



ROMAN METAL WORKER

## CHAPTER XXXVIII. ASPECTS OF CIVILISATION OF THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES OF THE EMPIRE

### THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

IN the first century of the empire the political circumstances of the world were in a deplorable condition. Power was entirely concentrated in Rome and the legions, and there the most shameful and degrading scenes occurred. The Roman aristocracy which had conquered the world, and which, in fact, alone had a share in the government under the rule of the Cæsars, gave themselves up to saturnalian crimes of the most unbridled kind ever witnessed.

Cæsar and Augustus, when instituting the imperial office, had clearly discerned the needs of their times. The world was politically so corrupt that no other form of government would have been possible. Since Rome had conquered numberless provinces, the ancient constitution, founded on the privileges of the patrician families, who were a species of obstinate and malevolent Tories, could no longer continue. But Augustus in leaving the future to chance had entirely neglected his political duty. Without legitimate heirs, without laws of election, without proper rules of adoption, without constitutional limits, Cæsarism was like an enormous weight on the deck of a ship without ballast. The most terrible upheavals were inevitable.

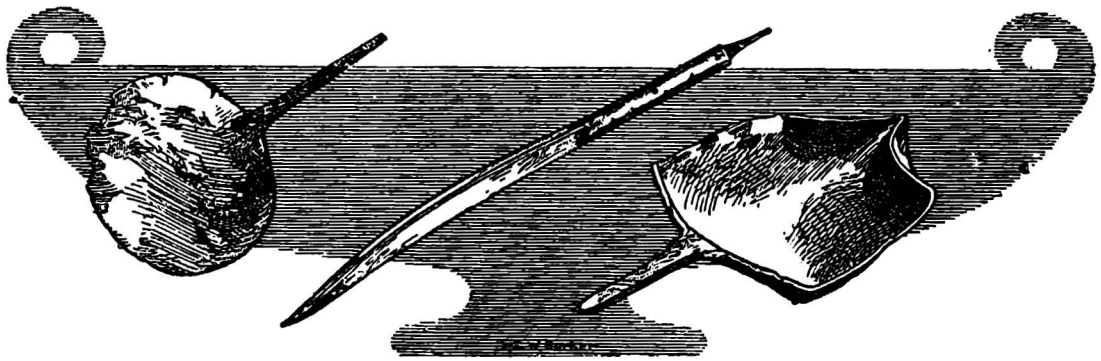
Three times in one century, under Caligula, under Nero, and under Domitian, the greatest power that has ever existed fell into the hands of execrable or extravagant men. The results were seen in horrors which have hardly been surpassed by the monsters of Mongolian dynasties.<sup>1</sup> In the fatal succession of rulers, we are almost reduced to making excuses for Tiberius, who was wholly wicked only towards the end of his life, or Claudius, who was only eccentric, wanting in judgment, and surrounded by evil counsellors.

The most shameful ignominies of the empire, such as the apotheosis of the emperor and his deification when still living, came from the East and more particularly from Egypt, which was then the most corrupt country in the world. The true Roman spirit still existed. Human nobility was far from

[<sup>1</sup> It is well to bear in mind that a more optimistic view of the early empire has its supporters. As has already been pointed out, there are different estimates of such emperors as Tiberius. It is urged, also, that the cruelties and vices of the emperors affected but a limited circle; and that meantime the provinces might be well governed, healthful, and prosperous. It has been alleged, *e.g.*, that Tiberius and Domitian ruled the provinces better than the Antonines.]

being extinct. There was still great traditional pride in some families, who came into power with Nerva, who rendered the age of the Antonines glorious. An epoch during which such absolutely virtuous people lived as, for example, Quintilian, Pliny the Younger, and Tacitus [are reputed to have been], is not an epoch of which one need despair. Outward debauchery did not touch the great foundation of honesty and sobriety which still existed in good Roman society; a few families were still models of good conduct, of devotion to duty, of concord and solid virtue. Admirable wives and admirable sisters were still to be found in the houses of the patricians. Was there ever a more touching fate than that of the chaste and youthful Octavia, daughter of Claudius and wife of Nero, who remained pure in the midst of all this infamy, and was put to death at twenty-two years of age, without ever having known happiness? Women who in inscriptions are called *castissimæ, univiræ* are not rare. Wives accompany their husbands into exile, others share their heroic death. The old Roman simplicity was not entirely lost, children were wisely and carefully educated. The most aristocratic women were known to work in wool; the vanities of the toilet were almost unknown in the best families.

Those excellent statesmen who under Trajan seemed to spring from the ground were not the product of the moment. They had been in office during the preceding reigns, only they had had but little influence, being kept



ROMAN KITCHEN UTENSILS  
(In the British Museum)

in the background by the freedmen and infamous favourites of the emperor. Men of the greatest merit thus occupied high places under Nero. The framework was good, and the rise of the bad emperors to power, although disastrous, did not suffice to change the general order of things and the principles of the state. The empire, far from being decadent, was in all the vigour of a most robust youth. The decadence was to come two hundred years later, and strange to say under far less wicked emperors.

Politically the situation was analogous to that of France, which since the Revolution has never enjoyed a direct succession of its ruling powers, and can pass through perilous fortunes without hopelessly damaging its internal organisation and national force. We naturally compare the first century of the empire to the eighteenth century, an epoch absolutely corrupt if we judge from the collections of anecdotes belonging to the times, and during which certain families nevertheless maintained their austere customs.

Philosophy made alliance with the honest Roman families and offered a noble resistance. The school of stoics produced such grand characters as Cremutius Cordus, Thrasea, Helvidius Priscus, Annæus Cornutus, Musonius Rufus—all admirable upholders of aristocratic virtue. The rigidity and



exaggeration of this school were due to the horrible cruelty of the government of the cæsars. The one idea of a man of real worth was to accustom himself to pain and to prepare for death. Lucan with bad taste, and Persius with superior talent, expressed the highest sentiments of a great spirit. Seneca the philosopher, Pliny the Elder, and Papirius Fabianus kept up a high standard of learning and philosophy. All were not corrupted; there were some shining lights; but too often their only alternative was death. The ignoble portion of humanity from time to time got the upper hand. The spirit of frenzy and of cruelty then burst forth and turned Rome into a veritable hell.

The government, which in Rome was so uncertain, was far better in the provinces, and the shocks which disturbed the capital were hardly felt there. In spite of its faults the Roman administration was far superior to the monarchies and republics which had disappeared through conquest. The reign of sovereign municipalities had passed away many centuries before. The small states had been killed by their egotism, their jealousy, their ignorance, and their disregard of private rights. The old Grecian life, made up of struggles entirely external, no longer satisfied the people. It had been charming in its day; but that brilliant Olympus, a democracy of demi-gods, having lost its freshness, had become hard, unfeeling, vain, superficial, for lack of sincerity and real uprightness. This was the cause which resulted in the Macedonian domination, followed by Roman rule.

The evils of excessive centralization were yet unknown to the empire. Up to the time of Diocletian the towns and provinces were allowed great liberty. In Palestine, Syria, Asia Minor, Lower Armenia, and Thrace there were independent kingdoms under the protection of Rome. These kingdoms only became sources of danger from the time of Caligula onwards, because the great and far-sighted policy which Augustus had traced with regard to them had not been carried out. The free towns—and they were numerous—governed themselves according to their own laws; they had legislative power and administered justice as in a self-governing country; until the third century, municipal decrees were promulgated with the formula, “the senate and the people.” Theatres served not only for scenic pleasures, they were everywhere centres of agitation and public opinion. The favour of the Romans towards the human race was the theme of some adulatory orations which were not, however, devoid of all sincerity. The doctrine of the “Roman peace,” the idea of a great democracy organised under the protection of Rome, was the basis of all thought. A Greek orator displayed vast learning in proving that the glory of Rome ought to be regarded by all the branches of the Hellenic race as a sort of common inheritance. As far as Syria, Asia Minor, and Egypt are concerned, it may be said that the Roman conquest did not destroy a single liberty. Those countries were either indifferent to political life or had never known it.

In spite of the exactions of the governors and the acts of violence inseparable from absolute government, the world, in many ways, had never been so happy. An administration coming from a centre far away was such an advantage, that even the pillage of the prætors of the latter end of the republic did not succeed in rendering it odious. Moreover, the *lex Julia* had greatly limited the field of abuses and extortion. Excepting under Nero, the follies or the cruelty of the emperor did not go beyond the Roman aristocracy and the immediate surroundings of the prince. Never had those who wished to leave politics alone lived in greater peace. The republic of ancient times, where everyone was forced into party quarrels, was not pleasant to live in; supersession and exile were too frequent.

Now it seemed as if the times were ripe for wide propagandism, superior to the quarrels of little towns, to the rivalries of dynasties. Attempts against liberty owed their origin to the independence which still remained to the provinces and communities, rather than to the Roman administration. In those conquered countries where political needs had not existed for several centuries, and where the people were deprived only of the power of tearing each other to pieces by continual warfare, the empire was an era of prosperity and welfare until then unknown and, we may add without paradox, of liberty. On the one hand the freedom of trade, and industry, and that personal liberty of which the Greek had no idea, became possible. On the other hand the freedom which consists in liberty of opinion could only be benefited by the new régime.

This liberty always gains in dealing with kings and princes more than in dealing with a jealous and narrow-minded middle class. The Greek republics had no such liberty of opinion. The Greeks achieved great things without it, thanks to the unequalled power of their genius, but for all that, Athens was actually under an inquisition. The inquisitor was the archon, the holy office was the royal portico where charges of impiety were tried. Accusations of this nature were very frequent — it was the favourite theme of Attic orators. Not only philosophical offences, such as denying God or providence, but the slightest offence against the municipal doctrines, preaching a strange religion, the most puerile omissions of the scrupulous laws pertaining to the mysteries, were crimes punished with death. The gods whom Aristophanes scoffed at on the stage could sometimes slay. They slew Socrates, they all but slew Alcibiades; Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Theodorus the atheist, Diagoras of Melos, Prodicus of Ceos, Stilpo, Aristotle, Theophrastus, Aspasia, Euripides, were more or less seriously threatened.

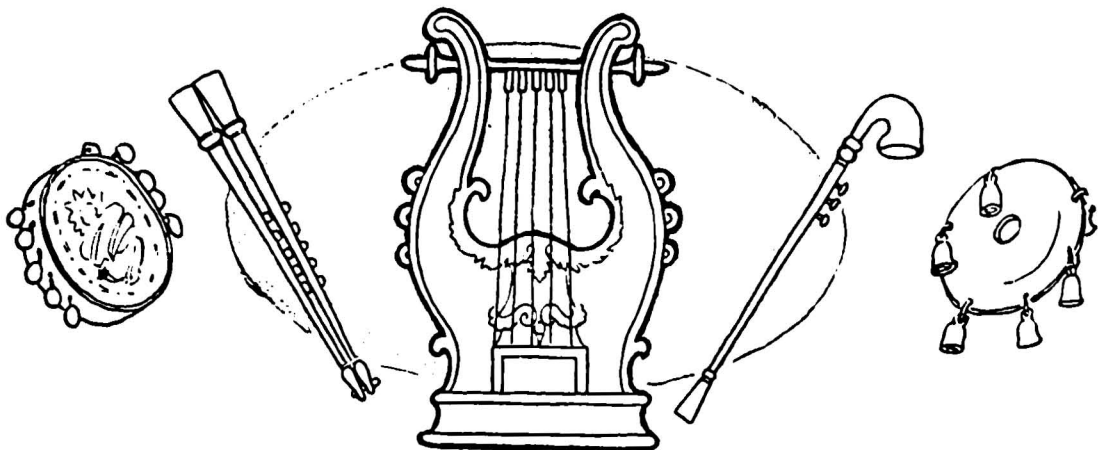
Liberty of thought was, in fact, the fruit of the kingdoms which sprang from the Macedonian conquest. Attalus and Ptolemy were the first to give to thinkers a liberty which none of the old republics had ever offered them. The Roman Empire continued on the same lines. There existed, under the empire, more than one severe law against philosophers, but that was on account of their meddling in politics. One might look in vain, in the collection of Roman laws previous to Constantine, for a passage against liberty of thought, or in the history of the emperors for a lawsuit about abstract doctrines. Not a scholar was disturbed. Men who would have been burned in the Middle Ages, such as Galen, Lucian, Plotinus, lived peacefully, protected by the law.

The empire inaugurated a period of liberty, in the sense that it abolished absolute government in families, towns, and tribes, and replaced or modified such governments by that of the state. Absolute power is even more vexatious than usual when it exercises its power in a narrower circle. The ancient republics and feudalism tyrannised over the individual more than the state has ever done. Granted that the Roman Empire, at certain epochs, cruelly persecuted Christianity, at least it did not kill it. The republics would have made it quite impossible; Judaism, if it had not felt the pressure of Roman authority, would have sufficed to crush it. It was the Roman magistrates who prevented the Pharisees from destroying Christianity.

A broad idea of universal brotherhood, the outcome for the most part of stoicism, and a kind of general sentiment of humanity were the fruit of the less narrow form of government, and of the less circumscribed education to which the individual was subjected. A new era and new worlds were dreamed of. The public wealth was great, and, in spite of the imperfections

of the economic doctrines of the times, comfort was widespread. Manners were not what they are often imagined to be. In Rome, certainly, vice vaunted itself with revolting cynicism. Theatres, above all, had introduced horrible depravity; certain countries, such as Egypt, had also fallen to the lowest depths. But in the greater number of the provinces there existed a middle class, amongst whom kindness, conjugal fidelity, domestic virtue, and uprightness were sufficiently common.

Does there exist a more charming and ideal picture of family life in the world of the honest middle class of small towns than that described by Plutarch? What good nature, what peaceful habits, what chaste and amiable simplicity! Charonea was certainly not the only town where life was so pure and innocent. There still remained in the general customs, even beyond Rome, something cruel, either as a relic of ancient habits, everywhere equally sanguinary, or through the special influence of Roman austerity. But there was improvement in that respect. What sweet and pure sentiment, what an impression of melancholy tenderness there is in the writings of Virgil and of Tibullus! The world was taking shape and losing its ancient rigour, acquiring freedom and moral sensibility. Principles of humanity



ROMAN MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

spread everywhere; equality and abstract ideas of the rights of man were loudly preached by stoicism. Woman, thanks to the system of dowries under Roman law, became more and more her own mistress; rules as to the treatment of slaves were made—Seneca dined with his. Slaves were no longer necessarily the grotesque and evil beings who were introduced into Latin plays to be laughed at, and of whom Cato urges that they should be treated as beasts of burden. Times had changed. The slave was his master's moral equal, and admittedly capable of virtue and fidelity, of which he gave proof. Prejudice concerning nobility of birth was diminishing.

Humane and just laws were passed even under the worst emperors. Tiberius was an able financier; he founded a system of land tenure on a sound basis. Nero introduced into the system of taxation, until then iniquitous and barbarous, improvements which might shame even the present day. The progress made in legislation was considerable, although the death penalty was much too common. Love for the poor, charity, and universal sympathy were accounted virtues.

The theatre was one of the scandals which gave the greatest offence to virtuous people, and one of the first causes to excite the antipathy of Jews and Judaisers of all kinds against the profane civilisation of the time. These

gigantic cauldrons seemed to them sewers in which all the vices simmered. Whilst the front rows were applauding, scenes of the greatest repulsiveness and horror were often taking place on the upper benches. In the provinces gladiatorial combats were only established with difficulty. The Hellenic countries, at least, disapproved of them, and kept for the most part to the ancient Greek exercises. In the East, cruel games always preserved a marked stamp of their Roman origin. The Athenians, wishing to rival the Corinthians, having one day discussed the subject of imitating their barbarous games, a philosopher got up and proposed that first of all the altar of Pity should be overthrown. The horror of the theatre, the stadium, the gymnasium, that is of all public places which were the essential elements of a Greek or Roman town, was thus one of the deepest sentiments of the Christians, and one of those which had the greatest results.

Ancient civilisation was of a public kind; everything took place in the open air, before the assembled citizens; in opposition to ours, where life is private and secluded within the precincts of the home. The theatre had succeeded the agora and the Forum. The anathema hurled against the theatres reflected upon the whole of society. A deep rivalry was established between the church, on the one hand, and the public games on the other. The slave, hunted from the games, took refuge in the church. One cannot sit down in these gloomy arenas, which are always the best preserved remains of an ancient town, without seeing in spirit the struggle between the two classes; here, the poor honest man, seated in the last row, hiding his face and going out indignant, there a philosopher getting up suddenly and reproaching the crowd with its depravity.

These instances were rare in the first century. Nevertheless protestations began to be heard, and the theatre fell into disrepute. The legislation and administration of the empire was still in a state of chaos. The central despotism, municipal and provincial liberty, the caprice of governors, the outrages of independent communities, jostled each other violently. But religious liberty gained in these conflicts. The perfected autocratic government which was established from the time of Trajan was to be far more fatal to the newly born religion than the state of disorder, fertile in surprises, and the absence of a regular police which characterised the time of the cæsars.

