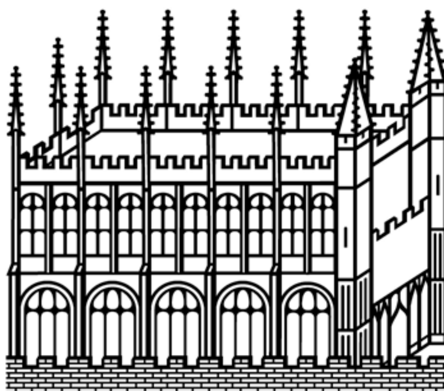

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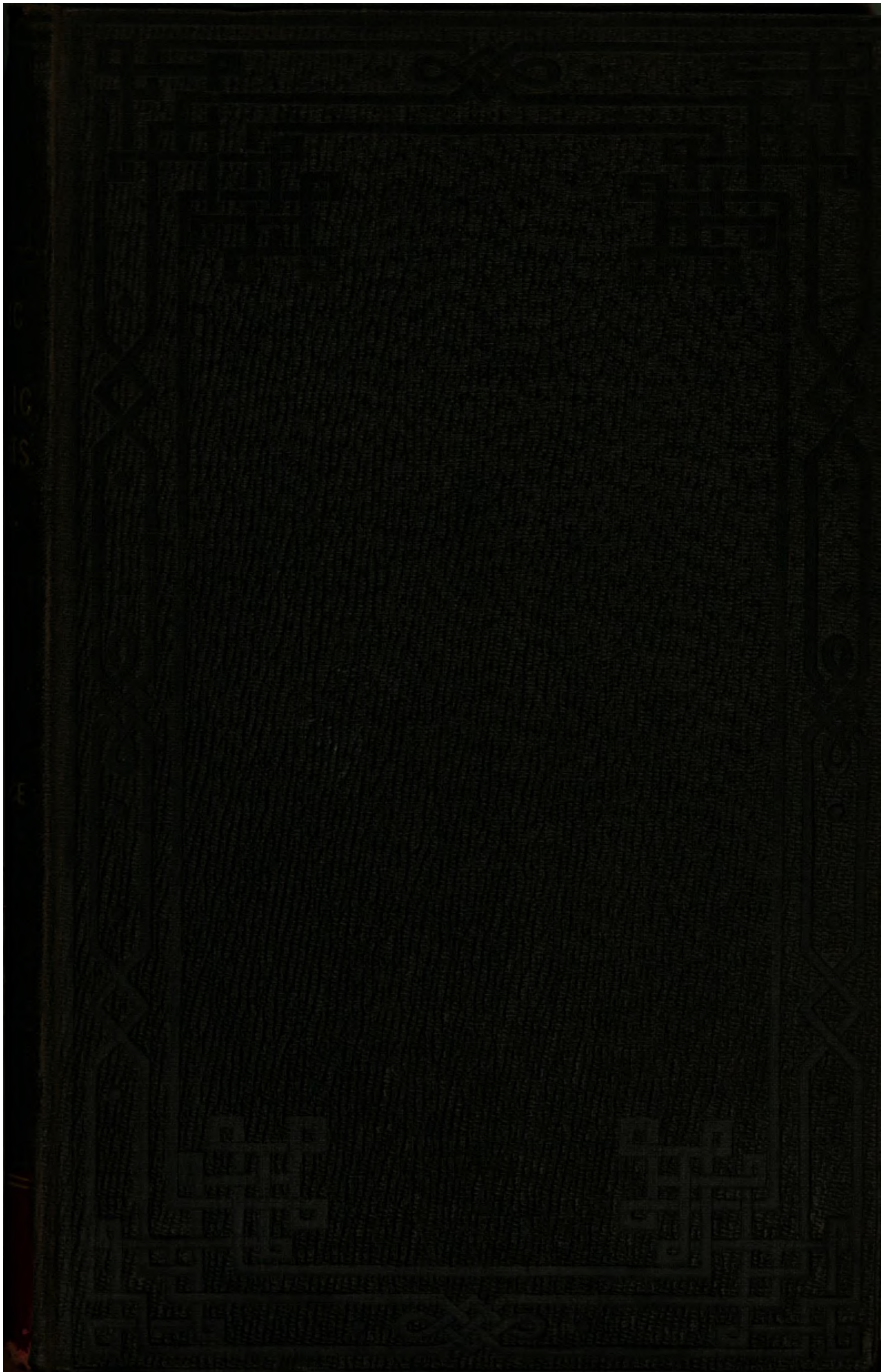

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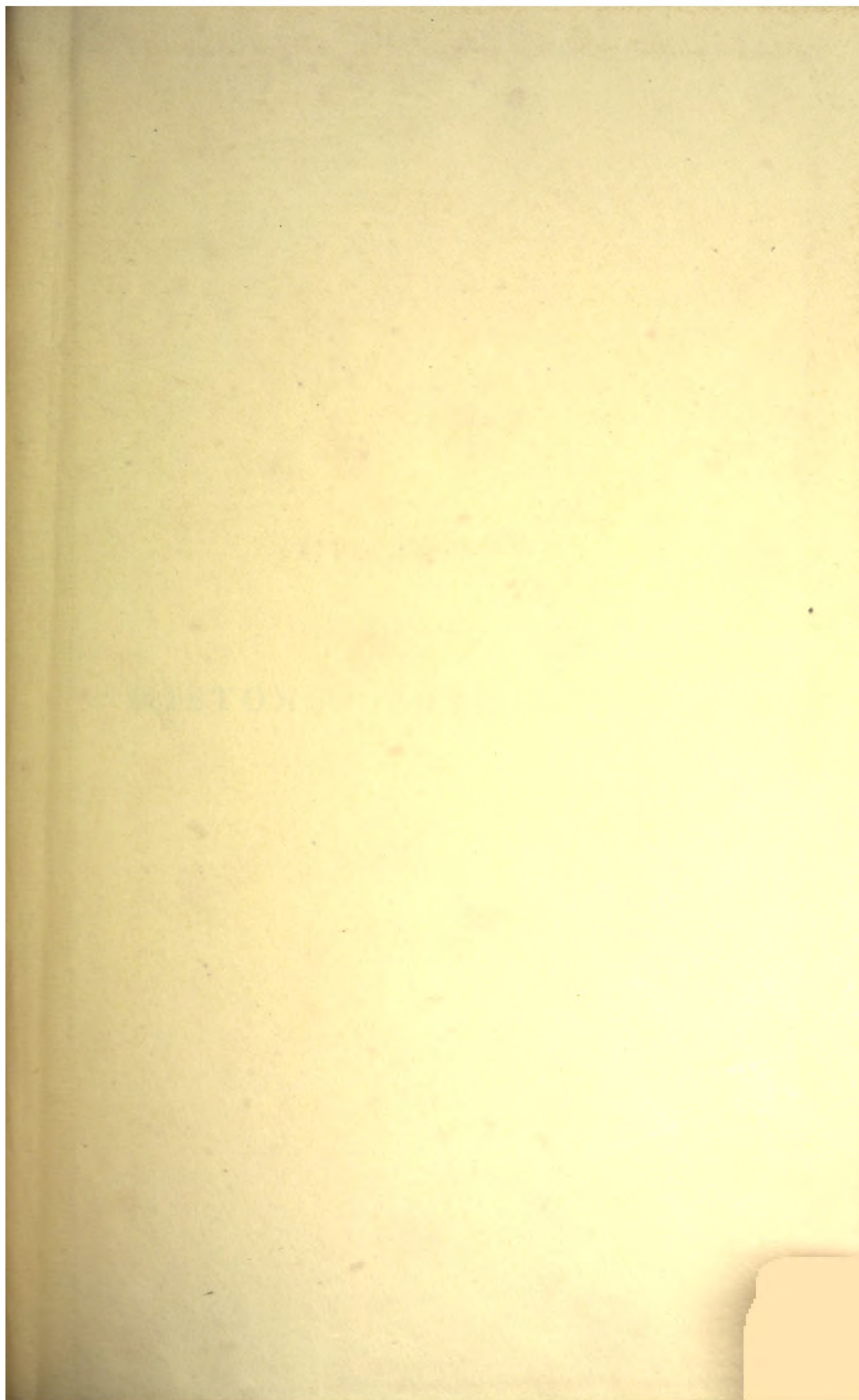

CLASSIC

AND

HISTORIC PORTRAITS.

VOL. I.

CLASSIC AND HISTORIC PORTRAITS.

BY

JAMES BRUCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

I BELIEVE that there are not many persons who read biography with interest, who have not felt a desire for a more intimate personal acquaintance, as it may be called, than is usually afforded them with those men and women whose virtues and vices, joined with their natural gifts and acquired accomplishments, made them either illustrious or infamous in their own days, and still influence the world at the distance of centuries after their deaths. Those works in which the narrative of great public affairs is mixed up with the more minute private and personal details and descriptions, which pedants

and philosophers consider to be below what they call "the dignity of history," are, I believe, in spite of learned reprehension, read with more pleasure than the more pretending volumes in which this disagreeable "dignity of history" is stiffly and proudly sustained. When the Roman historian deprecates the censure of those grave and surly readers who, as he anticipates, will charge him with trifling for telling them who it was that gave lessons in music to Epaminondas, and for informing them that the Theban General danced excellently and played learnedly on the pipe, I believe that all readers possessed of an enlightened curiosity, will not only heartily accept his apology, but thank him for what he has told, and regret that he has not given us a great deal more of the same kind of information.

In many cases, this natural curiosity to know as much as possible of the appearance and manners of remarkable persons is heightened by the consideration that these personal matters influenced the destinies of nations and of the world. The history of the Roman empire

might now exhibit a wholly different aspect from what it does if, at an intensely critical period the royal diadem of Egypt had not been placed on the brows of a woman of the most marvellous accomplishments, and possessed of the most inexhaustible arts of pleasing, persuading and seducing; a sorceress whose chain

> "Around two conquerors of the world was cast,
> But for a third too feeble broke at last."

And as Octavius might have lost the empire of civilized Europe, if the voice and tongue of Cleopatra had been less sweet and persuasive than they were, so the Reformation of religion in England might have been delayed for many a year—though it could not have been averted—had not, as the poet tell us, the

> "Gospel light first beamed from Bullen's eyes."

The description of the personal appearance, the dress, the private habits and tastes of some of the most distinguished persons whose names figure on the page of history, as collected from every source available to me, and separated

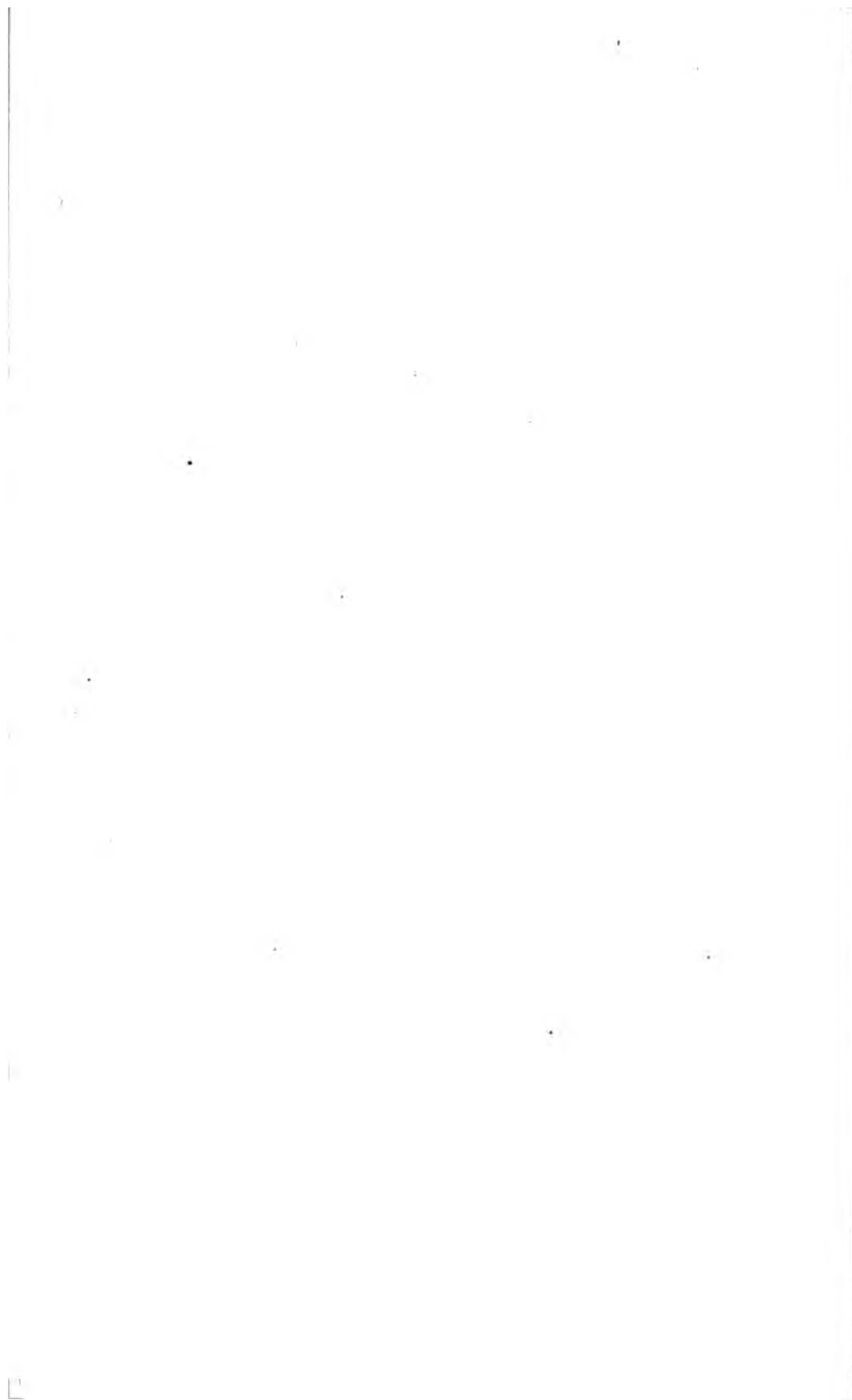
as far as possible from the often-told histories of their lives, and interspersed but sparingly, and where the temptation was irresistible, with criticism on their moral and intellectual characters—is the design which I have had before me in compiling these volumes. It would be a fatal error in a work of this kind, if the writer were to give his readers minute personal sketches of any persons but those whose names are famous enough to be familiar to all but the entirely illiterate. The Abbate Lanzi, in his History of Painting, justly reproves Vasari and others of his predecessors for giving their readers full details about the persons and habits of the inferior class of painters, but admits that all the information of this kind which can be collected about Raffaelle or the Carracci, or the other great masters of the art, is highly valuable. Montaigne, who has not left the world in ignorance of his own private life, in expressing his regret at the loss of the diaries kept by Alexander, Augustus, Cato, Sylla and Brutus, says: "Of such men we love and study the portraits even in copper and in stone."

The genius of the statuary and the painter is unquestionably indebted for much of the admiration which it receives, to this natural desire to look on the likenesses of the great men who have long left this world.

In speaking of some of the personages referred to, I have been led necessarily to discuss the ideas of beauty which have prevailed in different ages and countries; and occasional references to painting and the kindred arts have also been here and there, I hope not inappropriately, introduced.

I have found a difficulty in fixing on a title for these volumes, and the one which I have adopted is, I confess, not so clearly explanatory of their contents as I could have wished.

MAY, 1853.



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PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.

SAPPHO.

Of one of the most celebrated women of antiquity, the poetess Sappho, living about six centuries before the Christian era, we have a personal description handed down, in all probability, from her own time, if not indeed through writings of her own, now lost. This description is familiar to most readers from the epistle which Ovid, in the name of Sappho, has inscribed to Phaon, the object of her unrequited and fatal love. In this epistle, Sappho is made to tell us that nature had denied her beauty but had gifted her with genius; that her

fame was sung throughout the whole world, and that her countryman Alcæus, though his was a loftier strain, was not more celebrated than she was. She tells Phaon that she is of short stature and of a dark complexion; but she reminds him that Andromeda (whom Grecian fable makes the daughter of a king of Ethiopia), with the tawny colour of her country, had pleased the heroic Perseus.

When a woman otherwise famous, and living at a distant date, is spoken of, if there be no specific information respecting her person, tradition becomes gallant, and, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, gifts her with beauty in abundance. It is this consideration which gives weight to the belief that, in drawing her picture more than five hundred years after Sappho had ceased to sing, Ovid did not indulge in any wayward fancy of his own, rich and original as his fancy was beyond that of any other of the Roman poets, but embodied a well-founded and universally-received tradition, if he even did not make use of authentic historical information extant in his

time. The language which Ovid puts into her mouth is so specific as to give countenance to the belief entertained by some writers that the finest parts of this epistle, one of the best in the collection, were taken from writings of Sappho, which were in the poet's hands.

To the evidence furnished by Ovid, which is very strong, that Sappho could not boast of personal beauty, some have added a testimony which is certainly very weak. There are two verses preserved amongst the fragments of Sappho, in which she expresses her preference of the beauty of the mind to the beauty of the person.* The argument drawn from these verses—that Sappho undervalued what she did not possess—is, I think, perfectly worthless. In all ages of the world, both writers and speakers have, often no doubt hypocritically enough, expressed the very decided preference which they felt for moral and intellectual over personal beauty; and this preference, in truth, is one of the most completely worn-out of com-

* Sappho, "Fragmenta et Elogia." Cura Jo. Christiani Wolfii, p. 72. Hamburg, 1733.

mon-places. A volume of huge size might, without much trouble, be compiled on the praises of intellect and virtue, and the worthlessness of fine faces and fine figures. "Madame de Staël," says M. Philarete Chasles, to whom I shall have again to refer on the subject of Sappho's portrait, "whom nature had little favoured, was an enthusiast for beauty; Charlotte Corday, beautiful as an angel, thought on this subject like Sappho."* I have no doubt that, whatever they might think, most beauties have been in the habit of speaking like Sappho.

In opposition to the strong testimony of Ovid, it has been urged that a series of writers, ranging from Plato, writing about four hundred years before the Christian era, down to the Princess Anna Comnena in the eleventh century, have bestowed upon Sappho the Greek epithet which signifies beautiful. In looking, however, at the passages quoted, it will, I think, be found that in none of them is the epithet used in a very positive sense, but that in all

* "Etudes sur l'Antiquité," p. 282. Paris, 1847.

of them it is applied vaguely and loosely, the subsequent writers simply repeating the expression of Plato. In the "Phædrus" Plato represents Socrates speaking of some works "of the beautiful Sappho," (Σαπφους της καλης). On this passage we have an important criticism by the Platonic philosopher, Maximus Tyrius, who tells us that Sappho was "little and black," (μικραν και μελαιναν); and it is to be presumed that he had other authority for bringing these charges against her than the verses of Ovid, to which, it is to be observed, he makes no reference whatever. But, besides this, Maximus Tyrius supplies us with what I believe is the true explanation of the epithet which Plato has joined to the name of Sappho and which others after him have allowed her, when he tells us that Socrates called Sappho "beautiful" on account of her poetry.* The same interpretation may, I think, be fairly put on all the other passages cited from the Greek writers. Athenæus simply speaks of "the beautiful

* Maximus Tyrius, "Dissertatio," VIII, p. 90. Cantab. 1703.

Sappho," (ἡ καλη Σαπφω).* Two passages are met with in the letters of the Emperor Julian, in which, while he is referring to the literary genius of the poetess, he calls her "the beautiful Sappho." "Sappho the beautiful," he says in one of these passages, "tells us that the moon is silvery, and that therefore she obscures the face of the other stars."† In the other passage, writing to his friend Alypius, he acknowledges the Iambic verses which he has received from him, and which he says are such as "the beautiful Sappho weaves in her odes."‡ The expression is the expression of Plato, borrowed by Julian, his disciple and enthusiastic admirer. Now Plato himself, like his master Socrates, to whom he attributes the expression about Sappho, was sensible alike to the beauties of the person and of the mind, and, indeed, considered the one to be the reflexion of the other. But anything so un-

* "Athenæus," lib. XIII, p. 596. Edit. 1611.

† Julian, "Epist. ad Hecebolum," XIX. Opera, p. 386. Lipsiæ, 1696.

‡ "Epist. ad Alypium," XXX. Opera, p. 403.

philosophical as delight in the contemplation of female beauty has never been charged on Julian whose passion was all for the charms of the cold goddesses of Olympus. In the passage in which Anna Comnena speaks of Sappho, the application of the term "beautiful" is equally vague and unrestricted. The Princess is referring to the horrible heresies of the Bogomilians, and says that she could explain the whole, but that modesty forbids her, "as the beautiful Sappho somewhere says," (ως πȣ φησιν ἡ καλη Σαπφω).*

In the face of such extremely loose and careless authorities—all of them it may be assumed repeating the phrase of Plato, which his follower Maximus Tyrius evidently understood and has explained in its proper sense—the description adopted by Ovid has prevailed in the general belief.

A fragment—a single line—of Alcæus, one of Sappho's lovers, has been preserved, in which he addresses her as his "dark-haired, chaste,

* Annæ Comnenæ Cæsariensis "Alexis," lib. xv, Venet., 1729.

sweetly smiling Sappho;" (Ιοπλοκαμ' αγνα, μειλιχομειδε Σαπφοι) ;* a very moderate compliment from a lover.

Antipater of Thessaly, a poet of the time of Augustus, has unfairly been quoted as praising the beauty of Sappho. He merely praises the Lesbian women, whose beauty has at all times been as famous as the intensity of their passions, of which Sappho had her share with the rest. In the verses referred to, Antipater speaks of "Sappho, the ornament of the beautiful haired women of Lesbos," (Λεσβιαδων Σαπφω κοσμον ευπλοκαμων.)†

In the Greek Anthology, there are also some verses addressed by Damocharis to Sappho, in which her beauty is commended.‡ Damocharis, like Antipater, is a poet of the era of Augustus, and the evidence of a passage in his complimentary verses to the most distinguished of the Greek poetesses, has really very little weight.

The proof that Sappho was destitute of

* "Fragmenta et Elogia." Wolff, p. 126.

† "Anthologia Græca," lib. II, p. 65. Lipsiæ, 1829.

‡ "Anthologia," lib. III, p. 304.

personal beauty has satisfied Bayle, who speaks of her in the most unromantic terms. He is by no means surprised that Phaon would have nothing to do with her. "Sappho," he says, "was a widow in the decline of life, who had never been pretty, who had given occasion for being scandalously spoken of during her widowhood, and who paid no regard to decency in testifying the violence of her passion."*

There was a statue of Sappho erected in the Prytaneum of Syracuse. Her figure was cut in brass by the statuary Silanion. The people of Mytelene, it is said on somewhat doubtful authority, stamped her effigy on their coins. Her portrait, says Pliny, was drawn by the painter Leon. Ausonius has an epigram on the picture of Sappho, in which, following another epigram in the Anthology attributed to Plato, he calls her "The Tenth Muse." The writer who gives an original idea to the world is valuable. This fine idea of Plato has been used over and over again without any acknowledgment. The title of "The Tenth Muse,"

* Bayle, "Dictionnaire Hist. et Crit." Art. "Sappho."

is well deserved by Sappho, but it has been somewhat lowered in having also been bestowed on Margaret, the famous Queen of Navarre—a good woman, but not a muse nor a poetical genius in any respect. A Mexican-Spanish poetess of the seventeenth century, Doña Juana Inez de la Cruz, is styled in the title-page of her works "The Tenth Muse;" and this appellation has been completely prostituted by having been awarded to that polyglott Dutch virgin, Anna Maria à Schurman, a female admirable Crichton, without one particle of genius or original talent about her. This title is bestowed on Mademoiselle Schurman by the very learned Fredrick Spanheim, in his address to the reader prefixed to her works.*

Gronovius in his splendid collection of the effigies of illustrious men and women, has engraved a sculpture of Sappho in the form of the statues called *Hermæ*.† The face is a

* "Nobiliss. Virginis Annæ Mariæ a Schurman Opuscula." Trajecti ad Rhenum, 1652.

