrisy and thy demon's worship; ere thrice the sun has dawned, thou wilt know all! Dark sorcerer, tremble, and farewell!"

All the fierce and lurid passions which he inherited from his nation and his clime, at all times but ill concealed beneath the blandness of craft and the coldness of philosophy, were released in the breast of the Egyptian. Rapidly one thought chased another; he saw before him an obstinate barrier to even a lawful alliance with Ione—the fellow-champion of Glauceus in the struggle which had baffled his designs—the reviler of his name—the threatened desecrator of the goddess he served while he disbelieved—the avowed and approaching revealer of
his own impostures and vices. His love, his repute, nay, his very life might be in danger—the day and hour seemed even to have been fixed for some design against him. He knew by the words of the convert that Apæcides had adopted the Christian faith; he knew the indomitable zeal which led on the proselytes of that creed. Such was his enemy; he grasped his stilus—that enemy was in his power! They were now before the chapel; one hasty glance once more he cast around; he saw none near, silence and solitude alike tempted him.

"Die, then, in thy rashness," he muttered; "away obstacle to my rushing fates!"

And just as the young Christian had turned to depart, Arbaces raised his hand high over the left shoulder of Apæcides, and plunged his sharp weapon twice into his breast.

Apæcides fell to the ground pierced to the heart,—he fell mute, without even a groan, at the very base of the sacred chapel.

Arbaces gazed upon him for a moment with the fierce animal joy of conquest over a foe. But pre-
sently the full sense of the danger to which he was exposed flashed upon him; he wiped his weapon carefully in the long grass, and with the very garments of his victim; drew his cloak round him, and was about to depart, when he saw, coming up the path, right before him, the figure of a young man, whose steps reeled and vacillated strangely as he advanced; the quiet moonlight streamed full upon his face, which seemed by the whitening ray colourless as marble. The Egyptian recognised the face and form of Glaucus. The unfortunate and benighted Greek was chanting a disconnected and mad song, composed from snatches of hymns and sacred odes, all jarringly woven together.

"Ha!" thought the Egyptian, instantaneously divining his state and its terrible cause; "so, then, the hell-draught works, and Destiny hath sent thee hither to crush two of my foes at once!"

Quickly, even ere this thought occurred to him, he had withdrawn on one side of the chapel, and concealed himself amongst the boughs; from that lurking-place he watched, as a tiger in its lair.
the advance of his second victim. He noted the wandering and restless fire in the bright and beautiful eyes of the Athenian; the convulsions that distorted his statue-like features and writhed his hueless lip. He saw that the Greek was utterly deprived of reason. Nevertheless, as Glaucus came up to the dead body of Apaecides, from which the dark red stream flowed slowly over the grass, so strange and ghastly a spectacle could not fail to arrest him, benighted and erring as was his glimmering sense. He paused, placed his hand to his brow, as if to collect himself, and then saying—

"What, ho! Endymion, sleepest thou so soundly? what has the Moon said to thee? thou makest me jealous;—it is time to wake,"—he stooped down with the intention of lifting up the body.

Forgetting—feeling not—his own debility, the Egyptian sprung from his hiding-place, and as the Greek bent, struck him forcibly to the ground, over the very body of the Christian; then, raising his powerful voice to its loudest pitch, he shouted—

"Ho, citizens, ho!—help me!—run hither—
hither! A murder—a murder before your very fane! Help, or the murderer escapes!" As he spoke he placed his foot on the breast of Glaucus; an idle and superfluous precaution, for the potion operating with the fall, the Greek lay there motionless and insensible, save that now and then his lips gave vent to some vague and raving sounds.

As he there stood awaiting the coming of those his voice still continued to summon, perhaps some remorse, some compunctious visitings—for despite his crimes he was human—haunted the breast of the Egyptian; the defenceless state of Glaucus—his wandering words—his riven reason, smote him even more than the death of Apæcides, and he said, half audibly, to himself—

"Poor clay—poor human reason! where is the soul now? I could spare thee, O my rival—rival never more! but destiny must be obeyed, my safety demands thy sacrifice;" with that, as if to drown compunction, he shouted yet more loudly, and drawing from the girdle of Glaucus the stilus it contained, he steeped it in the blood of the murdered man, and laid it beside the corpse.
And now, fast and breathless, several of the citizens came thronging to the place, some with torches, which the moon rendered unnecessary, but which flared red and tremulously against the darkness of the trees; they surrounded the spot.

"Lift up you corpse," said the Egyptian, "and guard well the murderer."

They raised the body, and great was their horror and sacred indignation to discover in that lifeless clay a priest of the adored and venerable Isis; but still greater, perhaps, was their surprise, when they found the accused in the brilliant and admired Athenian.

"Glaucus!" cried the bystanders, with one accord; "is it even credible!"

"I would sooner," whispered one man to his neighbour, "believe it to be the Egyptian himself."