The institutions for public relief, founded on the principle that the state has paternal duties towards its subjects, only developed to any great degree from the time of Nerva and Trajan onwards. A few instances of it are however found during the first century. There already existed asylums for children, organised distributions of food to the needy, fixed prices for bread with indemnities to the bakers, precautions for provisioning, premiums and insurance for ship-owners, bread bonuses, which permitted the purchase of corn at a reduced rate. All the emperors, without exception, showed the greatest solicitude for these questions, minor ones, perhaps, but such as at certain epochs took precedence of all others. In remote antiquity, it might be said, the world needed no charity. The world was then young and vigorous, almshouses were useless. The good and simple Homeric ethics, according to which the guest and the beggar come from Jupiter, are the ethics of a robust and gay adolescence.

Greece, in her classical age, enunciated the most exquisite maxims of pity, of beneficence, of humanity, without a latent thought of social anxiety or of melancholy. Man in that epoch was still healthy and happy, evil could not be realised. With respect to mutual assistance the Greeks were far in advance of the Romans. No liberal and benevolent disposition came



from that cruel aristocracy which exercised such oppressive sway during the republic. At the time of which we are writing the colossal fortunes of the aristocracy, luxury, the concentration of population in certain places, and especially the hardness of heart peculiar to the Roman and his aversion to pity, resulted in the birth of "pauperism." The kindness shown by certain emperors towards the riff-raff of Rome only aggravated the danger. Bribery and the *tessera frumentaria* not only encouraged the vice of idleness, but brought no remedy to misery. In this particular, as in many others, the East was really superior to the Western world. The Jews had true charitable institutions. The temple of Egypt seemed to have possessed alms-boxes. The college of monks and nuns of the Serapeum of Memphis was also, in a manner, a charitable institution. The terrible crisis through which mankind was passing in the capital of Europe was little felt in remote lands, where everyday life had remained more simple. The reproach of having poisoned the earth, the comparison of Rome to a courtesan who has poured out to the world the wine of her immorality, was true in many ways. The provinces were better than Rome, or rather the impure elements from all parts, accumulating in Rome as in a sink, had formed an infectious spot where the old Roman virtues were stifled and where good seed germinated slowly.<sup>b</sup>

#### MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

But it is the life of the capital itself that must chiefly claim our attention here. Let us turn from the glowing generalities of Renan to a more specific consideration of some important phases of the everyday life of the people in the great centre to which all roads were said to lead.

In the early days of the empire, Rome was in the crisis of that transitional state which most great capitals have experienced, when a rapid increase in their population and in the transactions of daily life has begun to outstrip the extension of their means of accommodation. The increase of numbers must necessarily multiply the operations of industry, which cross and recross each other in the streets of a great city; and though neither the commerce nor manufactures of Rome were conducted on the scale to which our ideas are accustomed, the retail traffic which passed from hand to hand, and the ordinary affairs of business and pleasure, must have caused an ever increasing stir and circulation among the vast assemblage of human beings collected within its walls. The uninterrupted progress of building operations, and the extension of the suburbs simultaneously with the restoration of the city, must have kept every avenue constantly thronged with wagons and vehicles of all sorts, engaged in the transport of the cumbrous materials employed therein; the crush of these heavy-laden machines, and the portentous swinging of the long beams they carried round the corners of the narrow streets, are mentioned among the worst nuisances and even terrors of the citizen's daily walk.

Neither of the rival institutions of the shop and the bazaar had been developed to any great extent in ancient Rome. A vast number of trades was exercised there by itinerant vendors. The street cries, which have almost ceased within our own memory in London, were rife in the city of the cæsars. The incessant din of these discordant sounds is complained of as making existence intolerable to the poor gentleman who is compelled to reside in the midst of them. The streets were not contrived, nor was it possible generally to adapt them, for the passage of the well-attended litters and

cumbrous carriages of the wealthy, which began to traverse them with the pomp and circumstance of our own aristocratic vehicles of a century since;<sup>1</sup> while the police of the city seems never to have contemplated the removal of the most obvious causes of crowd and obstruction, in the exhibition of gymnastic and gladiatorial spectacles, of conjurors' tricks and the buffoonery of the lowest class of stage-players, in the centre of the most frequented thoroughfares.

The noble never crossed his threshold without a numerous train of clients and retainers; the lower people congregated at the corners of the streets to hear the gossip of the day and discuss the merits of racers and dancers; the slaves hovered over the steam of the open cookshops, or loitered, on their masters' errands, to gaze on the rude drawings or pore over the placards on the walls. The last century had filled the imperial capital with multitudes of foreigners, attracted from curiosity as much as from motives of business to the renowned emporium of the wonders of the world, who added to the number of idlers and loungers in the streets of Rome; men of strange costumes and figures and, when they spoke, of speech still stranger, who, while they gazed around them with awe and admiration, became themselves each a centre of remark to a crowd of wondering citizens. The marked though casual manner in which the throng of the streets is noticed by the Roman writers, shows, in the strongest way, how ordinary a feature it was of life in the city.

The streets, or rather the narrow and winding alleys, of Rome were miserably inadequate to the circulation of the people who thus moved along or thronged them; for the *vici* were no better than lanes or alleys, and there were only two *viæ*, or paved ways, fit for the transport of heavy carriages, the *Sacra* and the *Nova*, in the central parts of the city. The three interior hills, the *Palatine*, the *Aventine*, and the *Capitoline*, were sore impediments to traffic; for no carriages could pass over them, and it may be doubted whether they were even thoroughfares for foot passengers. The occurrence, not unusual, of a fire or an inundation, or the casual fall of a house, must have choked the circulation of the life-blood of the city. The first, indeed, and the last of these, were accidents to which every place of human resort is liable; but the inundations of Rome were a marked and peculiar feature of her ancient existence.

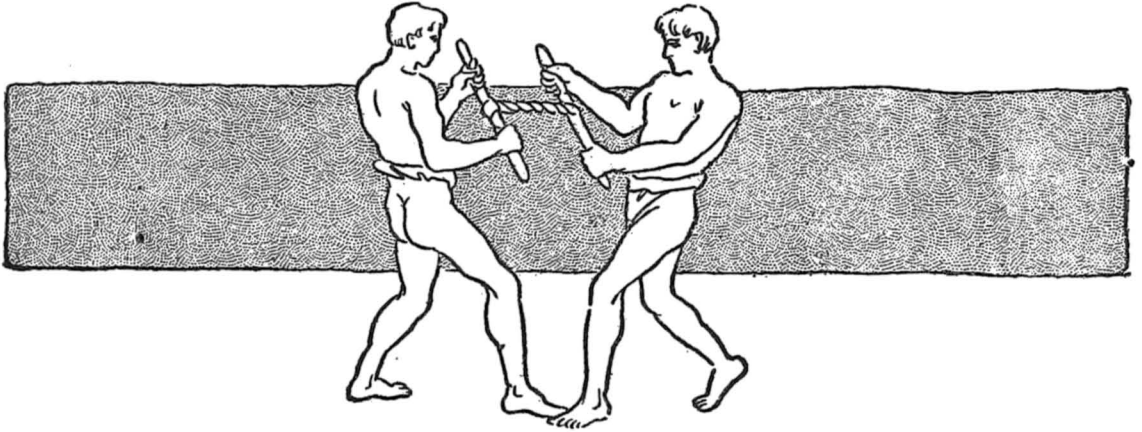
Augustus, with far-seeing economic sagacity, was anxious to employ all men of rank and breeding in practical business, while at the same time he proposed to them his own example as a follower both of the Muses and the Graces. The Roman noble rose ordinarily at daybreak, and received at his *levée* the crowd of clients and retainers who had thronged the steps before his yet closed door from the hours of darkness. A few words of greeting were expected on either side, and then, as the sun mounted the eastern sky, he descended from his elevated mansion into the Forum. He might walk surrounded by the still lingering crowd, or he might be carried in a litter; but to ride in a wheeled vehicle on such occasions was no Roman fashion.<sup>2</sup> Once arrived in the Forum, he was quickly immersed in the

<sup>1</sup> The *Appian way* was the fashionable drive of the Roman nobility.

<sup>2</sup> The Romans rode in carriages on a journey, but rarely for amusement, and never within the city. Even beyond the wall it was considered disreputable to hold the reins one's self, such being the occupation of the slave or hired driver. Juvenal ranks the consul, who creeps out at night to drive his own chariot, with the most degraded of characters: that he should venture to drive by daylight, while still in office, is an excess of turpitude transcending the imagination of the most sarcastic painter of manners as they were. And this was a hundred years later than the age of Augustus. See Juvenal, VIII, 145.

business of the day. He presided as a judge in one of the basilicas, or he appeared himself before the judges as an advocate, a witness, or a suitor. He transacted his private affairs with his banker or notary; he perused the public journal of yesterday, and inquired how his friend's cause had sped before the tribunal of the prætor. At every step he crossed the path of some of the notables of his own class, and the news of the day and interests of the hour were discussed between them with dignified politeness.

Such were the morning occupations of a *dies fastus*, or working day: the holy day had its appropriate occupation in attendance upon the temple services, in offering a prayer for the safety of the emperor and people, in sprinkling frankincense on the altar, and, on occasions of special devotion, appeasing the gods with a sacrifice. But all transactions of business, secular or divine, ceased at once when the voice of the herald on the steps of the Hostilian Curia proclaimed that the shadow of the sun had passed the line on the pavement before him, which marked the hour of midday. Every door was now closed; every citizen, at least in summer, plunged into the dark recesses of his sleeping chamber for the enjoyment of his meridian slumber. The midday siesta terminated, generally speaking, the affairs of the day,



ROMAN WRESTLERS

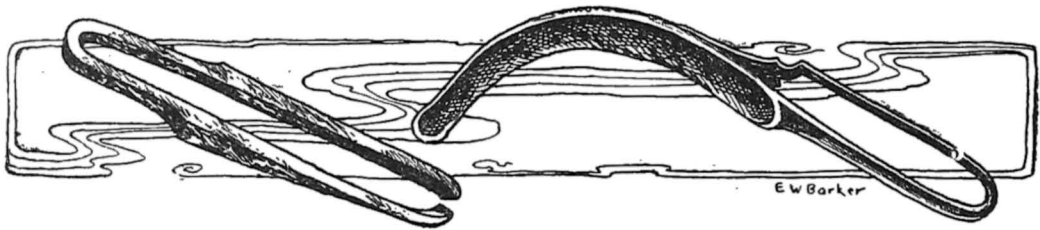
and every man was now released from duty and free to devote himself, on rising again, to relaxation or amusement till the return of night. If the senate had been used sometimes to prolong or renew its sittings, there was a rule that after the tenth hour, or four o'clock, no new business could be brought under its notice, and we are told of Asinius Pollio that he would not even open a letter after that hour.

Meanwhile Rome had risen again to amuse and recreate itself, and the grave man of business had his amusements as well as the idler of the Forum. The exercises of the Field of Mars were the relaxation of the soldiers of the republic; and when the urban populace had withdrawn itself from military service, the traditions of the Campus were still cherished by the upper ranks, and the practice of its mimic war confined, perhaps, exclusively to them. The swimming, running, riding, and javelin-throwing of this public ground became under the emperors a fashion of the nobility: the populace had no taste for such labours, and witnessed perhaps with some surprise the toils to which men voluntarily devoted themselves who possessed slaves to relieve them from the most ordinary exertions of the day. But the young competitors in these athletic contests were not without a throng of spectators: the porticoes which bordered the field were crowded with the elder people and

the women, who shunned the heat of the declining sun; many a private dwelling looked upon it from the opposite side of the river, which was esteemed on that account a desirable place of residence. Augustus had promised his favour to every revival of the gallant customs of antiquity, and all the Roman world that lived in his smiles hastened to the scene of these ancient amusements to gratify the emperor, if not to amuse themselves.

The ancients, it was said, had made choice of the Field of Mars for the scene of their mimic warfare for the convenience of the stream of the Tiber, in which the weary combatants might wash off the sweat and dust, and return to their companions in the full glow of recruited health and vigour. But the youth of Rome in more refined days were not satisfied with these genial ablutions. They resorted to warm and vapour-baths, to the use of perfumes to enhance the luxury of refreshment.

The Romans had, indeed, a universal and extraordinary fondness for the bath, which degenerated in their immoderate use of it into a voluptuous and enervating luxury. The houses of the opulent were always furnished with chambers for this purpose; they had their warm and cold baths as well as their steam apparatus, and the application of oil and perfumes was equally universal among them. From the earliest times there were perhaps places of more general resort, where the plebeian paid a trifling sum for the enjoyment of this luxury; and among other ways of courting popu-



ROMAN BATH IMPLEMENTS

lar favour was that of subsidising the owners of these common baths, and giving the people the free use of them for one or more days. Agrippa carried this mode of popular bribery to excess. Besides the erection of lesser baths to the number of 170, he was the first to construct public establishments of the kind, or *thermæ*, in which the citizens might assemble in large numbers, and combine the pleasure of purification with the exercise of gymnastic sports; while at the same time their tastes might be cultivated by the contemplation of paintings and sculptures, and by listening to song and music.

The Roman, however, had his peculiar notion of personal dignity, and it was not without a feeling of uneasiness that he stripped himself in public below the waist, however accustomed he might be to exhibit his chest and shoulders in the performance of his manly exercises. The baths of Mæcenus and Agrippa remained without rivals for more than one generation, though they were ultimately supplanted by imperial constructions on a far more extensive scale. In the time of Augustus the resort of women to the public baths was forbidden, if indeed such an indecorum had yet been imagined. At a later period, whatever might be the absence of costume among the men, the women at least were partially covered. An ingenious writer has remarked on the effect produced on the spirits by the action of air and water upon the naked body. The unusual lightness and coolness, the disembarassment of the limbs, the elasticity of the circulation, com-



bine to stimulate the sensibility of the nervous system. Hence the thermæ of the great city resounded with the shouts and laughter of the bathers, who, when emerged from the water and resigned to the manipulations of the barbers and perfumers, gazed with voluptuous languor on the brilliant decorations of the halls around them, or listened with charmed ears to the singers and musicians, and even to the poets who presumed upon their helplessness to recite to them their choicest compositions.

#### SUPPERS AND BANQUETS

The bath was a preparation for the *cæna* or supper, which deserves to be described as a national institution; it had from the first its prescriptions and traditions, its laws and usages; it was sanctified by religious observances, and its whole system of etiquette was held as binding as if it had had a religious significance. Under the protection of the gods to whom they poured their libations, friends met together for the recreation equally of mind and body. If the conversation flagged, it was relieved by the aid of minstrels, who recited the gallant deeds of the national heroes; but in the best days of the republic the guests of the noble Roman were men of speech not less than of deeds, men instructed in all the knowledge of their times, and there was more room to fear lest their converse should degenerate into the argumentative and didactic than languish from the want of matter or interest.

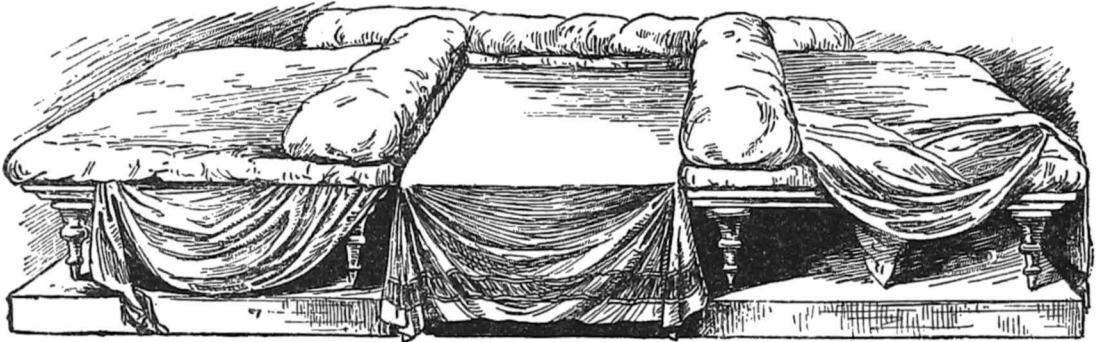
It is probable, however, that the table talk of the higher classes at Rome was peculiarly terse and epigrammatic. Many specimens have been preserved to us of the dry, sententious style which they seem to have cultivated; their remarks on life and manners were commonly conveyed in solemn or caustic aphorisms, and they condemned as undignified and Greekish any superfluous abundance in the use of words. The graceful and flowing conversations of Cicero's dialogues were imitated from Athenian writings, rather than drawn after the types of actual life around him. "People at supper," said Varro, himself not the least sententious of his nation, "should neither be loquacious nor mute; eloquence is for the Forum, silence for the bed chamber." Another rule of the same master of etiquette, that the number of the guests should not exceed nine, the number of the Muses, nor fall short of three, the number of the Graces, was dictated by a sense of the decorous proprieties of the Roman banquet, which the love of ostentation and pride of wealth were now constantly violating.

Luxury and the appetite for excitement were engaged in multiplying occasions of more than ordinary festivity, on which the most rigid of the sumptuary laws allowed a wider license to the expenses of the table. On such high days the numbers of the guests were limited neither by law nor custom; the entertainer, the master or father, as he was called, of the supper, was required to abdicate the ordinary functions of host, and, according to the Greek custom, a king of the wine or arbiter of the drinking, was chosen from among themselves by lot, or for his convivial qualities, by the bacchanalian crew around him.