† Gronovius, "Thesaurus Antiquit. Græcarum," II, 34. Venet. 1732.

half front, the eye full of fire, the forehead protruding as we see it in women led into crime by furious passions, the nose masculine, the mouth highly intellectual, and the whole expression of the features that of deep melancholy energy. A copy of this engraving forms a striking frontispiece to Wolff's elaborate edition of the remains of Sappho. In speaking of this portrait, M. Philarete Chasles takes notice of "the bold, masculine expression of the face, the audacious projection of the forehead, speaking of passion and vehemence of thought, the lips a little thick but well chiselled, ready to throw out sentiment and eloquence, the eye ardent and open, and animated with inexpressible energy. This is Sappho. This is that woman gifted with a masculine soul and impetuous senses, devoted to genius and misfortune, to disasters and to distinction, to a fatal glory which survives her works. In presence of this portrait we are tempted to cry out with Plutarch, 'I see the volcano from whence have issued flaming thoughts and burning hymns.'" After telling us that he rejects

as spurious all the portraits extant of Sappho, except this admirable one, M. Chasles proceeds: "It would agree as well with one of the criminal heroines of Byron or of Eschylus as with the lover of Phaon. It bears the character of that organisation which consumes the life, and which delivers up a woman to all the fury of the passions, to all the remorse and all the sorrow which they carry along with them."*

In Ovid's picture of Sappho we have a portrait rescued from extreme antiquity. It is no part of my design to record the histories of the persons described in this work; and in the case of Sappho, this is a happy relief from a painful duty. Madame Dacier was good-naturedly resolved to hold that Sappho was an ill-used woman; and the German Welcker has written a book to prove her innocence. Thirlwall, the present Bishop of St. David's, in his "History of Greece," treats her guilt as a slander; and Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer appears, from a remark in his "Athens and the Athenians," in reference to Welcker's work, to be one of those

* "Etudes sur l'Antiquité," p. 282.

charitable persons who believe in her purity. "Sappho," says Sir Edward, "(whose chaste and tender muse it was reserved for the chivalry of a northern student five-and-twenty centuries after her hand was cold and her tongue was mute, to vindicate from the longest continued calumny that genius ever endured), gave to the most ardent of human passions the most delicate colouring of female sentiment."*

The evidence on the other side is, however, painfully strong. At the distance of more than two thousand years, the verses of the unhappy Sappho still breathe the very soul of that consuming passion, which called forth and lighted up the fire of her genius. There is an unconcerted harmony in the strong figurative language which has been used in describing her poetry, by all who have spoken of it. Horace celebrates the hot loves which the Æolian girl gave to her lyre; Plutarch says she breathes fire; and Byron has called her "the burning Sappho." It was by the study of her writings,

* "Athens," b. I, c. 8.

we are told, that the physician Erasistratus discovered that the sickness of Antiochus arose from his love for his mother-in-law Stratonice.*

Sappho taught amatory writing to the Greek poets, and amongst her scholars are reckoned the sad Simonides and that Ibycus of Rhegium, who, of all others, appeared to Cicero to be warmest in love.†

The ancients made this woman a heroine in their dramas and romances. The love of Anacreon and Sappho is merely a beautiful fiction, the credit of which is destroyed by chronology. "Diphilus the comedian," says Bentley, "in his *Sappho* introduced Archilochus and Hipponax as gallants to that lady, though the one was dead before she was born, and she dead before the other was born."‡ Had it been practicable for Sappho to have been courted by Hipponax, she would have had a

* Plutarch, "Demetrius."

† Cicero, "Tuscul." IV, 33.

‡ Bentley, "Dissertation on Phalaris." Works I, p. 183. Lond. 1836.

lover, whose remarkable person is commemorated by Ælian in his chapter on thin men, where we are told that the poet was of small stature, and deformed, and very slender.*

* Ælian, "Varia Historia," lib. x, c. 6.

ÆSOP.

THERE are certain great persons in history regarding whom the traditions of fable and poetry, and the assertions of plain falsehood, have triumphed in the vulgar belief of ages over the most authentic records and the most complete evidence. That Homer was a beggar; that Belisarius became both blind and a beggar; that Shakspere had no classical learning; and that Æsop, the fabulist, was a dwarf, with a hump on his back, are at this moment historical facts with, perhaps, ninety-nine out of a hundred who have heard of these illustrious men.

The name of Æsop is amongst the most renowned that have come down from antiquity. His era is some time about five or six hundred years before Christ. He stands somewhere between Homer and the great age of Grecian literature. The story of his deformity is of comparatively modern origin, even if the broad assertion of Bentley, who holds that it was first sent forth to the world by Planudes, a Byzantine monk of the fourteenth century, should be found to be untenable.

Of Planudes, Bentley says, with characteristic politeness, "that idiot of a monk has given us a book which he calls 'The Life of Æsop,' that perhaps cannot be matched in any language for ignorance and nonsense."* It is somewhat curious to find Bentley resenting more warmly than he does all the other fictions in the monk's work the unfavourable representation which it gives of Æsop's person. "But of all his injuries to Æsop, that which can least be forgiven him, is making such a mon-

* Bentley, "Dissertation upon the Fables of Æsop." Works, vol II, p. 233.

ster of him for ugliness; an abuse that has found credit so universally, that all the modern painters since the time of Planudes have drawn him in the worst shapes and features that fancy could invent. It was an old tradition amongst the Greeks that Æsop revived again and lived a second life. Should he revive once more and see the picture before the book that carries his name, could he think it drawn for himself or for the monkey, or some strange beast introduced in his fables?"

Since the time of Planudes, a thousand authorities have copied his description, and there is not a pictured edition of Æsop, or Phædrus, or Fontaine, which does not help to sanction and sanctify the belief. Yet the critical inquirer must reject the tale. "What revelation," asks Bentley, "had this monk about Æsop's deformity? For he must learn it by dream and vision, and not by ordinary methods of knowledge. He lived about two thousand years after him; and in all that tract of time there's not one single author that has given the least hint that Æsop was ugly."

It is said, and the remark is founded on a generous feeling amongst mankind, that when once we begin to think that the devil is not so very black as the vulgar represent him to be, we never stop till we make him as fair as an angel. In this spirit, Bentley is not content with showing that the popular notion about the deformity and ugliness of Æsop is unfounded, but adduces arguments to make us believe that he was really beautiful; and his arguments are well arranged, and not without weight. He tells us that in Plutarch's 'Convivium:' "Our Æsop is one of the guests, with Solon, and the other sages of Greece; there is abundance of jest and raillery there among them, and *particularly upon Æsop;* but nobody drolls upon his ugly face, which could hardly have escaped had he had such a bad one. Perhaps you'll say it had been rude and indecent to touch upon a natural imperfection. Not at all, if it had been done softly and jocosely. In Plato's 'Feast,' they are very merry upon Socrates's face, that resembled old Silenus; and in this they twit Æsop for having

been a slave, which was no more his fault than deformity would have been. Philostratus has given us, in two books, a description of a gallery of pictures; one of which is Æsop, with a chorus of animals about him. There he is represented *smiling, and looking towards the ground in a posture of thought;* but not a word of his deformity, which, were it true, must needs have been touched on in an account of a picture."

This is really ingenious, and in a great degree as solid as it is ingenious. But there is still more in this line of argument in which Bentley has displayed great ability. He alludes to the statue which Phædrus tells us was erected by the Athenians in honour of Æsop, and adds: "But had he been such a monster as Planudes has made of him, a statue had been no better than a monument of his ugliness; it had been kinder to his memory to have let that alone. But the famous Lysippus was the statuary that made it. And must so great a hand be employed to dress up a lump of deformity?" Bentley next refers to the

epigram of Agathias upon this statue, and asks: "How could he, too, have omitted to speak of it, had his ugliness been so notorious? The Greeks have several proverbs about persons deformed. Our Æsop, if so very ugly, had been in the first rank of them; especially when his statue had stood there to put everybody in mind of it." The conclusion of Bentley's argument is admirable. "But I wish," he says, "I could do that justice to the memory of our Phrygian to oblige the painters to change their pencil. For it is certain he was no deformed person, and it is probable he was very handsome. For whether he was a Phrygian, or, as others say, a Thracian, he must have been sold into Samos by a trader in slaves. And it is well known that that sort of people commonly bought up the most beautiful they could light on, because they would yield the most profit. And there is mention of two slaves, fellow-servants together, Æsop and Rhodopis, a woman; and if we may guess him by his companion and *contubernalis*, we must needs believe him a comely person. For that Rhodopis was the

greatest beauty of all her age, and even a proverb arose in memory of it: Απανθ' ὁμοια, και Ῥοδωπις ἡ καλη."

Upon the whole, Bentley has been successful in relieving Æsop of the hump which the almost unanimous voice of mankind in modern days had fixed on his back, and the evidence brought to prove that he was really handsome is certainly respectable.

From the time that the ugliness of Æsop was asserted in the romance of Planudes, till Bentley attacked and demolished the credibility of the story, the belief that Æsop was a deformed dwarf appears to have been universal even amongst the learned. Lord Bacon makes use of this belief in his "Essay on Deformity." The author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy" also assumes it as a fact. Ritterhusius, in his Commentary on Phædrus's Fables, while his attention must have been called to the history of Æsop, in noticing the line where Phædrus says he has known many excellent persons with ugly faces (*et turpi facie multos cognovi optimos*), gives Æsop as his first instance of a

good man with a deformed person.* Bayle, who takes every opportunity of extolling the gifts of the mind over those of the body, tells us that intellect is able to overcome, in the eyes of a beauty, the ill effects of ugliness; "Æsop," he says, "the most ugly of men, nevertheless touched the heart of Rhodope."†

It is somewhat remarkable that the old Scottish poet, Robert Henrysoun, writing between 1500 and 1508, in his Prologue to his Fables, which are full of poetical beauty, represents Æsop appearing to him in a dream—not as a little hunchback, but as "the fairest man that he had ever seen," and of stature large.

It may be worth mentioning, that Dr. Blomfield (in the "Museum Criticum") asserts that the life of Æsop, attributed to Planudes, is more ancient than his time. But what is more to the purpose, as proving that Bentley is so far wrong, though substantially in the right, is this: the Rev. Mr. Dyce, in his annotations on Bentley's works, quotes Huschke, a German

* Phædri, "Fabulæ," p. 359. Amstel, 1698.

† Bayle, "Dict. Hist. et Crit." Art. "Rhodope."

critic, as referring to a passage in the orations of Himerius, a writer of the fourth century, in which Æsop is spoken of as ugly. Himerius thus becomes an authority upon the question of ugliness, standing midway between Æsop and Planudes, and reducing the wide waste of two thousand years to one thousand. But the evidence adduced by Bentley, that Æsop was not ugly, is still, I think, nearly conclusive.

The notion that Æsop was ill-favoured and deformed, may have originated in the vulgar belief in the wisdom of hunchbacks and crooked persons; a belief which is prevalent amongst those persons themselves, affording them more than solace for their ungainly exterior. Lord Bacon is perhaps not far wrong when he says that "all deformed persons are bold. First, as in their own defence, as being exposed to scorn; but in process of time by a general habit. Also it stirreth in them industry and especially of this kind, to watch and observe the weakness of others that they may have somewhat to repay."

The renown of Æsop has been such as might

satisfy any ambition. The Athenians, we have seen, erected a public statue in his honour. Socrates versified some of his Fables, while lying in prison awaiting the executioner. Luther held these apologues to be next in value to the New Testament. And the children in all civilized countries at this day seek pleasure and wisdom in them.

PYTHAGORAS.

THE extreme beauty of Pythagoras, the father of philosophy, is matter of uniform tradition, and is alluded to by all his biographers. His mother, Pythias of Samos, was the most beautiful woman of the age; her charms being commemorated by a poet of her country, who declares, in a distich which is preserved in Jamblichus, that she bore Pythagoras to the god Apollo. Pythagoras himself appears to have been not unwilling to be believed to be the son of Apollo, or even Apollo himself come in the flesh. His disciple, Jamblichus, with more respect for the honour of the philosopher's

mother, denies his divine origin, but admits that his soul was from Apollo. When his mother was with child, the oracle of Delphi declared that she would bring forth a son excelling all men in beauty, and who would be a blessing to the world.* The writer of the life of Pythagoras, ascribed to Porphyry, tells us that Pythagoras had a very beautiful face and was tall in stature, and that there was much grace and comeliness in his manners and in all the movements of his body.† The epithet "Cometes" was applied to him in allusion to his long flowing hair, and he was also called "the youth with the beautiful hair." His personal elegance was accompanied with great strength and admirable health, his life having been prolonged to nearly a hundred years, or, as some say, to more than a century. His appearance and voice fixed upon him the attention of all who ever came in his presence.‡

* Diogenes Laertius, "Vit. Philos." Art. "Pythagoras." Jamblichus, "De Vita Pythagoræ," c. II, sec. 5. Amst. 1707.

† Porphyrius, sec. 18.

‡ Jamblichus, c. II, sec. 10.

In his eighteenth year, Pythagoras appeared at the Olympic games, where he offered himself as a boxer amongst the boys, but the judges decided that he had passed boyhood, on which he took up a match with the men, and vanquished them all.* Pythagoras is not merely the father of philosophy, but also the father of what in modern days is courteously called "the noble art of self-defence." He was the first who boxed scientifically, and the lessons which he gave to his pupil Eurymenes made him the champion of the ring. Eurymenes, as we learn from Porphyry, was of small stature, but, under the instruction of Pythagoras, was able to thresh the biggest man who appeared against him. The athletes were dieted upon cheese and figs, but Eurymenes, by advice of Pythagoras, took daily a certain allowance of animal food.† Jamblichus, it may be mentioned, tells us nothing of this, but he mentions another Pythagoras, a disciple of the philosopher, who wrote some books on athletics, and who directed the wrestlers to eat animal food. Pliny also

* Diogenes Laertius. Art. "Pythagoras."

† Porphyrius, sec. 15.

appears to believe that the philosopher and the wrestler were not the same person. He tells us that the eating of figs gives strength to the body, and that hence the athletes were fed on them, and that it was Pythagoras, "the master of exercises" (*exercitator*), who first taught them to eat flesh.* The notion that Pythagoras and his disciples wholly abstained from animal food, has no doubt helped the belief in the distinction between the sage and the boxer. But it is not established; and Pythagoras had every qualification for excelling in the art of self-defence, being, as Bentley says, "a lusty proper man, and built, as it were, to make a good boxer."† Jamblichus tells us that amongst their other exercises, the disciples of Pythagoras were instructed in anointing, racing, and wrestling, in throwing the plummet, and in leaping, and in short in all exercises calculated to strengthen the powers of the body.‡ The body was considered as worthy of education, as the soul by

* Plinius, "Hist. Nat." l. XXIII, c. 7.

† Bentley, "Phalaris." Works I, p. 121.

‡ Jamblichus, c. XXI, sec. 97.

the sages of Greece. Cleanthes, the stoic, the strongest man of his age, was in his youth, like Pythagoras, a famous bruiser; Chrysippus shone on the race-course, while Plato and Lycon of Troas were distinguished as wrestlers.

In manhood and old age Pythagoras was remarkable for the dignity and gravity of his aspect. No one, says Porphyry, ever saw him either laugh or cry. His rebuke in one instance is said to have been followed by the fatal effect which has been attributed to the Satires of Archilochus. A young man, reproved by Pythagoras, straightway went and hanged himself. Seeing the alarming consequence of his reprimand, which there need be no doubt was conveyed with all possible mildness, the philosopher, who was of a sweet and amiable temper, and who inculcated in his disciples the duty of being gentle in censuring, ever afterwards, it is said, abstained from reproving at all.

The beard of Pythagoras was long and flowing; and as he was regarded as the first

* Porphyrius, sec. 35.

philosopher, this circumstance helped to make a long beard to be looked on as the badge of a wise man, and to lead all the quacks, who aspired to the reputation and profits of philosophy, to take care to be furnished with this outward and visible sign of their inner wisdom, and of the genuineness of their calling. In all ages of the world evidence of wisdom and virtue, quite as equivocal as a long beard, has been received as perfectly satisfactory both by the learned and the unlearned vulgar. It is a pretty story in illustration of the reverence which the ancients paid to a long beard, which is told by Aulus Gellius of the wise and good Herodes Atticus. A person came to Herodes, wrapped in a cloak with long hair and a very long beard, and asked money of him to buy bread. Herodes inquired what he was, on which the beggar, with a frowning face and surly voice, said he was a philosopher, expressing at the same time his wonder that Herodes should ask any question about what he must see. "I see, indeed," replied the true philosopher, "the beard and the cloak; but the philosopher I do not yet see. I

request you, however, with your good leave, to tell me what reason you think we have for knowing you to be a philosopher." On this Herodes dismissed the needy quack with as much money as would buy him bread for thirty days.*

Like Aristotle and Aristippus, Pythagoras delighted in the adorning of his person, and was altogether a man of elegant tastes. He wore a white robe with Persian trowsers (αναξυριδες), and a golden crown on his head.† His robe was of linen, woollen clothes being for some reason or other avoided by him and his disciples.‡ There was a refinement about all his habits, as indeed there was about those of the best of his followers amongst the Greek philosophers. He delighted in poetry; his favourite writers being Homer and Hesiod. The verses which he used oftenest to sing were the lines in the seventeenth book of the Iliad (51, 60), describing the death of Euphor-

* Aulus Gellius, "Noctes Atticæ," l. IX, c. 2.

† Ælian, XI, c. 38.

‡ Jamblichus, c. XXVIII, sec. 149.

bus. Euphorbus, whose soul Pythagoras taught had passed into his body, was, like Pythagoras, extremely beautiful. Like Pythagoras also he delighted in tasteful ornaments; "his locks," says Homer, "were like those of the Graces, and were bound with gold and silver."

Like Sophocles, and the accomplished and amiable Theban, Epaminondas, Pythagoras was skilled in the science and practice of music and dancing.* The instrument of his preference was the lute. Like the fabled Minerva and the true Alcibiades, he probably objected to the pipe on account of its disfiguring the features of the player; but Jamblichus tells us that the Pythagoreans considered that the pipe had something effeminate in it unworthy of free men. Music was part of the regular discipline in the school of Pythagoras, and it was used as a medicine for physical diseases, as well as for the sufferings of the soul. "There were strains composed," says Jamblichus, "for curing the affections of the body, and others which were present remedies against sorrow and anguish of

* Quintilian, "Institut. Orat." lib. II.

the heart;"* strains which, like the music described by Milton, could—

> "Mitigate and suage
> With solemn touches troubled thoughts, and chase
> Anguish, and doubt, and fear, and sorrow, and pain
> From mortal or immortal minds."

The disciples of Pythagoras composed their minds to sleep by soft and soothing airs played on the lyre, and were awakened in the morning by strains of a stirring spirit. Such was the use of music with the Pythagoreans; and poetry appears to have been employed also as affecting the health of the body and the mind, and the dispelling of evil passions.

Pythagoras delivered his lectures to his disciples by twos and threes at a time, as they walked together in the shade of some beautiful grove. His instructions were sought after by both sexes; and his school was attended by several distinguished women. Amongst many other things which impress us with a highly favourable idea of the intellect and character of

* Jamblichus, xxv, sec. 110.

Pythagoras, are the traditions of the respect and kindness which he paid to women, and the lessons of practical wisdom which he taught them. But Pythagoras, it should be recollected, lived in an era when women filled their natural and proper station in Greece, and long before the Athenians learned to regard their wives as merely household drudges, and breeders of children for the service of the State, and to bestow their respectful attachment on the imported courtezans of Ionia. I am inclined to believe that it was no doctrine of the elegant Pythagoras, which is imputed to him by the ascetic Platonists of the latter ages, that no woman who did not profess unchastity ought to wear gold ornaments.

With regard to his diet, the philosopher has, without reason, been sometimes claimed by the vegetarians as a member of their dyspeptic fraternity; and it has been asserted that he fed altogether like a horse, except that he would not eat beans. In more than one passage in the biographies of him by Jamblichus and Porphyry, it is said absolutely that he ab-

stained from wine and flesh, and forbade their use to his disciples. His ordinary food is said to have been bread and honey, and honey-comb and pot-herbs. Millet also was held in much esteem by the Pythagoreans. Pythagoras himself, who persuaded an ox not to eat beans, is also said to have instructed a she-bear to eat bread and apples, and to have dismissed her after taking her oath that she would never more taste animal food.* These passages, however, are inconsistent with others in the same biographies, in which it is declared that he and his disciples eat the flesh of animals which it was lawful to sacrifice. Besides this, Aristoxenus, a disciple of Aristotle, left behind him a work on Pythagoras, in which, as he is quoted by Aulus Gellius, he says that of all kinds of pulse, Pythagoras preferred beans, on account of his belief in their medicinal qualities; and that he also partook of kid's flesh and sucking-pigs.† Difficulties and doubts hang over this whole subject, as indeed they do over

* Jamblichus, c. XIII, sec. 60. Porphyrius, sec. 23.

† Aulus Gellius, lib. IV, c. 11, sec. 4.

everything connected with Pythagoras. The probability is, that the philosopher relaxed and modified his dietary laws according to the constitution and circumstances of his disciples, and according to their various stages of advancement in philosophy.

The whole history of the life and opinions of this famous man is involved in obscurity and contradiction. His character is an interesting study. If we estimate him according to the impression which he has made on the world, we must admit him to have been one of the greatest of mortals. The philosophy both of India and Egypt seems to have entered into his system. His writings have either been lost, or, according to some authorities, he left nothing in writing behind him. Yet the influence of his teaching endured directly for six centuries in Greece, and is still felt in the world. Speaking with the imperfect and confused knowledge of Pythagoras, which has reached modern times, it appears that with all the real wisdom and real philanthropy which he possessed, he mixed up much of the spirit and craft of the impostor

and the juggler, and that he committed frauds on the ignorance and inexperience of his contemporaries, in order, it may be admitted, to benefit his age and generation. The author of "The Anatomy of Melancholy" gives Pythagoras the character of being "part philosopher, part magician, and part witch." Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton in his "Student" has some fine remarks on distinguished men, who, for the sake of effect and influence, have mingled quackery with their greatness, and Pythagoras comes first on the list. "Mankind," says Bulwer, "love to be cheated; thus the men of genius, who have not disappointed the world in their externals, and what I shall term the management of self, have always played a part; they have kept alive the vulgar wonder by tricks suited to the vulgar understanding; they have measured their conduct by device and artifice, and have walked the paths of life in the garments of the stage. Thus did Pythagoras and Diogenes; thus did Napoleon and Louis XIV. (the last of whom was a man of genius, if only from the delicate beauty of his

compliments); thus did Bolingbroke and Chatham (who never spoke except in his best wig, as being the most imposing); and, above all, thus did Lord Byron. The last three were men eminently interesting to the vulgar, not so much from their genius as their charlatanism."*

In his work on "Athens," Bulwer has some admirable remarks on the character of Pythagoras, whom he calls "a demi-god in his ends, and an impostor in his means." "Looking to the man himself," says Bulwer, "his discoveries, his designs, his genius, his marvellous accomplishments, we cannot but consider him as one of the most astonishing persons the world ever produced; and if in part a mountebank and an impostor, no one, perhaps, ever deluded others with motives more pure, from an ambition more disinterested and benevolent."†

Pythagoras seems to have perfectly understood the important use which may be made of mysterious language, of obscurity, and of pure,

* "The Student," vol. I, p. 4.

† "Athens," lib. IV, c. 17, sec. 20.

downright nonsense in dealing with mankind; and to have justly appreciated and turned to good account the popular contempt for plain and intelligible teaching. The five years silence which he prescribed to his disciples—most probably an invention which he had taken from the Indian Brahmins—was certainly the prescription of a quack. Pythagoras, more than a thousand years before Mahomet, enjoyed, if we are to believe himself, confidential communication with beasts and birds; the arts of mesmerism he understood more than two thousand years before Mesmer was born. He persuaded his followers that he had a golden thigh; and though Jamblichus assures us that he showed it to Abaris, the Hyperborean philosopher, he no doubt took good care not to make a curiosity of this kind a sight for everybody's seeing. About the end of the sixteenth century of the Christian era, many people in Europe, including several men of learning, believed that a boy in Silesia had a golden tooth, which had grown naturally in his head; and in this century, the people were assured on

the testimony of good witnesses that a child was to be seen with the name of Napoleon Buonaparte written at full length round the ball of his eye.