Here a centurion thrust himself into the gathering crowd with an air of authority.

"How! blood spilt! who the murderer?"

The bystanders pointed to Glaucus.
THE LAST DAYS OF

"He—by Mars, he has rather the air of being the victim! Who accuses him?"

"I," said Arbaces, drawing himself up haughtily, and the jewels which adorned his dress flashing in the eyes of the soldier, instantly convinced that worthy warrior of the witness's respectability.

"Pardon me—your name?" said he.

"Arbaces; it is well known methinks in Pompeii. Passing through the grove, I beheld before me the Greek and the priest in earnest conversation. I was struck by the reeling motions of the first, his violent gestures, and the loudness of his voice; he seemed to me either drunk or mad. Suddenly I saw him raise his stilus—I darted forward—too late to arrest the blow. He had twice stabbed his victim, and was bending over him, when, in my horror and indignation, I struck the murderer to the ground. He fell without a struggle, which makes me yet more suspect that he was not altogether in his senses when the crime was perpetrated; for, recently recovered from a severe illness, my blow was comparatively feeble, and the frame of Glauceus, as you see, is strong and youthful."
His eyes are open now—his lips move," said the soldier. "Speak, prisoner, what sayest thou to the charge?"

"The charge—ha—ha! Why it was merrily done—when the old hag set her serpent at me, and Hecate stood by laughing from ear to ear—what could I do? But I am ill—I faint—the serpent's fiery tongue hath bitten me. Bear me to bed, and send for your physician; old Æsculapius himself will attend me if you let him know that I am Greek. Oh, mercy—mercy—I burn!—marrow and brain, I burn!"

And with a thrilling and fierce groan the Athenian fell back in the arms of the bystanders.

"He raves," said the officer compassionately, "and in his delirium he has struck the priest. Hath any one present seen him to-day."

"I," said one of the spectators, "beheld him in the morning. He passed my shop and accosted me. He seemed well and sane as the stoutest of us."

"And I saw him half an hour ago," said another, "passing up the streets, muttering to himself
with strange gestures, and just as the Egyptian had described."

"A corroboration of the witness! it must be too true. He must at all events to the praetor; a pity, so young and so rich; but the crime is dreadful: a priest of Isis in his very robes too, and at the base itself of our most ancient chapel!"

At these words the crowd were reminded more forcibly, than in their excitement and curiosity they had yet been, of the heinousness of the sacrilege. They shuddered in pious horror.

"No wonder the earth has quaked," said one. "when it held such a monster!"

"Away with him to prison—away!" cried they all.

And one solitary voice was heard shrilly and joyously above the rest,

"The beasts will not want a gladiator now.

"Ho—ho! for the merry, merry show!"

It was the voice of the young woman, whose conversation with Medon has been repeated.

"True — true — it chances in season for the Games!" cried several; and at that thought all
pity for the accused seemed vanished. His youth—his beauty—but fitted him better for the purpose of the arena.

"Bring hither some planks—or if at hand, a litter—to bear the dead," said Arbaces; "a priest of Isis ought scarcely to be carried to his temple by vulgar hands, like a butchered gladiator."

At this, the bystanders reverently laid the corpse of Apæcides on the ground, with the face upwards, and some of them went in search of some contrivance to bear the body, untouched by the profane.

It was just at that time that the crowd gave way to right and left as a sturdy form forced itself through, and Olinthus the Christian stood immediately confronting the Egyptian. But his eyes, at first, only rested with inexpressible grief and horror on that gory side and upturned face, on which the agony of violent death yet lingered.

" Murdered!" he said. " Is it thy zeal that has brought thee to this? Have they detected thy
noble purpose, and by death prevented their own shame?"

He turned his head abruptly, and his eyes fell full on the solemn features of the Egyptian.

As he looked, you might see in his face, and even the slight shiver of his frame, the repugnance and aversion which the Christian felt for one whom he knew to be so dangerous and so criminal. It was indeed the gaze of the bird upon the basilisk—so silent was it and so prolonged. But shaking off the sudden chill that had crept over him, Olinthus extended his right arm towards Arbaces, and said in a deep and loud voice—

"Murder hath been done upon this corpse! Where is the murderer! Stand forth, Egyptian! For as the Lord liveth, I believe thou art the man!"

An anxious and perturbed change might for one moment be detected on the dusky features of Arbaces, but it gave way to the frowning expression of indignation and scorn, as, awed and arrested by the suddenness and vehemence of the
charge, the spectators pressed nearer and nearer upon the two more prominent actors.

"I know," said Arbaces proudly, "who is my accuser, and I guess wherefore he thus arraigns me. Men and citizens, know this man for the most bitter of the Nazarenes, if that or Christians be their proper name! What marvel that in his malignity he dares accuse even an Egyptian of the murther of a priest of Egypt!"