Our own more polished but not unmanly taste must look with amazement and even disgust at the convivial excesses of the Romans at this period, such as they have themselves represented them to us. Their luxury was a coarse and low imitation of Greek voluptuousness; and for nothing perhaps did the Greeks more despise their rude conquerors than for the manifest failure of their attempts at imitating the vices of their betters.

The Romans vied with one another in the cost rather than the elegance of their banquets, and accumulated with absurd pride the rarest and most expensive viands on their boards, to excite the admiration of their parasites, not to gratify their palates. Cleopatra's famous conceit, in dissolving the pearl in vinegar, may have been the fine satire of an elegant Grecian upon the tasteless extravagance of her barbarian lover. Antony, indeed, though he degraded himself to the manners of a gladiator, was a man of noble birth, and might have imbibed purer tastes at the tables of the men of his own class; but the establishment of the imperial régime thrust into the high places of society a number of low-born upstarts, the sons of the speculators and contractors of the preceding generation, who knew not how to dispense with grace the unbounded wealth their sires had accumulated.

Augustus would fain have restrained these excesses, which shamed the dignified reserve which he wished to characterise the imperial court; he exerted himself by counsel and example, as well as by formal enactments, to educate his people in the simpler tastes of the older time, refined but not yet enervated by the infusion of Hellenic culture.<sup>1</sup> His laws, indeed, shared the fate of the sumptuary regulations of his predecessors, and soon passed from



ROMAN DINNER-TABLE  
(After De Montfaucon)

neglect into oblivion. His example was too austere, perhaps, to be generally followed even by the most sedulous of his own courtiers. He ate but little, and was content with the simplest fare: his bread was of the second quality, at a time when the best was far less fine than ours; and he was satisfied with dining on a few small fishes, curds or cheese, figs and dates, taken at any hour when he had an appetite rather than at regular and formal meals. He was careful, however, to keep a moderately furnished table for his associates, at which he commonly appeared himself, though he was often the last to arrive, and the first to retire from it.

The ordinary arrangement of a Roman supper consisted of three low couches, disposed, horse-shoe fashion, before a low table, at which the attendant slaves could minister without incommoding the recumbent guests. Upon each couch three persons reclined, a mode which had been introduced from Greece, where it had been in use for centuries, though not from heroic times. The Egyptians and Persians sat at meat; so, till the Greeks corrupted them, did also the Jews; the poetical traditions of Hellas represented the gods as sitting at their celestial banquets. The Macedonians also, down to the time of Alexander, are said to have adopted the more ordinary practice; and such was the custom at Rome till a late period. When the men first

<sup>1</sup> The *leges Juliae* allowed two hundred sesterces for a repast on ordinary days, three hundred on holidays, one thousand for special occasions, such as a wedding, etc. Gellius *l.* II, 24.

allowed themselves the indulgence of reclining, they required boys and women to maintain an erect posture, from notions of delicacy ; but in the time of Augustus no such distinction was observed, and the inferiority of the weaker sex was only marked by setting them together on one of the side couches, the place of honour being always in the centre.

Reclined on stuffed and cushioned sofas, leaning on the left elbow, the neck and right arm bare and his sandals removed, the Roman abandoned himself, after the exhaustion of the palæstra and the bath, to all the luxury of languor. His slaves relieved him from every effort, however trifling ; they carved for him,<sup>1</sup> filled his cup for him, supplied every dish for him with such fragmentary viands as he could raise to his mouth with his fingers only, and poured water upon his hands at every remove. Men of genius and learning might amuse themselves with conversation alone ; those for whom this resource was insufficient had many other means of entertainment to resort to. Music and dancing were performed before them ; actors and clowns exhibited in their presence ; dwarfs and hunchbacks were introduced to make sport for them ; Augustus himself sometimes escaped from these miserable vulgarities by playing at dice between the courses ; but the stale wit and practical humour, with which in many houses the banquet seems to have been seasoned, give us a lower idea of the manners of the Roman gentlemen than any perhaps of these trifling pastimes. The vulgarity, however, of the revellers of Rome was far less shocking than their indecency, and nothing perhaps contributed more to break down the sense of dignity and self-respect, the last safeguard of pagan virtue, than the easy familiarity engendered by their attitude at meals.

Some persons, indeed, men no doubt of peculiar assurance and conceit, ventured to startle the voluptuous languor of the supper-table by repeating their own compositions to the captive guests. But for the most part the last sentiments of expiring liberty revolted against this intolerable oppression. The Romans compounded for the inviolate sanctity of their convivial hours by surrendering to the inevitable enemy a solid portion of the day. They resigned themselves to the task of listening as part of the business of the morning.<sup>c</sup>

Banquets of a more pretentious order played a very important part in the life of the Romans of all classes. Anniversaries, religious festivals, the necessity also that those who belonged to the same college should treat common affairs together, or simply the desire of spending life more enjoyably, had multiplied them during the empire to an unlimited degree. Men of distinction especially sought at them the pleasure of conversing freely with their friends. During the endless and capricious conversations politics were not forgotten. What was said after dinner, when the heat of festivity had animated the guests and loosened their tongues was not always favourable to the imperial government. It was during one of these repasts that the prætor Antistius read those insulting verses concerning Nero which led to his banishment. As has just been said, however, the banquet-hall was not the place usually chosen for reading verses or other compositions. Freer scope for this and for the public promulgation of serious ideas in general was found in the so-called "circles."

<sup>1</sup> The structor or carver was an important officer at the sideboard. Carving was even taught as an art, which, as the ancients had no forks (*χειρονομῆν*, to manipulate, was the Greek term for it), must have required grace as well as dexterity. Moreau de Jonnès observes, with some reason, that the invention of the fork, apparently so simple, deserves to be considered difficult and recondite. The Chinese, with their ancient and elaborate civilisation, have failed to attain to it.



## THE CIRCLES

It is not so easy to know what was meant by the circles. To form an exact idea of them, the habits of the ancient nations must be taken into account. In those delightful climates people do not remain shut up all day at home; on the contrary, the day is generally spent out of doors. The inhabitants of Rome when they were not at the theatre or the circus walked about looking at the perpetual sights the Eternal City offered to the curious of all nations. They went about the streets, they stopped in the public squares, seated themselves when they were tired, on the benches and *exedrae*, with which the public places were supplied. These groups of idlers, gathered together to look at something or to talk, were called *circuli*. They collected especially in the Campus Martius and in the Forum, around the quacks selling their remedies, the showmen with their rare or performing animals and those who performed feats of strength. Sometimes a miserable poet, unhappy at having no readers, took advantage of these groups to venture to spout his verses to the assembly. Very often they were gathered together only to listen to those people who posed as persons of importance, and professed to be well informed. There were a great number of such in Rome, and at times of crisis, in those moments of anxiety and expectation when men are anxious to hear what they tremble to know, they acquired much credit. After having listened to them, everybody gave his opinion. Blame or praise was gravely meted out to the generals, plans of campaign were made, and treaties of peace discussed. Towards the end of the republic and during the beginning of the empire these street politicians assembled together at the foot of the tribune reserved for speeches, which won them the name of *subrostrani*. Thence were spread gloomy rumours which alarmed Rome. It was said that the Parthians had invaded Armenia, that the Germani had crossed the Rhine, and the crowd that listened to this sinister news did not always spare the emperor and his ministers, who were not taking strong enough measures for the protection of the frontiers. The emperor had consequently taken steps to have these bold speakers watched. He sent disguised soldiers who mingled in these groups, and reported to their chiefs what they had heard.

These open-air discussions which the spies of the prince could hear, were thus not without danger. Those who did not care to run the risk of being ruined took care to say nothing there; they only spoke out in company in which they thought themselves safe. Besides, opportunities for speaking were not wanting. I do not doubt that there existed in Rome at that time something similar to what is nowadays called society, that is to say, meetings of people, usually unknown to each other, of different origin and fortune, who have no affairs to discuss, no common interests to debate, and who in collecting only seek the pleasure of being together. What is for us the peculiar characteristic of society, that the women freely associate with the men, was often found at Rome also. It was not forbidden to the women to appear at the banquets, even when strangers to the family were invited, and Cornelius Nepos tells us that nobody was astonished to see a Roman taking his wife with him when he went to dine out, a thing which would have greatly shocked the Greeks. Thus repasts were already social assemblies, but it may be safely asserted that there were many others although accounts of them have not reached us. I even believe that as early as the first century, the habit of living together had sometimes given rise to a certain gallantry between the two sexes, hitherto unknown in ancient society, and which at moments might resemble the customs of our seventeenth century. Here



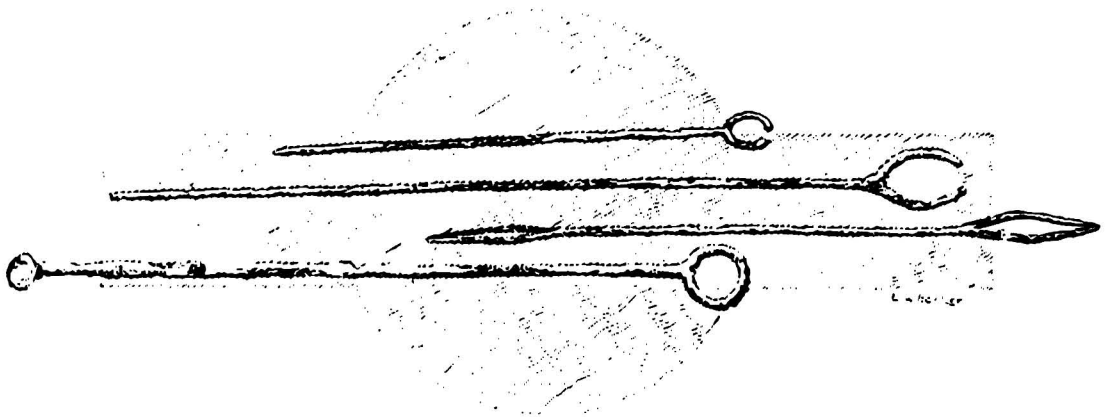
is the portrait which Martial sketches, of a dandy of his time : " A dandy is a man whose hair is nicely parted, who breathes perfumes, who hums between his teeth songs from Spain and Egypt, and knows how to beat time with his hairless arms ; he does not leave the chairs of the ladies during the whole day, he has always something to whisper in their ears, knows all the scandal of Rome, will tell you the name of the woman with whom so-and-so is in love, whose society another person frequents, and knows by heart the genealogy of the horse *Hirpinus* " It seems to me this dandy is not very different from Molière's marquis, and like him he has the habit of not " leaving the chairs of the ladies." There were some people at Rome whose assiduity took them far ; and Tacitus tells us of a consul, a clever man, and a terrible banterer as well, who owed his political rank to the influence of women.

When men are alone together they discuss and discourse ; in presence of ladies they are forced to converse. Seneca described wonderfully well these society conversations where everything was treated and nothing thoroughly discussed, and where one subject followed another so easily. In a few hours the conversation of these clever people wandered far from the starting-point. They talked doubtless much of themselves and other people. The habit of living together encouraged a taste for studying each other, and everyone's passions and characteristics became thoroughly known. In that immense town, which might easily, as Lucan says, have contained the whole world, where so many bitter battles were waged daily to conquer power and wealth, subjects of study were not wanting to these worldly moralists. They collected amusing anecdotes of well-known people and came in the evening to relate them to their friends. Literature was also an absorbing topic. The whole of Roman society liked and cultivated it. As a rule Romans were orators by occupation ; poets simply as a means of distraction. A little poetry flourished in those days which has not lived until our time ; it did not deserve to live, being merely written to charm the elegant society of those days. As in the time of the Abbé Delille, games of dice or chess, fishing and swimming, dancing and music, the art of ordering a dinner or receiving guests, were all sung in verse. However agreeable this poetry might be, it could not always charm, and new subjects had constantly to be thought of to animate the conversation. It was thus that, when literature and scandal had been thoroughly exhausted, politics followed in the natural course.

It is quite conceivable that much raillery was indulged in by these clever people who above everything did not wish to appear fools, and would not take seriously all the comedies that were being played in the senate. Reserved and sharp lookers-on, little disposed towards any kind of enthusiasm, they must have smiled at the excessive flattery with which the prince was overwhelmed, and the deification of the dead or living emperor must have left them quite unmoved. Society generally develops a leaning towards irony ; to know how to lash a neighbour agreeably is doubtless a very estimable quality, and probably it was valued still more when this neighbour was an emperor. A dangerous game it must have been, and raillery aimed so high might have cost dear, but danger was not a sufficient reason for stopping a joke when it was clever and appreciated. " I cannot be sorry," said Seneca, " for those people who would rather lose their heads than a clever saying." In this charming but frivolous society, nobody would miss uttering a clever repartee, even at the risk of losing his head. All had to compensate themselves for the restraint they had gone through in the senate, where they were forced to have smiling faces and to second the praises which were showered upon the prince by his friends. They always left dissatisfied

with themselves and with others, their hearts filled with rage that must find vent. They expressed themselves freely directly they were sure of being amongst friends whom they could trust. In these secret meetings they above all liked to communicate news "which could not be spoken of or listened to without danger."

Rome was then overrun by those bearers of news which newspapers and telegraphy have done away with. We met some just now in the clubs; they were still more numerous in society gatherings. They knew everything that was being talked of in the army and in the provinces, and gave the most precise information on whatever happened. When an important personage died, they related all the circumstances of his death, they said without hesitation who had held the dagger or poured out the poison. Such a number of wicked rumours had never circulated in Rome as since the right of free speech had been denied the people. The authorities in trying to find those who spread the rumours only gave them more credit than they deserved. Besides it is in nature with difficulty to believe what is openly told and to accept without a word what is whispered in the ear. Thus all measures taken by the government were used against itself. Everything became known: everything was believed; reasons were found for everything; and



ROMAN NETTING NEEDLES

(In the British Museum)

the most natural reasons were not those most readily believed; to be listened to it was necessary to imagine strange and improbable explanations for everything.

This opposition took many different forms and changed according to circumstances. Sometimes it was very much on the surface, at others it was hidden in the shade, but bold or timid, visible or hidden, it never died out, and it was this suppleness and obstinacy which composed its strength. Sometimes it dared to reveal itself to all through the medium of a pamphlet; one of those satirical testaments, for example, which it was the fashion to invent for important personages, in which the dead said exactly what they thought of the living. Sometimes it took the form of malicious verses which were whispered around, and after having travelled through every rank of this discontented population ended by being written, by an unknown hand, on the walls of the Forum. "Tiberius disdains wine," they said, "now that he thirsts for blood; he drinks blood to-day as formerly he drank wine." If this audacity seemed too risky, they fell back on malicious allusions which were easily grasped by wide-awake minds. When these allusions were followed up and punished, a few furtive words were exchanged by friends at

meeting. If it became impossible to speak at all there was an eloquence in the people's silence, which showed what they were thinking of, and means were found to render even silence seditious.

#### PUBLIC READINGS

Public lectures or readings became the fashion about the middle of the reign of Augustus — they were introduced by Pollio. They attained rapid success, which is not to be wondered at, taking into account the occupations and tastes of the people of that period. Literature was much liked, and we believe Horace, nearly everyone cherished a belief in his ability to write. It is never customary to keep one's writings for one's self, seeming sin not to let them be known to the public. Unfortunately in antiquity books could not be so easily propagated as to-day. Those of celebrated writers spread quickly enough and went far, but the others ran the risk of remaining in obscurity. Thus the authors, to escape this sad destiny and to make themselves known in some manner, thought of reading their words in public, thereby saving their works from the death which threatened them. If these authors were poor they went where crowds were likely to gather, to the Forum, under the porticoes, in the public baths; they even stopped the passers-by and spouted their poetry to them at the risk of being hissed or torn to pieces, if the people were not in a humour to listen to them. If rich they invited their clients and friends to dinner, treated them well, and took advantage of their gratitude to cause themselves to be listened to and admired. Horace tells us the amusing story of a terrible creditor who gathered together his insolvent victims on the day of reckoning to read to them the very dull works he had written; they had to come or pay. In order to obtain leniency the unfortunate guests had to bend their backs as resigned victims and applaud.

Pollio was not poor enough to have to resort to the public places nor foolish enough to be satisfied with bought praise. He wished particularly to have his tragedies and tales become known. This vain person who had helped Cæsar and Octavius to the first place was not satisfied with the second, and expected to obtain in literature the importance and place that he had failed to get in politics. This gave him the idea of choosing a room in a house, of arranging it like a theatre, that is, with an orchestra and galleries, and inviting by tickets people whom he knew or wished to know, to come to hear his works read. Soon others followed his example, and it was soon the fashion to do nothing else in Rome during the months of April and August but to assemble in these lecture rooms.