Audacity is the very soul of the art of conversion; it has the effect of fascination on the multitude, and Pythagoras practised it. He gained believers in his doctrine of the transmigration of souls by boldly relating the history of his own transmigrations. He recollected, he said, when his soul inhabited the body of Æthalides, and also when he was Hermolitus, the fisherman. At the Trojan war he was Euphorbus; and in the temple of Juno, at Argos, he pointed to the shield which he bore in battle.* His followers carried on his history. Aulus Gellius has quoted two ancient writers, Clearchus and Dicearchus, who say that Pythagoras afterwards appeared as Pyrander, then as Callicles, and then as the beautiful courtesan Alce.†

It seems also, that while in this world, Pytha-

* Ovid, "Metam," lib. xv.

† Aulus Gellius, lib. IV, c. 11, sec. 14.

goras either possessed the faculty attributed by the Irishman to the birds of being in two places at once, or kept a shadow of himself, such as the Germans call a *Doppelganger* (about which kind of duplicate the reader will consult with pleasure Mrs. Crowe's interesting work, "The Night Side of Nature"), and that he was seen on the same day, and at the same hour, at Metapontus, and at the games of Crotona.*

For the successful carrying on of the business of a teacher of mankind, the value of a prepossessing personal appearance is incalculable. The fine figure and great comeliness of Pythagoras, which would justify the belief in his divine parentage, were no doubt amongst the means by which he effected the good which he did in his own time, and by which he attained the great name which has but little decayed for some five-and-twenty centuries. Some part of the influence of Mahomet may be attributed to the same cause, and there is a similarity between the men, in so far as that while both

* Ælian, lib. II, c. 26; and lib. IV, c. 17.

could resort to fraud and imposture, in order to establish and secure their intellectual dominion over the minds of men, both were, under Providence, great benefactors of the world; and it would be as uncharitable and unjust to the Arabian prophet, as it would be to the philosopher of Samos, to doubt that the first and habitual intentions of the one and the other were virtuous and patriotic; and that both might believe that their missions were from heaven. It is only those who are unable to conceive that the man who, when driven to it by difficulties, occasionally resorts to pious frauds and wholesome deceptions, may at the same time be guided in his career mainly by sincere enthusiasm and profound convictions, who will regard either Pythagoras, or Mahomet, or any of the great teachers of the world as a mere impostor. It may, indeed, be assumed as a fact that no man ever yet imposed a faith on a large portion of mankind, who was not himself to a great extent a sincere convert to his own revelations.

The heathen writers, Jamblichus and Por-

phyry, are believed to have drawn the character of Pythagoras with the view of contrasting it, in his favour, with that of the teacher of Christianity. On the other hand, the early Christian writers have most unjustly depreciated the real merits of Pythagoras. Tertullian civilly calls him a liar; and Lactantius describes him as a stupid old man, and one who talked as an idle old woman would do to a set of credulous children.

ASPASIA.

Aspasia, of Miletus, is the most celebrated of that class of Grecian women to which modern times and Christian nations do not furnish any exact parallel; though France, in the reign of Louis XIV., produced something remarkably similar in the famous Ninon de l'Enclos. The teacher of Socrates, and the mistress and counsellor of Pericles, is said to have been beautiful; and the circumstance that, at a subsequent period, we find a Greek woman of surpassing beauty, Milto of Phocis, assuming her name, is better evidence of the charms of the elder

Aspasia than the passion of Pericles, which the wisdom, the eloquence and the varied accomplishments of Aspasia might have inflamed.

In the collection of ancient portraits by Gronovius, there is a particularly fine bust of Aspasia. She wears a splendid helmet and crest, the front of the helmet presenting the figures of horses coming half body out, as in the sculptures of the Parthenon. She has a fine corslet, and her neck, which is left bare, is encircled with a necklace. The whole armour, which is gorgeous, speaks a woman's love of finery. In all probability, we are to understand this to be Aspasia, in the character of Minerva; but, amidst all the warlike accoutrements, the picture is rather that of a Venus. The hair is thick and long, and beautifully flowing; the cheeks are full, and the face is at once voluptuous and intellectual.

Of Aspasia's lover, the accomplished Pericles, we have only the vague tradition that he was of a prepossessing appearance; and it is men-

tioned that when the Athenians began to dread his ascendancy, and to fear that he was about to usurp supreme dominion over them, they discovered that, in his commanding person, he bore a striking resemblance to the tyrant Pisistratus.

MILTO.

MILTO, afterwards called Aspasia, from her resemblance, it is said, to the mistress of Pericles, was the daughter of Hermotimus of Phocis, in Ionia, and was the most beautiful woman of her time, which is somewhat later than that of her namesake; Milto, perhaps, having been born a little before the elder Aspasia died. We have a tolerably full account of her history, and a minute description of her person. Her mother died in bringing her into the world, and her father, being a very poor man, educated her with difficulty.

While a little girl, though otherwise a great

beauty, she had a tumour on her chin, which occasioned much grief to herself as well as to her doting father. A skilful physician offered to remove the tumour, but he had the cruelty—rare, certainly, in the profession to which he belonged, and which he disgraced—to demand a reward for the operation, which the poverty of Milto's father made him unable to pay. But Milto was born to splendour and greatness, and all obstacles were doomed to vanish from her path. In the meantime, while she used to sit holding her little mirror on her knees, and mourning deeply at the sight of the deformity which impaired the perfection of her beauty, she was cheered with dreams in which she found herself united in wedlock with a beautiful and good man.

One night, when, overcome with grief, she had gone to bed without supper, in a vision, a dove, the bird of Venus, came to her, and after assuming the form of a woman, of the Goddess of Beauty herself, prescribed the cure that was successful. The doubtful remedies of regular physicians are generally disgusting; but the

infallible prescription of the goddess was pleasant and lovely. Milto was directed to take the rosy chaplet of Venus, when it should be withered, and having reduced it to a powder, to apply it to her chin.

Ælian, in the longest chapter of his amusing work, gives us a complete and minute portrait of Milto. Her hair was yellow, the locks a little curled; she had very large eyes, the nose a little aquiline, and small ears. Her skin was soft, and her complexion approached to the rosy, on account of which, when a child, she was called Milto. Her lips, as a matter of course, were red; and, equally as a matter of course, her teeth were whiter than the snow. Her feet and legs were handsome, and she was what Homer calls καλλισφυρος, "having beautiful ankles." Her voice was sweet and tender, so that when she spoke, you would have thought that you listened to a syren. She used no curious or superfluous female ornaments, it being expressly mentioned that she was "beautiful without paint."

When she was brought before Cyrus, the

other beauties of the court had their hair adorned and their faces painted; and according to the fine expression which Ælian puts into the mouth of the Persian prince, they were even more deceptive in their manners than in their faces. The elevation of Milto to be the favourite of Cyrus, was the accomplishment of her visions; and it was from him that she received the name of Aspasia, by which she is best known in history.

In the portrait of Aspasia we have an embodiment of almost all those features which went to constitute beauty according to the notions of the ancients, and according to the taste which has generally prevailed in Europe in all ages. Yellow hair—it is a palish flaxen yellow that has been most adored—and large eyes are ingredients in almost every picture of a beauty, whether the person be historical or imaginary. The large eyes of Helen of Troy are celebrated in every description of her person which has come down to us. Juvenal mentions as one of the inroads which old age makes on beauty, that, with the lapse of years, the eyes grow

smaller.* In the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," the Vizier's daughter describes her beloved Bedreddin Hassan as "the young man who has large eyes and black eyebrows." The hair of Aspasia was a little curled. This is that crisped hair, "the smiling locks" (*crines ridentes*) of the Romans, to which there are so many allusions in the poets. This is the hair universally attributed to Helen of Troy. It was the hair of the Beatrice of Dante—

> "Io miro i crespi e gli biondi capegli,"

the poet says in one of his canzoni; and in another he speaks of the fair locks which Love, to consume him, had gilded and curled—

> "Biondi capelli
> Ch' amor per consumarmi increspa e dora."

Small ears and elegant ankles have been in general request; and there are men whose criticism on female beauty goes no farther than the ankles. The aquiline nose, while it is considered appropriate in the face of a military

* Juvenal, "Sat." lib. VI, 144.

commander, is not so decidedly according to orthodox taste in women's faces; but it is to be observed that Ælian has qualified the description to "slightly aquiline" (ολιγον επιγρυπος). I am not sure what is the true meaning of the expression in Petronius, in his exquisite description of Circe, where he speaks of her *nares paululum inflexæ*, which has generally been understood to mean that her nose was rather aquiline.*

Kühnius, the editor of Ælian, has a good note on the description of Aspasia's nose. The Persians, he remarks, amongst whom Aspasia had come, thought the aquiline nose beautiful, and the token of a generous mind, because Cyrus, the founder of their monarchy, was born with a hooked nose (γρυπος). The ολιγον, "a little," is, however, he says, well added, as a crooked nose is considered base by the admirers of female beauty; as in Terence we read: "Shall I marry that red young woman with grey eyes, a wide mouth, and a crooked nose? Father, I cannot."

* Petronius, "Satyricon," p. 96. Paris, 1601.

AGESILAUS.

The ancient Spartans paid as much attention to the rearing of men as the cattle-breeders in modern England do to the breeding of cattle. They took charge of the firmness and looseness of men's flesh, and regulated the degree of fatness to which it was lawful, in a free state, for any citizen to extend his body. Those who dared to grow too soft or too fat for military exercise and the service of Sparta, were soundly whipped. In one particular instance, that of Nauclis, the son of Polybus, the offender was brought before the Ephori and a meeting of

the whole people of Sparta, at which his unlawful fatness was publicly exposed, and he was threatened with perpetual banishment if he did not bring his body within the regular Spartan compass, and give up his culpable mode of living, which was declared to be more worthy of an Ionian than of a son of Lacedemon.*

In the same spirit, the Spartans imposed a fine on their king, Archidamus, for having married the little Eumolpa, to the probable lowering of the stature of the royal family. That little woman became the mother of little Agesilaus, and if her memory must suffer for having given birth to a son, in point of height unworthy of stalwart Sparta, to her we must award the nobler praise—if it be true, as there is reason to believe that it is, that the moral and intellectual qualities of men are derived from their mothers—of having given to her country one of its greatest heroes, and one of

* Ælian, xiv, c. 7.

the most accomplished and amiable men in the story of Lacedemon.

Agesilaus, in addition to his small stature, was lame of one leg, and some accounts bear that he was otherwise deformed, and that his features were disagreeable. Plutarch, however, is probably right when he tells us that the defect of his lameness was compensated by the agreeableness of the rest of his person. We must presume also that his constitution was good, as he was capable of enduring all the fatigues of Spartan warfare and the hardships of Spartan diet, and yet lived to the age of eighty-four, a period of life rarely attained by those who undergo severe bodily exercise and live sparingly.

Plutarch tells us that there was no portrait nor statue of Agesilaus, and that he would not allow one to be made. The real motive for this might be a Spartan abhorrence of refinement. We find that Plotinus, the Platonic philosopher, would not yield to the wishes of his disciples to sit for his portrait; and a much

better man, Montesquieu, showed a similar aversion to having his likeness taken. M. de la Tour was extremely desirous of having the honour of making a portrait of his illustrious countryman, but failed in persuading him to give him the necessary sittings.

In the year 1752, Dassier, the celebrated medallist, was sent from London to Paris, to make a medallion portrait of the President. He for some time met with nothing but refusals on the part of Montesquieu, till at last he said : " Do you not think that there is as much pride in refusing my proposal as there would be in accepting it ?" Montesquieu's delicacy was overcome, and the medallion was made.*

Amongst great men who would not allow their portraits to be drawn, we must reckon St. Francis Borgia. At different times attempts were made to take his likeness, but he resolutely refused to afford any sittings to the artists sent to him for that purpose. A picture of him by

* D'Alembert, "Eloge de Montesquieu."

Velasquez is mentioned by Mrs. Jameson; and there are various engravings which represent him as a lean-faced man, with a long aquiline nose. With more true wisdom and with more kindness for posterity, some of the most famous saints have allowed their portraits to be transmitted to our day. We have the genuine fat figure of St. Theresa, and the gentle beauty of St. Francis of Sales. And what Christian is not delighted at contemplating the portrait of the blessed St. Catharine of Sienna, from the pencil of her friend and admirer, the painter Andrea Vanni?

The moral portrait of Agesilaus is that of a man of heroic spirit, of great abilities, and vast perseverance, with much humanity, admirable good temper, and a cheerful disposition. He warded off all jokes about his person by anticipating and making them himself. He is endeared to most readers by the anecdote related of him by Ælian, who tells us that, on being found by a friend riding on a stick, to amuse his son, he bade his visitor not speak about it

till he was a father himself.* A similar story is told of Socrates,† and in modern times of one of the kings of France.

* Ælian, lib. XII, c. 15.

† Valerius Maximus, lib. VIII, c. 8.

SOCRATES.

SCULPTURE has preserved to us that repulsive cast of features from which the physiognomist Zopyrus pronounced that Socrates was a man addicted to many vices, a judgment which drew from the Athenian philosopher that admirable observation, that he was indeed inclined to these vices, but had corrected his evil propensities by reason. What makes this anecdote the more interesting is, that we know that Socrates was one of those who held that the outward comeliness of the person was an evidence of the inward beauty of the soul.

Socrates in the first place was bald, and the ancients held baldness of itself to constitute ugliness. Agathocles, the tyrant of Syracuse, who, according to Ælian, had "a most ridiculous and base head," out of which the hair fell by little and little, was so ashamed of his baldness, that he wore a myrtle crown to conceal it.* We know also that of all the honours conferred upon him, there was none that Cæsar accepted more gratefully than the right of wearing the laurel-crown which concealed his baldness.† With the ancients, baldness had a moral repulsiveness about it, as it was associated in their ideas with licentiousness of life; and the Roman soldiers, who gibed at Cæsar in the midst of his Gallic triumph, took care not to lose sight of this connexion. Amongst the other effects of his increasing years, Tacitus represents Tiberius as ashamed of his baldness.‡ He occasionally wore a crown of laurel on his head, but this was to protect him from the

* Ælian, XI, c. 4.

† Suetonius, "Julius," c. 45.

‡ Annales IV, c. 57.

lightning.* Domitian also, who had higher pretensions to personal beauty, could not suffer any allusion to be made to his baldness; but he might be the more concerned about the loss of his locks, as he had written a treatise on the care of the hair.† The history of Elisha, mocked by the children, teaches us that the prejudice is of extreme antiquity.

In addition to his baldness, Socrates had a dark complexion, a flat nose, protuberant eyes, and an ungracious expression. His health and his strength, however, were good. He served as a soldier in his country's wars; and in marching and enduring the fatigues of military discipline, was without a rival. He could also suffer well both hunger and thirst; and when the time for fasting was past, and the time for feasting arrived, he was noted for being able to hold a larger quantity of drink than any of his comrades without being the worse of it.‡ As the wisest of the ancients believed occasional

* Suetonius, "Tiberius," c. 69.

† Suetonius, "Domitian," c. 18.

‡ Plutarch, "Symposium."

debauches to be commendable, the capacity for enduring them was regarded as a valuable accomplishment. So also in Christian times, thought Montaigne. In his remarks on education, addressed to Madame Diane de Foix, Countess of Gurson, and intended for the benefit of the child with which the Countess was then pregnant, and which Montaigne assured her would be a boy, as "you are too generous not to commence with a male;"* he recommends that his pupil should be taught to stand drink well.

"I wish," he says, "that even in debauchery he should surpass his companions in vigour and firmness; and that he do not forego the doing evil either from want of power or of science, but from want of will." This ability for hard drinking, Montaigne thought absolutely necessary for great statesmen. Pitt, with his vast capacity for port, would have been a minister of state quite to his mind.

Socrates learned to play on the pipe in his old age; he also got himself taught singing,

* Montaigne, "Essais," lib. I, c. 19. Paris, 1657.

and danced every day. "He was not ashamed," says Seneca, "to divert himself with children, and was found one day by Alcibiades riding on a stick to amuse his boys."

A great deal of nonsense has been spoken by Coleridge and others about the profound philosophy, morality, and religion of Rabelais; but he certainly was a ripe scholar, and from him I shall borrow what I consider to be the best picture of the character of Socrates—including a sketch of his person—that I have anywhere seen. It is, in fact, an able digest of what the Curé of Meudon must have gathered from an enlarged acquaintance with all that has been recorded of Socrates. The reader may take it either in the unrivalled English of Sir Thomas Urchard, or in the original of Rabelais, which I give in a note. Rabelais has described one of those boxes in the apothecary's shop with ugly figures on the outside, but filled within with precious drugs, and he goes on: "Just such another thing was Socrates, for to have eyed his outside, and esteemed of him by his exterior appearance, you would not have given

the peel of an onion for him, so deformed was he in his body, and ridiculous in his gesture; he had a sharp-pointed nose, with the look of a bull, and countenance of a fool; he was in his carriage simple, boorish in his apparel, in fortune poor, unhappy in his wives, unfit for all offices in the state (this last statement, with Rabelais' leave, is a mistake, and a very great mistake indeed), always laughing, tippling, and merry carousing to every one with continual jibes and jeers, the better by these means to conceal his divine knowledge. Now opening this box, you would have found within it a heavenly and inestimable drug, a more than human understanding, an admirable virtue, matchless learning, invincible courage, inimitable sobriety, certain contentment of mind, perfect assurance, and an incredible misregard of all that, for which men commonly do so much watch, run, sail, fight, travel, toil and turmoil themselves."*

* The Works of F. Rabelais, M.D., done out of French by Sir Thos. Urchard, Kt., and others. London, 1694: "Tel disoit estre Socrates; par ce que, le voyant

au dehors, et l'estimans par l'exteriore apparence, n'en eussiez donné ung coupeau d'oignon, tant laid il estoit de corps, et ridicule en son maintien, le nez poinctu, le reguard d'ung taureau, le visaige d'ung fol, simple en meurs, rusticq en vestimens, paoure de fortune, infortuné en femmes, inepte a tous offices de la republicque, tousiours riant, tousiours beuuant d'aultant a ung chascun, tousiours se guabelant, tousiours dissimulant son diuin sçauoir. Mais ouurans ceste boyte, eussiez au dedans trouué une celeste et impreciable drogue, entendement plus que humain, vertus merueilleuses, couraige invincible, sobresse nonpareille, contentement certain, asseurance parfaicte, deprisement incroyable de tout ce pourquoy les humains, tant veiglent, courent, trauaillent, nauigent, et bataillent."—*Œuvres de F. Rabelais*, p. 2. Paris, 1845.

PLATO.

PLATO, who according to the superstitious belief of his times, was the son of Apollo, was a tall and handsome man. His name, he is said to have derived from his broad shoulders. He had a protuberance at the back of his head. He was of a grave countenance, and laughed but seldom. He had a shrill but pleasing voice. He was temperate in sleeping, eating and drinking, but approved of occasional intoxication. The belief of the medical faculty for more than two thousand years was, that an occasional debauch promoted good health; all the great physicians of the middle ages insisted

on their patients getting drunk once a month. Plato lived in good health to the age of eighty-four. He excelled in all the Grecian exercises, having studied wrestling under Aristo the Argive. He also applied himself to poetry and painting. Being a man of wealth, he used a decent splendour in his whole style of living, and did not think the use of gold and silver plate unbecoming a philosopher. He dressed genteelly, but reproved the effeminacy and vain adornings of Aristotle, as much as he did the proud sordidness of Diogenes. Notwithstanding the dreamy nature of many of his speculations, Plato was a man of the world, had the art of pleasing in conversation, and took particular care not to annoy his company by the introduction of philosophical discussions.

The description left us of Aristotle is, that he was a man of slender form, with spindle-shanks and small eyes. He had a shrill voice, and stammered in his speech.* Diogenes Laertius, who tells us these things, as well as most of the particulars which I have gathered

* Diogenes Laertius, lib. v, c. 1, sec. 2.

of Plato, quotes the authority of Timotheus, the Athenian, for the fact that Aristotle hesitated in his speech, and the circumstance is also mentioned by Plutarch. He delighted in rich apparel, wore a number of rings on his fingers, and was particular in shaving, and in trimming his hair. In the ornamenting of his person, he did not neglect his shoes, which were adorned with precious materials. He was much addicted to talking, and had a sneering and fault-finding expression in his face.*

Such is the portrait of him whom Southey calls "the most sagacious man whom the world has yet produced." No man certainly has ever lived whose writings, real or supposed, have exercised so tyrannical an authority over mankind. His reputation gathered strength for at least eighteen hundred years after his death; and during fifteen centuries of Christianity his word, with the learned, held divided empire with the Gospel itself.

Amongst great men, who more or less delighted in magnificence, are enumerated, besides

* Ælian, lib. III, c. 19.

Aristotle, Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristippus, Demosthenes the Athenian orator, and Hortensius the Roman. Both Demosthenes and Hortensius subjected themselves to the ridicule and censure of their contemporaries for their excessive attention to elegance in dress.* Parrhasius, the painter, delighted in the adornment of his person, and called himself Αβροδιαιτος—the delicate, the elegant. He wore a purple robe, and a golden crown on his head.† He had a staff encircled with golden rings, and wore golden clasps in his shoes.

Amongst military men, we find that Xenophon's love of beauty in everything made him select the most splendid armour, the Argotic shield, the Attic corselet, the helmet of Bœotia, and the horse of Epidaurus. He tells us himself that he was "most elegantly adorned for war."‡ Xenophon, who, it may be remarked, was distinguished by great personal beauty, used to say that if he

* Aulus Gellius, lib. I, c. 5.

† Ælian, lib. III, c. 24.

‡ Xenophon, "Anabasis," lib. III.

conquered the enemy, he was worthy of the most splendid adorning; and if he lost his life in battle, he would appear with grace in magnificent armour. The horse of Epidaurus alluded to, Xenophon was once obliged to sell at Lampsacus; but his friends, finding how much he valued him, bought him again, and made a present of him to the general.* Hannibal also delighted in splendid armour, and in fine horses. Montaigne mentions Alexander, Cæsar, and Lucullus, as generals who loved to distinguish themselves in battle by rich armour, and accoutrements of a shining and conspicuous colour.†

Agis, Agesilaus, and Philip the Great, Montaigne enumerates amongst those who went to battle obscurely dressed, and without any imperial array. Agesilaus, indeed, and Epaminondas affected an extreme poverty in their dress. In his old age, Agesilaus went bare-footed, even in winter.‡

* "Anabasis," lib. VII.

† "Essais," lib. I, c. 47.

‡ Ælian, lib. VII, c. 13.

Epaminondas, otherwise a man of elegant tastes, had but one poor garment, and was obliged to keep the house whenever he put it to the fuller to get the dirt taken out of it.*

Amongst great men in modern times who have indulged in magnificent dress and ornaments, the most illustrious are Raleigh, Buffon, and Haydn.

Charles of Sweden in his taste imitated Agesilaus; Murat was a warrior like Xenophon.

* Ælian, lib. v, c. 5.

ALCIBIADES.

ALL historians agree that the accomplished Alcibiades was by far the most handsome man of his age. On account of his beauty, says Xenophon, who knew him personally, he was "hunted" by many honourable women.* The strong expression of Xenophon (Θηρωμενος), which is taken from the chase, I have translated literally. In amiability of character and beauty of person, says Ælian, Alcibiades was chief amongst the Greeks, and Scipio amongst the Romans.† Of beautiful persons, Lord Bacon

* Xenophon, "Memorabilia Socratis," lib. I, c. 2, sec. 24.

† Ælian, lib. XII, c. 14.

says, that "they prove accomplished, but not of great spirit, and study behaviour rather than virtue. But this holds not always; for Augustus Cæsar, Titus Vespasianus, Philip le Bel of France, Edward IV. of England, Alcibiades of Athens, and Ismael the Sophi of Persia, were all high and great spirits, and yet the most beautiful men of their times." This list might easily be amplified. It wants Demetrius Poliorcetes, who was beautiful beyond description; but its great defect is the omission of Alexander the Great, the most warlike of mortals.