"I know him! I know the dog!" shouted several voices. "It is Olinthus the Christian—or rather the Atheist—he denies the gods!"

"Peace! brethren," said Olinthus with dignity, "and hear me! This murdered priest of Isis before his death embraced the Christian faith—he revealed to me the dark sins, the sorceries of yon Egyptian—the mummeries and delusions of the fane of Isis. He was about to declare them publicly. He, a stranger, unoffending, without enemies! who should shed his blood, but one of those who feared his witness?—who might fear that testimony the most?—Arbaces, the Egyptian!"
"You hear him!" said Arbaces, "you hear him! he blasphemes!—Ask him, if he believe in Isis?"

"Do I believe in an evil demon?" returned Olinthus boldly.

A groan and shudder past through the assembly. Nothing daunted—for prepared at every time for peril, and in the present excitement losing all prudence, the Christian continued—

"Back, idolaters! this clay is not for your vain and polluting rites—it is to us—to the followers of Christ, that the last offices due to a Christian, belong. I claim this dust in the name of the great Creator who has recalled the spirit!"

With so solemn and commanding a voice and aspect the Christian spoke these words, that even the crowd forbore to utter aloud the execration of fear and hatred, which in their hearts they conceived. And never, perhaps, since Lucifer and the Archangel contended for the body of the mighty Lawgiver, was there a more striking subject for the painter's genius, than that scene exhibited. The dark trees—the stately fane—the moon full on the corpse of the deceased—the torches tossing wildly
to and fro in the rear—the various faces of the motley audience—the insensible form of the Athenian, supported in the distance: And in the foreground, and, above all,—the forms of Arbaces and the Christian: the first drawn to his full height, far taller than the herd around; his arms folded, his brow knit, his eyes fixed, his lip slightly curled in defiance and disdain. The last, bearing, on a brow worn and furrowed, the majesty of an equal command—the features stern, yet frank—the aspect bold, yet open—the quiet dignity of the whole form impressed with an ineffable earnestness, hushed, as it were, in a solemn sympathy with the awe he himself had created. His left hand pointing to the corpse—his right hand raised to heaven.

The centurion pressed forward again.

"In the first place, hast thou, Olinthus, or whatever be thy name, any proof of the charge thou hast made against Arbaces, beyond thy vague suspicion?"

Olinthus remained silent—the Egyptian laughed contemptuously.
"Dost thou claim the body of a priest of Isis as one of the Nazarene or Christian sect?"

"I do."

"Swear, then, by yon fane, yon statue of Cybele, by yon most ancient sacellum in Pompeii, that the dead man embraced your faith!"

"Vain man! I disown your idols! I abhor your temples! How can I swear by Cybele then?"

"Away! away with the atheist! away! the earth will swallow us, if we suffer these blasphemers in a sacred grove—away with him to death!"

"To the beasts!" added a female voice in the centre of the crowd; "we shall have one a-piece now for the lion and tiger!"

"If, O Nazarene, thou disbelievest in Cybele, which of our gods dost thou own?" resumed the soldier, unmoved by the cries around.

"None!"

"Hark to him! hark!" cried the crowd.

"O vain and blind!" continued the Christian, raising his voice, "can you believe in images of wood and stone? Do you imagine that they have eyes to see, or ears to hear, or hands to help ye?"
Is yon mute thing carved by man's art, a goddess?—hath it made mankind?—alas! by mankind was it made. — Lo! convince yourselves of its nothingness—of your folly!"

And as he spoke, he strode across to the fane, and ere any of the bystanders were aware of his purpose, he, in his compassion or his zeal, struck the statue of wood from its pedestal.

"See!" cried he, "your goddess cannot avenge herself. Is this a thing to worship?"

Farther words were denied to him; so gross and daring a sacrilege, of one too of the most sacred of their places of worship, filled even the most lukewarm with rage and horror. With one accord, the crowd rushed upon him, seized, and but for the interference of the centurion, they would have torn him to pieces.

"Peace!" said the soldier, authoritatively,—
"refer we this insolent blasphemer to the proper tribunal—time has been already wasted. Bear we both the culprits to the magistrates; place the body of the priest on the litter—carry it to his own home."
At this moment a priest of Isis stepped forward. "I claim these remains, according to the custom of the priesthood."

"The flamen be obeyed," said the centurion.

"How is the murderer?"

"Insensible, or asleep."

"Were his crime less, I could pity him—On—"

Arbaces, as he turned, met the eye of that priest of Isis—it was Calenus; and something there was in that glance, so significant and sinister, that the Egyptian muttered to himself—

"Could he have witnessed the deed!"

A girl darted from the crowd, and gazed hard on the face of Olinthus. "By Jupiter, a stout knave!—I say, we shall have a man for the tiger now—one for each beast—huzza!"

"Huzza!" shouted the mob, "a man for the lion, and another for the tiger. What luck! huzza!"

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.