It is easy to form an idea of the sentiments brought by the guests to these literary festivals. Auditors and lecturers belonged, as a rule, to the best society, and shared in all the hates and prejudices of the upper class. Opposition, as it may be supposed, flourished in these public lectures. It was here that one could speak, when speech was not forbidden; here that Titinius Capito, after the death of Domitian, read the story of his victims. It was a duty to come and listen. "It seemed," says Pliny, "that we were listening to the melancholy praises of the victims who had not been given funeral honours." Under the harsh rulers caution was naturally necessary, yet nevertheless a way was found to speak. In the darkest times of the reign of Nero, Curvatus Maternus, the poet, dared to read a poem full of disagreeable allusions to the emperor. He continued, under Vespasian, his little war of epigrams. "He read one day of Cato, and forgot himself," says Tacitus,

“to think only of his hero.” Applause was not wanting to the bold tirades of the poet; the next day the whole of Rome spoke about his audacity and the dangers to which it would expose him.

The tragedies of Curiaius Maternus are lost, but those of Seneca remain, and give us an idea of what was allowed to be said in the lecture rooms. These works are second rate, and could be judged very severely if considered in the light of plays for the theatre, or if compared to the works of Sophocles and Euripides. It must be remembered, however, that they were not written for the stage, being destined for public reading. They are drawing-room tragedy, hence must not be treated as tragedy for the theatre. This order of play may seem unworthy or false; it can be severely condemned; it is a distinct order, nevertheless, and is not subject to the rules that govern others; also, having a different public, certain defects are necessary to enable it to please. Seneca, who was eager to succeed, submitted to these conditions willingly. His aim was to flatter the tastes of his audience, and he knew that he could interest them only by speaking of their times and their friends; he did this openly and without hesitation; it might be said from the way he expressed himself that he wished them to see for themselves that the present interested him more than the past; that he was always thinking of Rome even when speaking of Argos or of Thebes. This is why political allusions are so frequent in his works.<sup>e</sup>

#### LIBRARIES AND BOOK-MAKING

It must not be supposed, however, that the author in Rome depended solely upon verbal utterance for the circulation of his ideas. Nothing could be further from the fact. The publishing no less than the writing of books was a recognised form of business and one that apparently flourished.

Notwithstanding the entire loss of all the books produced in Rome in the early days, we are supplied with tolerably full information as to the making and use of books there during the later period of the republic, and throughout the empire.

The private library discovered at Herculaneum gives a perfectly clear idea of the way in which the books were kept in an ordinary house. This library contained seventeen hundred books. It was so small a room, however, that all its shelves could be reached from its centre. The books themselves, consisting of rolls, were contained in round cases called *capsæ*, and we have the further evidence of various statues and pictures, as well as written descriptions, to prove that this was the usual method of caring for manuscripts.

The books of this period were always in rolls, never folded after the modern method. This applies not merely to papyrus books, but to the parchment ones also. Generally the strip of papyrus or parchment was inserted at one end into a slit in a reed or cane about which the manuscript was rolled as written. Usually a corresponding cane was supplied at the other end after the book was completed, so that the book could be rolled either way, thus greatly facilitating the reading. Presumably the book as ordinarily kept ready for use would be rolled on the lower reed, so that anyone unrolling it began at once with the first column, the columns being arranged transversely. A tag or label was usually attached to the manuscript, and these tags are represented in the paintings on the walls of Pompeii as projecting from the cases in which the books are stored. The length of a papyrus or parchment strip varied indefinitely, but it appears to have been usual to write an entire



book of any given work on a single strip. The relatively short books into which most classical works were divided facilitated this method; or perhaps it became customary to divide works into small books for the convenience of the scribe, rather than because of any logicity in the method itself.

It appears that in the later Roman times it was quite the fashion to have a library in every ordinary house, and some of these libraries attained very respectable proportions. Thus it is said that the grammarian Epaphroditus had a library of thirty thousand volumes, and that Sammonicus Serenus had one of sixty-two thousand volumes. The fact that Augustus confiscated two thousand copies of the pseudo-sibylline oracles testifies to the wide prevalence of the reading, or at least the book-buying, habit. No doubt this distinction between the buying and the reading of books should be clearly drawn in the case of the Romans as elsewhere. Still, it will not do to draw too sweeping conclusions from the sneers of Seneca and Cicero, which are so often quoted as implying that the Romans bought books as ornaments, rather than for their contents. Doubtless the reproach was true then as now of a large number of purchasers; still, the making and the selling of books must always imply the existence of a taste for books, and such a fashion could never have come into vogue unless a very large number of people were actually book readers. In point of fact, the book business in Rome assumed proportions that seem almost incredible. Book stores were numerous in the more frequented parts of the city, and, as far as one can learn, the trade flourished quite in the modern fashion. Within the shop the rolls were ranged on shelves for the inspection of the would-be purchaser, and outside on pillars were advertised the names of the authors represented.

Naturally enough, when private libraries were the fashion there were numerous public libraries as well. According to Publius Victor, there were no fewer than twenty-nine of these public libraries in Rome. Asinius Pollio, the friend of Cæsar, and the famous patron of literature of his time, who died in the year 6 B.C., was credited with being the founder of the first public library, although there is a tradition that Æmilius Paulus, the conqueror of Macedonia, brought back with him to Rome a large collection of books in 168 B.C. Be that as it may, there probably was no very great taste for reading in Rome at that early period, and it was not until the time of Augustus that public libraries began to assume real importance.

Augustus himself, carrying out the intention of Julius Cæsar, founded two public libraries, one called the Octavian, and the other the Palatine. From that time the founding of public libraries became a fashion with the emperors, Tiberius, Vespasian, Domitian, and Trajan successively adding to the number, the most famous collection of all being the Ulpian library of Trajan. No available data have come down to us as to the exact size of these libraries, but the respectable proportions of some of the private collections make it a safe inference that some, at least, of these public libraries must have contained hundreds of thousands of books, since we can hardly suppose that a private library would be allowed to outrival the imperial collections.

When one reflects on this prevalence of books, the very natural query arises as to how they were produced, and the answer throws a vivid light on the social conditions in Rome. The enormous output of books, almost rivaling the productions of the modern press, was possible solely because of the great number of slaves in Rome. Book-making was a profession, but it was a profession apparently followed almost exclusively by slaves, who were known as *librarii*. These educated slaves were usually Greeks, and a large

publishing house, of which there were several in Rome, would keep a great number of them for purposes both of making the materials for books, and of transcribing the books themselves.

It is known that shorthand was practised extensively in Rome, and it has been supposed that a very large number of the current books were written in this abbreviated hand. This supposition, however, appears more than doubtful, for it is hardly to be supposed that the general public took the trouble to learn the Tironian system, by which name the shorthand script was known; Tiron, the secretary of Cicero, being commonly, though no doubt incorrectly, credited with its invention. As to the latter point, there are various references in the Greek classical authors to the practice of shorthand in ancient times. It is said even that Xenophon took down the lectures of Socrates in this way, and whether or not that statement is true, the existence of the rumour is in itself evidence of the prevalence of the custom from an early day. Very probably Tiron developed a modified and greatly improved system of shorthand writing, and doubtless this became popular, since lexicons were written interpreting the Tironian script in terms of ordinary Latin. But, as has been said, all this does not make it probable that the average reader understood the script, and it seems much more likely that the popular authors were represented in the ordinary script, subject, however, to numerous abbreviations. The writers who were most in vogue in imperial Rome are said to have been Ovid, Propertius, and Martial among the satirists; Homer, Virgil, and Horace among the poets; and Cicero, Livy, and Pliny among prose writers. It is alleged that the works of most of these were in every private collection. Of all this great store of literary treasures not a single line has been preserved in the original manuscript, save only a few rolls from the library at Herculaneum, and most of these are charred and damaged beyond recognition.

Thanks to the use of slave labour, it would appear that the Roman publisher was able, not merely to put out large editions of books, but to sell these at a very reasonable price. According to a statement of Martial himself, a very good copy of the first book of his epigrams could be purchased for five denarii. This presumably must refer to the cheapest edition, probably a papyrus roll, though no definite data as to the relative cost of papyrus and parchment are available. Naturally, there were more expensive editions put out for those who could afford them. It was customary, for example, to tint the back of the parchment roll with purple; at a later day the inscribed part itself was sometimes tinted with the same colour, and this custom also may have prevailed as early as the Roman time. Certain books were illustrated with pictures, as appears from a remark of Pliny; but this practice was undoubtedly very exceptional. It may not have been unusual, however, to ornament or emphasise portions of the manuscript by using red ink, for the ink wells illustrated in the paintings of Pompeii are often shown to be double, and the presumable object of this was to facilitate the use of ink of two colours.

The pen employed by the Roman scribe was made of a reed and known as a *calamus*. It was sharpened and split, not unlike a modern quill pen. The question has been raised many times as to whether the Romans did not employ the quill pen itself. Certain pictures seem to suggest that the quill pen was used not merely by the Romans, but by the Egyptians as well. There seems little ground for this supposition, however, and the first specific reference to a quill pen was in the writings of Isidorus, who died in 636 A.D. This proves that the use of quills had begun not later than the seventh

century, but it is extremely doubtful whether the Romans employed them, though the quill seems so obvious a substitute for the reed that its non-employment causes wonder. But the history of all simple inventions shows how fallacious would be any argument drawn from this obvious inference. Incidentally it may be noted that the reed pen held its own against the quill for some centuries after the invention of the latter. Even in the late Middle Ages the reed was still employed for particular kinds of writing in preference to the quill, and no doubt a certain number of people for generations continued to prefer the reed, just as there are people now who prefer a quill pen to the steel pens that were perfected in 1830. Every desk in the reading room at the British Museum to-day is supplied with a quill as well as a steel pen; and a fair proportion of the readers there seem to prefer the former.

It would not do to leave the subject of Roman books without at least incidental mention of the tablets which were in universal use. These were probably not employed in writing books for the market, but it is quite probable that many authors used them in making the first drafts of their books. The so-called wax tablet was really made of wood, quite in the form of a modern child's slate, the wax to receive the writing being put upon the portion that corresponds to the slate proper. These tablets were usually bound together in twos or threes, and only the inner surfaces were employed to receive the writing, the outer surface being reserved for a title in the case of business documents, or for the address when the tablet was used as a letter. When used as business records or in correspondence, the tablets were bound together with a cord, upon which a seal was placed. It was quite the rule for a Roman citizen to carry a tablet about with him for the purpose of making notes. The implement used in writing was a pointed metal needle known as the *stylus*. It was almost dagger-like in proportions, and was sometimes used as a weapon. It was said that Caesar once transixed the arm of Cassius with his *stylus* in a fit of anger in the senate chamber itself. The other end of the *stylus* was curved or flattened, and was used to erase the writing on the tablet for corrections or to prepare the surface for a new inscription.

Turning from the practicalities of literature to a yet more important phase of everyday life, let us witness

#### THE CEREMONY OF A ROMAN MARRIAGE

The solemn ritual of marriage was based on the virginity of the bride, and so appeared in a curtailed version when a widow married again, which, even in later times, was regarded as somewhat shocking and in the earliest period of antiquity was of rare occurrence.

Particular care was taken in choosing the wedding-day, because certain times of the year were, from a religious point of view, ill adapted for the wedding ceremony, particularly the whole month of May and the first half of June. For the Lemuria and the sacrifice of the Argei fall in May, and in the beginning of June come the *dies religiosi*, devoted to the holiness of Vesta, which come to a close on the 15th of June with the purification of the temple of Vesta. Other days to be avoided were the *dies parentales* (from the 13th to the 21st of February), the first half of March, the three days on which the Nether World was open (*mundus patet* on the 24th of August, the 5th of October, and the 8th of November), all *dies religiosi*, the calends, the nones, and the ides. But solemn marriages were not

conducted on festival days chiefly because, in early times at all events, the participators in the marriage were hindered by the festival. Widows on the other hand did not exclude such days from their selection.

All that we are told of the decoration of the bride is again concerned with virgins. On the day before marriage the girl laid aside her virginal attire (*toga prætexta*), sacrificing it with her toys to the gods and perhaps originally to the Lares of her father's house. As was the custom for a youth before taking the *toga*, she was invested (*ominis causa*) with a new garment suitable to her new condition before going to sleep, a *tunica recta* or *regilla*, and upon her head was placed a red hair net. The bridal dress itself was a *tunica recta*, that is to say a garment woven according to ancient custom with vertical, not horizontal, threads, held together with a woollen girdle (*cingulum*) that was bound with a *nodus herculeus*; instead of the hair net she was provided with a red scarf (*flammeum*) with which she veiled her head (*nubit, obnubit*): its red colour only distinguished it from those scarfs which all women wore when they went out. Her hair was arranged in *sex crines*, that is, plaits or locks held together not with a comb but with a crisping pin bent at the end (*hasta cælibaris*) and separated by ribbons. Beneath the scarf on her head she wore a wreath of flowers gathered by herself, and at a later period the bridegroom himself also wears a wreath.

The ceremony of the marriage day falls into three parts: the handing over of the bride, her home taking, and her reception into the husband's house; with regard to the disposition of the separate customs appertaining to these three acts we are to some extent left to conjecture.

The solemnisation of marriage began with *auspicia*, which were usually taken by proper *auspices* in the silence of early morning, just as at the *sponsalia* it was sought to inquire into the will of the gods by an omen before sunrise. In the earliest times the flight of birds was observed, this kind of divination being later on replaced in private life (as it already existed in public) by the easier process of causing a *haruspica* to examine entrails. But the sacrifice made with a view of consulting the gods, the performers of which have also been called *auspices*, must not be confounded with the main sacrifice, for it took place before the handing over of the bride. The sacrificial animal was probably a sheep, the skin of which was afterwards used for the *confarreatio*.

On the assembly of the guests the *auspices* entered to announce the result of their investigation. After this only is the marriage contract completed, and even in later times before ten witnesses such as were accustomed to be present at the ancient *confarreatio*; the bride and bridegroom then declare their consent to the wedding, and where there is a *confarreatio* the former declares her will to enter into the *manus* and thereby the family of her husband, originally announcing also her readiness to exchange her own name for that of her husband in the formula *quando tu Caius ego Caia*. After this declaration the bridal pair are brought together by a married woman (*pronuba*) and take each other's hands (*dextras jungunt*), upon which, at the *confarreatio*, in accordance with the most ancient Roman sacrificial custom, a bloodless sacrifice is brought consisting of fruits and a *panis farreus*. It was dedicated to Jupiter and so was probably performed by the *flamen Dialis* present; he pronounced the forms of prayer in which the gods of wedlock, especially Juno, and the rustic deities Tellus, Picumnus, and Pilumnus were invoked. During the sacrifice the bridal pair sat upon two chairs joined together, over which the skin of the sheep that had been slain was stretched; at the prayer they wandered round the altar from



right to left; a *camillus* lent his services, bearing a *cumerum* in which *mola salsa* and other requisites of the sacrifice were received.

Whether at the *confarreatio* there was an animal sacrifice besides the sacrifice of grain, or not, we do not know; Ulpian seems to assume that there was. In later times the sacrifice of corn fell into desuetude, but for the rest the old ritual was maintained as far as possible, so that for instance there was always a prayer delivered, if not by a priest, by an *auspex nuptiarum* and addressed to other gods. Also in these later times the celebration of marriage centred round the sacrifice of a calf or even of a pig, and the newly wedded pair set out this sacrifice themselves, not always in the house but sometimes before a public temple. Not only have we express witnesses to testify to this, but also pictorial representations in which partly the temple is sketched and partly the sacrifice in process of performance, which would have no sense if the sacrifice took place in the house. So it comes that sacrifice of animals could only be conducted in the house, as in the temple, under certain conditions, whereas it was quite common on the sacrificial altars erected especially for private sacrifice in front of the temples. The witnesses having expressed their congratulations (*feliciter*) in a shout of



HEAD-DRESSES

approval, the sacrifice was followed by the *cena*, which, like all earlier portions of the celebration, was usually held in the house of the bride's father.

The guests having risen from this at fall of night, the *deductio* begins. The bride is taken from the arms of her mother and conducted in solemn procession to the new house, the procession including not only the guests but also the interested public. Flute-players and torch-bearers lead the way, the procession sings a fescennine song and echoes the cry *talasse*; the boys bid the bridegroom strew walnuts as he is now taking leave of the games of childhood. The bride is accompanied by three *pueri patrimi et matrimi*, one of them bearing a torch in front, the other two leading the bride; after her are borne distaff and spinning-wheel. The bridegroom's torch is not, like the others, made of fine resin, but of white thorn (*Spina alba*), which is sacred to Ceres and a charm against witchery; it is captured by the guests and carried away by violence. The procession having reached the new house, the bride anoints the door-posts with fat or oil and binds them with woollen fillets; then she is borne over the threshold of the house and received in the atrium by her husband into the common possession of fire and water; that is to say, she is made a partner in domestic life and the service of the gods. In the atrium, her future living room, opposite the door, the *lectus genialis* is made ready by the *pronuba*; here she prays to the gods of the new home for a happy marriage. On the day after the wedding she receives relations at the feast of *repotia* as a matron and presents her first sacrifice to the gods of the house.]

## THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The restoration of the temples of Juno by Augustus and his consort indicated the interest the new government felt in the institution of marriage. Neither the history nor literature of Rome can be understood without clear ideas upon this branch of her social economy. All nations have agreed in investing marriage with a religious sanction; but religion and policy were closely connected through every phase of the social life of the Romans, and in none more closely than in this. Marriage they regarded as an institution hallowed by the national divinities for the propagation of the Roman race, the special favourite of the gods. Its object was not to chasten the affections and purify the appetites of man, but to replenish the curies and centuries, to maintain the service of the national temples, recruit the legions and establish Roman garrisons in conquered lands. The marriage therefore of Caius and Caia, of a Roman with a Roman, was a far higher and holier matter, in the view of their priests and legislators, than the union of a Roman with a foreigner, of aliens with aliens, or of slaves with slaves. Even the legitimate union of the sexes among the citizens was regulated by descending scale of confarreation, coemption, and mere cohabitation; and the offspring of the former only were qualified for the highest religious functions, such as those of the flamen of Jupiter, and apparently of the vestal virgins, on which the safety of the state was deemed most strictly to depend.

These jealous regulations were fostered in the first instance by a grave political necessity; but the increase of the power of Rome, the enlargement of her resources, the multiplication of her allies, her clients and dependents, had long relaxed her vigilance in maintaining the purity of her children's descent. The dictates of nature, reinforced by the observation of foreign examples, had long rebelled in this matter against the tyrannical prescriptions of a barbarous antiquity. After the eastern conquests of the republic it became impossible to maintain the race in its state of social isolation. In his winter quarters at Athens, Samos, or Ephesus, the rude husbandman of Alba or the Volscian hills was dazzled by the fascinations of women whose accomplishments fatally eclipsed the homely virtues of the Latin and Sabine matrons. To form legitimate connections with these foreign charmers was forbidden him by the harsh institutions of a Servius or Numa; while his ideas were so narrowed and debased by bad laws, that he never dreamt of raising his own countrywomen by education to the level of their superior attractions. Gravely impressing upon his wife and daughters that to sing and dance, to cultivate the knowledge of languages, to exercise the taste and understanding, was the business of the hired courtesan, it was to the courtesan that he repaired himself for the solace of his own lighter hours. The hetærae of Greece had been driven to the voluptuous courts of Asia by the impoverishment, and perhaps the declining refinement, of their native entertainers. They were now invited to the great western capital of wealth and luxury, where they shared with viler objects the admiration of the Roman nobles, and imparted perhaps a shade of sentiment and delicacy to their most sensual carouses. The unnatural restrictions of the law formed a decent excuse for this class of unions, which were often productive of mutual regard, and were hallowed at least at the shrine of public opinion.

Such fortunate cases were, however, at the best, only exceptional. For the most part, the Grecian mistress of the proconsul or imperator, the object of a transient appetite, sought to indemnify herself by venal rapacity for actual contempt and anticipated desertion. The influence of these seductive

intriguers poisoned the springs of justice before the provincial tribunals. At an earlier period a brutal general could order a criminal to be beheaded at his supper table, to exhibit to his paramour the spectacle of death; at a later, the luxurious governor of a province allowed his freedwoman to negotiate with his subjects for the price of their rights and privileges, or carried her at his side in his progress through Italy itself. The frantic declamations of Cicero against the licentiousness of Verres and Antony in this respect were a fruitless and, it must be admitted, a hollow attempt to play upon an extinct religious sentiment.

The results of this vicious indulgence were more depraving than the vice itself. The unmarried Roman, thus cohabiting with a freedwoman or slave, became the father of a bastard brood, against whom the gates of the city were shut. His pride was wounded in the tenderest part; his loyalty to the commonwealth was shaken. He chose rather to abandon the wretched offspring of his amours, than to breed them up as a reproach to himself, and see them sink below the rank in which their father was born.

In the absence of all true religious feeling, the possession of children was the surest pledge to the state of the public morality of her citizens. By the renunciation of marriage, which it became the fashion to avow and boast, public confidence was shaken to its centre. On the other hand, the women themselves, insulted by the neglect of the other sex, and exasperated at the inferiority of their position, revenged themselves by holding the institution of legitimate marriage with almost equal aversion. They were indignant at the servitude to which it bound them, the state of dependence and legal incapacity in which it kept them; for it left them without rights, and without the enjoyment of their own property; it reduced them to the status of mere children, or rather transferred them from the power of their parent to that of their husband. They continued through life, in spite of the mockery of respect with which the laws surrounded them, things rather than persons; things that could be sold, transferred backwards and forwards, from one master to another, for the sake of their dowry or even their powers of child-bearing. For the smallest fault they might be placed on trial before their husbands, or if one were more than usually considerate in judging upon his own case, before a council of their relations. They might be beaten with rods, even to death itself, for adultery or any other heinous crime; while they might suffer divorce from the merest caprice, and simply for the alleged departure of their youth or beauty.

The latter centuries of the Roman commonwealth are filled with the domestic struggles occasioned by the obstinacy with which political restrictions were maintained upon the most sensitive of the social relations. Beginning with wild and romantic legends, the account of these troubles becomes in the end an important feature in history. As early as the year 330 B.C., it is said, a great number of Roman matrons attempted the lives of their husbands by poison. They were dragged before the tribunals, probably domestic, and adjudged to death. As many as 170 are said to have suffered. In the following century, after the promulgation of the Oppian law, which forbade women to keep more than half an ounce of gold, to wear robes of various colours, and to ride in the *carpentum*, they formed a new conspiracy — such at least was the story — not to destroy their husbands, but to refuse conversation with them and frustrate their hopes of progeny. This was followed at the distance of half a century by the *lex Voconia*, “the most unjust of laws,” in the judgment of the Christian Augustine, which excluded women from the right of inheriting. Of these laws,



however, the first was speedily abrogated, the other was evaded, and, by under-hand and circuitous means, women came to receive inheritances, to the great scandal, as afterward appeared, of the reformers under the empire. But the continued quarrel of the sexes was exaggerated by mutual jealousy, and at the outbreak of the Catilinarian conspiracy, it was currently reported among the men that the traitors obtained money for their enterprise from a multitude of matrons, who longed for a bloody revolution to exterminate their husbands.

In the primitive ages the state had not only regulated the forms of marriage, but had undertaken to enforce it. Among the duties of the censors was that of levying fines upon the citizen who persisted in remaining single to the detriment of the public weal. The censure of Camillus and Postumius, 403 B.C., was celebrated for the patriotic vigour with which this inquisition was made. In process of time the milder method of encouraging marriage by rewards was introduced, the earliest mention of which, perhaps, is in a speech of Scipio, censor in the year 199 B.C. At this time it appears, certain immunities were already granted to the fathers of legitimate, and even of adopted, children, which last the censor denounced as an abuse. But neither rewards nor penalties proved effectual to check the increasing tendency to celibacy, and at the period of the Gracchi an alarm was sounded that the old Roman race was becoming rapidly extinguished. The censor of the year 131 B.C., Metellus Macedonicus, expounded the evil to the senate in a speech which seems to have been among the most curious productions of antiquity. "Could we exist without wives at all," it began, "doubtless we should all rid ourselves of the plague they are to us; since, however, nature has decreed that we cannot dispense with the infliction, it is best to bear it manfully, and rather look to the permanent conservation of the state than to our own transient satisfaction." It is still more curious, perhaps, that above a hundred years afterwards Augustus should have ventured to recite in the polished senate of his own generation the cynical invective of a ruder age. But, so it was, that when the legislation of Julius Cæsar was found ineffectual for controlling the still growing evil, it was reinforced by his successor with an enhancement both of penalties and rewards, and the bitter measure recommended by the arguments and even the language of the ancient censor.

The importance attached by the emperor to this fruitless legislation appears from his turning his efforts in this direction from the first year of his return to Rome. When he took the census with Agrippa in 28 B.C., he insisted on carrying into execution the regulations of the dictator, which had been neglected during the interval of anarchy, and were destined speedily to fall into similar neglect again. Upon this one point the master of the Romans could make no impression upon the dogged disobedience of his subjects. Both the men and the women preferred the loose terms of union upon which they had consented to cohabit to the harsh provisions of antiquity. They despised rewards, and penalties they audaciously defied. Eleven years later Augustus caused the senate to pass a new law of increased stringency, by which the marriage of citizens of competent age was positively required. Three years grace was allowed for making a choice and settling preliminaries; but when the allotted interval was expired, it was found expedient to prolong it for two years more; from time to time a further respite seems to have been conceded, and we find the emperor still struggling almost to the close of his life to impose this intolerable restraint upon the liberty or licence of the times.



The consent of the fathers themselves, subservient as they generally were, was given with murmurs of reluctance, the more so, perhaps, as they alone were excepted from the indulgence, which was now prudently extended to every lower order of citizens, of permission to form a legitimate marriage with a freedwoman. The measure was received indeed with outward deference, but an inward determination to evade or overthrow it. Even the poets, who were instructed to sing its praises, renounced the obligation to fulfil its conditions; while others, whose voices were generally tuned to accents of adulation, exulted openly in its relaxation or postponement.

The nature of the penalties and rewards assigned by this law shows that the views of Augustus were for the most part confined to the rehabilitation of marriage in the higher classes, and the restoration of the purest blood of Rome. On the one hand, celibacy was punished by incapacity to receive bequests, and even the married man who happened to be childless was regarded with suspicion, and mulcted of one-half of every legacy. On the other, the father of a family enjoyed a place of distinction in the theatres, and preference in competition for public office. He was relieved from the responsibilities of a tutor or a judex, and, as by the earlier measure of the dictator, was excused from a portion of the public burdens, if father of three children at Rome, of four in Italy, or of five in the provinces. Of the two consuls, precedence was given, not to the senior in age, according to ancient usage, but to the husband and the father of the most numerous offspring. It is clear that such provisions as these could have had little application to the great mass of the citizens, who lived on the favour of their noble patrons or the bounty of the treasury, and bred up a horde of paupers to eat into the vitals of the state.

The perverse subjects of this domestic legislation seem at first to have sought to evade it by entering into contracts of marriage which they afterwards omitted to fulfil. It was necessary to enact new provisions to meet this subterfuge. The facility allowed by the ancient usage to divorce formed another obvious means of escape; but again did the vigilant reformer interfere by appointing the observation of onerous forms for the legal separation of married parties. When a divorce had actually taken place, the parties fell again under the provisions of the marriage law, and were required to find themselves fresh consorts within a specified interval. Another mode of driving the reluctant citizens within the marriage pale was the infliction of penalties and disgrace upon unchastity beyond it; while now, for the first time, adultery, which had been left to be punished by the domestic tribunal as a private injury, was branded as a crime against the general well-being, and subjected to the animadversion of the state. But Augustus was not satisfied with directing his thunders against the guilty; he sought to anticipate criminality by imposing fresh restraints upon the licentious manners of the age. After the example of his predecessors in the censorship, he fixed a scale of expense for the luxuries of the table, and pretended to regulate the taste of the women for personal ornaments. At the gladiatorial



ROMAN TERRA-COTTA TOY  
(Naples Museum)

shows, from which they could no longer be excluded, he assigned different places for the two sexes, removing the women to the hinder rows, the least favourable either for seeing or being seen, and altogether forbade them to attend the exhibitions of wrestling and boxing.<sup>c</sup>

#### PATERNAL AUTHORITY AND ADOPTION: THE SLAVERY OF CHILDREN

If the Roman custom in relation to marriage and the position of women generally is decidedly to be preferred to that of the Greeks, it cannot be denied that the reverse was the case as regards the relations of children, as the arbitrary power which the father had over them in Rome was a flagrant injustice: the freedom of an individual was thus limited in a most unjust manner, and the child held in an unnatural dependence on his father. The great mistake consisted in the Roman father considering the power which Nature imposes as a duty on the elders, of guiding and protecting a child during infancy, as extending over his freedom, involving his life and death, and continuing during his entire existence. The Grecian law differed in two respects from the Roman: first, that the father's power ceased with the son's independence, and this he attained either by arriving at a certain period of life, or by marriage, or by being entered on the list of citizens. Secondly, the Grecian father had merely the right of terminating the relation between child and parent, by banishing him from his house, or disinheriting him, without daring to injure either his liberty or life.

The *patria potestas* of the Romans was in theory indeed very different from absolute possession (*dominium*), but in reality it approached very near to it, especially in ancient times; only the latter extended over things, the former over persons. Consequently this *potestas* gave the father the right over the life and liberty of his child. This law, said to be as early as Romulus, but at any rate very ancient, was revived in all its severity in the Twelve Tables. The unnatural part of this decree was somewhat modified, in that the right of life and death belonged in fact to that of discipline and punishment, which was permitted by the state to the *pater familias*, and as the father could not act on his own judgment, but must, conformably to custom, summon a family council. This judgment is mentioned by Valerius Maximus,<sup>k</sup> where he says of T. Manlius Torquatus, *ne consilio quidem necessariorum indigere se credidit*, as his son had been accused by the Macedonians on account of extortion. The father sat in judgment for three days, hearing witnesses and so on, and at last banished his son from his presence, whereupon he killed himself.

Other examples are related, of sentence being passed on sons by their fathers, without mention of the family council, and probably because the official position of the father rendered such aid unnecessary, as in the harsh judgment of Brutus and T. Manlius Imperiosus. In capital offences, too, the father could by himself inflict punishment, as it is deemed more proper that he should himself condemn his son, than that he should come himself as his accuser. Valerius Maximus relates two instances of a father's judgment in the time of Augustus. In the latter case the father condemned the son for parricide, letting him off with exile only. A solemn family council also preceded, to which the emperor was invited; there the kindness of the father openly prevailed, and whilst he made use of his right, he protected his son from the punishment which he would have found in the public court of justice. The second case proves the harshness and misuse to which this

right could be applied. But after all, not one case of absolute death is mentioned, but only of cruel punishment. If a misuse of the *patria potestas* occurred in earlier times, the censor could resent it. Orosius even speaks of a public indictment; in later days the emperor saw to it, as it is related of Trajan and Hadrian. In the two-hundredth year of the empire this power was taken away from the father by law.

Although the right of sale undeniably existed, and was recognised by the Twelve Tables, no recorded instance of it exists; and we may therefore suppose that it was early abolished, and used only as a form in the *emancipatio*. Numa even seems to have limited this right, according to Dionysius. In the form of *emancipatio*, the father had the right to sell the son three times; after the third time he did not again come into the *patria potestas*.

From the *patria potestas* must be entirely separated the right with which we frequently meet in antiquity, of killing or exposing new-born children. In Rome it did not exist to so great an extent as elsewhere. Romulus is said to have interdicted sons and first-born daughters from being killed. On the other hand, it seems to have been commanded that the deformed should be put to death. That the exposure and murder of the new-born was not infrequent, even in the most important families, many instances show.

The son remained in the father's power until his death, unless either of them had suffered a *capitis diminutio*. The *patria potestas* ceased if the son became a *flamen dialis*. Other dignities made no difference. In the case of a daughter it ceased when she entered into marriage with *manus*, or became a vestal virgin. If a father wished to renounce the *patria potestas* over his son, it must be done either by adoption (by which he passed into another *potestas*) or by the formality of emancipation.<sup>1</sup>

Created by nature or transferred by adoption, the paternal authority could be replaced, at the death of the father of the family, by guardianship (*tutela*) for the protection of children (*tutela impuberum, pupillaris*) and women (*tutela muliebris*), or it could even be revived after it had expired under the name of trusteeship (*cura*), for the protection of persons of full age but recognised as incapable of managing for themselves.

Jurisprudence concerning guardianship and trusteeship was first of all dominated by the principles of the ancient gentilitious law as sanctioned by the Twelve Tables.

At the death of a father the feminine portion of a family — the widow and grown-up but unmarried daughters, were looked upon as *sui juris* in the sense that they could administer their own property, but as they could not bring actions (except in the case of the vestals), they needed for all legal acts which concerned them, the authority (*auctoritas*) of a guardian. The sons reached the age of puberty at fourteen; under that age they required a guardian. If the family had a new head over fourteen years old, he was the guardian of all those under age and of all the females of the family; in the contrary case the guardian came from outside the family.

The law of the Twelve Tables did not allow those interested the choice of their guardian; the legitimate guardian was the nearest relation (*agnat*) of the deceased, or, in default, one of the members of the gens. It was exactly the same for the trusteeship which came into operation when a citizen *sui juris* was recognised as mad, or decreed by the interdictum of the prætor to be in the position of a maniac on account of prodigality. The trustee had the most unlimited powers over the person and property of the person so decreed.

The lawyers laboured to make the guardianship of the young secure and effective, to suppress the guardianship of women and to abolish the interference of the gentilitious customs in favour of natural relationship.

A first step had already been taken in the time of the Twelve Tables — the father of the family was permitted to choose and appoint by will the guardian of his children. The legitimate guardian according to the gentilitious law was called upon to replace the testamentary guardian in case the latter refused to undertake the guardianship. Later the law *Atilia*, about 190 B.C., empowered the prætor urbanus or the college of the tribunes of the plébs to nominate a guardian (*tutor atilianus*) in default of a legitimate or testamentary guardian in case the latter refused to undertake the guardianship. The custom was even introduced at this epoch of leaving to the widows, by will, the choice of their guardian (*tutor optivus*), either allowing them to change them once or twice (*optio angusta*), or as many times as it pleased them (*optio plena*). Women could even escape effective guardianship — especially with the object of acquiring the right to make wills — by tricks of procedure. For this purpose they made use of fiduciary co-emption. Co-emption substituted the co-emptionator for the guardian. The man who thus acquired the rights of a husband ceded the woman to a third person by mancipation. The latter emancipated the woman whose guardian he remained in form (*tutor fiduciarius*). This procedure was well known in the time of Cicero. It must be added that it was not applied in such an easy fashion when the guardian was the *tutor legitimus* of gentilitious law; the latter could not be forced to give his consent to the fictitious marriage which began the work of deliverance.