"The beauty of Alcibiades," says Plutarch, "continued with him through all the stages of childhood, youth, and manhood." He caused himself to be painted lying in the lap of the courtesan Nemea. Plato notices the loose, flowing robe, which, after the fashion of the men of pleasure of these times, characterised Alcibiades. The ancients—the men at least—appear to have valued personal beauty more than the moderns do, and took greater pains in preserving it. Plutarch tells us that in learning

music, Alcibiades chose the lyre, for its gracefulness. When he lived with his uncle Pericles, his tutor, Antigenis, attempted to teach him to play on the pipe; but when he looked at his face in the mirror, as he used the instrument, he dashed it on the ground, and broke it in pieces. The boy Alcibiades then led the fashion in everything; and the Athenians, when the story got abroad, gave up with one consent the use of the pipe.* Alcibiades, it has been farther said, objected to the pipe because he could not accompany it with his voice. I have noticed before that Pythagoras had chosen the lyre in preference to the pipe, most probably for similar reasons; and there is a strong resemblance between the anecdote of Alcibiades and the mythological story related by Ovid, which tells us that when Minerva, as she played on the pipe, looked into a fountain, and noticed the ungraceful swelling of her cheeks, she threw away the instrument in disgust.†

The importance attached by the ancients to

* Aulus Gellius, lib. xv, c. 17.

† "Ars. Amat." lib. III.

the cultivation of music as a means of social improvement, appears ludicrous to modern readers. The philosophic Montesquieu has devoted a chapter of his great work to discussing their theories on this subject.* In his work on politics, Aristotle tells us that at the close of the Peloponnesian war, there was scarcely a freeborn Athenian unacquainted with the flute.†

From Plutarch, who quotes contemporary authority, we learn that Alcibiades had a lisp in his speech "which became him and gave a grace to his discourse." The fact is established by some lines, which Plutarch quotes from Archippus, a poet of the times, who ridicules a son of Alcibiades, for imitating the sauntering step, the loose robe, the lisp, and the bent neck of his father. With regard to the effect of a lisp in the speech, opinions both in ancient and in modern times have been very favourable. Ovid alludes to those women who, by lisping, have found in their imperfection a charm to

* "Esprit des loix," lib. IV, c. 8.

† "Politica," lib. VIII, c. 6.

catch mankind.* In popular belief, lisping in a woman is thought to be characteristic of a disposition to love. Thus, in Ford's "Lady's Trial," (Act iv. sc. 2).

> *Amorette.* I do not uthe
> To thpend lip labour upon quethionths
> That I mythelf can anthwer.
> *Futelli.* No, sweet madame,
> Your lips are destined to a better use,
> Or else the proverb fails of lisping maids.
> *Amorette.* Kithing, you mean.

And the chorus of the song which is sung after this, is

> "None kitheth like the lithping lath."

In the other sex we see from other instances than this of Alcibiades, that this imperfect elocution has been admired. Thus, Chaucer tells us of the friar,

> "Somewhat he lisped for his wantonnesse,
> To make his English sweet upon his tongue."

And Barbour, the Scottish poetical historian,

* "Ars. Amat." lib. III.

speaking of the good Sir James Douglas, says that "he lisped like Hector of Troy," and that his lisping became him remarkably well. In more recent times, we learn of the Lord Keeper Coventry, from an account published by Lodge, in his "Portraits of Illustrious Persons of Great Britain," from a manuscript in the Sloane Collection, that "he was of a very fine and grave elocution, in a kinde of gracefull lisping; so that where nature might seeme to cast something of imperfection on his speech, on due examination, she added a grace to the perfection of his delivery."

That Hector lisped, Barbour, in all probability, learned from the spurious work on the destruction of Troy, attributed to Dares the Phrygian. This book, which is now utterly despised, was held to be genuine, and was highly admired in Barbour's time, and is quoted in his poem. It contains personal descriptions of most of the men and women connected with the Trojan war. Of Hector, we are told that he was "lisping, fair-haired, crisp, squinting, swift of limb, of a venerable countenance,

bearded, comely, warlike, great of mind, gracious to the people, worthy of and fit for love."*

Barbour, it may be remarked, declares that Hector, like Sir James Douglas, had black hair. Dares says he was fair; for, from the context, it is pretty clear that the term *candidum* refers to his hair.

It would thus appear that, along with the general tradition of Hector's comeliness and his lisp, and his proverbial acceptability to the other sex, there is a fame that he squinted. So did George Whitfield and Edward Irving, both of whom were favourites with the fair, the latter being called "the adorable Edward Irving."

Descartes admired a squint, one story being that a woman with whom he was in love looked at him obliquely; while another version, which is adopted by Southey, is that this partiality arose from his associating a squint with the recollection of the eyes of a kind nurse. There

* Dares Phrygius, "De Excidio Trojæ," p. 170. Amst. 1631.

is a recent case which took place in Paris, in 1842, which is deserving of attention, and which may be a lesson to those who are not content with the eyes which Heaven has given them. A young woman was about to be married to a man with whom she was deeply in love, he squinting most unmistakeably. At that time the operation of strabism was much in vogue, and the thoughtless lover imagined that by its means he would get rid of what he regarded as a blemish in his countenance. Without letting his mistress know his intention, he got the defect entirely removed, and fancied that he would now appear with increased favour in her eyes.

On his next meeting with her, however, she uttered a cry of alarm, and in spite of all explanations, refused to receive as her husband him whom she had loved and chosen under quite a different aspect.* The marriage was broken off; the separation was for ever, the lady contenting herself with cherishing in her

* Roussel, "Système Physique et Morale de la Femme," (Note by M. Cerise), p. 131. Paris, 1843.

own soul the squinting object of her young affections.

The philosophy of all this is not very intricate. Where the person or the mind is on the whole agreeable, peculiarities which abstractly would be reckoned defects, by appearing as parts of the whole, come, by a natural association of ideas, to be regarded as constituent beauties. Thus we find persons endowed with a graceful lameness who would be quite spoiled if their legs were made equal, and others who would be disfigured if they were to recover a lost eye.

Anne of Brittany, the wife of Charles VIII. of France, and the Princess of Condé, were beauties who moved gracefully through the world with one leg shorter than the other. Catharine des Jardins (now nearly forgotten as a writer of poetry and dramas), though strongly marked by small-pox, had personal charms enough to get for herself three husbands and a great many lovers beside.

Mademoiselle de la Vallière, the most amiable of Louis XIV.'s mistresses, has, by recent

writers, generally been described as a beauty, notwithstanding her admitted lameness. But this is a mistake. Louis did not confine his admiration of the sex to those of them who had beauty to attract him. His first mistress, Mademoiselle de Mancini, was allowed to be the reverse of either beautiful or handsome. She was stout, but short and ill-shaped, and had a very vulgar air. Historians have not been able to make up their minds as to what it was that pleased the king in Mancini.

Mademoiselle de la Vallière was kind-hearted and amiable, and Louis loved her because she first loved him. A contemporary author of a life of la Vallière, written and printed in her life-time, and who is extremely favourable to her real merits, thus describes her:—"As a man in a meadow, adorned with an infinite variety of lovely flowers, is almost always embarrassed in his choice, so the king, in the midst of so many beauties, did not know in favour of whom he should determine. Chance decided his choice, and Mademoiselle de la Vallière, who had nothing to recommend her in

point of beauty, triumphed over all the rest. She is of middle stature and rather thin (*assez flouette*); she walks ungracefully, and is slightly lame; she is white and fair (*blanche et blonde*), and marked with small-pox; her eyes are blackish (*noiratres*), and her look languishing. She has a large rosy mouth; her teeth are not good. She has no bosom; her arm is flat, and does not give too favourable an idea of the rest of her person. She is sometimes gay, and has always a great deal of wit and vivacity; she speaks agreeably, and wants neither knowledge nor solidity. She is well versed in literature, and has a soul great, generous, and disinterested. She has sincerity and good faith; she has always had an extreme aversion for all that is called coquetry; and, above all, she has a good heart, and loves her friends as tenderly as can be."*

The dark, languishing eyes here ascribed to

* "La Vie de la Duchesse de la Vallière," par. * * *, p. 90. A Cologne, chez Jean de la Verité. The place of publication is as fictitious as the assumed name of the bookseller.

la Vallière did not, as might be thought, redeem her face from being plain; and Louis, even after he began to regard her, on discovering her affection for himself, confessed her entire want of beauty; and his taste in everything was admirable.

One day a courtier pointed her out to the king, and said, in a jeering tone: "Come hither, fair one, with the dying eyes (*la belle aux yeux mourans*), who art content with nothing less than monarchs." La Vallière was confused, and the king was vexed at the rudeness. He still saw nothing to admire about her, but, after his gracious fashion, he saluted her with the utmost respect and spoke kindly to her; and he soon after made it known that he wished to see her married to a nobleman of high rank, and that he would compensate for her want of personal charms by the fortune which he would bestow on her. When he came, however, after this to enter more frequently into conversation with this affectionate creature, his kindness became converted into love.*

* "La Vie de la Duchesse de la Vallière," p. 96.

Amongst beautiful squinters is enumerated the Greek poet, Menander. A modern writer on the calamities of genius, mentions the squint of Menander.* The poet is described as living the life of a Sybarite. "Flowing with unguents and with a loose robe," says Phædrus, describing his appearance before the tyrant Dionysius, "he came forward with a delicate and languid walk." His passion for female beauty is described as a perfect madness, his love for the courtesan Glycera being much celebrated amongst the Greeks.

Some there have been who inflamed all hearts by the fire of a single eye, notwithstanding the almost universal prejudice in favour of two. The Princess of Eboli, the mistress of Philip II., of Spain, who was deprived of the sight of one of her eyes, was, notwithstanding, a perfect miracle of beauty. "Nature," says the Père le Moyne, "had finished with extraordinary care both the mind and the body of this princess, but had only given her one eye; whether it was that she despaired of being able

* D. Josephus Barberius, "De Miseria Poetarum," p. 54. Neap. 1686.

to make a second equal to the first; or that, in this respect, the princess might resemble the day, which has but one eye; or, as Perez said to Henry the Great, that Nature was afraid that if she had had two eyes she would have set the whole world on fire."* Mrs. Jameson, in her "Memoirs of Early Italian Painters," notices a picture by Titian, called "Philip II. and the Princess of Eboli," in the Fitzwilliam Museum, at Cambridge.

According to Dr. Joseph Warton, it was upon the Princess of Eboli and Luis de Maguiron, the most beautiful man of his time, and the favourite of Henry III. of France, who lost an eye at the siege of Isore, that the famous epigram about Acon and Leonilla—the finest of modern Latin epigrams, as it is justly allowed to be—was written. It has been translated, but with little success, into various languages.

"Lumine Acon dextro, capta est Leonilla sinistro
Et potis est forma vincere uterque deos;
Blande puer, lumen quod habes concede sorori,
Sic tu cæcus Amor, sic erit illa Venus."

* "La Galérie des Femmes Fortes," par le Père le Moyne, partie II, p. 25. Paris, 1663.

"Acon is deprived of his right eye; Leonilla of the left; and either of them in beauty is able to vanquish the gods. Sweet youth, yield up to your sister the eye that you have; so you will be blind Love, and she will be Venus." Warton believed this renowned epigram to be anonymous. It is, however, the production of an obscure Italian poet, Girolamo Amaltheo (in Latin, Hieronymus Amaltheus), and is to be found amongst his pieces, in a collection of the beauties of two hundred Italian poets.* Only one other epigram by Amaltheo has obtained celebrity. It is the epigram *Galla tibi totus sua munera dedicat annus, &c.* "Oh, Galla, the whole year dedicates its gifts to thee; the spring has painted with its red thy rosy cheeks and lips; the summer has placed a thousand fires in thy radiant eyes; the autumn hides its fruit in thy bosom, and the winter has sprinkled all the rest with its snow."

* "Delitiæ C. C., Italorum Poetarum, hujus, superiorisque ævi Illustrium." Collectore Ranutio Ghero, 1608.

HELEN OF TROY.

Having brought forward a traditional portrait of Hector, I may be allowed to refer to the pictures which have been given of Helen of Troy, the most illustrious name in the history of beauty. Helen, according to the author of the work which bears the name of Dares, and which is believed to have been written during the decline of the Roman literature, resembled her brothers, Castor and Pollux, who had yellow hair and large eyes. "She was besides," says Dares, "beautiful, of a simple mind (as no doubt she was), pleasant, with very fine legs, having a mark between her eyebrows (*notam inter duo supercilia habentem;* this, I suspect,

is the small space admired by antiquity), and a very little mouth."*

I have not met in any writer in any period when good taste flourished, with a commendation of little mouths; a little mouth being condemned by all good judges, as being the almost unfailing accompaniment of want of intellect and taste. In the enumeration of the thirty points of female beauty, which are said to have all met in Helen, a small mouth is enumerated. There are other serious errors of taste in that production, to which I shall afterwards have occasion to refer. It appears to have been written about the commencement of the sixteenth century.

Homer, it has been observed, has told us nothing specific about Helen's person or face. With him she is "the divine woman," and Helen "with the face like that of the immortal gods." In one place, he tells us that she was wrapped in an ample robe. In Homer's great poem, Juno, with her white arms, and her ox-eyes, is less of an abstraction than Helen. What

* Dares Phrygius, p. 170.

Homer has omitted to do has, however, been done by writers of less fertile imagination. The picture drawn by Constantine Manasses, a Byzantine writer, is the most detailed and curious account. If it serves no other purpose, it is authentic enough as a specimen of the Byzantine ideas of beauty. Artopæus, the commentator on Dares, notices the tautology of this description by Constantine, but I give it entire.

"She was a most beautiful woman, with beautiful eyebrows, of a very fine complexion (ευχρουστατη), with beautiful cheeks, a good face, large eyes, whiter than the snow, with curved eyebrows, delicate, a grove of graces, with white arms, given to pleasures, breathing beauty, of a fair and agreeable complexion, her cheeks rosy without paint, the rosy blush setting off her great whiteness, as if one mingled the splendid purple with the ivory, with a long and very white neck, whence she was said to be the daughter of a swan." The description of Helen by Cedrenus, another Byzantine writer, agrees in the main points with this by Con-

stantine Manasses. "Helen," says Cedrenus, "was most beautiful." "One day when Paris looked into her garden, he saw that she was of incomparable beauty, for she was tall (ευστολος), with beautiful breasts, white as snow, with beautiful eyebrows, an elegant nose, her hair crisp (ουλοθριξ), and half yellow (υποξανθος), and with large eyes."* I have translated the word ευστολος, "tall," by advice of Artopæus. He declares that those who have translated ευστολος "elegant in her dress" are wrong, as an elegant dress is no part of the gifts of the person; and as besides Helen never was elegant in her dress till she ran off with Paris. Ευστολος, he contends, is "tall, or of a deep waist." I have seen it translated slender, but I cannot believe that a writer of Constantinople would have praised slenderness; and I did not wish to place Cedrenus in direct opposition to Constantine on this point. Cedrenus is not unsup-

* Georgii Cedreni, "Compendium Historicum," tom I, pp. 121, 124. Paris, 1647. The passage from Constantine Manasses, I have been obliged to take from Artopæus's "Commentary on Dares."

ported by venerable authority when he calls Helen ευμαστος, "of a beautiful bosom." In ancient days, Euripides, the woman-hater, who has bestowed the most opprobrious epithets on Helen, has particularly referred to the singular handsomeness of her bust. Helen herself appears to have been perfectly sensible of her merits in this respect, if it be true, as Pliny relates, that she presented as an offering to Minerva, a cup made of the precious metal called *electrum*, modelled after the form of her breast.*

The fine passage, in which Homer speaks of the effect of Helen's beauty, even upon those who had reason to hate her, has drawn forth something like a feeling of the spirit of poetry, even from Bayle. He tells us that all the descriptions of her person which have come down to us, do not give us an idea of her charms equal to that which we form when we hear that the

* Plinii, "Hist. Naturalis," lib. xxxiii, c. 23. The *electrum*, according to Pliny, was a composition of gold with a fifth part of silver, and had the properties of shining brightly and of detecting poison.

aged chiefs, when she made her appearance on the walls, burst out into the exclamation, that the Trojans and the Grecians were "not to be blamed for having so long endured so much suffering for such a woman; for in countenance she is altogether like the immortal goddesses." Marlowe, I think, has taken a hint from this really beautiful passage in the outburst which he puts into the mouth of Faustus, when the devil brings before him the shade of Helen—

"Was this the face that launch'd a thousand ships,
And burnt the topmost towers of Illium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!
Her lips suck forth my soul! See where it flies!
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again!
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,
And all is dross that is not Helena.
I will be Paris, and, for love of thee,
Instead of Troy shall Wittenberg be sack'd;
And I will combat with weak Menelaus,
And wear thy colours on my plumed crest;
Yea, I will wound Achilles in the heel,
And then return to Helen for a kiss.
Oh! thou art fairer than the evening air—
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars;

Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter
When he appeared to hapless Semele;
More lovely than the Monarch of the sky
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms,
And none but thou shalt be my paramour."

Some writers have asserted that the charms of Helen did not fade in old age. But the moralist, who wishes to withdraw the soul from the contemplation of that beauty which is but dust and ashes, to that comeliness to which increase of years only gives increase of brightness, will be better pleased with Ovid, who represents Helen looking in her mirror with tears, and asking herself why first Theseus and then Paris had stolen her away.

"Flet quoque ut in speculo rugas conspexit aniles
Tyndaris; et secum cur sit bis rapta requirit."

ALEXANDER THE GREAT.

THE common modern notion of Alexander the Great is, that he was a man of short stature, wry-necked, and otherwise deformed. I could quote many testimonies to this effect. Burton, in his "Anatomy of Melancholy," tells us that the Great Alexander was "a little man of stature." We are assured by Pope that—

> "Great Ammon's son one shoulder had too high;"

and Gillies, in his "History of Greece," says "he was of low stature, and somewhat deformed." These statements are all erroneous. The ancients knew Alexander only as beautiful alike in face and form.

We have, most unfortunately, no history of Alexander by any contemporary writer, but we have the relations of authors, who had the contemporary writers in their hands. Our accounts of Alexander's person are from authors of the second and third centuries of the Christian era; Arrian, Plutarch, Tacitus, Ælian, and Solinus. There is a complete harmony amongst all these authorities; all are agreed on the beauty of Alexander; and out of their statements, put together, we have a detailed account of his person and appearance. The faithful and accurate Arrian, who had before him the writings of Ptolemy and Aristobulus, who had fought with Alexander, tells us that he was in person most beautiful (το δε σωμα καλλιστος).*

The curious and inquisitive Ælian gives Alexander as an instance in his chapter on those who have excelled in beauty, ranking him in this respect with Alcibiades, Scipio, and Demetrius Poliorcetes, the comeliest of men. "His hair," he says, "was yellow and flowing."† Solinus

* Arrian, lib. VIII, c. 28.

† Ælian, lib. XII, c. 14.

says his stature was lofty beyond the common, with a long neck, large and lustrous eyes, his cheeks gracefully ruddy, and beautiful in all other points with a certain air of majesty.*

Tacitus, in speaking of the death of Germanicus, tells us that the people were led to compare his beauty, his youth, the manner of his death, on account of the near neighbourhood of the places in which both died, with the fate of Alexander the Great; "for both," adds the historian, "with great beauty of person, and illustrious descent, at the age of little more than thirty, had fallen amongst foreign nations by the treachery of their own people."† The beauty of the amiable Germanicus is matter of established history, though in the proper place I shall have to notice the defect which Suetonius describes in his person.

There is no contradiction to these concurring accounts in any ancient writer; and Plutarch furnishes us with information, from which we may see in what way the modern belief that

* Solinus, "Polyhistor," c. 14.

† Taciti, "Annales," lib. II, c. 73.

Alexander had a wry neck has arisen. Alexander had the fashionable Greek habit, as the beautiful Alcibiades had, and as others beautiful and not beautiful had, of leaning his head gently and gracefully to one side; perhaps not more than a painter would have desired him to do, if he wished to draw him in an easy attitude. The fashion was in practice with the Greek women as well as the men; and is mentioned in a fragment of the comic poet Alexis, quoted by Athenæus, as one of the means which they took to make themselves amiable.

Montaigne, who thoroughly admired and perfectly understood Alexander, has stated this matter well. "It was," he says, "an affectation arising from his beauty which made Alexander lean his head a little to one side."* This habit of Alexander is also well described in an amusing passage in the "Spectator." "If we look farther back into history, we shall find that Alexander the Great wore his head a little over the left shoulder; and then not a soul stirred out till he had adjusted his neck-bone;

* "Essais," lib. II, c. 17.

the whole nobility addressed the prince and each other obliquely; and all matters of importance were carried on in the Macedonian court with their polls on one side."* In this attitude, and looking up to heaven, Lycippus, the sculptor, designed the statue of Alexander. "It was," says Plutarch, "Alexander's posture while he lived." Lycippus showed himself a true master of his art by taking Alexander in his favourite attitude; as we frequently see painters and statuaries destroy the whole spirit and character of a work, otherwise possessed of merit, from want of attention to this point.

Lycippus, Plutarch tells us in this same treatise, expressed in brass, the vigour of Alexander's mind, and the lustre of his virtues; while others, imitating the bend in the neck, and the rolling of the eye, failed to express the lionlike fierceness of the face. In his life of Alexander, Plutarch tells us that he had a terrible countenance, which struck and disturbed those on whom he cast a look in anger—a description in

* Plutarch, "De Fortuna Alexandri," lib. II.

no way inconsistent with the idea of his great beauty. Plutarch farther tells us that Alexander was fair and ruddy in the face and breast, though Apelles, in painting him holding the thunderbolt, had made his face darker than it was. This I should conjecture to be an ignorant criticism on a noble stroke of art in the great painter.

In short, we have a superfluity of evidence that Alexander had all that form which charmed antiquity; and in his time he was considered to be a living representation of the divine Achilles, with whom he was pleased to be compared. A striking proof of the idea of Alexander's person, universally prevalent amongst the ancients, is furnished by the historian Herodian. The mad emperor Caracalla had a passion for imitating Achilles and Alexander; and Herodian tells us that the people laughed at seeing a man of his small stature aping these very valiant and large (μεγιστȣς) warriors.*

The head of Alexander on his silver coins is bound with a fillet; the hair is richly curled, the

* Herodian, "Hist." lib. IV, c. 16.

eyes large and open, the nostrils wide, and the mouth finely shaped.

There are two circumstances in the history of Alexander, as it is usually written, which may have helped to confirm the fable of his being of small stature. In his Indian expedition, he is said to have caused suits of armour of a gigantic size to be buried in the earth, in order that on their being afterwards dug up by the people, they might give them an idea that the Macedonian invaders were men of marvellous stature. This, it has been said, is not like the expedient of a tall man.

Another story, or rather a romance, told by Quintus Curtius, would, when ignorantly read, convey an impression of the small stature of Alexander. He tells us that Thalestris, Queen of the Amazons, out of desire to see the conqueror, left her country at the head of three hundred of her women. When she saw the king, however, she was much disappointed with his appearance, and looked at him with an unterrified countenance; for, says the historian, with all the

barbarians, veneration is paid to majesty of person; they do not consider any one capable of great things, except those whom nature has endowed with an extraordinary appearance.*

If all this, and all the love affair between the warlike queen and Alexander, as related with much simplicity by Curtius, were matters of real history, and not of romance, they would prove nothing farther than that the Amazonian queen expected to meet with a regular giant, which, in her case, would have been a very natural expectation, and was disappointed. The idea of a great conqueror, even in the minds of those who are not barbarians, is that of a giant. See, in Shakespere, how the Countess of Auvergny is disappointed when she finds that the fierce Talbot, the scourge of France, is not a perfect ogre.

"Is this the scourge of France?
Is this the Talbot, so much fear'd abroad,
That with his name the mothers still their babes?
I see report is fabulous and false:
I thought I should have seen some Hercules,

* Quintus Curtius, lib. VI, p. 133. Amst. 1671.

> A second Hector, for his grim aspect,
> And large proportion of his strong-knit limbs.
> Alas! this is a child, a silly dwarf."*

The sweet odour which Plutarch, referring to the memoirs of Aristoxenes as his authority, tells us, issued from the body of Alexander, and perfumed his dress, is, in all probability, a fable for which we are indebted to the idolatry of his admirers, or the deceit of his flatterers; perhaps to an innocent fraud on the part of Alexander himself. This was a gift attributed to the heathen goddesses; and if we are to believe a thousand legends of the Christian Church, was a virtue possessed by the bodies of great saints, both during their lives and after their deaths. Of Polycarp, the early martyr, many respectable Christians believed at the time, and at this very day, I have no doubt many Christians still believe, that when he was fastened to the stake, his body emitted a delightful fragrance like that of frankincense to the senses of all present. Eusebius is the authority for the tale.

The sensible Dr. Jortin has given a very

* Henry VI, Act II, sc. 2.

reasonable conjectural explanation of the miraculous perfume felt at the pile of Polycarp. "Scented wood," he says, "is common in hot countries, and the odour might proceed from the fuel, for the people ran about the baths and other places to get wood; and a Christian might also join with them, and bring a bundle of wood with aromatics enclosed in it to honour the funeral of his bishop. The Christians, however frugal in other respects in their expenses, were very profuse at the interment of their brethren."*

With regard to this alleged property of Alexander's, I do not think it is calculated to raise our admiration of him; and I cannot help agreeing with Montaigne that the Macedonian hero would have been as well without this singular endowment. "The sweetness of the purest breaths has nothing more perfect than to be without any odour like those of healthy children. Hence says Plautus:

"'Mulier tum bene olet, ubi nihil olet.'

The most exquisite odour of a woman is to

* Jortin, "Rem. on Ecclesiastical History."

smell of nothing. And as to the fine strange odours, we have reason to believe that they are employed to cover some natural defect in that way."*

The private habits of Alexander are well known. He delighted in splendour and magnificence, and like Cæsar had a fine taste for literature and the arts, and was a judicious patron of both. His great vice was the vice of his father and of his country, the drunkenness which was as truly national in Macedonia in ancient times as it is in Sweden and Scotland in modern days. Ælian has placed the name of Alexander amongst those of distinguished drunkards. In a familiar line, Pope has called Alexander "Macedonia's madman." This wonderful young man, who died at the age of thirty-two, besides being a perfect master of the art of war, was a man of cultivated and elegant tastes, a sagacious politician, and a benefactor of the human race. We may safely leave his character to the enthusiastic praises of such men as Montesquieu and Schlegel, and, above

* Montaigne, "Essais," lib. I, c. 55.

all, of Bacon. All these men of genius regarded Alexander as amongst the greatest of mere men.

Trebellius Pollio, the Augustan historian, in his account of the Macrian family, tells us that the men had the figure of Alexander sculptured on their rings, and their silver plate; and that the women wore his figure in the net-work on their heads, and in their bracelets (*dextrocherium* is the word, meaning the bracelet worn on the right arm), and on every sort of ornament, so that there were gowns and fringes and mantles in the family at the time when Pollio wrote, which showed the figure of Alexander in various fashions. He had seen Cornelius Macer, when he gave a supper in the temple of Hercules, present to the chief magistrate a goblet of electrum *(pateram electrinam)*, which in the centre had the face of Alexander, while the whole history of Alexander was sculptured in minute figures round its border. The cup, he says, was carried round the whole company; all of them very fond of so great a man. The historian adds, that it was considered lucky to

carry about the person the figure of Alexander in gold or silver.*

The horses of great warriors—of Alexander, Cæsar, and the Cid of Spain—have had their appearance and characters noticed in history. Alexander's Bucephalus has been supposed to have derived his name from his head being like that of an ox; but Montaigne is in all probability right, when he says that the name of "Ox-head" would merely denote that he had a large head. In the same way, it is probable that when Homer speaks of the "ox-eyes" of Juno, he merely means that the eyes of the imperious queen of heaven were large and round. A large head is not reckoned handsome, either in a horse or in a woman; but the numerous virtues of Bucephalus would atone for his want of personal beauty. He had belonged to Philip, for whom he had been purchased for thirteen talents.

When armed and adorned for the battle, he would allow no one to mount him but Alex-

* "Historiæ Augustæ Scriptores," tom II, p. 296. Lugd. Bat. 1671.

ander. In the Indian war, he carried his master into the heart of the enemy's ranks; and being mortally wounded in the neck and side, by a great effort he brought him out again, and then fell down and died. Alexander buried him with military honours, built a city on the place where he was interred, and called it after his name.*

The Arabs attribute all the virtues of a horse to his mother. The intellect of men is in general an inheritance from the maternal side. If, however, intellect be hereditary, Alexander on the side both of father and mother was singularly fortunate; and he seems to have inherited the great and good points of both parents, with but little share of their vices. The great abilities, splendid wit, beauty and intolerable arrogance of Olympias, are matters of history. There is nothing in the records of sarcasm finer than the reproof which she wrote to her son when, in the intoxication of vanity, he asserted his divine parentage, commencing his letter to his mother with, "Alex-

* Aulus Gellius, lib. v, c. 2.

ander, the son of Jupiter Ammon, sends health to his mother."

"For my love," said Olympias in reply, "be quiet about that, and do not bring me into trouble with Juno, who will do me a mischief, if you represent me as her rival."*

What a world of satire on her son, on the pagan religion, and on the jealous character of the queen of heaven ! and what a diverting religion it was which gave fair room for such satire! Another saying of Olympias is better than witty; it is great and generous. Philip had fallen in love with a woman of Thessaly, who, in the popular belief, was thought to have made use of the magical arts, for which her country has always been renowned, to inflame the king's passion. Olympias caused her rival to be brought before her. She found nothing to marvel at in her beauty, but after conversing with her, she exclaimed: "Let slanders cease! your witchcraft is in yourself!" What a compliment for a woman to receive from a woman, and from such a woman as Olympias !

* Aulus Gellius, lib. xiii, c. 4.

Alexander, besides his intellectual obligations to his mother, was indebted to her for the beauty of his face. All the coins and medals represent Alexander as bearing a striking resemblance to Olympias. Olympias has, in addition to a fine double chin of her own, the large open eye, the fulness of face, the Greek nose, and the exquisitely chiselled mouth of Alexander.

In a very fine medal published in Snakenberg's Quintus Curtius, Olympias has her hair beautifully arranged with some leaves gracefully intertwined, and an ornament of a crescent shape in front. In another coin or medallion the heads of Alexander and his mother are placed together, and the resemblance is very remarkable.

Olympias has gained pardon from posterity for many great faults by the courage and calmness with which she met her death, "submitting to her fate in such a way," says the historian, "that you might recognise Alexander in his dying mother." Like Polyxena before her, and Cæsar after her, in her last moments she ad-

justed her robes and her hair, so as to be graceful in death as she had been in her lifetime, carefully covering her bosom and limbs as she would wish to be seen.*

* Justin. Hist. xiv, c. 6. The reading has been much tortured by the commentators: "Insuper expirans *capillis* et veste crura contexisse fertur, ne quid posset in corpore ejus indecorum videri." I have adopted the reading of Grævius: "Insuper expirans *papillas* et veste crura contexisse fertur."

DEMETRIUS.

DEMETRIUS OF MACEDONIA, called "the besieger of towns," was so very beautiful, that it was said no painter or sculptor could do justice to the mingled grace and dignity of his face and form, with which also his manners and conversation admirably harmonised. This beauty he strove to improve, according to the taste of his time, by art. Being naturally pale, he used pigments to heighten his colour.*

It is not improbable that, like the Roman Heliogabalus, he in reality impaired his natural beauty by such effeminate applications. To

* Ælian, lib. IX, c. 9.

meet the requirements of his age, he dyed his hair yellow by arts known in his time. The demand for golden locks has not only led to the adoption of false hair, but to the invention of scientific means of converting other colours into the desired hue.

We know that Massalina, for the purpose of carrying on her infamous amours, hid her black hair with yellow locks.* Black hair was considered becoming in a matron, and yellow hair was the colour for youth. Those who imitated youth therefore put on yellow hair, and hence it became the fashion adopted by unchaste women under the empire. The same notion has prevailed in many ages in Europe. Mary Queen of Scots wore false yellow hair. In the "Merchant of Venice," Bassanio, in an extremely beautiful passage, says:

> "Look on beauty,
> And you shall see it purchased by the weight,
> Which therein works a miracle in nature,
> Making them lightest that wear most of it;
> So are those crisped, snaky, golden locks,

* Juvenal, "Sat." lib. VI, 120.

Which make such wanton gambols with the wind
Upon supposed fairness, often known
To be the dowry of a second head—
The scull that bred them in the sepulchre."

The art of making the hair yellow or fair has been known and practised from a very remote period, and is familiarly spoken of by ancient writers. Besides what he says about Demetrius, Ælian, speaking about Atalanta, tells us that "the colour of her hair was yellow, produced, not by any womanly art or by tinctures or drugs administered, but altogether natural."* Ælian could not have spoken in this way if the art had not been well known in his time. It is particularly noticed by Tertullian in his interesting work on the ornaments of women. "I see some of you," he writes to his "very dear sisters in Christ," his black-haired countrywomen, "constantly occupied in giving their hair a fair colour. They are almost ashamed of their country; they are vexed at not having been born in Gaul or Germany."†

* Ælian, lib. xii, c. 1.

† Tertullian, "De Cultu Fœminarum," lib. ii, c. 6; Opera i, 156. Lut. Par. 1664.

As it has always been considered lawful to draw people to what is right by appealing to the motives by which they are most likely to be influenced, Tertullian leaves the high ground of denouncing these arts as inventions of the fallen angels, and tells his countrywomen that by these processes the hair is lost, and that the brain itself is enfeebled by the use of the liquors employed, and "by the excessive heat of the sun in which you take pleasure, in inflaming and drying your heads." The notion that black hair became matronly years is alluded to by Tertullian in this treatise. "There comes a time, however," he says, "when they strive to change their fair hair into black; when, arrived at a fatal old age, they are grieved at having lived too long."

St. Jerome, writing nearly two centuries later, notices the dying of hair red. "Thou shalt not," says this vehement father, "turn your hair red, making it ominous of the fires of hell" (nec capillum inrufes et ei aliquid de gehennæ ignibus auspiceris).

This strange art of converting black or dark-

coloured hair into fair has been practised in modern times. The following extract is from Mrs. Jameson's "Memoirs and Essays illustrative of Art, Literature, and Social Morals." It is an interesting commentary on the extracts from Tertullian, and shows that what was known to the Venetian ladies in the sixteenth century was also familiar to the women of Carthage in the second, as it was also to the Greeks long before the Christian era. Truly, there is nothing new under the sun in human vanity.

"With regard to the Venetian women, every one must remember, in the Venetian pictures, not only the peculiar luxuriance, but the peculiar colour of the hair, of every golden tint, from a rich full shade of auburn to a sort of yellow flaxen hue, or rather not flaxen, but like raw silk, such as we have seen the peasants in Lombardy carrying over their arms, or on their heads, in great shining twisted heaps. I have sometimes heard it asked, with wonder, whether those pale, golden masses of hair—the true *biondina* tint—could have been

always natural? On the contrary, it was often artificial—the colour, not the hair.

"In the days of the elder Palma and Georgione, yellow hair was the fashion, and the paler the tint the more admired. The women had a method of discharging the natural colour by first washing their tresses in some chemical preparation, and then exposing them to the sun. I have seen a curious old Venetian print, perhaps satirical, which represents the process. A lady is seated on the roof, or balcony, of her house, wearing a sort of broad-brimmed hat without a crown. The long hair is drawn over these wide brims, and spread out in the sunshine, while the face is completely shaded."

Besides the colouring of the hair by what may be called a chemical process, destroying the original colour, the ancients resorted to the less artificial and mechanical mode of making their hair of the desired yellow by sprinkling it with a golden powder. The elder Galienus, the emperor, used this powder.* I do not know

* Trebellius Pollio, "Hist. Aug. Scriptores," lib. II, p. 232.

whether it be from a notion of its being beautiful that many of the Arabs of Aden make their hair yellow by the use of clay of that colour.

Ælian uses a very strong expression, which reminds us of the terms in which the use of ointments on the person is spoken of in the Hebrew Scriptures, when he says that Demetrius himself and his pavement flowed with unguents. The fresh flowers of every season were strewed below him that he might walk among them. This use of flowers, as it has something in it of a passion for the charms of nature, is certainly the most defensible, as it is the most refined and elegant of Sybarite luxuries.

Heliogabalus, otherwise a contemptible creature in comparison with Demetrius, according to the Augustan historian, strewed his seats, his beds, and the porticos of his houses with roses, and walked amongst lilies and violets, hyacinths and narcissuses. When the younger Dionysius revelled with the women of Locria, he filled the insides of his palaces with roses

and wild thyme. The Emperor Galienus, the elder, lay on beds of roses, which he procured even in spring.

Ælian has devoted a chapter to the history of two Sybarites—Straton of Sidon, and Nicocles of Cyprus—who contended with each other who should be most magnificent, luxurious, and delicate; and when the one heard of any great exhibition of splendid voluptuousness on the part of the other, he made it his business to throw it into the shade by something still more extraordinary. At his suppers, Straton was surrounded with beautiful women, singing, playing on instruments, and dancing. "Yet," says Ælian, gravely, "neither of these princes could indulge in these pleasures for ever; but both were removed from the world by a violent death."*

Polyænus tells us that Nicocles hanged himself. Of Straton we learn that fearing to fall into the hands of the Persians, he wished to slay himself, but got frightened at the sight of the naked sword, and resolved to await his

* Ælian, lib. VII, c. 2.

fate, when his wife, snatching the weapon from his trembling hand, pierced him through with it, and then stabbing herself mortally, threw herself into his arms and died. The ancients would have called this a good wife.

But Demetrius could unite the character of the warrior and the politician with that of the voluptuary. The union is not common, but is not unexampled. In well-authenticated history, the Roman Emperor Otho is the most perfect example of this strange mixture of the most luxurious effeminacy and the utmost heroism of soul. Surena, the Parthian general, who conducted the war against the Romans, was an Otho on a less conspicuous field. History pronounces him to have been the greatest warrior, the ablest politician, and the tallest and most beautiful man of his time amongst the Parthians.* In his expeditions he had a thousand camels bearing luggage, and two hundred carriages conveying the women of his harem. Though always the foremost man in the field or in the assault on the fortified city, Surena's

* Plutarch, "Crasuss."

beauty was distinctly of a feminine cast; and while it was the Parthian custom to let the hair grow wild and shaggy, in order to strike terror into their foes, their heroic general, the most warlike amongst them, painted his face and parted his locks effeminately on his forehead, after the luxurious fashion of the Medes. On the part of Surena, who carried with him in all his marches a train of the most beautiful Parthian women, and spent his nights with them in feasting and licentious singing and dancing, it was bitter mockery when he showed his court the indecent books of Aristides, which had fallen into his hands amongst the baggage of the Romans, as evidence of the luxuriousness of their enemies, who could not travel without such things.

Amongst warlike and energetic monarchs who were at the same time addicted to those soft vices which usually break down all manliness of character, the History of England gives us Edgar, Henry II., and Edward IV. France presents us with Francis I. and Henry IV., and the German empire gives us Frederick, the

great opponent of ecclesiastical despotism in the thirteenth century. Ladislaus, king of Naples, who was murdered by a young woman of Florence by means of a poisoned handkerchief, was a man of this stamp. "This good captain," says Montaigne, "courageous and ambitious, proposed to himself, as the chief end of his ambition, the completion of his pleasure and the enjoyment of some rare beauty."*

In the other sex this character is not so rare as amongst men. From the Semiramis of Assyria, to the Semiramis of the North, Catharine of Russia, there is a well filled up list of women, illustrious for their heroic spirit and infamous for their licentious passions.

Beauty, voluptuousness, and valour were met in the famed queen of Assyria. "Semiramis," says Ælian, "was of all women most beautiful, but careless of her charms."† There is amongst the portraits of Gronovius‡ a full-length figure

* Montaigne, "Essais," p. 537.

† Ælian, lib. VII, c. 1.

‡ Gronovius, "Thesaurus Antiq. Græcarum," tom I. Note.

of this remarkable woman, robed closely to the feet, with a slender coronet on her head, and attended by a dove. Ancient fable relates that as her mother, Dercete, was after death changed into a fish with the face of a beautiful woman, so Semiramis was metamorphosed into a dove, which hence became the Babylonian emblem. The dove is the bird of Venus, the representative of tenderness and love; and the transmigration of the soul of Semiramis was characteristic of the softer passions of that warlike woman.

Justin tells us something about her person. When she passed herself off as the son and not the widow of Ninus, Semiramis was aided by the circumstance that both were about the same stature, both had the same slender voice, and both in features resembled each other. She covered her arms and legs with her robe and placed a tiara on her head; and in order that she might not appear to be concealing anything under this dress, she commanded the whole people to be attired in the same way, in consequence of which this dress became

national.* This is the dress in which she appears in the picture in Gronovius.

Ælian tells us that Semiramis did not exult when in the chase she captured a lion, but was proud when she took a lioness, the danger of the feat being esteemed much greater.†

It is really a pretty story which is told of Semiramis by Valerius Maximus. She was one day dressing her hair, when tidings reached her that Babylon had revolted. She had got the curls on one side of her head to her mind, but the tresses on the other were still in loose disorder. But she threw herself, as she was, at the head of her soldiers, and flew to the siege, and did not complete her toilet till she had first reduced the city to obedience. Her statue in Babylon represented her as she appeared on that day before its walls.‡

It is somewhat remarkable that Sir Walter Raleigh, who, in his melancholy and grand history, has more than once expressed the most

* Justin, lib. I, c. 1.

† Ælian XII, c. 39.

‡ Valerius Maximus, lib. IX, c. III, sec. 4.

false opinions about the wickedness of woman, refuses to believe the voice of all history regarding the licentiousness of Semiramis. "For her vicious life," he says, "I ascribe the report thereof to the envious and lying Grecians." His reasons for disbelief are, however, such as cannot be allowed to invalidate a historical relation. "For delicacie and ease," he continues, "do more often accompanie licentiousnesse in men and women than labour and hazzard do."*

I have already shown that this rule, as regards men, is not without its exceptions; as regards women, it is still less to be looked on as universal. The licentiousness of Semiramis is established by constant and uniform historical tradition. Thus Juvenal, speaking of the effeminate arts of the Emperor Otho, who applied plasters of bread to his face to make it delicate, declares that this was what neither Semiramis nor Cleopatra did.† Diodorus represents her as building a palace, and con-

* Raleigh, "History of the World," book I, c. 12, sec. 4. Lond. 1614.

† Juvenalis, "Sat." lib. II, p. 108.

structing gardens in one of her cities, and making her habitation remarkable in the same way as in modern history the tower of Nesle is by the amours of the French princesses.* Procopius, in his "Anecdota," in which he has so many terrible things to tell of the wickedness of women, refers as to an undoubted fact to the dissolute life of Semiramis (Σεμιραμιδος ακολαστον βιον).† And our own Shakespere has embodied the spirit of ancient history regarding this famous woman—

> "Or wilt thou sleep? we'll have thee to a couch,
> Softer and sweeter than the lustful bed
> On purpose trimm'd up for Semiramis."‡

* "Diod. Siculus," lib. II, c. 13.

† Procopius, "Anecdota," p. 5. Lipsiæ, 1827.

‡ "Taming of the Shrew." Ind. sc. 2.

SCIPIO AFRICANUS.

THE younger Scipio Africanus, according to the testimony of his friend the historian Polybius, which is followed by Livy and Ælian, was extremely beautiful. His person appears to have indicated his amiable and elegant mind. He studied the Greek literature, and anticipated the cultivation of the age of Augustus. "He had nothing of the old Roman severity about him," says Michelet; "his was rather a Greek genius resembling that of Alexander."

Livy has a passage about Scipio, which gives us a high idea of his prepossessing appearance, from the impression which it made on Massanissa.

He tells us that Massanissa, being desirous of entering into an alliance with the Romans, had formed a great admiration of Scipio, from the fame of his actions, and had conceived in his mind that the hero was vast and stately in his person. Scipio, says the historian, had much majesty in his nature. His hair was long and flowing His person was not scrupulously adorned, but manly and truly military. Being then just recovered from a sickness, he appeared as if he had been in the flower of his youth.* From a passage in Tacitus, in reference to Germanicus, we learn that Scipio walked without retinue, with uncovered feet, and in a similar dress with his soldiers.†

* Livius, lib. XXVIII.

† Tacitus, "Annales," II, c. 59.

SYLLA.

THE famous dictator Sylla considered himself, and was regarded by others, as a beauty. He had yellow hair, with a complexion in which red and white were strangely contrasted. His eyes were of a lively blue, and fierce and threatening. Owing to the mixture of colours in his face, Plutarch, from whom we have these particulars about Sylla's person, tells us that a satirist of the time compared it to a mulberry strewed with flour. Sylla, who believed himself to be the handsomest man of his time, grounded his claims mainly on his fine hair. When the soothsayers announced that the troubles of

Rome were to be settled by a man of courage and superior beauty, Sylla declared that this could be none other than himself; "for my golden hair," he said, "sufficiently proves my beauty; and after what I have achieved, I need not hesitate in avowing myself a man of courage."*

Sylla was reckoned the most fortunate man of his times; and we find from the excuse which a woman made for touching him with her hand, as he sat in the theatre, that it was with the ancients, as it is with the moderns, considered lucky to touch a lucky person. From youth to age, he was an indiscreet admirer of female beauty, and was passionately beloved by the sex. Plutarch appears to be right in believing that he was not naturally cruel, notwithstanding the crimes into which his position and desire to rule drove him. His passion for a country life, and his actual retirement from the city, and his pursuit of rural sports and fishing, are curious traits in his character.

* Plutarch, "Sylla."

CLEOPATRA.

THE charms of Cleopatra, the renowned Queen of Egypt, are more celebrated than the beauty of any other woman named in history, with the exception of Helen of Troy. Historians, hearing of her fascinations, have attributed them all to mere face and form. Thus Dion assumes that she was the most beautiful of all women. Yet, though her perfections affected the course of this world's history, there is reason to believe the testimony of Plutarch, that the beauty of her face and figure was not remarkable beyond that of women of whose attractions less has been said and written. In

stature she was small. Michelet calls her "a little wonder;" and, in his usual picturesque style, in allusion to her having got herself conveyed to Cæsar when he was in Alexandria, in a bundle of clothes, says, "The height of her who was carried to Cæsar, wrapped up in a bundle upon the shoulders of Apollodorus, could not have been very imposing." The heads of Cleopatra, on medals and coins, represent her as bearing a considerable resemblance in features to her second lover, Antony. As in him, the chin and nose are rather hooked, threatening an unpleasant approximation at an early age. The nose of Cleopatra is also not so decidedly feminine as a sound taste would demand.

All accounts, however, agree in attributing to Cleopatra an infinite variety of accomplishments, the rarest literary acquirements, a knowledge of languages only equalled in ancient times by that attributed to Mithridates, the marvellous King of Pontus, the finest taste in the arts, an unexplainable grace in her manners, the most bewitching powers of conversa-

tion, and a tone of voice which made those powers irresistible. Dion, who says that she excelled all other women in elegance of form, tells us that there was such a grace in her voice, that with whatever man she spoke, she could wheedle him with this charm, and could draw any one, however averse to love by nature or years, to be enamoured of her.*

Cleopatra was in her twentieth year when she captivated Julius Cæsar; and she was twenty-five when Antony became her admirer. Antony, however, it is stated by Appian, when he was general of the horse in Egypt, under Gabinius, had seen Cleopatra, then a child, and conceived a love for her.† At her death she was in her fortieth year, and it is evident that at that age she did not despair of charming Augustus; and if she failed there, it is not fair to attribute her want of success to any decay in her powers of pleasing, but to her having, in that selfish and cold-blooded politician, the very worst subject possible to work upon.