Thus it was against the legitimate guardianship that the legists directed their efforts. Augustus released from ordinary guardianship all women having three children, and freedwomen who were mothers of four children. Claudius absolutely suppressed gentilitious guardianship for women. It was only kept up for children. There remained only ordinary guardianship to be annihilated. Hadrian rendered fiduciary co-emptions unnecessary by giving women the right of making wills with the consent of their guardians, and Antoninus in certain cases recognised the legality of wills made without this sanction. As women had already received the right of administration of their property, guardianship was from that time almost objectless as far as they were concerned. It disappeared of itself. The movement of emancipation continued; from the time of Diocletian women began to acquire the right of guardianship over their own children.

As to the guardianship of young boys the legists had tried to extend, not the liberty of the wards, but the responsibility of the guardians. They even thought good to extend the guardianship under another name beyond the age fixed by the ancient law, which declared male children to have attained puberty at the age of fourteen. From the commencement of the second century before Christ, a law *Plætoria* created a state of minority from fourteen to twenty-five; for fear the minors should be "circumvented," it decreed that the loans agreed to by them should only be legal if they had been witnessed by a trustee named by the prætor. Marcus Aurelius made it a duty of the magistrates to give permanent trustees to all minors who requested them, and it was to the latter's interest to do so, because otherwise they could not appeal to the law. The trusteeship of minors had, in spite of distinctions, a singular resemblance to that of madmen and persons interdicted, and to the guardianship of children. And, from the time of Constantine, it was much the same as the other kinds. There was however one difference;



this was that the interdicted persons were reduced to a passive condition, and a ward was only allowed to act with authorisation of the guardian, whilst the minor could contract debts without the consent of his trustee.

Jurisprudence here became confused by its precautions ; it hesitated between respect for individual liberty and the far more potent anxiety to safeguard the material interests of the family.

It will be understood that the respect for individual liberty here referred to has reference only to a relatively small portion of the community. The larger number of the inhabitants of Rome had no individual liberty ; nor, indeed, any other right that commanded respect. In a word, the mass of the population was made up of slaves ; therefore, even a casual glance at the manners and customs of Roman society cannot disregard this unfortunate class.

#### THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY

The slaves in a large Roman house sprang from two different origins : either they had been bought or they were born in the house of a slave father and a slave mother. These latter were called *vernæ*, and were more



ROMAN SLAVE WORKING IN THE FIELDS

esteemed than the others. It is to them that their masters refer in the inscriptions with the greatest respect and tenderness. They were supposed to be attached to the family in which they had been born. Besides, they had not been branded by the humiliation of a public sale, and this meant a great deal. The bought slave had appeared in the market-place, his feet marked with white and a label round his neck, on which his merits and defects were inscribed ; he had been set on a platform and had been made to jump, turn a somersault, walk, run, laugh, and talk. The slave born in the house had at least escaped this ignominious ordeal. It was as though his dignity as a man had been less entirely lost, and as though he must be more capable of noble feeling. The man himself was so proud of this title of *verna* that in some instances it was retained even after liberation, and the freedman caused it to be inscribed on his tomb.

The number of slaves which these two sources of servitude, birth and purchase, introduced into Rome must have been very considerable. The Syrian or Numidian whom the steward of a great noble had bought in the street of the Subura or near the temple of Castor, for the purpose of making use of him as runner or cook, was sure, on entering the palace of his new master, to find himself in a numerous company. The moralists complain that

in the great houses the servitors were counted by thousands, and here they cannot be accused of exaggerating. Tacitus and Pliny say the same. In a satire by Petronius, Trimalchio, who does not know the tenth part of the slaves he possesses, is informed every morning of the number of them born during the night on his domain. This is not, as might be supposed, an imaginary scene, and history confirms the fable. Seneca tells us nearly the same thing of one of Pompey's freedmen. Even this freedman had legions of slaves; and according to the custom of good generals who keep a reckoning of the number of their soldiers, a secretary was ordered to inform him every day of the changes that birth, sales, or death had made in this army since the day before.

At the present time wealth is more equally distributed, life has become more simple, and we have some difficulty in forming a conception of the households of the great nobles of ancient Rome. Let us imagine one of those rich patricians or knights who possessed four or five thousand slaves, like that Cæcilius of whom Pliny the Elder speaks. This multitude, crowded together in the palaces or scattered amongst the farms, belong to different nations and speak different tongues. Besides, each nation has its specialty. Greece furnishes chiefly grammarians and scholars; the Asiatics are musicians or cooks; from Egypt come the beautiful children whose chatter amuses their masters; the Africans run in front of the litter to clear the way. As for the Germans, with their huge bodies and their heads perched none knows where (*caput necio ubi impositum*), their only use is to get killed in the arena for the greater diversion of the Roman people. Some order must be established in this confusion: they are classed according to their nation, and are known by the colour of their skin (*per nationes et colores*) or, which is oftener the case, they are divided into groups of ten, or decuries, with a decurion to command them. Above the decurions are placed, in the country the farmers (*villici*), in the town the stewards (*dispensatores*).

It is easy to see that to feed all these people was no easy matter, and it is a rule that in a well-regulated establishment the master buys nothing outside, but has enough on his own estates to supply his whole household. His domains supply him with every kind of commodity, his town houses contain workmen of every trade. To guard against failure of supplies he lays up stores of every kind in huge storehouses, whose riches he does not always know. It is related that during the time when, as at the present day, the theatre sought to attract the crowd by the brilliancy of the *mise-en-scène*, a manager who had to provide dresses for a large number of the chorus, and did not want to go to this expense, went to Lucullus and asked him to lend him one hundred tunics. "A hundred tunics," answered the rich Roman, "where do you expect me to find them? Nevertheless I will see." The next day he sent five thousand. The management of these huge fortunes must have given a great deal of trouble, and consequently the master often excused himself from attending to it. Given up entirely to pleasure, he left all his affairs in the hands of stewards, who robbed him. When he consented to manage his business himself the laborious task was not without profit. It has been said with reason that if the Roman nobles had for many centuries a keen political sense, and if they showed themselves capable of ruling the world, this was because each one could undergo in his own domains an apprenticeship in the art of governing. The working of these vast estates, the millions of sesterces to be handled, the nations of slaves to be managed, rendered the great nobles administrators and financiers from their youth up.

It is the rule that everyone imitates those above him, and it is the custom for the inferior classes to follow as much as possible the examples set them by the aristocracy. We have seen that the nobles of Rome displayed their wealth by the number of their slaves; the middle class did likewise. Perhaps, even, this great number of servitors is still more striking in a modest house, so little does it seem to correspond with the owner's means. Marcus Scaurus, who afterwards became a great personage, began by being very poor. He said in his memoirs that his father only left him thirty-seven thousand sesterces [£296 or \$1,480], and ten slaves. Certainly at the present day no one who possessed only £296 in the world would have ten servants. The poet Horace was not very rich either: he lived on the liberality of Mæcenas, who gave him ease rather than riches. And yet he tells us that when he returned home in the evening he had three slaves ready to serve his dinner. He gives us the bill of fare of this dinner; there are leeks, chick peas, and a few cakes. It would seem that three waiters are a great many for such a poor dinner, and that the repast is not in keeping with the service.

And though the expense was small, it is impossible that the great number of superfluous slaves could have failed to be a general nuisance. Why did people have them? Why did the middle classes impose upon themselves a burden which weighed heavily on the rich? The answer is easy — they desired to make a show. Everybody wished to dazzle the eyes by an imposing retinue. The great personages, when they went to the Forum, trailed after them a whole army of clients and friends. They required hundreds of servitors or of freedmen whenever they left Rome. This is why they had to turn their country or town houses into veritable barracks.

Under Nero the prefect of Rome, Pedanius Secundus, having been assassinated by one of his slaves, all those that had that night slept under his roof were arrested as accomplices. There were four hundred of them. The man who walked out alone had to defy prejudice, as Horace did. A magistrate who went out with only five servants, was pointed at in the streets. The people had even begun to measure their esteem for a man according to the number of servants who accompanied him. An advocate was not considered eloquent if he did not have at least eight servitors behind his litter. When he was not rich enough to buy them he hired them, this being the only way by which he could get causes to plead and be listened to when he spoke. Women also made use of them to attract public attention. Juvenal says that Ogulnia took good care not to go to the theatre alone; who would have turned round to look at her? She hired female attendants and a fair-haired damsel, to whom she pretended to give frequent orders. She carried display to such an extent that she was always accompanied by a respectable nurse and some female friends of good appearance. In this way Ogulnia was sure to create a sensation wherever she went.

Thus the slaves were very useful out of doors; they accompanied their masters, created a good opinion of him, and contributed to his importance; but what was to be done with them in the house? There were too many for occupation to be found for all in an ordinary household, and in order to give them something to do each had his particular office. "I use my slaves," said a Greek, "like my limbs, one for each thing." From this arose the extreme division of labour in ancient houses; it was never carried farther than at Rome. There were slaves to open the door to a visitor, others to bring him in, others to lift up before him the heavy draperies, and others to announce him. There were some to carry the dishes to the table, others to carve, some to taste them before the guests, and others to offer them: "These

unhappy creatures," says Seneca, "live only to carve the poultry well." Each portion of a woman's toilet was given to a different slave.

The slave who had charge of the clothes was not the same as the one who looked after the jewels or the purple. There were special artists for hair-dressing and for perfuming. The tomb has even been discovered of an unhappy man whose sole function in life was to paint the aged Livia. Thus the master as soon as he returns home finds a crowd of servitors who are on the lookout for his wants and anticipate his orders. "I sit down," says a character in a comedy, "my slaves run up to me and take off my shoes, others hasten to arrange the couches and to prepare the repasts. They all take as much trouble as possible." What is the result? That by force of being surrounded and waited upon the master contracts the habit of doing absolutely nothing. All these people who gather around him, and to whom he is so grateful, render him the worst service possible; they take from him the necessity of doing anything for himself. The Roman of the early days of the republic, who had hardly more than one personal servant and who waited upon himself, was active and energetic; he conquered the world. The Roman of the empire, continually surrounded by a troop of slaves, became cowardly, effeminate, and a dreamer. Of all the furniture in his house, his couch is the one he is most ready to use. He lies down to sleep, to eat,



ROMAN FISH HOOKS  
(In the British Museum)

to read, and to think. His servants divide amongst themselves all the functions of life, and all is minutely calculated to give him nothing to do. But this regularity which he admires so much is full of danger. Physical activity cannot be relaxed without moral activity suffering as well, and he who ceases to act ends by ceasing to have any will. This race of men who had given up exercising their bodies and keeping themselves in condition, also allowed their souls to become enervated. It is therefore a true saying that the large number of slaves which the Romans kept up contributed in no small measure to render themselves the slaves of the cæsars.

Let us suppose the newly purchased slave thrown amidst the multitude of servants that fills the Roman house; his first thought is naturally for his new master. He tries anxiously to know him, that he will see what he may expect from him, and how he will be treated. Let us do like him, and let us ask first of all to what treatment he will be subjected, and what will be the relations between master and slave. The answer to this question is not easy; the lot of the slave may be conceived of in different ways, and, for instance, it entirely changes its aspect according to whether we study it from the laws or from the facts. Until the days of the Antonines, the law in relation to him is terribly hard. It abandons him wholly to his master, whose property he is as much as a field or a flock of sheep. He has the right to use him or abuse him according to his fancy. He is free to inflict upon him all kinds of insults and dishonour; he can beat and kill him. We are therefore forced to admit that according to the laws there has never been



a worse condition than that of a Roman slave; but it must be remembered that human institutions never do all the good or harm of which they are capable. In public morals and in the general feeling there exist obstacles which cannot be surmounted. Laws may be excellent or detestable; man, who is little capable of perfection and who is instinctively averse to barbarism, corrects their exaggeration in practice; as a rule he only carries them out in so far as they are not opposed to the mediocrity of his nature. We are therefore liable to mistake, if we judge the social condition of a nation according to its legislation. The first thing to discover is in what manner it was actually applied. There is reason to think that in Rome, even at the time when manners were most barbaric, the terrible rights that the law gave to the masters were rarely taken advantage of. Cato might say that it is wise to sell a slave when he is old and can be of no further use; custom might allow him to be abandoned without mercy when he was ill and left in the island of the Tiber near the temple of Æsculapius, in order that he might recover or die without any expense; but it is probable that, in generous souls, nature has always revolted against such cowardly desertion. There are several reasons for thinking that even in Cato's time the slave was as a rule humanely treated, that he lived on familiar terms with his master, and that he nearly always grew old in his master's house. After the battle of Cannæ, Rome having no more soldiers did not hesitate to arm eight thousand slaves. They fought bravely side by side with the legions, and deserved their liberty. Would they have exposed themselves to die for masters whom they detested?

All slaves, however, were not treated alike, and distinctions must be made between them. They were as a rule less well treated in the country than in the town. The agriculturists, in describing the stock of a farm and the instruments of cultivation, have no hesitation in classing the slave in the same category with the oxen. In reality the master does not make much difference between him and the cattle. At night he is shut up in a species of stables or underground prisons (*ergastula*), with narrow windows, at such a distance above ground that he cannot reach them with his hand. During the day, if he is to work alone, irons are put on his feet in case the fresh air and open field should suggest to him the idea of escape. This is certainly rigorous treatment, and nevertheless the slave seems to support it with no great difficulty. A comic author makes him say, "When one's work is in a distant field, where the master rarely comes, one is not a servitor but master."

When a day of festival comes round and work is suspended, he celebrates it with such noisy joy that "those in the neighbourhood can hardly support his outbursts of delight." It would have been difficult to imagine — seeing him after the harvest or the vintage, amusing himself with such good will, laughing and singing at the games of the cross-ways (*compitalia*) or jumping gaily over the straw fires at the *Palilia* — that he was so harshly treated the rest of the year. What proves that on the whole this lot was not thought so wretched is that the town slave sometimes envied his country brother. Horace had at Rome a slave of an unstable disposition who asked his master as a favour to send him to his Sabine farm. It is true he soon repented this.

As a rule the slave was sent to the fields only as a punishment when he had given dissatisfaction. It is certain that he was better treated and happier in town. Placed near his master he might have to suffer more from his caprice, but he also reaped advantage from it. He had the best

chance of obtaining his liberty and making his fortune. There were some whose situations were even brilliant and envied, namely the imperial slaves. To belong to Cæsar's household was to be somebody, and the great lords who esteemed themselves happy to be known by the porter of Sejanus bought the good graces of the stewards of Tiberius by presents and degrading acts. Even before being liberated these slaves often filled real public offices; they were officers of the mint, the finances, and the commissariat of Rome. They had also a sense of their own importance. They were proud and insolent and thought they were under an obligation to see that the dignity of the emperor was respected in their own persons. After these we should naturally place the slaves belonging to the towns, the temples, and the different civil and religious bodies. When authority is thus divided and when nobody takes the entire burden, not only is the servitor not under control but in reality it is he who dominates. Thus the slaves of this class appear as a rule to be rich and contented with their lot. Some there are who make large donations to the societies which have bought them, giving themselves the piquant pleasure of being the benefactors of their masters.

Nor are those belonging to some great houses much to be pitied. If they attain high functions in the establishment they make good profit. Sometimes the steward of a rich man found the position so lucrative that he preferred to remain a slave, rather than give it up. The most fortunate were those who happened to fall to a master who prided himself upon being humane and enlightened, who cultivated literature and practised the lessons of the philosophers. Pliny the Younger treated his dependents with the greatest kindness. Not only did he forbid irons to be put on them when they were tilling his fields, but he did not allow them to be crowded together in narrow cells or dark prisons. In his house at Laurentum the accommodation was so good that he could put guests there. He looked after them whenever they were ill, he allowed them to make wills and leave their small possessions to their friends; his humanity went so far that he wept at losing them. In the service of a rich and wise man like Pliny the slave is not really very unhappy. It is when he is with humbler people that his lot is harder. As he shares the fortune of the house, with the poor he is of course poor, and he may chance to fall into the hands of a master in very wretched circumstances. Everybody, even the workmen and soldiers, had slaves in those days. Even the peasant of the *Moretum* whose worldly wealth consists of a little garden, and who gets up so early to prepare his dish of garlic, cheese, and salt, is not alone in his hut; he has for maidservant a negress, whom the poet describes to us with such striking realism: "Her hair is woolly, her lips thick, her skin black; her body badly made, her legs lank, and nature has given her a foot which spreads at ease" (*spatiosa prodiga planta*). In the poor houses little money was made and life was hard.

The only compensation the slave had in his miserable life was that he lived near his master, that he was more familiarly treated; that, being obliged to help him in his sufferings and share his hard lot, he was looked upon less as a slave than a kinsman. Moreover, it must be noted that, in Rome as in the East to-day, he always formed part of the family. In modern times master and servants, being both free and united by a temporary contract on conditions already agreed upon between them, live apart from one another, although under the same roof. They are two jealous individualities who keep a watch on each other and are very determined to maintain their respective rights. At Rome the slave had no rights; he was not a citizen

and hardly a man. His dignity did not prevent him from wholly abandoning himself to the man to whom he belonged and becoming one with him.