* Dion Cassius, "Hist. Rom." lib. XLII, c. 42, p. 201.

† Appian, "De Bell. Civ." lib. V, c. 8.

The amours of Cleopatra with Julius, are forgotten by the general reader in the greater celebrity and greater historical consequences of her love of Marc Antony. As I shall notice in the sketch of Julius, Merivale attributes a deteriorating influence over his mind from his passion for the Egyptian Queen. I am not able to trace a false step in all the splendid career of Cæsar. Dion, however, gives support to the opinion of this excellent historian, and alludes to actions of Cæsar which he did purely out of love to Cleopatra; and he tells us that on their first meeting, Cæsar became her slave. It is a strong expression to apply to one of the most vigorously minded men that ever lived; but Cæsar was also the most refined man of his time, and experience testifies that all cultivation of the mind only weakens its powers of resisting the fascination of beauty and graceful manners.

"On women, nature did bestow two eyes
Like heaven's bright lamps in matchless beauty shining,
Whose beams do soonest captivate the wise,
And learned heads made rare by art's refining."

I have noticed the introduction of Cleopatra, by stealth, into the presence of Cæsar. When Apollodorus laid down his precious burden, there took place a remarkable interview. It was an interview between the two most intellectually gifted persons who perhaps ever met together, the two most accomplished persons of their age, perhaps of any age. Never in this world, either before or since, did such a pair meet in one apartment, in one city, in one country. Nature had prodigally lavished all her graces on both the man and the woman, and both had cultivated all the faculties of their minds with the utmost assiduity and the most splendid success. As has been observed of others who have fallen in love together, there were several points of resemblance between the two. Both were amongst the most learned persons of their times, both had a passion for an elegant, refined, and magnificent voluptuousness, both had an ornamental Greek cast of mind, both were of high courage, both were fearless of danger and death, and both were

irreligious, or rather the religion of both was of that kind which prevailed amongst the Egyptians and the Greeks, and which taught that the certainty and the quick approach of death, and the thick darkness which hung over the nature and the very existence of the future and unseen world, were the most powerful reasons for making the best use of the present; motives calling on them to eat, drink, and be merry, and particularly to love; that spirit which gives its bright lights and its deep shades to the finest ode of Catullus: "Vivamus, mea Desbia, et amemus."

The conversation between Cæsar and Cleopatra, in all probability, was carried on in Greek, being the court language of the time; and being also, as we learn from Martial and Juvenal and other authorities, the language of love amongst the Romans.

Plutarch represents Cleopatra at twenty-five, as feeling certain that when she appeared before him, Antony would not be able to resist her in the ripeness of her beauty and understanding,

seeing that when an inexperienced girl and ignorant of the world, she had made a conquest of Cæsar and of the son of Pompey.

Bayle is extremely pleased with this reasoning of Cleopatra's, and has in more than one place taken an opportunity of enforcing his doctrine of the powerlessness of mere beauty of face and person when not supported by intellectual resources. "This argument," he says, "is much better than those persons imagine who only talk about girls of fifteen, of roses half blown, and with whom twenty is an entrance upon old age—impertinent persons, who might easily discover, both by what is passing in their own times and by the history of former ages, that the women who have most charmed great princes, and have made the greatest disturbances in courts, were of an age which enabled them to acquire an experience in business and to perfect their understanding, and that there are few whose empire is of long duration if the graces of the mind do not second those of the body."*

And again, in speaking of Cæsonia, the wife

* Bayle. Art. "Dellius."

of Caligula, Bayle says: "It is strange that this woman, being neither young nor beautiful, and having already had three children to her husband, was able to inspire a passion so ardent and so constant in this barbarian; but, however much may be said about the first flower of youth, it will be seen, if the matter is carefully considered, that the address and practice of a woman of from thirty to forty uphold her reign better when she is mistress of a prince than the mere beauty of a girl would do."*

Plutarch lets us know that Cleopatra was neither younger nor more beautiful than Antony's virtuous wife Octavia; and founding upon this information, Brantome has gone the length of nearly disallowing any beauty whatever to Cleopatra, and of asserting that Octavia was a hundred times prettier, and that it was entirely Cleopatra's talk that seduced Antony. "It was on this account," he says, "that Marc Antony loved Cleopatra so much, and preferred her to his wife Octavia, who was a hundred times more loveable *(aimable)* and beautiful than Cleo-

* Bayle. Art. "Caligula."

patra; but this Cleopatra had so delicate a discourse *(la parole si affectée)*, and her words were so much to the purpose, with her loose fashions and graces, that Antony forgot everything for her love."*

Cleopatra's voice has been compared to an instrument of many strings. There is a voice in some women, which, by some not easily explainable sympathy between it and those who listen to it, will do almost anything; it will atone for the want of youth and beauty, and has a power which may without a figure of speech be called magical. It will make a set of insipid verses appear in the reading to be the poetry of the heart; it will carry through a worthless drama, and make it pass for a fine tragedy.

It is one half the battle with an actress if she appear on the stage with a voice of this kind. To such a voice as this it is said that Madame Roland owed in a great measure the strange fascination which her eloquence exerted on all who came within the circle of her attractions.

* Brantome, "Dames Galantes." Œuvres, tom. III, p. 279.

Miss Kavanagh, following the contemporary authorities, has attempted to describe it. "Great as was the power of her personal charms, it yielded to that of her voice. Those who had heard it once could never forget it again. The low, clear tones—so mellow and so deep—haunted them like a strain of exquisite melody through years, long after she who gave them utterance had perished on a scaffold."*

Madame Roland herself was sensible what a gift this is, and has left it on record that the voice of her husband, "Roland the Just," was not a well-modulated one. To this voice of hers and the infectious nature of political fanaticism, Madame Roland's influence in her day is chiefly to be attributed. Her character is not an amiable one. I can never read the fate of Marie Antoinette without sorrow; but I confess I think that the death of Madame Roland was just a piece of retributive justice, and I have no pity to afford her.

The Roman writers have used the strongest terms to describe the madness of Antony's

* "Women of France," vol. II, p. 141.

passion for Cleopatra—that passion for which it is not an heroic exaggeration to say that he lost the empire of the world; for he undoubtedly entered on the contest for the prize with an amount of favour and popularity with the Romans, both citizens and soldiers, of which his successful rival Octavius was destitute.

"After the death of Cassius and Brutus," says Appian, "Cæsar went to Italy, and Antony proceeded to Asia, where Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, having met him, instantly conquered him at first sight; and their love brought destruction on themselves, and after them entailed numerous ills on all Egypt."* "Antony," he says in another place, "wounded in soul at the sight of her, presently began to love her as if he were a boy, although he was then forty years of age, having, as is said, always had a disposition for such passions."†

The historian represents him as throwing aside all the former energy of his nature, following only the commands of Cleopatra, with

* Appian, "De Bell. Civ." lib. v, c. I.

† Ibid. lib. v, c. 8.

an utter disregard to all laws, human and divine. "All the great army," says the same writer, "with which Antony terrified the Bactrians and the Indians more remote than these, Cleopatra alone rendered of no avail, for out of his desire for her he did not commence the war at the proper time, and he did everything without consideration, not being master of his senses, and so enslaved by the witchcraft of that woman, that he thought not so much of victory as of a speedy return to her."*

Dion speaks in a similar manner. "Antony, seized with the love of Cleopatra, cared nothing henceforth for honour, but served the Egyptian woman."† Our own Dr. South, in his admirable sermon on "ill-disposed affections, the cause of error in judgment," has noticed the weakness of Antony with his usual vigour of language and closeness of logic. "Show me," he says, "so much as one wise counsel or action of Marcus Antonius, a person otherwise both

* Appian, "Parthica." Opera, lib. IV, p. 276. Lipsiæ, 1829.

† Dion, lib. XLVIII, p. 371.

valiant and eloquent, after that he had subdued his understanding to his affections, and his affections to Cleopatra !"

Cleopatra was certainly no model of purity, but her wickedness has been exaggerated by the Roman writers. Dion speaks of her extreme general licentiousness.* Her wickedness and her beauty have been exaggerated in the purest spirit of romance by Aurelius Victor.† Yet her amours with Cæsar and with Antony, and her unsuccessful attempt upon Octavius, appear to have been mingled in her mind with a desire to preserve the independence of her sovereignty. Women are generally religious, and much worse women than Cleopatra was —for she was a saint in comparison with many of the Roman queens, even Christian queens— have been devout. This alleviation or aggravation of her guilt, whichever it may be called, it does not appear that Cleopatra could plead.

* Dion, lib. LI, p. 453.

† S. Aurelius Victor: "Hæc tantæ libidinis fuit, ut sæpe prostiterit; tantæ pulchritudinis, ut multi noctem illius morte emerint."

Amongst her other wild freaks with Antony, Cleopatra, the queen of a deeply religious people—the people who had torn in pieces the Roman soldier who, by accident, had killed a sacred cat—appeared in the garb and character of the awful Isis—whose veil, the ancient inscription said, no mortal had ever removed—while the graceless Antony acted the part of her Osiris.

Our notions of a charming woman are terribly shocked when we hear of Cleopatra, even in the presence of Octavius, flying at one of her slaves, and tearing his face with her nails. I do not know if we are more or less shocked at this than at hearing how the philosophical Cato, before proceeding to meditate with Plato on the immortality of the soul, gave his attendant a blow on the mouth because he had considerately removed his sword, fearing that his master was about to do himself a mischief.

But the ideas of different ages and countries are very dissimilar in matters of this kind. Even in fiction, where the writer has it in his

power to make all his great people decorous and amiable, we find, in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," the most accomplished ladies doing as Cleopatra did. Badoura, the charming Princess of China, seizes her nurse by the hair of the head, and beats her till her face is covered with blood.

But even in Cleopatra's days, it is gratifying to find that Ovid, in that book of his "Art of Love," which is devoted to instructing the fair sex how to make themselves agreeable, expresses his repulsion to a woman who loses her temper, and beats or scratches her maidservant.

There was a Lucrezia Gonzagua, a learned woman of the sixteenth century, whose name has descended to the present day with the warmest commendations of her erudition, virtue and piety. Her injudicious admirers published her epistolary correspondence as far as it could be collected, including the letters which she wrote on her purely household affairs. A quotation is made from one of these letters by Bayle, the effect of which is to destroy all the

reputation of goodness which her friends have endeavoured to rear up for her. She is writing to Lucia, who appears to have been at the head of her domestic establishment, about a maid, Livia, and says: "If Livia is not obedient to you, lift her petticoats to her head, and whip her till her flesh be blue and the blood run down to her heels." Such letters as these, Bayle calmly says, might have been suppressed without doing injury to the writer.* I believe Lucrezia Gonzagua was an impudent woman, and a hypocrite in morality and religion.

I earnestly trust that it is not true what is to be read in books of the women of South Carolina—famous for their neat ancles, and their amazing chastity—that they not only will give orders for the flogging of a slave, even a female slave, but will themselves see the brutality carried into effect. If there really be such beasts in the shape, or in anything like the

* Bayle. Art. "Gonzague" (Lucrece). "Se Livia non vi e obbediente, alzatele in capo i drappi e datelene tante che le carni si facciano livide e il sangue le scorra sino alle calcagne."

shape of women—for the Carolina women are said to be not very much in that shape—what sort of savages of men must they be who fall in love with them, or can even endure their society?

Plutarch has given us a great part of the information which we have about Cleopatra. He had, he tells us, picked up from his grandfather all that could be learned of the history of her and Antony; and while Plutarch is censurable for inaccuracy in dates, and in the drier parts of history, this was just a subject on which this peculiarly interesting writer would be desirous of being correct, and well-informed.

The arts which Cleopatra had practised through life did not desert her in her final unsuccessful struggle. "She played boldly," says Merivale, "with the loaded die, and threw her last cast with a hand that had never faltered."* Her last effort to preserve her independence is well described by Dion. When she received Octavius, she was lying on a splendid couch,

* Merivale, "History of the Romans under the Empire," III, p. 336. Lond. 1851.

highly adorned, but in mourning-weeds; which, the historian tells us, became her wonderfully well. She was surrounded by the portraits of Julius, and had the letters of her illustrious lover in her bosom. She wept and kissed the letters, and threw herself down before the bust of Cæsar, and adored it. She then turned her eyes towards Octavius, and spoke to him in those tones which had melted the souls of Julius and Antony, but they were lost upon the heartless triumvir, who afterwards in cold blood murdered the boy whom Cleopatra was pleased to call the child of Julius.

The queen was vexed that Octavius said nothing about her kingdom, and spoke not a word of love; she threw herself at his feet, but drew from him nothing but harsh reproaches. This was not the language which she had been accustomed to hear, when she chose to exert her powers of seducing and pleasing. Octavius, who was anxious to prevent her from committing suicide, left her in what he believed to be safe custody.

But Cleopatra disappointed the insolent con-

queror of the gratification which he had proposed to himself in dragging along the great enchantress in his triumphal procession. She had learnedly studied the nature of various poisons, in order to ascertain which produced the easiest death. "The true euthanasia," says Merivale, "she discovered, it is said, in the bite of the asp, which suffused the brain with languor and forgetfulness, and extinguished the faculties without any sense of suffering."

The bite of the asp of Egypt, according to the ancients, is followed by a desire of sleep, and a death without pain. An asp was brought into the queen's apartment, concealed in a basket of figs. The sight of her deliverer filled her with joy. Cleopatra died in a manner characteristic of her elegant tastes; and the Roman writers, hired to load her memory with execration, are unable to speak of her last moments without admiration. She adorned herself in her richest robes, and had the dead body of Antony placed beside her on a golden couch. She anointed herself with perfumes, while her maids placed the royal diadem of

Egypt on her head. She then applied the asp to her veins, and slept into death.

The anointing of the body with perfumes was an ancient mode of preparing for death. Frenshemius, in a note on the passage in Florus, in which the historian notices the death of Cleopatra, remarks that the practice is not condemned by our Saviour. The reference of the commentator is to that pathetic and beautiful passage in the Gospel where, when the disciples murmured against the woman who poured the alabaster-box of precious ointment on his head, our Lord says, "Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my head, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this which this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her."

The scene after Cleopatra's death is described by Plutarch with great picturesque beauty. When the officers of Augustus burst into the apartment, Cleopatra was dead, and

her maid Iras had also expired at her feet. Charmion, the other maid, half-fainting, was placing the diadem aright on the queen's brow. "Was this well done?" said one of the officers. "Perfectly well," said Charmion; "and worthy the daughter of the King of Egypt," and Charmion then fell down dead.

There were no discolorations or spots, the usual indications of poison, to be found on the body of Cleopatra. The marks of two small punctures were, it is said, discovered on her arm; and Octavius employed the Egyptian serpent-charmers in the vain attempt to bring her to life again.

In the triumphal procession of the conqueror, the image of Cleopatra had two serpents twined about the arms. A golden statue of her was placed in the temple of Venus, round the walls of which several ornaments, which belonged to her, were suspended.

Mrs. Jameson, in describing the Cleopatra of Shakespere, has described the real Cleopatra. "Her mental accomplishments, her unequalled graces, her woman's wit and woman's wiles, her

irresistible allurements, her starts of irregular grandeur, her bursts of ungovernable temper, her vivacity of imagination, her petulant caprice, her fickleness and her falsehood, her tenderness and her truth, her childish susceptibility to flattery, her magnificent spirit, her royal pride, the gorgeous Eastern colouring of her character; all these contradictory elements has Shakespere seized, mingled them in their extremes, and fused them into one brilliant impersonation of classical elegance, oriental voluptuousness, and gipsey sorcery."*

* "Characteristics of Women," vol. II, p. 123.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

We have, fortunately, a complete-enough portrait of Julius Cæsar, and we know a good deal, though not nearly so much as it would be desirable that we knew, of his habits and mode of life. He was a tall, slender, well-made man, with a long pale face; his brow was high but not broad; he had dark sparkling eyes, and his mouth was rather large. "A slight puffing of the under lip," says Merivale, "which may be traced in some of his best busts, must undoubtedly have detracted from the admirable contour of his countenance." Yet he was still reckoned handsome, and in his moments of

vanity he delighted to trace his descent through his ancestor, Iulus, to the love of the goddess of beauty for the mortal Anchises; while the name of his ancestress, Venus, was actually stamped on some of his coins.

His features, it is said, had something of the feminine grace which afterwards appeared in his nephew Octavius. Velleius Paterculus, who, however, is accused of flattering the emperors, tells us that Julius was the most eminent in beauty of all the citizens.* His coins and busts represent him in his declining years, when his brow was furrowed with deep and painful thought, and when the alternate military severity and licentious indulgence of his early life had brought on premature decay. In youth he had in a great measure deserved the praise of Velleius. It was then that he affected that carelessness in dress, in reference to which Sylla was constantly urging the aristocracy—none of whom, with the exception of himself, was capable of measuring the grandeur of Cæsar's

* Velleius Pater. "Hist. Rom." lib. II, p. 149. Lugd. Bat. 1653.

soul, or the vastness of the ambition by which it was devoured—to beware of "the ill-girt boy" (*puerum male præcinctum.*)*

Julius, however, when a youth, might, out of policy, indulge in the loose dress of the debauchees of the time, while he was secretly meditating schemes of future greatness; or, possibly, while pursuing his pleasures, a negligence in matters of dress might be part of his system. Ovid, living very near his time, has expressly recommended carelessness of costume as a means of attraction, alleging that it was by a total neglect of hair-dressing, and such like fopperies, that Theseus had won the beautiful Ariadne; and that the greatest achievements in conquering hearts had been made by men who took no pains in adorning their persons.†

Michelet, in his history of Rome, has a fine picture of Cæsar. "I should like," he says, "to have seen this white and pale figure, faded before its time by the debauches of Rome, this delicate epileptic man, marching under the

* Suetonius, "Julius," c. 45.

† Ovid, "Ars. Amat." lib. I.

rains of Gaul, at the head of his legions, swimming over rivers, or riding on horseback between the litters in which his secretaries were carried." Suetonius, in a short chapter (the fifty-seventh), has furnished the idea so beautifully brought out here.

In manhood, and in his latter years, the once "ill-girt boy" paid attention to the neatness of his attire. He shaved carefully—there is no bust or coin of Cæsar with a beard—he was fond of gems and jewels, and loved a becoming magnificence in his houses.

Cæsar, though his health was generally good, was subject to starting in his sleep, to fainting, and to the falling sickness, having twice been seized with epilepsy in public.* This latter malady is generally found in connection with feebleness of mind, or rather tends to induce mental weakness. Merivale, in noticing the case of Cæsar, mentions that Napoleon had attacks of epilepsy. Cæsar's intellect certainly is amongst the very highest that ever shone upon the world. The story that Mahomet, a

* Suetonius, "Julius," c. 45.

man of the most vigorous mind, was subject to falling sickness, is unknown to genuine history, being a fable invented by his Christian opponents.

Cæsar's baldness, with the notion which the ancients attached to the falling of the hair from the head, subjected him to much ridicule. His soldiers, when they accompanied him in his Gallic triumph, with the licence accorded to them on such occasions, did not fail to jeer him on this score.* He tried as far as he could to conceal this defect by bringing forward his hair; and, as I have elsewhere noticed, of all the honours conferred upon him by the senate, that which most delighted his heart was the right of continually wearing the laurel wreath round his brows.

The historians who have most severely censured Cæsar's want of chastity, have allowed that he was temperate in eating and drinking.†

Cæsar's eloquence was of the very highest

* Suetonius, "Julius," c. 51.

† Ibid. c. 53.

and most effective order. Cicero confessed that he did not know any orator to whom Cæsar ought to give place. He spoke, we are told, with a shrill voice, and used much gesture, but with great gracefulness. His language was just what might be expected of him—the image of his mind. It was, according to Cicero, " elegant, and splendid, and magnificent, and generous."*

The horses of great warriors become the subjects of history. Cæsar's favourite horse, it is gravely said, had feet almost like those of a man, the hoofs being divided into toes. He had been reared with great care, as the augurs had predicted that the owner of this strange animal would become the master of the world. Amongst the presages of Cæsar's death, we are told by Suetonius that the horses which he had let loose to graze refused to eat their food, and shed tears abundantly; as Homer, in a very tender passage, represents the horses of Achilles weeping bitterly for the death of their charioteer. In some of the poems about the

* Suetonius, "Julius," 55.

Cid, the Cid's horse, Babieca, comes to see his master die, and sheds tears as he follows his funeral.

Julius, says Velleius, had "a soul elevated beyond human nature and belief." Certainly, after allowing all the defects which the most severe criticism has been able to discover in his character, it still remains one of the most wonderfully great and symmetrical in history, presenting a union of strength and energy with gracefulness, elegance and refinement, such as have neither before nor since been met with in one man.

From the time that, when a mere boy, he—and he alone—offered resistance to the tyranny of Sylla and the aristocracy, till he rose to the head of the empire, it is difficult to detect one single error or one false step in the whole of his splendid career. He gathered together the fragments of the popular party, scattered and down-trodden after the death of Marius, and led them on, without a single repulse, to the final overthrow of the aristocracy. Though no one on whom it was ever bestowed better

merited the title of the "father of his country," which a grateful people bestowed upon him, it is his higher praise that in him the feelings of patriotism were mingled with aspirations for the good of all mankind. He protected the peaceable citizen from the tyranny of the noble, and the inhabitant of the most remote province of Rome justly regarded Cæsar as his friend.

Strangers of all nations bewailed his death: his tomb was visited, with lamentations, night after night by the Jews, abhorred by the Romans, and oppressed by them all but by Cæsar. He may even be said to have, by anticipation, taken a generous revenge on his cowardly assassins. There was scarcely one of them, whom he had not overwhelmed with favours. He had spared the life of Marcus Brutus, and taken him to his bosom after he had forfeited pardon by appearing against him in arms. Decimus Brutus he had made one of his heirs.

Michelet powerfully describes the sensation created in Rome by his death, accomplished

with such treachery. "The conspirators thought that twenty poignard stabs had sufficiently killed Cæsar, yet never was Cæsar more alive, more powerful, more terrible than when his old and worn-out body, his withered corpse, lay pierced with wounds. He appeared then, purified, redeemed, that which he had ever been, despite his many stains—the man of humanity. An actor having pronounced in the theatre this verse of a tragedy—'Men' men' servasse ut essent qui me perderent,' every eye was filled with tears, and a storm of sobs and cries burst forth."

The greatest soldier and the most profound statesman of his age was eminently, as Michelet calls him, "the man of humanity."

Merivale, who has done justice to his virtues, imagines that he can trace in the conduct and temper of Cæsar a change for the worse after he became acquainted with Cleopatra. This excellent historian expresses himself strongly on this point, misled, as I think, by a laudable desire to "point a moral."

"If from henceforth," he says, "we find his

generosity tinged with ostentation, his courage with arrogance, his resolution with harshness; if he becomes restless, and fretful, and impatient of contradiction; if his conduct is marked with contempt for mankind rather than with indulgence to their weaknesses, it is to this impure source that the melancholy change is to be traced." Now Cæsar did not become acquainted with Cleopatra till the power of the aristocracy, against which he had contended, was broken for ever on the field of Pharsalia.

After he had attained to the utmost height of greatness that even his splendid ambition could have sighed for, he appears to have been filled with a sad feeling of the unsatisfactory nature of all earthly glory, and to have experienced the sure disappointment which awaits the fulfilment of human wishes—the curse which falls on the man who has all his desires gratified. He became melancholy, careless of his now declining years, and regardless of his personal safety. He expressed his desire for death rather than for life, preferring to fall

by treachery to being troubled to guard against it.

His life, he said with truth, was of more value to his country than to himself, and he obstinately refused to take any precautions whatever against the designs of his enemies and false friends. When warned particularly against Brutus, he said: "Brutus will wait for the end of this weak body." His murder, calamitous to the empire, could scarcely be called unfortunate to himself. His prayer had been to be saved from a slow decay, and that his death might be sudden, quick, and unforeseen.* Heaven, which had granted him success in every action of his life, might be said to have gratified him in the manner in which he terminated it.

Merivale remarks that on the coins which Brutus stamped with his effigy on one side, and a cap of liberty between two daggers on the other, "the tyrannicide's face is thin, and bears out the famous saying of Cæsar regarding both him and Cassius."

* Suetonius, "Julius," c. 87.

Michelet says that Brutus had "a narrow forehead." I presume the expression is used as a figure of speech for a slender understanding, which that weak tool of the aristocracy certainly had.

AUGUSTUS.

THE great personal beauty of Augustus is matter of established history. Suetonius has used the strongest terms in describing the comeliness which distinguished him at every period of his life. In his entertainments, at which he and his friends appeared in the characters of the gods and goddesses, the part of Octavius was to represent the graceful Apollo. From an affectation of modesty, Octavius melted down all the silver statues that were erected in his honour, and dedicated the value of them in the form of golden tripods to the Palatine Apollo. He could act the humble patriot like Julius, and when the people were violently forcing the

dictatorship on him, he fell on his knees, and uncovering his shoulders and breast, refused the honour.

Augustus was of rather short stature, but this was so far concealed by his extremely symmetrical figure, and was not, as Suetonius tells us, well perceived except when a tall man stood beside him. Besides this, he wore high shoes in order that he might appear taller than he was, a fashion which we learn was universal amongst the ancient princes of Persia, where great stature was considered an attribute of royalty. The features of Augustus were full of majesty, with something of a feminine delicacy in them, particularly in the mouth and chin, and their expression was that of great calmness and tranquillity. His complexion was between brown and fair. His yellowish hair was slightly curled, and he was careless of dressing it, as he was of his toilet altogether. His beard he sometimes had clipped and sometimes shaved, and these operations were performed while he was engaged in reading or writing.*

* Suetonius, "Octavius," c. 79.

Suetonius has noticed the lustre of the emperor's large eyes; Pliny tells us that they were blue. Aurelius Victor, following Suetonius, has referred still more distinctly to the emperor's belief in their dazzling brightness. "In all his person," says the historian, "he was beautiful, but particularly so in his eyes. He darted their light like that of the brightest stars, and was willing that others looking at him should be struck by his glance as by the rays of the sun. A soldier having turned away from him, on being asked by the emperor why he did so, replied, 'Because I cannot suffer the lightning of your eyes.'" Such compliments have been but rarely paid to men; but this was a prudent soldier, and I have no doubt that he got rapid promotion.

Augustus's eyebrows were joined, a feature delightful to the ancients and repulsive to the moderns. The passion of the ancients was for eyebrows between which the separation was barely perceptible. "Do not," says Anacreon, in his directions to the painter how to paint his mistress, "do not separate the eyebrows nor

fairly join them, but let her picture have, as she has, the eyebrows indiscernibly running into each other."*

The emperor's ears were of the middle size; his nose was elevated in the upper part, and drawn more slenderly below. With all the points of beauty which were met in him, the pictorial Suetonius, like a faithful artist, tells us that Augustus's teeth were few, small, and uneven; that in his latter years he partially lost the sight of his left eye; that he had a weakness in his left side, and often halted on the left leg, and sometimes had not the use of the forefinger of his right hand. The health of Augustus was weak; he was afflicted with gravel; he could neither endure great heat nor great cold, and never went out of doors even under the winter sun without a broad covering on his head. There were some roughnesses on his skin arising from prickling, which by the assiduous use of brushing were gathered together in the form of ringworm. We need not credit as anything better than a mere story,

* Anacreon. Od. XXVIII.

as indeed Suetonius calls it, that the emperor had spots on his breast and belly disposed in the order and number of the stars in the constellation of the Bear.

Augustus excelled all who preceded him in the frequency, variety, and magnificence of the public spectacles with which he entertained the people. In his youth he loved to have about him the most splendid Corinthian furniture, but in his mature years he studied plainness in everything. His beds and tables scarcely equalled the elegance of those in private houses. He wore the clothes that were spun for him by his wife, his daughter, and his nieces. His toga was neither tight nor loose; his robe was not narrow neither was it broad, like those of the nobles.*

Augustus caused his too famous daughter Julia, and his nieces Julia and Agrippina, to be taught spinning; no doubt from a sincere desire to keep them in the paths of virtue. In Rome, from the days of the chaste Lucretia, the practice of spinning was considered an

* Suetonius, "Octavius," c. 73.

evidence of virtue; and the eulogium inscribed on a matron's tomb was, that she kept the house and spun wool. But Augustus, fortunate in everything else, was unhappy in his family. The daughters of Charlemagne had been brought up in the same way, and yet their good names have not escaped the breath of scandal.

An industrious life, such as Augustus assigned to the women of his household, is generally an innocent one; and love in particular has been called by a wise ancient "the affection of an indolent soul." Nevertheless, the two Julias and Agrippina became the most abandoned women in Rome; the conduct of the Julias having in after-times been referred to as confirming the belief that women of that name are unchaste. The profligacy of the learned and philosophical Julia, the wife of Septimus Severus, gave additional authority to this silly notion. Upon this point, Brantome tells us that the virtuous Severus, when reproached with the frailty of his queen, used to say that "her name is Julia, and therefore she must be excused, as all women of that name

from the remotest antiquity have been subject to great weakness."*

Brantome goes farther, and declares that there are certain names amongst Christian women, which subject those who bear them to the fate of becoming licentious; but that from the reverence which he owes to our holy religion, he will not mention what these names are.

Augustus ate little, and only of the plainest food; using bread of a coarse quality, with fish, cheese, and green figs. He was moderate in the use of wine, preferring that of Rhætia. To quench his thirst he made use of bread steeped in cold water, or a piece of cucumber, or young lettuce-sprouts, or a fresh and acid apple with a winy juice.

During supper, Augustus loved to have plays acted, or to see other entertainments of an amusing character. He is charged with

* Brantome, "Dames Galantes." Œuvres, tom. III, p. 35. Bayle, who has noticed this remark of Brantôme, says that he has not found it in any ancient historian.—*Diction. Hist. et Crit.* Art. *Julie.*

being too much addicted to playing at dice. On the ground of this passion for gambling, Cardan, in his Eulogium of Nero, contends that Nero was a much better man than Augustus, as he did not gamble, but played on the harp.*

After his mid-day meal, the emperor was accustomed to retire to rest with his dress and shoes on, covering his eyes with his hand. Before retiring for the night, he finished his daily writing. His sleep never exceeded seven hours; and in the course of that rest, he would awake three or four times, and call his attendants to read to him, or tell him stories.†

Augustus, who constitutionally was a coward on the field of battle, was from superstition terribly frightened at thunder and lightning, and constantly wore about his person the skin of a sea-calf, as a protection against them; while at the least token of an approaching storm, he used to shut himself up in a con-

* Hier. Cardani, "Neronis Encomium," p. 42. Amst. 1640.

† Suetonius, "Octavius," c. 74, 76, 77, 78.

cealed place. He attended carefully to his own dreams, and those of others, and acted upon the interpretation of them by the soothsayers. During spring, it has been remarked, his dreams were frequent, and very terrible; at other times they were rarer, and less wild. He studied seriously all auspices and omens; if a dew fell as he set out on a journey, he felt assured that it boded success; if he put on his left shoe instead of his right of a morning, he looked for evil fortune for that day.*

The habits of Augustus, as a man of business and of literature, as they are recorded by Suetonius, are exceedingly interesting. In the earlier part of his reign, we are told he used as his seal a sphynx (highly characteristic certainly of his ambiguous character); afterwards he adopted a figure of Alexander the Great, and lastly his own portrait. In dating his letters, he marked upon them not only the day or night, but the hour and the minute at which they were dispatched.†

A remarkable circumstance is related in

* Suetonius, "Octavius," c, 16, 90, 91, 92.

† Ibid. c. 50.

reference to the propriety and precision of his discourse. When he had to speak even in private on important matters, he wrote down and read what he had to say; and he practised this kind of discourse even with his beloved Livia. He studied elocution under a master; his voice was sweet, but occasionally, from sore throat, he was obliged to make his public harangues through a crier.*

I do not know whether or not he read his lectures to Julia from a paper, but they appear to have had all the inefficiency popularly charged upon written sermons. He forbade her the use of wine and of fine clothes, and kept a strict watch over all of the other sex who had access to see her. But all was in vain; and after deliberating whether he should not use the Roman father's right of putting his child to death, he sent her into perpetual banishment. His daughter and his nieces he used to call, by a strong figure of speech, his three misfortunes, his three cancers.†

Augustus's eloquence was elegant and chaste.

* Suetonius, "Octavius," c. 84.

† Ibid. c. 65.

Tacitus and Aulus Gellius have joined with Suetonius in praising its excellence. He avoided the offensiveness (*fœtores*, as he called it) of recondite words, says Suetonius. It is this passage in Suetonius, I have no doubt, that has led Rabelais to attribute to Octavius the saying of the greater Julius, who, in the first book of his lost work, "De Analogia"—"Avoid as a rock all unheard and unusual words."* The passage from Cæsar is quoted by Aulus Gellius, to whom Rabelais expressly refers; but this very learned man had trusted to his memory, without looking at his authority.†

The style of Augustus, as described by Suetonius, would serve for a criticism on Cobbett. He used to ridicule the niceties of Mæcenas,

† "Habe semper in memoria atque in pectore ut tanquam scopulum, sic fugias inauditum atque insolens verbum."—*Cæsar, quoted by Aulus Gellius*, lib. I, c. 10.

† "Ce que dict le philosophe et Aule Gelle qu'il nous conuient parler selon le languaige usité. Et comme disoit Octauian Auguste, qu'il faut euiter les motz espaues, en pareille diligence que les patrons de nauire euitent les rochiers de mer."—*Rabelais*, "Pantagruel," lib. II, c. 6.

and the obsolete and out-of-the-way language of Tiberius; and accused Antony of writing in such a way as to excite wonder rather than to be understood, and of using an eastern profusion of language. It appears also that he felt called on to correct the slovenly literature and elocution, as well as the loose morals, of his niece Agrippina.*

Suetonius has given us a minute account of the peculiarities used by Augustus in his handwriting, and of the singularities which he affected in orthography.

Augustus, who had often prayed for a sudden and easy death, had his prayer granted. When he felt his end approaching he called for his mirror, and caused himself to be adorned and have his hair dressed. Then asking his friends if the farce of life had been well played, he bade them, quoting a Greek verse, give him the due applause. Only once in the course of his short illness, his mind exhibited any wandering, when he started in terror and complained that forty young men were carrying him off. The

* Suetonius, "Octavius," c. 86.

impression, says Suetonius, was prophetic; his body was removed by forty of the Prætorian soldiers. He expired kissing Livia, with the words on his lips, "Live mindful of our marriage, and farewell."*

* Suetonius, "Octavius," c. 99.

TIBERIUS.

Tiberius, the most cold-blooded and hateful of the Roman emperors, was a man of tall stature, with broad shoulders and chest, and well-proportioned limbs. He was a left-handed man; and with a finger, we are told, he could pierce through a fresh apple, and could inflict a wound on the head of a boy with a filip. This is the picture of Tiberius drawn by Suetonius, and referring to the best days of his manhood. In old age, as he is described by Tacitus, he grew thin. His complexion, Suetonius tells us, was fair, and his face handsome though disfigured by blotches. His eyes were very iarge,

but dull and heavy during the day; while, like the treacherous beasts of prey, which in his character he so much resembled, he could see in the dark.

Causaubon, quoting Photius, tells us that such eyes had Asclepiadorus, the philosopher. And Scaliger says that his father could at times see in the dark, and that he himself had this faculty from boyhood, till his twenty-third year. Tiberius's hair was gathered at the back of his head, as was the case also with Caligula, covering his neck, a feature which appeared, says Suetonius, to belong to his family. He was bald in front, and in his latter years the sight of this hated deformity, with his reduced figure and the blotches on his face, afflicted him greatly.

The coins and medals of Tiberius represent him with a very large neck—that is, a neck at once long and thick. He carried his neck stiff, says Suetonius, with his face contracted. It was characteristic of the calm wickedness of his character that he spoke but little, and

that little slowly. It is added that he made use of certain effeminate gestures with his fingers.

The notices of the private habits of Tiberius are not interesting, but simply disgusting.

GERMANICUS.

SUETONIUS unites with Tacitus and Dion in praising the great beauty of the amiable Germanicus, the father of Caligula; but Suetonius, whose delight it was to be critical even in the praise of comeliness, tells us that the slenderness of the legs of Germanicus detracted from the perfection of his person.* He appears to have propagated slender legs amongst his descendants, both Caligula and Nero having been distinguished for this peculiarity.† So was Domitian afterwards; though it must be observed that the

* Suetonius, "Caligula," c. 3.

† Ibid. c. 50. "Nero," c. 50.

line of the Cæsars by family extraction was broken by the accession of Galba to the empire.

The descent of personal features through successive generations is readily noticed in royal families. The thick upper lip of the royal house of Austria, thence called "the Austrian lip," which has appeared in all the sovereigns, is an inheritance not from the Emperor Maximilian, as is sometimes said, but from Mary of Burgundy, who was married to him in the year 1478. The features of Maximilian were extremely regular; but in Mary the development of the upper lip was enormous. When, in the course of time, it became known that a thick upper lip was an attribute of royalty, it came to be regarded as a beauty in Austria, as the aquiline nose, the prominent characteristic of the descendants of Cyrus, was in ancient Persia. An Austrian writer is quoted by Amelot de la Houssaye, speaking to this effect: "The princes of the house of Austria have received great graces from God and nature; from nature, in having all long chins and thick lips, which shows their piety, constancy, and

integrity; from God, that in giving with their hands a glass of water to a person afflicted with goitre they cure him, and when they kiss a stuttering person, they loosen his tongue."*

Germanicus, we are told by Suetonius, cured himself of the slenderness of legs, which has been as much condemned in modern as it was in ancient times, by constantly practising riding on horseback after his meals. Mandeville, the author of the Fable of the Bees, in his "Treatise on the Hypochondriack Diseases," has noticed the slender legs of Germanicus, and corrects a medical writer, Fuller, who in his "Medicina Gymnastica" had taken it upon him to interpret the *crurum gracilitas* of Germanicus as meaning that he laboured under atrophy. "I would have everybody," says Mandeville, "make the most of his argument; but I hate a man should wilfully pervert the sense of a good author merely to serve his turn. The matter of fact is this; Suetonius describing the person of Germanicus from head to foot,

* Amelot de la Houssaye, "Mémoires Hist. Polit. Crit. et Littéraires," tom. I, p. 146. Amst. 1731.

tells us that in his youth he had spindle legs, but that by frequent riding this defect had been much remedied. From this, what mortal could suppose that he had an atrophy?"*

The criticism of Mandeville as against Fuller is perfectly sound, but it is remarkable that this ingenious writer does not notice the singularity in the cure; the riding being "after meals" (*post cibum*), which, if we are to believe what doctors say, is like all exercise whatever after meals—whether of body or mind—most unhealthy.

Germanicus died under suspicion of being poisoned by Tiberius. Suetonius records some curious appearances about the dead body. There were spots all over it, and froth at his mouth; and when his remains were burned, the heart was found still entire. It was the popular belief that the heart of a person who had died of poison could not be consumed by fire.

If the personal appearance of Germa-

* Mandeville, "Treatise on the Hypochondriack and Hysteric Diseases," p. 310. London, 1721.

nicus improved with his years, so it appears did that of his sister Livia (the wife of Drusus), of whom Tacitus tells us that, in early life, she was of indifferent comeliness, but afterwards excelled in beauty.*

I have not discovered where Montaigne learned that Germanicus was unable to endure either the sight or the crowing of a cock.†

* Tacitus, "Annales," lib. IV, c. 3.

† Montaigne, "Essais," lib. I, c. 19.

CALIGULA.

CALIGULA, the son of the beautiful Germanicus, was by far the ugliest of the Cæsars. He was tall and large in person, with slender neck and legs, of a pale complexion, with hollow eyes and a broad and stern forehead; and though otherwise a rough, hairy man, the locks on his head were scanty, and the crown was entirely bare.*

This is the substance of the picture by Suetonius. It is, in every respect, borne out by the description of Caligula given by Seneca, who must have been well acquainted with the empe-

* Suetonius, "Caligula," c. 50.

ror's person. He describes his paleness as of a horrible kind, and indicative of madness—his crooked eyes lurking under a wrinkled forehead (*sub fronte anili*); and the expression is strange when we recollect that at his death the emperor was only twenty-nine. Though his head was destitute, his neck was thick set with hair; his legs were slender, and his feet very large.*

This ill-made man had a particular delight in jeering at the deformities of others, and in the most minute criticisms on their personal appearance.† He would cause any good-looking person whom he met with to be disfigured, by ordering his hair to be cut in a ludicrous fashion. His own horrid and dismal countenance he studied to make more frightful than it naturally was, by practising the making of terrible faces before a mirror.

The health of Caligula from his boyhood was bad. He was frequently seized with fits. He could not sleep above three hours at a time,

* Seneca, "De Constantia," c. XVIII.

† Seneca, ut supra.

and this short slumber was agitated by horrid spectres. He would then awake, and sit up in bed, or walk about the corridors calling for the daylight.*

Caligula sometimes appeared in the costume of a man and sometimes of a woman, and frequently as one of the gods or goddesses. Sometimes he was Alexander the Great with his breastplate, sometimes Jupiter with his golden beard and thunderbolt, and sometimes Mercury with his caduceus; and sometimes the ugliest man of the age appeared in the character of the goddess of beauty.†

Caligula was addicted to literary pursuits. His criticisms on Homer, Virgil, Livy, and Seneca, are preserved by Suetonius. He paid much attention to the study of eloquence. Besides this, he was a singer and a dancer, a fencer and a chariot-driver.‡

* Suetonius, ut supra.

† Suetonius, "Caligula," c. 52.

‡ Ibid. c. 53, 54.

LOLLIA PAULINA.

The beauty of Lollia Paulina, the second wife of Caligula, whom he divorced for the sake of his beloved Cæsonia, is less noticed in history than her extravagant luxury. The probability is that she was not deficient in the graces of the person, though the reason given by the historian as that which led Caligula to take her from her husband, "because he had heard that her grandmother had been very beautiful,"* is far from being conclusive on this point. Caligula should have recollected that neither beauty nor virtue always runs in

* Suetonius, "Caligula," c. 25.

the blood, and that he himself, a monster of wickedness and the ugliest young man of his age, was the son of the comely and virtuous Germanicus.

Pliny, who had seen Lollia, gives a description of her gorgeous attire. Not merely on grand public occasions, but on ordinary days, she carried on her person the spoils of whole provinces, being covered with emeralds and pearls in alternate rows in her hair, and hanging in her ears and about her neck, her wrists, and her fingers, to the value of forty sesterces.*

It is to Lollia Paulina that Rabelais refers inaccurately under the name of Pompeie Pauline, "who attracted the admiration of the whole city of Rome, and who was called the ditch and magazine of the robber conquerors of the world."†

Pliny's description of Lollia carrying on her person the spoils of whole provinces has a parallel in Tertullian's account of the ornaments

* Plinius, "Hist. Nat." lib. IV, c. 58.

† Rabelais, "Pantagruel," lib. IV, c. 42.

of some Christian women of his time. "From the smallest parts of the body a large patrimony is exposed. Ten sesterces are held by one thread—one tender neck carries about it forests and islands. The delicate lobes of the ears cost a whole book of expenses, and the left hand carries, in sport, a bag of money on each finger. Such is the power of ambition, that it makes one little person, and that of a woman, able to carry all these treasures."*

Ovid, who distinctly warns the fair against attempting to charm by rich dresses, complains of an ostentatious young woman that her person is the least part of herself; and Thomson has taught many a one to repeat after him that beauty

> "Needs not the foreign aid of ornament,
> But is when unadorned adorned the most."

It is rather remarkable that St. Chrysostom, in various passages of his works, in which he inveighs against the adornings and rich dresses of the women of his time, is not contented with

* Tertullian, "De Cultu Fœminarum," lib. II, c. 8.

denouncing the sin and the extravagant expenditure, but insists upon it that rich dresses and gold and pearls detract from the personal appearance of the wearer. Thus, in one passage in his Treatise on Virginity, he states that if a woman is beautiful, she loses the charm of nature by these ornaments, as their great abundance does not permit any part of her to be seen naked; and if she is ugly, it makes the matter worse, as what is in itself uncomely becomes still more so by contrast with the splendour of what is around it. "Pearls," he says, "make the blackness of the body blacker, and varied colours make the ill-favoured face still more ill-favoured."*

It is, however, to be suspected that there are more people who admire richly-dressed women than are willing to own it. In fact, the love of dress would not be so prevailing a passion in women as it is, if it was not their understanding that it had some avowed and a great many concealed admirers in the other sex. Even writers

* St. Chrysostom, Opera, lib. I, p. 320. Paris, 1718. And again, lib. VIII, p. 412.

of fiction have admitted its attraction. In the Greek romance of "Daphnis and Chloe," by Longus, the writer tells us how much external ornaments help to set off beauty, and assures us that Chloe, when she was dressed for her marriage, with her hair twisted up into a net, was so much improved that Daphnis, who had courted her in her shepherdess's weeds, was hardly able to recognise her.

Brantome also, it is clear from most of his criticisms, thought that rich dresses, as well as high titles, added unspeakably to natural beauty; beauty being a gift which he appears to have believed to be entirely monopolised by queens, duchesses, and countesses, and which he scarcely recognises in persons of low degree.

In this way he has celebrated the beauty of Queen Elizabeth of England, of which no other person, except those intending to benefit themselves by flattering her, has spoken favourably. But Elizabeth dressed gorgeously, and it is but fair to add that she had fine hands, of which Brantome was a fanatical admirer. He can, however, scarcely describe beauty of face or

form without mixing up his portrait with passionate details about fine robes. It is not easy to discover whether he more admired the beautiful legs of which Catharine de' Medici was so vain, or the charming stockings in which she invested them. In his accounts of some other princesses, the description of their clothes occupies more space than the picture of their natural beauty.

Of the person of Lollia Paulina we have only one particular. According to Dion, there was something peculiar about her teeth; perhaps she had the gift of a complete and even set. When Agrippina caused her to be murdered, she made the assassin bring the head of Lollia to her, and she opened the mouth in order to ascertain from the teeth if it was really the head of her victim.

CÆSONIA.

THE third and favourite wife of Caligula was that remarkable woman Cæsonia. Pliny notices that Cæsonia was an eight months' child. The circumstance is not remarkable, were it not for the venerable superstition, which has stood its ground firmly from the days of Hippocrates to the present hour, in the face of abundant contradiction from facts, that though a seven months' child often lives, an eight months' child always dies within eight days from the time of its birth.

Though, as Suetonius tells us, neither young nor beautiful, and having had three children to

her former husband, and with no recommendation that the world could see but her licentious character, Cæsonia was constantly and ardently loved by this monster, who scarcely loved anything else. For her sake he divorced Lollia Paulina. Caligula used to dress Cæsonia in a military cloak and helmet, and show her to the army as she rode by his side. It is said that he also—though he alone was sensible of her beauty—was led by vanity to make the same display of the charms of his wife to his private friends as in former days cost the indiscreet King of Lydia the loss of his crown and his life.

The daughter whom Cæsonia bore to Caligula, and whom he named Julia Drusilla, appears also to have been loved by her father. After carrying her through all the temples of the divinities, he placed her in the bosom of Minerva, recommending her to the care and instruction of the goddess of wisdom. As soon as little Julia began to scratch and tear the faces of the children with whom she sported, the delighted emperor expressed his satisfaction

with this unequivocal evidence of her being papa's own daughter.

The immense affection which Caligula bore to Cæsonia, as well as the insanity which appears in his conduct, were in his time attributed to a philtre given to him by the queen to make him love her,* as the madness and suicide of the poet Lucretius have been charged on a potion administered to him by his wife for the same laudable purpose.

According to Juvenal, the charm administered to Caligula was the *hippomanes*, as it was called, taken from the forehead of a foal at its birth,† and which Virgil represents Dido as having recourse to in order to secure the affections of Æneas. Concerning the notions of the ancients about this drug, or the various articles to which the name of *hippomanes* was applied, the inquisitive reader will get every satisfaction

* Suetonius, "Caligula," c. 50.