There was thus more intimacy and less reserve in their bearing towards each other. There remain many tombs erected by masters in memory of their servitors. They often bear the expression of the most tender feelings; not only is homage paid to their good service, they are also thanked for their affection. In return it must be remembered that they were treated with kindness, "like sons of the house," and some significant words are even ascribed to them: "Servitude, thou hast never been too heavy for me." On the tomb of a centurion of the fourth legion, which was erected by his freedmen, are these words: "I never married, and I possessed children," and the slaves' answer, "'Thanks and farewell."

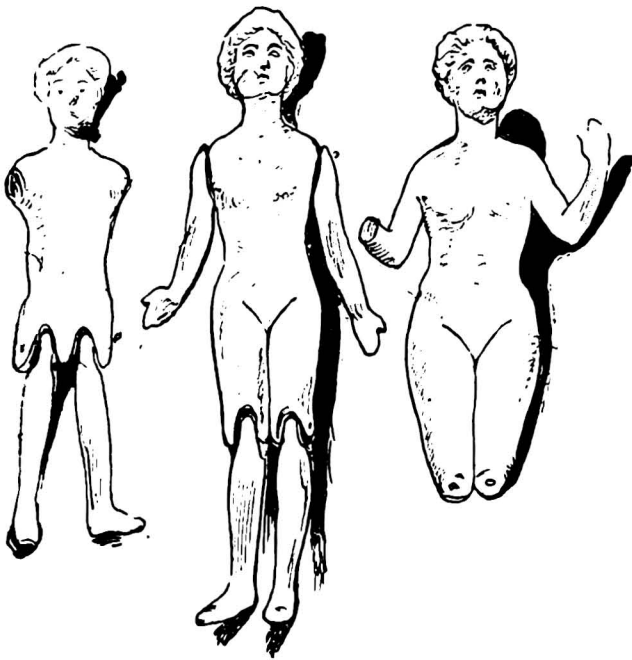
What strikes us most of all in studying Roman society is that most of the vices which devoured it and caused its ruin were due to slavery. We have seen that it favoured the corruption of the higher classes, that in accustoming a man to rely continually on the activity of others it paralysed his strength and enfeebled his will. It is also responsible for having nourished a contempt of human life. Cruelty may be learned. Perhaps it is naturally repugnant to mankind, but it feeds on example. It may be said that the houses of many of the rich were public schools of inhumanity. The slave long suffered from it and the master also ended by being its victim. If under the cæsars the crowd saw the deaths of so many illustrious people with great indifference, was it not because tortures and death were no new things to them, and because, when they had become used to seeing manhood no longer respected in the slave, they were less moved to anger at seeing it outraged in the noble? Another graver reproach which can be made against slavery is that it created that miserable populace of the time of the empire which disgusts us so much in the narratives of Tacitus. Its baseness and cowardice are no longer astonishing when we remember its origin. It was the outcome of slavery; slavery formed it, and naturally it was formed for slavery. Not only did its moral degradation and political indifference render the tyranny of the cæsars possible, but the recollection of the injustice it had suffered must have nourished in it those feelings of bitterness and hostility which exposed society to perils little dreamed of.

If there was no servile war in Italy after Spartacus, it is none the less true that slavery kept up a kind of perpetual conspiracy against the public safety. Above all it was the most determined enemy of that spirit of conservatism and tradition which had been the strength of the Roman race. The slaves did not spring from the soil of Rome, their recollections and affections were elsewhere, and when they became citizens they did not hesitate to welcome foreign customs and to introduce them into the city. Whilst the statesmen and leading men wore themselves out in trying to preserve what remained of the ancient spirit and the old customs, down below, amongst those classes of the populace which were constantly being recruited from slavery, there was a continual working to destroy it. It was thus that, thanks to this secret and powerful influence, new religions easily spread throughout the empire.

At the time nobody seems to have perceived the amount of the evil, and as its extent was not realised only partial remedies were proposed. Efforts, often successful, were made to render the slaves' lot less hard. They were given some security against their masters; the philosophers proclaimed, and all recognised with them, that these were men; lawyers even inscribed in the codes that slavery was contrary to nature. It seems as if this principle,

had it been followed out in all its consequences, must have eventually led to the abolition of slavery; but when would the day for it have come, or would it have come at all, if the ancient world had continued? It may well be doubted, in view of the slowness with which progress is accomplished and the frequent recurrence of causeless reactions. Even in the most enlightened times, when opinion seems to give the strongest impulse towards liberal measures, it may chance on a sudden that power, obeying other instincts, again becomes cruel or severe, or that it hovers between severity and indulgence, unable to decide which course to pursue.

It is under Augustus, just when manners are becoming milder and humanity seems to triumph, that a *senatus-consultum* ordains that when a master



ROMAN DOLLS  
(From the British Museum).

has been assassinated by a servant, all those who slept under his roof that night, innocent or guilty, shall be put to death. It is, no less a matter of surprise that under Constantine, in Christian times, the laws, which since the Antonines had become much more humane, all at once revert to the ancient severities against slaves. These sudden relapses made them lose in a moment all the ground that they had gained during centuries, and all had to be begun again. Let us add that the measures taken to protect slaves were not always so efficacious as might be expected. Humane laws were hardly ever carried out except by well-disposed men, who were themselves inclined to humanity. Others found ways to evade the laws. Authority, always averse to interfering with the family and re-

straining the sacred power of the master, generally shut its eyes, and thus abuses, practically beyond the reach of the law, became general.

What is most remarkable of all is that no ancient writer ever expressed, either as a far-away hope, or as a fugitive wish, or as an improbable hypothesis, the idea that slavery might one day be abolished. Whether favourable to slavery or not, no one so much as imagined that it could cease to be. Those even who complain of it with bitterness, who count up the dangers that it occasions and the annoyances to which it gives rise, those who say with Seneca: "How many starving animals, whose voracity we have to gratify! What expense to clothe them! What anxiety to watch all those rapacious hands! What pleasure is there in being waited upon by people who murmur against us and detest us?" — even they did not seem to think that some day these people might be dispensed with. The institution was so ancient, and had so entered into the habits of the nation, that life could not be imagined without it. Men who thought slavery indispensable were not inclined, even when they knew it to be unjust, to take much trouble to abolish it. It was one of those radical reforms that one is scarcely justified in expecting in the ordinary course of events, and we may say that such a complete change, which no one either desired or foresaw,



could only be accomplished by one of those revolutions which renovate the world.<sup>h</sup>

Let us turn from this depressing picture of the one labouring class in Rome to the complementary theme of games and recreations.

#### GAMES AND RECREATIONS

Nothing is more enlightening to the understanding both of the peculiarities of the individual and of the character of a nation, than to observe the free motion which begins where work leaves off. Professional activity is illustrated more or less in the same fashion all the world over, and it is forced into a more or less perfect uniformity, for it always follows the same aim. Recreation, on the other hand, opens the door to play, in which spontaneous inclination embodies its expression. As the traveller will note with particular attention the games and entertainments in which a nation spends its leisure, so the student of antiquity is prompted to direct his gaze to this side of life. But on no question are the sources of information so reticent, so far as the Romans are concerned, as on the question before us.

If we take as our basis the description which the ancients themselves give us of the activity peculiar to the Romans and their rooted disinclination for the Greek *far niente* (*otium Græcum*), the dignified motion and bearing (*gravitas*) that was so little fitted for gaiety that even Cicero says that only a man drunk or mad can dance; if we bear in mind the foreign nature of the apparatus which, at all events in the time of the emperors, was engaged for the carrying on of games and festivals—the actors, mimes, pantomimes, athletes, gladiators who were employed for amusement, paid and despised,—we shall be inclined to infer that the Romans had altogether little talent for a spirited enjoyment of life and for national rejoicing.

But one piece of general information at least has been unequivocally handed down to us, and this is the fact that they took an early and religious pleasure in dancing, in studying, and in games. At the *pompa circensis* in the *ludi magni*, which were celebrated between the 4th and the 19th of September, two detachments of dancers were employed; first those bearing arms in three choruses of men, youths, and boys, all in red tunics with bronze girdles, equipped with swords, lances, and crested helmets, then the comic dancers in sheepskins. Similarly dancing was a part of the ritual of the *salii* and of the *arvales* long before it became fashionable with the youths of distinction. Music, too, is acceptable to the gods, and not only in foreign rites, but it is a necessary ingredient in Roman ritual for which the old college of the *tubicines* and the *tibicines* provided. Music was indispensable in all festal celebrations, triumphs, funeral processions; and at the feast of Pales (on the 21st of April) the whole town was a blare of wind instruments, cymbals, and kettledrums. Songs and mimic representations were not missing either in the ceremonial of worship, or at home, or on the occasion of popular rejoicing, as we may see from the songs of the *salii* and of the *arvales*, from the songs of praise during meals, from the *fescennini*, *saturæ*, and *atellanae*, as well as from the comic interludes at the Saturnalia, at the Floralia, at the Megalesia, at triumphs, and at funeral processions.

True, these beginnings of an original Roman national poetry never reached their perfect development, because they submitted to the influence of Greek literature, so much admired by the educated classes; but, on the other hand, they resisted this influence so strenuously that Augustus still

continued to make *fescennini*, and the four masked types are still unchanged to-day in the Italian *commedia dell' arte*. We may assume the same to have been generally the case with the games of amusement. What was specially Greek in them was absorbed by the higher orders chiefly; what was really national is still to be traced more or less in the Italy of to-day. So the well-known game *mora*, in which two players hold out a number of fingers at the same moment and let their adversary guess how many they were, is found certainly with the Greeks, but is of extreme antiquity in Italy, where it is described by the expression *micare digitis*, and was used on grave occasions, and particularly on the occasion of business transactions, as a kind of lottery (*sors*). On the whole, the information on Roman games is uncommonly scanty, and it is vain to attempt to imagine a definite picture of the entertainments at the Matronalia, the Vinalia, and the Saturnalia.

Ovid once describes the festival of Anna Perenna that was celebrated on a heath on the Via Flaminia, but there is nothing characteristic in the whole description; people eat, drink, dance, and sing, but what they sing are not national songs. "*Cantant*," says Ovid, "*cantant quidquid didicere theatris*." What we hear of games in Rome is all Greek or is reckoned as such at least; even the old game of jumping upon full leather bottles that were oiled, and trying, it would appear, to stand on one's head upon them, is mentioned by Virgil as Attic, and in fact identical with the Greek *ἀσκωλιάζειν*. Under these circumstances we must not attempt to prove the existence of any form of national rejoicing peculiar to the Romans, and must confine ourselves to gathering together those games which, although customary in Greece also, are frequently mentioned in Rome. On the one hand, we have children's and young men's games; on the other, games of hazard and board games.

The game of ball, which is known to all antiquity, is certainly a game for young men, but owing to the healthy movement which it affords, and which Galen quite particularly recommends in a singular pamphlet on the little ball, it was also a recreation for elder persons as useful as it was agreeable. In Rome and Italy generally ball was played, both on the Campus Martius, where the younger Cato himself might have been seen taking part in the game, and in the *sphæristeria* especially laid out for the purpose in the baths and villas. Among the players of ball were Mucius Scævola, Cæsar, the emperor Augustus, Mæcenas, the old Spurinna the friend of Pliny, the emperor Alexander Severus; and there were people who spent their whole time in this amusement.

During the empire five kinds of balls were employed, one small, one middle-sized, one large, one very large, one full of air. Perhaps these five kinds correspond to the Latin expressions *pila*, *trigon* or *pila trigonalis*, *pila paganica*, *harpastum*, perhaps identical with *pila arenaria*, and *follis*. The ordinary ball was stuffed with hair and sewn with bright or at all events coloured patches; the *paganica*, the name of which indicates a game between people *en masse*, in which the whole village (*pagus*) in the country took part, was a large ball stuffed with feathers; the *follis*, which was first discovered in the time of Pompey, was the largest and was full of air (*κενή*); of the *harpastum* we know nothing further than that it was a small hard ball.

The different kinds of games may be determined first by the nature of the throw and secondly by the number of people engaged in the games. First the ball may be thrown up and caught by the thrower himself or by another — this is the Greek *οὐρανία*; secondly the ball may pass between two or more players (*datatim ludere*), the object being skill in throwing (*διδόναι*), *dare*,

*mittere, jactare*, in catching (*λαμβάνειν, δέχεσθαι, facere, excipere*), and in throwing back (*remittere, repercutere*). Finally the ball may be bounced violently on the ground or against the wall, so that it rebounds and may be repeatedly slapped with the hand. In this game, which is the Greek *ἀπορράξις* and the Latin *expulsim ludere*, the number of bounces are counted, and if several play, the winner is he who can keep it up longest without letting the ball fall. The true significance of the word *pilicrepus* is certainly to be found from this game, as elsewhere the ball makes no especial kind of noise. According to this, apart from the height of the throw, we may indicate all the methods of playing ball by the formulæ of *datatim, reptim, expulsim ludere*.

So far as the number of players is concerned, first of all there was the single game in which one played alone with one, or also with two and three balls, keeping them in perpetual motion as he sat or walked. From this juggler's game was derived the art of *Ursus Togatus*, who, proud of his steadiness, first used glass balls. Then there was the double game in which two played and threw the ball to each other, and then one of the most popular games, which was played before the bath and very frequently in the *Campus Martius*, was the *trigon*, in which three players took part. It is often mentioned but never described. The stations of the three players were at the three corners of an equilateral triangle; but the ball



ENTRANCE TO THE COLOSSEUM

did not travel simply from one player to another; it was thrown at one of them arbitrarily, so that he had to rid himself of two balls at the same time, a process which involved the use of both hands, and not only the catching of the two balls but their discharge at one of the other players. Besides the players themselves, three persons were necessary for the *trigon* to pick up the balls, and three others to keep the score.

The games for players *en masse* (*sphæromachiaë*) were particularly interesting to the Romans. There were three kinds, *ἡ ἐπίσκυρος* or *ἐπίκοινος*, *τὸ φενίδα*, and *τὸ ἀρπαστόν*. We are only partially informed of the difference between them; according to the latest investigation however the following may be assumed to be probably correct particulars. In the *ἐπίσκυρος*, the players divide into sides of equal numbers which are separated by a line marked in stones (*σκῦρος*): they also had a limit at the back of them beyond which they were not allowed to go. The ball is placed on the *σκῦρος*. One of the sides, whichever is the first to capture the placed ball, throws off as far as possible; the other side remains where it is caught and in turn throws it



back. The object is to throw the ball with such force that the opposite side are driven back, and to drive them right back to the boundaries of the court, in which case they have lost the game.

In the second game, the *φενίδα*, two sides are also engaged. The man who throws off challenges a definite person on the opposing side to catch the ball, but then throws it in quite another direction, in which case it has to be caught by someone else. If it falls to the ground, the side which failed to catch it has lost. We know least of all about the *harpastum*, but the ball seems to have been thrown up in the air so that the thrower himself is in a position to catch it again. In order to stop this all the players scrum up, and while they are struggling for the ball upset one another to the accompaniment of a tremendous noise. Finally, the game described by Cinnamus the Byzantine, which Meineke and after him Grasberger have identified with the *harpastum*, has nothing whatever to do with it. It was quite a particular game for the imperial family, was played on horseback, and the ball was hit with a racket, none of these features being characteristic of the *harpastum*.<sup>f</sup>

### *The Roman Theatre and Amphitheatre*

If the Roman people was ill accommodated in its streets, it might derive compensation in the vast constructions which were erected for its amusement,

the ample walks and gardens devoted to its recreation, and the area which was sedulously preserved for its exercise in the Campus Martius, and the circuses of Romulus and Flaminius. The theatre of Pompey, the first fabricated of stone for permanent use, was rivalled by that of Balbus, and Augustus dedicated a third to the pleasures of the citizens under the title of the theatre of Marcellus. From the enormous size of these celebrated edifices, it is clear that the idea of reserving them for dramatic performances entered but little into the views of their builders. The Roman



ROMAN LAMP

theatre was an institution very different from ours, where a select audience pay their price of admission to a private spectacle on a large scale. They were the houses of the Roman people, to which every citizen claimed the right of entrance; for they were given to him for his own by their munificent founders, and the performances which took place in them were provided gratuitously by the magistrates. The first object, therefore, was to seat the greatest number of people possible; and when that was accomplished, the question followed of how they should be safely and conveniently entertained.

An assemblage of thirty thousand spectators, gathering excitement from the consciousness of their own multitude, could not sit tamely under the blaze of an Italian sun, tempered only by an awning, in the steam and dust of their own creating, which streams of perfumed waters were required to allay, to hear the formal dialogue of the ancient tragedy declaimed by human puppets from brass-lipped masques, staggering on the stilted cothurnus. Whatever might be the case with the Greeks, it was impossible, at least for the plainer Romans, so to abstract their imaginations from the ungraceful realities thus placed before them as to behold in them a symbolic adumbra-



tion of the heroic and the divine. For the charms, however, both of music and dancing, which are also considered pleasures of the imagination, they appear to have had a genuine though perhaps a rude taste. Their dramatic representations, accordingly, were mostly conducted in pantomime; this form at least of the drama was that which most flourished among them, and produced men of genius, inventors, and creators in their own line.

Some of the most famous of the mimic actors were themselves Romans; but the ancient prejudice against the exercise of histrionic art by citizens was never perhaps wholly overcome. Accordingly Greek names figure more conspicuously than Roman in the roll of actors on the Roman stage; and two of these, Bathyllus and Pylades, divided between them, under the mild autocracy of Augustus, the dearest sympathies and favours of the masters of the world. The rivalry of these two competitors for public applause, or rather of their admirers and adherents, broke out in tumultuous disorders, which engaged at last the interference of the emperor himself. "It is better for your government," said one of them to him, when required to desist from a professional emulation which imperilled the tranquillity of the city — "it is better that the citizens should quarrel about a Pylades and a Bathyllus than about a Pompey and a Cæsar."

But whatever claims pantomime might have as a legitimate child of the drama, the Roman stage was invaded by another class of exhibitions, for which no such pretensions could be advanced. The vast proportions of the theatre invited a grander display of scenic effects than could be supplied by the chaste simplicity of the Greek chorus, in which the priests or virgins, whatever their number might be, could only present so many repetitions of a single type. The finer sentiment of the upper classes was overpowered by the vulgar multitude, who demanded with noisy violence the gratification of their coarse and rude tastes. Processions swept before their eyes of horses and chariots, of wild and unfamiliar animals; the long show of a triumph wound its way across the stage; the spoils of captured cities, and the figures of the cities themselves were represented in painting or sculpture; the boards were occupied in every interval of more serious entertainment by crowds of rope-dancers, conjurers, boxers, clowns, and posture-makers, men who walked on their hands, or stood on their heads, or let themselves be whirled aloft by machinery, or suspended upon wires, or who danced on stilts, or exhibited feats of skill with cups and balls. But these degenerate spectacles were not the lowest degradation to which the theatres were subjected. They were polluted with the grossest indecencies; and the luxury of the stage, as the Romans delicately phrased it, drew down the loudest indignation of the reformers of a later age. Hitherto at least legislators and moralists had been content with branding with civil infamy the instruments of the people's licentious pleasures; but the pretext even for this was rather the supposed baseness of exhibiting one's person for money than the iniquity of the performances themselves. The legitimate drama, which was still an exercise of skill among the Romans, was relegated, perhaps, to the smaller theatres of wood, which were erected year by year for temporary use. There were also certain private theatres, in which knights and senators could exercise their genius for singing and acting without incurring the stigma of public representation.

The appetite for grandeur and magnificence, developed so rapidly among the Romans by the pride of opulence and power, was stimulated by the furious rivalry of the great nobles. The bold and ingenious tribune, Curius, whose talents found a more fatal arena in the contests of the civil wars, was

perhaps the first to imagine the form of the double hemicycle, which he executed with an immense wooden structure and a vast mechanical apparatus, by which two theatres, after doing their legitimate duty to the drama, could be wheeled front to front, and combined into a single amphitheatre for gladiatorial spectacles. There can be no doubt that this extraordinary edifice was adapted to contain many thousands of spectators; and there are few perhaps, even of our own engineers, who build tubular bridges and suspend acres of iron network over our heads, who would not shrink from the problem of moving the population of a great city upon a single pair of pivots.

The amphitheatre of Julius Cæsar in the Campus was of wood also, and this, as well as its predecessors, seems to have been taken down after serving the purpose of the day. It remained for Statilius Taurus, the legate of Augustus, to construct the first edifice of this character in stone, and to bequeath to future ages the original model of the magnificent structures which bear that name, some of which still attest the grandeur of the empire in her provinces; but the most amazing specimen of which, and indeed the noblest existing monument of all ancient architecture, is the glorious Colosseum at Rome.

Like most of the splendid buildings of this period, the amphitheatre of Taurus was erected in the Campus Martius, the interior of the city not admitting of the dedication of so large a space to the purpose; though it was rumoured indeed that Augustus had purposed to crown the series of his public works by an edifice of this nature, in the centre of his capital, to be attached perhaps to his forum. While the amphitheatre, however, was a novel invention, the circus, to which it was in a manner supplementary, was one of the most ancient institutions of the city. The founder himself had convened his subjects in the Murcian valley, beneath his cabin on the Palatine, to celebrate games of riding, hunting, and chariotteering.

The enclosure in which these shows were annually exhibited was an oblong, curved at the farther end, above six hundred yards in length, but comparatively narrow. The seats which ranged round the two larger sides and extremity of this area (which derived its name of arena from the sand with which it was strewed) were originally cut for the most part out of the rising ground and turfed; less rude accommodation was afterwards supplied by wooden scaffoldings, but the whole space was eventually surrounded by masonry and decorated with all the forms and members of Roman architecture.

The arena was adapted for chariot racing by a partition, a dwarf wall, surmounted with various emblematic devices, which ran along the middle and terminated at either end in goals or ornamented pillars, round which the contending cars were driven a stated number of times. The eye of the spectator, from his position aloft, was carried over this spinal ridge, and he obtained a complete view of the contest, which thus passed and repassed, amidst clouds of dust and roars of sympathising excitement, before his feet. The Romans had from the first an intense delight in these races; and many of the most graphic passages of their poets describe the ardour of the horses, the emulation of their drivers, and the tumultuous enthusiasm of the spectators.

These contests maintained their interest from the cradle to the very grave of the Roman people. The circus of Constantinople, under the Greek designation of Hippodrome, was copied from the pattern of the Roman; and the factions, which divided the favour of the tribes almost from the beginning

of the empire, continued to agitate the city of Theodosius and Justinian. The citizens were never satiated with this spectacle, and could sit without flagging through a hundred heats, which the liberality of the exhibiter sometimes provided for them. But the races were more commonly varied with contests of other kinds. All the varieties of the Greek pancratiun, such as boxing, wrestling, and running, were exhibited in the circus; gladiators fought one another with naked swords, sometimes in single combat, sometimes in opposing bands.

The immense size of the arena, unfavourable for the exhibition of the duel, was turned to advantage for the display of vast multitudes of wild animals, which were let loose in it to be transfixed with spears and arrows. This practice seems to date from the sixth century, when victorious generals first returned to Rome from the far regions of the teeming East, to ingratiate themselves with the populace by showing them the strange monsters of unknown continents, lions and elephants, giraffes and hippopotami. As in other things, the rivalry of the nobles soon displayed itself in the number of these creatures they produced for massacre; and the favour of the citizens appears to have followed with constancy the champion who treated it with the largest effusion of blood. The circus was too spacious for the eye to gloat upon the expression of conflicting passions, and watch the last ebblings of life; but the amphitheatre brought the greatest possible number of spectators within easy distance of the dead and dying, and fostered the passion for the sight of blood, which continued for centuries to vie in interest with the harmless excitement of the race.

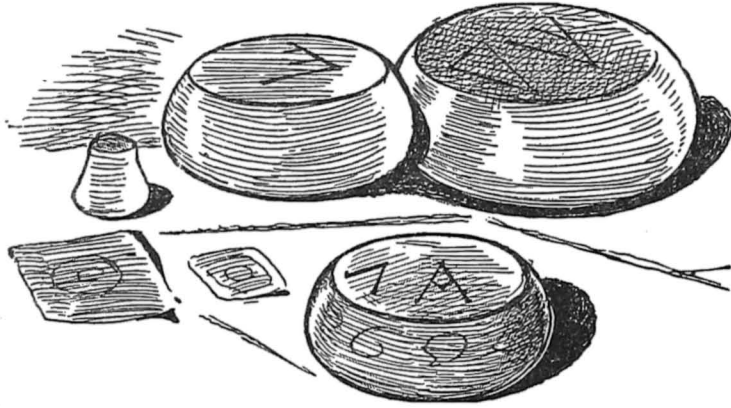
The idea of the theatre is representation and illusion, and the stage is, as it were, magic ground, over which the imagination may glance without restraint and wander at will from Thebes to Athens, from the present to the past or future. But in the amphitheatre all is reality. The citizen, seated face to face with his fellow-citizens, could not for a moment forget either his country or his times. The spectacles here presented to him made no appeal to the discursive faculties; they brought before his senses, in all the hardness of actuality, the consummation of those efforts of strength, skill, and dexterity in the use of arms to which much of his own time and thoughts were necessarily directed.

The exhibition of gladiatorial combats, which generally preceded the departure of a general upon a foreign campaign, was part of the soldier's training (and every citizen was regarded as a soldier), from which he received the last finish of his education, and was taught to regard wounds and death as the natural incidents of his calling. These were probably the most ancient of the military spectacles. The combats of wild beasts, and of men with beasts, were a corruption of the noble science of war which the gladiatorial contests were supposed to teach; they were a concession to the prurient appetite for excitement, engendered by an indulgence which, however natural in a rude and barbarous age, was actually hardening and degrading. The interest these exercises at first naturally excited degenerated into a mere passion for the sight of death; and as the imagination can never be wholly inactive in the face of the barest realities, the Romans learned to feast their thoughts on the deepest mystery of humanity, and to pry with insatiate curiosity into the secrets of the last moments of existence. In proportion as they lost their faith in a future life, they became more restlessly inquisitive into the conditions of the present.

The eagerness with which the great mass of the citizens crowded to witness these bloody shows, on every occasion of their exhibition, became one



of the most striking features of Roman society, and none of their customs has, accordingly, attracted more of the notice of the ancient writers who profess to describe the manners of their times. By them they are often represented as an idle and frivolous recreation, unworthy of the great nation of kings; nor do we find the excuse officially offered for the combats of gladiators, as a means of cherishing courage and fostering the ruder virtues of antiquity, generally put forward as their apology by private moralists. Men



ROMAN WEIGHTS

of reflection, who were far themselves from sharing the vulgar delight in these horrid spectacles (and it should be noticed that no Roman author speaks of them with favour, or gloats with interest on their abominations), acquiesced without an effort in the belief that it was necessary to amuse the multitude, and was better to gratify them with any indulgence they craved for

than to risk the more fearful consequences of thwarting and controlling them. The blood thus shed on the arena was the price they calculated on paying for the safety and tranquillity of the realm.

In theory, at least, the men who were thus thrust forth to engage the wild beasts were condemned criminals; but it was often necessary to resort to the expedient of hiring volunteers to furnish the numbers required, and this seems to prove that the advantage was generally on the side of the human combatant. The gladiators, although their profession might be traced by antiquarians to the combats of armed slaves around the pyre of their master, ending in their mutual destruction in his honour, were devoted to no certain death. They were generally slaves purchased for the purpose, but not unfrequently free men hired with liberal wages; and they were in either case too costly articles to be thrown away with indifference. They were entitled to their discharge after a few years' service, and their profession was regarded in many respects as a public service, conducted under fixed regulations. Under the emperors, indeed, express laws were required to moderate the ardour even of knights and senators to descend into the arena, where they delighted to exhibit their courage and address in the face of danger. Such was the ferocity engendered by the habitual use of arms, so soothing to the swordsman's vanity the consciousness of skill and valour, so stimulating to his pride the thunders of applause from a hundred thousand admirers, that the practice of mortal combat, however unsophisticated nature may blench at its horrors, was actually the source perhaps of more pleasure than pain to the Roman prize-fighters. If the companions of Spartacus revolted and slew their trainers and masters, we may set against this instance of despair and hostility the signal devotion of the gladiators of Antonius, who cut their way through so many obstacles in a fruitless effort to succour him. But the effect of such exhibitions upon the spectators themselves was wholly evil; for while they utterly failed in supplying the bastard courage for which they were said to be designed, they destroyed the nerve of sympathy for suffering which distinguishes the human from the brute creation.<sup>c</sup>





TO THE TIGERS

(From the painting by Dr. Mend)



## SHEPPARD'S ESTIMATE OF THE GLADIATORIAL CONTEST

The gladiatorial combats were, above all things else, the distinctive characteristics of Rome. Rome, in her fallen days, without virtue, without faith, without trust in her gods or in herself, loved, believed in, deified one idol still — Homicide. The butcheries of the amphitheatre exerted a charm upon the minds of men, for which literature, art, philosophy, religion, and the simple enjoyments of domestic life were flung aside. Existence became a frightful phantasmagoria — an alternation of debauch and blood.

The practice itself can be traced back to one of the darkest superstitions of the human mind. It originated in the barbarous instinct of the savage to sacrifice his victim upon the tomb of the dead as a satisfaction, and perhaps as an attendant upon the departed spirit. The example, from whatever source derived, was first set to the Roman people by Marcus and Decimus Brutus, who matched together gladiators in the Forum Boarium, for the purpose of casting unprecedented éclat upon the obsequies of their father, 264 B.C. The seed fell upon fruitful ground, for it soon grew and ripened into a harvest more destructive than the dragon's teeth of Grecian fable. The wealth and ingenuity of the Roman aristocracy were taxed to the uttermost to content the populace and provide food for the indiscriminate slaughter of the circus, where brute fought with brute and man with man, or where the skill and weapons of the latter were matched against the strength and ferocity of the first. In one day Pompey poured six hundred lions into the arena. Augustus delighted the multitude with the sight of four hundred and twenty panthers. Twenty elephants, Pliny tells us, contended against a band of six hundred Gætulian captives. The games given by Trajan lasted for more than one hundred and twenty days. Ten thousand gladiators descended to combat, and more than ten thousand beasts were slain. Titus, that "delight of the human race," had upwards of five thousand animals slaughtered in a single day. Every corner of the earth was ransacked for some strange creature whose appearance was hailed with frantic applause by the spectators. We hear of camelopards, white elephants, and the rhinoceros. Scaurus produced upon the stage a hippopotamus and five crocodiles. Game of the nobler sorts became scarce. The Roman populace was as indignant with those who in any way damaged its supplies, as the country sportsman is with a poacher or with the unlucky culprit who has made away with a fox. In the time of Theodosius it was forbidden by law to destroy a Gætulian lion, even in self-defence.

But the death-agonies of the wild animals of the desert were too tame a spectacle to satisfy the Roman thirst for blood. It was when man strove with man, and when all that human strength and skill, increased by elaborate training and taxed to the uttermost, could do, was put forth before their unrelenting eyes, that the transport of their sanguinary enthusiasm was at its height. It is impossible to describe the aspect of the amphitheatre at such a time. The audience became frantic with excitement; they rose from their seats; they yelled; they shouted their applause, as one blow more ghastly than another was dealt by lance, or sword, or dagger, and the life-blood spouted forth. "Hoc habet" — "he has it, he has it!" — was the cry which burst from ten thousand throats, and was re-echoed, not only by a debased and brutalised populace, but by the lips of royalty, by purple-clad senators and knights, by noble matrons, and even by those consecrated maids whose presence elsewhere saved the criminal from his fate, but whose function here it was to consign the suppliant to his doom by reversing

the thumb upon his appeal for mercy. His blood was soon licked up by the thirsty sand, or concealed beneath the sawdust sprinkled over it by the ready attendant; his body dragged hastily from the stage by an iron hook, and flung into a gory pit; his existence forgotten, and his place supplied by another and yet another victim, as the untiring work of death went on.

And we must remember that these things were not done casually, or under the influence of some strange fit of popular frenzy. They were done purposely, systematically, and calmly; they formed the staple amusement, I had almost said the normal employment, of a whole people, whose one audible cry was for "panem et circenses" — "bread and blood." Neither were they fostered by the brutalised habits and associations which surround the cockpit or the prize-ring. When men were "butchered to make a Roman holiday," it was among all the delicate appliances of the most refined sensualism. An awning, gorgeous with purple and gold, excluded the rays of the midday sun; sweet strains of music floated in the air, drowning the cries of death; the odour of Syrian perfumes overpowered the scent of blood; the eye was feasted by the most brilliant scenic decoration, and amused by elaborate machinery; and, as a crowning degradation to the whole, the Paphian chamber of the courtesan arose beside the bloody den into which were flung the mangled bodies of men and brutes.

Such things seem impossible to those who live beneath a civilisation which Christianity has influenced, however imperfectly, by its presence. And indeed it needs much — the concurrent testimony of poet, historian, and philosopher; the ruins of a hundred amphitheatres before our eyes; the frescoes of the Museo Borbonico; the very programmes of the performance, which something higher than accident has preserved; the incidental witness of an inspired apostle — it needs all this to convince us of the truth. But they are true, undisputed facts of history, and facts which carry with them no obscure intimation of the reasons which worked the fall of the imperial city. They prove that she deserved to fall, and by the hands of those in whose persons she had outraged humanity. It was not a poet remarkable for overstraining the religious sentiment of divine retribution, who wrote:

" Shall he expire,  
And unavenged! Arise, ye Goths! and glut your ire."

The gladiator, whether directly a captive or a refractory slave, was generally the child of those races who wreaked, in after times, a bloody vengeance upon the city of blood. And if her own degenerate sons, freedman, knight, or senator, nay, even her degraded daughters, descended into the arena and combated by his side, this could only bespeak her more entire debasement and unfitness to direct the destinies of the world.<sup>i</sup>