† Juvenal, "Sat." lib. vi, 614. Bayle seems to give credit to this story. Dict. "Hist. et Critique," Art. "Caligula."

in the special dissertation by Bayle on the subject.* The most remarkable thing in that curious essay is the quotation made from a romance of Bayle's own day, the "Avantures de Henriette Sylvie de Molière," in which certain ladies of Paris are represented as having recourse to the use of *hippomanes*, in order to secure a return of affection from some gentlemen with whom they are in love.

Caligula was playful in his atrocities; and when he kissed the necks of his favourites, he would say: "What a beautiful neck! but as soon as I give the order, it will be cut asunder;" and he said he would inquire by the torture of the rack why he loved Cæsonia so passionately.†

* Bayle, "Dissertation sur l'Hippomanes," Dict. lib. IV, 593. Basle, 1738.

† Suetonius, "Caligula," c. 33.

BOADICEA.

I WISH to avoid all affectation of being curious in a matter of so little consequence as the correct and best spelling of this woman's name, which may be met with in a great variety of forms. Boadicea, Bouduca, Bonduca, Boundouica, and so on; all of them perhaps far off from her ancient British designation, and I have therefore adopted a very common spelling. We have a striking and faithful portrait—for such it may without much difficulty be admitted to be—of the warlike Queen of the Iceni in the reign of Nero—a queen who, at the head of her countrymen, captured from the Romans

two of their towns lying on the banks of the Thames, and in the neighbourhood of London. For this portrait we are indebted to the picturesque Dion Cassius, living sufficiently near her time to have collected his specific description of her person and address from the Romans, whose possession of Britain had been threatened and endangered by her valour and patriotism.

When Boadicea appeared at the head of her army, she is described as of gigantic stature, of a beautiful figure, a terrible aspect, and a sharp voice; with yellow hair, which fell in rich profusion down to her thighs. She wore round her neck a large golden collar or chain, and about her body a robe of variegated colours, twisted into folds, and over this a thick, heavy mantle or cloak. As she addressed her countrymen, she brandished in her hand a spear, in order to excite them to valour.*

The Roman historians, who have described the terrible vengeance which the heroic widow of Prasutagus took on the inhabitants of the

* Dion, "Hist." lib. LXII, p. 701.

Roman cities which fell into her hands, have not disguised her terrible wrongs, and the wrongs of her husband and her race. Prasutagus had made the emperor the heir of his great wealth—great it is called by Tacitus, it is to be presumed with reference to what might be expected of a British prince in that age—in the hope of averting the Roman hostility, and securing the quiet possession of his own dominions. His kingdom was ravaged, his palace pillaged, as if he had been a conquered foe; his relatives were made slaves, his wife, the heroic Boadicea, was scourged, and her daughters were ravished.*

The fate of Prasutagus is not noticed by historians. After the events which I have mentioned, Boadicea appears as the Queen of the Iceni and the leader of the army, and her abilities in both capacities are spoken of with respect.

Both Tacitus and Dion give—the former briefly and the latter at some length—a speech which they represent Boadicea to have delivered

* Tacitus, "Annales," lib. xiv, c. 31.

to her countrymen. The eloquent address which Dion puts into her mouth is no doubt, in the main, the composition of his own closet, yet he may have had information or recent tradition of the substance of what she said. It abounds in eloquent passages, and warlike as it is, it is yet pervaded by a womanly spirit. Dion makes her draw a contrast between the simple lives of her countrymen and the vices of Rome, and it is drawn with much beauty. The sighing after a simple and savage life is characteristic of ages of over-refinement and vicious cultivation.

In early and rude ages when poets, writing in refined times, would have us to believe that men employed themselves in lying on the banks of rivers and under the shades of trees, playing on pipes and sighing out their souls in love, while the women, on their part, were similarly disengaged and similarly subjected to all the softer and sweeter influences, the real occupation of the men, in which they were often heartily joined by the women, if any reliance is to be placed in the songs of contemporary bards, was fighting

battles, cutting throats, giving and taking of hard blows and knocks, and kicks and cuffs, besides abusing each other vehemently with their tongues, and telling and swearing to all manner of horrible lies, and taking every possible advantage of each other. Such is the true picture of early and primitive times, and such are the subjects of the first records of all nations, of the songs of all really ancient poets. It is amidst the corruption and decline of over-civilized states, in the most sophisticated and artificial and unpoetical condition of society, in the atmosphere of courts and palaces, that men begin to dream of the existence of a happy pastoral life beyond the boundaries of wicked cities; and that poets over their claret set about describing as a reality what never had and never can have an existence except in poets' brains.

These visions will steal gently over the soul of even the blood-stained murderer. In the midst of his terrible proscriptions, Sylla sighed to leave Rome, and longed for the simple enjoyment of his rural cot, his country diversions,

and a loved and loving mistress; but he had so much massacreing work on his hands, that he never could get to this fancied Elysium, where his active mind would have been completely miserable in three days' time.

It was either in the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus, or in the marble palaces of Syracuse, while wallowing in wealth and luxury, and robed in purple and fine linen, that Theocritus, who is allowed to be the simplest and the most natural of all rural poets, the father and unapproached model of all succeeding writers of pastorals, wrote those idyls which are regarded as the truest, most faithful, and most exact pictures of that country life which the aristocratic and courtly poet knew nothing about.

Virgil was once, it is true, a bit of a farmer, and I have no doubt a very bad and unimproving one, but it was after he had forgot what the country was like, and had become the courtier and the flatterer of Octavius, and the man of wealth, that he set about making the shepherds Melibœus and Tityrus talk such stuff as mortal shepherds never talked on this earth.

The inventors of the pastoral romance, Heliodorus, Longus, and Xenophon of Ephesus, were men living under the corruption of literature, taste and morals, which characterized the Byzantine empire. Tasso and Guarini were courtiers; they lived in no primitive or pastoral ages, and were entirely unacquainted with sheep and cattle.

Our own poet Pope, the companion of debauched lords in powdered wigs, embroidered coats and breeches with gold buckles, and the sickly fondling of ladies made up of elongated stays, hooped petticoats, steel and "ribs of whale," distorted spines and unnatural waists—odours and perfumes, neither of the violet nor the hawthorn, but of the civet cat and the apothecary's phials, and faces superficially composed of a mixture of glaring carmine, contrasted with spotless ceruse and provoking black plaster—this poet of the city, the poet of art, and the most artful of poets, was truly a pretty gentleman to sit down after a night of as much dissipation with his profligate and prosaic companions as his feeble body could

endure, to tell us honestly and faithfully, and to the best of his knowledge, what it was exactly that the love-sick Strephon sung in praise of Delia; and what, on the other hand, Daphnis, equally deep in tenderness, was able to warble in commendation of the sprightly Sylvia; and how Damon, the pastoral umpire, had his judgment so completely confounded by having listened to both sides, that in consideration of what both had done for love and poesy, he was obliged to award the poetical premium—which fortunately was a double one—to both of them.

To return to Dion, the governor of a Roman province in the age of Rome's most unmanly and most vicious emperors—a man who had been conversant with such extremely unpastoral persons as Caracalla and Heliogabalus—would feel much relief to his soul in drawing the fanciful picture of the virtuous barbarians of Britain—a remote region, cut off from the civilised world—"penitus toto divisos orbe Brittannos," with which the utmost acquaintance that Dion is likely to have possessed would be derived

through his palate, which would no doubt often be gratified by the delicate flavour of those sincerely esteemed oysters, for the sake of which the Roman nobility sent ships and sailors to England's coast, and for which many of Rome's epicures thought the conquest and dominion of the island alone valuable.

Historians have celebrated Boadicea's knowledge of the art of war; and in this speech the mode of warfare best adapted for her soldiers, and the means of safety in the event of being compelled to a temporary retreat, are ably laid down. The superiority of the Britons in a skirmishing warfare, in which the enemy might be cut off in detail, is insisted on. "In all these things," she says, "they are much inferior to us, and particularly because they cannot bear hunger, thirst, cold and heat, as we can. They stand so much in need of shade, coverings, kneaded corn, wine and oil, that if any of these things fail them they die. To us any herb or root is bread, any juice is oil, all water is wine, any bush is a house. To us all places are familiar, and, as it were, friendly to us in carrying on

the war; to them they are unknown and hostile; we can swim the rivers naked, while they can only with difficulty cross them in their boats."

She is made by the historian to understand the true interests of the inhabitants of Britain, owing to its sea-girt situation, to be one family united against all foreign invasion; a discovery which the inhabitants did not till after many long centuries of bitter experience of the fruits of internal warfare discover for themselves. "Citizens, friends, and relatives (συγγενεις)," she says, "for I regard you all who inhabit this island in common as my relatives." This is a powerful and pathetic stroke of true eloquence.

In the midst of her address, Boadicea took an omen on the event of the war after the fashion of her country. She drew from her bosom a hare, and let it loose; and it would appear that the course which it took in running was hailed by the Britons as a presage of victory. Boadicea is then represented as lifting her hands to heaven, and thanking the goddess

whom she worshipped for the favourable omen, and imploring her, as a woman, to grant to her —a woman called to rule over men—victory, safety, and liberty. And here the historian makes the warlike queen pour out a strain of invective on the effeminate life of Nero, whose dominion she hopes will be confined to the people of Rome, who are worthy to serve this woman (as she terms him), since they have borne with his tyranny so long. "But thou, O divine lady!" she concludes, "I earnestly pray thee, be ever alone present with us!"

The Roman writers have, in general, not shown much justice—not to say generosity—in estimating the character of those of their enemies whose prowess and obstinate patriotism offered a dangerous resistance to the conquering career of the imperial arms. The terms "cruel" and "perfidious" have been liberally heaped on Hannibal, their most formidable foe; and according to the measure of their opposition to the Roman power, have been the invectives poured out on other lesser enemies, whose spirit

of independence rose in rebellion against the Roman lust for universal dominion.

The Roman writers, in this respect, no doubt faithfully echoed the voice of the contemporary Roman people; and something of this unfair spirit has at all times pervaded the minds of warlike nations in the heat of great struggles. When the hosts of Hyder, with his French allies, threatened the existence of the British dominions in the East, there was no story which ingenuity or imagination could invent of the horrible crimes attributed to the Mussulman prince, which was not greedily received and believed at home by all who had one spark of patriotism left in their bosoms.

And in the days when the whole of Europe appeared about to fall into the hands of Napoleon, the spirit of that country which effectually resisted him, and finally overthrew him, led her sons to regard the conqueror of kings as not merely a villain of the blackest dye—which was a judgment not very unnatural—but to caricature him in songs, and prints, and plays,

as a fool and a coward, and to believe any incredible crime which any patriotic British subject was good enough to invent against him, for the purpose of keeping alive at home the noble flame of national independence.

In the whole descriptions of the Roman historians, however, there is discernible something of a generous admiration of the courage of Boadicea; and they have not concealed the recognition that if her vengeance was terrible, her injuries were equally dreadful. Her appearance in the field evidently threw the Romans into great alarm, as is testified by the signs and wonders by which it was said to be announced by Heaven. The blue waters which roll between Britain and Gaul displayed the colour of blood, preternatural sounds of barbarian shouts and laughter were heard where no barbarians were present, the image of the goddess of victory fell down on its face as if it yielded to the enemy, and the appearance of a submerged city was seen in the Thames.*

* See Dion, LXII, p. 700; and Tacitus, "Annales," lib. XIV, c. 32.

The first outburst of undisciplined valour is generally attended with decided success. Boadicea marched hastily on the two Roman cities, and captured them without difficulty, putting the inhabitants to the sword; the number of the slain being, according to Dion, eighty—according to Tacitus, seventy—thousand.

It may be believed that, under the command of a justly-infuriated woman, thirsting for vengeance, the usages of ancient warfare were carried out in all their stern ferocity; but we may attribute to Roman invention the narrative of the revolting cruelties which Boadicea is said to have exercised on her own sex, as, unfortunately, the Romans have here the advantage of telling both sides of the story, as they generally have against all their enemies. The British reader will be justified in disbelieving Dion when he tells us that Boadicea seized upon Roman women of rank and hung them up naked, and having cut off their breasts, fastened them to their mouths "as if they might seem to eat them," and afterwards impaled their bodies.

The sequel of the history is shortly told. Paulinus was hastily called from the Isle of Man to check the progress of Boadicea. Had the Britons now scattered themselves and retreated to the fastnesses, which might have defied the strength of the enemy, the Romans would have been deprived of their retaliation. But Boadicea was now at the head of a huge army, animated with enthusiasm and flushed with triumph, and she hazarded a pitched battle. She drew up this vast force, which Dion tells us amounted to two hundred and twenty thousand men—in all probability, the fighting women are included in this number—in one long line.

Paulinus divided his army into three divisions. The wives of the British soldiers accompanied them in battle, and Boadicea appeared in a chariot with her two injured daughters, the sight of whom would inflame the thirst for vengeance amongst the Britons. It was not till after a protracted resistance that the wild valour of the Britons gave way before the

steady discipline of the Roman legions; yet it may be gathered, even from the Roman historians themselves, that the victory of Paulinus was far from being complete. The great prize, which would have been hailed with rapture at Rome, escaped him, as Cleopatra did Octavius.

Whether, as Tacitus says, Boadicea poisoned herself, or, as Dion tells us, died naturally of disease, it is gratifying to know that she did not fall into the hands of the enemy, to be sent to Rome to grace an imperial triumph—for Nero would willingly have taken the whole credit of her overthrow to himself—and that this heroic woman did not appear like Zenobia in after-days, loaded with burdensome ornaments and jewellery, walking behind the chariot of the effeminate emperor whom she had ridiculed as "a lady" and "a singer"—an object of pity to the people whom she had described as scarcely to be called men—"creatures reproachful, wicked, insatiable and criminal, bathing themselves in hot water, eating dishes of dainty cookery, drinking wine, besmeared with

unguents, lying on soft couches," and such other effeminacies which the ancient queen would name openly, and the ancient historian records faithfully, but which must not be alluded to here.

NERO.

THE Emperor Nero was about middle size; his body was spotted and dark; his hair yellowish; his face was beautiful rather than handsome. It was, to use the distinction of Suetonius, *pulcher* rather than *venustus*. I can make nothing more of this than one of the commentators on Suetonius (Schildius) has done. He conceives that *pulcher* refers to the complexion, and *venustus* to the form of the features. His eyes were grey and heavy; his neck thick; his belly prominent, and his legs slender.* This slenderness of legs was in-

* Suetonius, "Nero," c. 51.

herited from Germanicus. Nero, it will be observed, closed the direct line from Augustus; in the belief of the Romans he was the last lineal descendant of the Trojan Æneas. His voice, according to both Dion and Suetonius was husky and extremely feeble.

In his dress, and in the care of his hair, Nero adopted various effeminate fashions which the Romans considered indecent. He loved great splendour, and, like our good Queen Elizabeth, never wore the same dress twice. The Romans made a feast on the occasion of a young man first undergoing the operation of shaving. Nero celebrated this event in his own life with peculiar splendour. At the entertainment which he gave on the occasion, it is noticed by Dion as something very remarkable that a lady of noble rank and great wealth, in the eightieth year of her age, danced amongst the company.* Nero preserved the hairs of his beard, and presented them in a gold casket to the Jupiter of the Capitol. There is good reason to believe that Petronius, in his singular

* Dion "Hist." lib. LXI, p. 698.

work which presents us with so vivid a picture of the manners of the times, has described Nero under the name of Trimalchio. In noticing the articles in Trimalchio's house, Petronius mentions the household gods made of silver, a marble figure of Venus, and a golden casket in which it was said that Trimalchio's beard was preserved.* It has been asserted that there was a medal of Nero—a satirical one—which bore on one side the words, "C. Nero August. Imp."and on the reverse, "Trimalchio."

This famous criminal, whose murder of his mother has given to his name a proverbial pre-eminence in wickedness over all the other bad emperors, was a young man of varied accomplishments. He was a poet, a sculptor and a painter; in music he was both a vocal and an instrumental performer; and besides all this he was a dancer, an amateur actor, and a chariot driver. He would sit far into the night practising singing with Terpnus the harp player, and he made use of all the means then known for strengthening and improving his voice,

* Petronius, "Satyricon," p. 22. Paris, 1601.

which was so very weak and indistinct, says Dion, that to listen to him provoked both laughter and tears.

Suetonius describes some of the arts which Nero adopted under the direction of a Phonascus, or voice doctor. Our English poet, Nathaniel Lee, in his tragedy of "Theodosius," has embodied the information furnished by the historian. Marcian upbraiding Theodosius, says:

> "But for you,
> What can your partial sycophants invent
> To make you room among the emperors?
> Whose utmost is the smallest part of Nero;
> A pretty player, one that can act a hero
> And never be one. O ye immortal gods!
> Is this the old Cæsarean majesty?
> Now, in the name of our great Romulus,
> Why sing you not, and fiddle too, as he did?
> Why have you not, like Nero, a Phonascus?
> One to take care of your celestial voice?
> Lie on your back, my lord, and on your stomach
> Lay a thin plate of lead—abstain from fruits."

The dramatist enumerates others of the luxurious follies of Nero.

> "Build too, like him, a palace lined with gold,
> As long and large as that to the Esquiline;

> Enclose a pool too in it, like the sea,
> And at the empire's cost let navies meet.
> Adorn your starry chambers too with gems,
> Contrive the plated ceilings to turn round
> With pipes to cast ambrosial oils upon you;
> Consume with his prodigious vanity,
> In mere perfumes and odorous distillations,
> Of sesterces at once four hundred millions;
> Let naked virgins wait you at your table,
> And wanton Cupids dance and clap their wings."

Nero, when he appeared as a singer on the stage, was called "The Celestial Voice," a circumstance to which the poet alludes. He first came out as a vocalist in the theatre at Naples, where he used to sing for whole consecutive days. By an imperial edict no one was permitted to leave the theatre when the Emperor was singing or acting; so that, it is said, women were delivered of children within its walls. There is some humour in the story told by Dion that some courtiers, in order to get away, feigned suddenly falling dead, and were carried out by their servants. At these performances this historian tells us that Seneca and Burrhus used to applaud with their hands,

and by lifting their robes in order to lead on the rest; but Nero had a body of five hundred soldiers paid for the purpose of applauding. Of all his courtiers, Thrasea alone refused to applaud, and Thrasea for this and other similar offences paid the penalty with his life. As a tragedian, Nero's favourite characters were those of Canace in labour (in which he used to be delivered on the stage) Orestes, Œdipus, Alcmæon, Thyestes, and Hercules in his rage. As a woman he used to appear dressed as his departed and loved Poppæa.

According to Pliny, Nero was the first to set the example of cooling water by immersing it in a glass vessel amongst snow.

The reader of Roman history does not, I think, hate Nero so much as he does some of the other emperors, certainly not so much as Tiberius. Gibbon tells us that he was not so much repelled by him as by Tiberius, Caligula or Domitian.* There

* "Dois-je le dire et dire ici? Néro ne m'a jamais revolté autant que Tibère, Caligula ou Domitien. Il avait beaucoup de vices mais il n'était pas sans vertus. Je vois dans son histoire peu de traits d'une méchanceté

is reason to believe that he had some popular virtues, though he would no doubt raise himself in the estimation of the mob by his cruelties to the Christians. He was not universally execrated after his death. He appears to have been capable of loving and of being loved. "Nor," says Suetonius, "were there wanting those who for a long line after adorned his tomb with the flowers of the spring and the summer."

The eccentric Cardan, as I have elsewhere noticed, has written a treatise on "The Praise of Nero." From the title it might be supposed that the work was satirical, but it is not so; it is a serious eulogium, and has not the merit of the least ingenuity. In order to set off the virtues of Nero in high relief, Cardan is liberal in the censure of every other person mentioned in his work, and the first reprobates whom he notices are the historians Tacitus and Suetonius, who have transmitted to us the records of Nero's life. Tacitus, he says, was an idolatrous

étudiée. Il était cruel, mais il l'était plutôt par crainte que par goût."—*Gibbon, Journal.*

priest, and a man of the greatest ambition and wickedness.

Cardan does not admit that there was one good emperor in the whole series from Julius to his own day, except Alexander Severus, and he mentions that even he was voracious and ambitious. The philosopher Seneca we know was no practical moralist, and Cardan calls him the worst of all men (*mortalium improbissimus*) and commends Nero for ridding the world of him. He would rather that Nero had not murdered Octavia, but contented himself with banishing her, as she was guilty of sterility; but as regards his mother, he thinks that Nero was to blame for allowing her to live too long, an endurance which leads him to think that he was the most patient of men. He contrasts the innocence of Nero in many respects with the guilt of the other emperors. Augustus, Claudius, and Caligula played at dice, and Nero did not. "What is worse," asks Cardan, "what can be worse than dice?" "Is there," he repeats, "or can there be imagined anything worse than dice?" As an evidence

of the amazing goodness of Nero, Cardan begs to inquire, what man is there so patient that he could live with the most sweet-tempered woman for four whole years without a quarrel, as Nero did with Poppæa, the most peevish of all women (*omnium fœminarum morosissima*) ?

AGRIPPINA.

I HAVE met with nothing recorded of the person of Agrippina beyond the general praise of her great beauty, which is spoken of in the strongest language by Dion. At the public spectacles, this historian describes her as wearing a cloak interwoven with gold. The Roman people, who appear to have tolerated much of Nero's wickedness, were evidently struck with horror at the murder of his mother; caricatures, rhymes, and satirical pictures were fixed up in public places, reviling the matricide. Nero himself appears to have been distracted by his accusing conscience. He leaped in terror

from his bed in the night, and was alarmed by the sound of trumpets heard over the spot where she was buried. The murder was preceded by every circumstance of treachery and hypocrisy. On taking leave of his mother on the night when his first attempt at her death by drowning was made, Nero embraced her, says Dion, and kissed her eyes and her hands. The remark which he made on looking at her dead body, says the historian, was more wicked than the murder itself: "I did not know that my mother was so beautiful."*

Of all the lost works of the ancients, the loss most to be deplored is that of the commentaries of Agrippina, to which Tacitus refers as his authority for matters which he had not found elsewhere. He describes the work as a history of her own life, and of the fate of her relations.†

* Dion, "Hist." lib. LXI, p. 696. Ουκ ηδειν οτι ουτω καλλην μητερα ειχον.

† "Id ego a scriptoribus annalium non traditum, reperi in commentariis Agrippinæ filiæ; quæ Neronis principis mater, vitam suam et casus suorum posteris memoravit." —*Tacitus, Annales*, lib. IV, c. 53.

The loss of a work of history is a positive loss of wisdom to the world which cannot be supplied; in the case of a history written by a woman of the great abilities of Agrippina, and who had mingled so much as she had done in scenes of blood and licentiousness, the loss is felt with double acuteness.

POPPÆA SABINA.

Poppæa Sabina, the mistress and second wife of Nero, according to Tacitus, inherited great beauty from her mother. She had, like her lover, yellow hair; and Nero, who amongst his other accomplishments was a poet, wrote verses in praise of her amber locks *(capillos succineos)*.* The extreme whiteness of her skin, the usual accompaniment of golden hair, she preserved by bathing every day in asses' milk, and wherever she went she had along with her a troop of five hundred she-asses to furnish her bath.†

* Plinius, "Hist. Natur." lib. xxxvii, c. 12.

† Ibid. lib. ix, c. 96.

In a curious little volume called "Abdeker, or the Art of Preserving Beauty," written by Camus, a French physician, in the middle of the last century, the practice of Poppæa is referred to, and the writer asserts that "this kind of milk, as well as goats' milk, takes away the wrinkles of the skin, and gives it a certain gloss that pleases both the senses of seeing and feeling."*

The receipt is probably as good as another which Camus gives for procuring a white skin, and is certainly much safer, where he advises walking by the side of a river in a fog. Wrinkles, he says, are removed by laying slices of veal on the face before going to bed.

D'Israeli, in his "Curiosities of Literature," has noticed the work of Camus, and speaks of the author as "a French physician, who combined literature with science, the author of 'Abdeker, or the Art of Cosmetics,' which he discovered in exercise and temperance." It is quite clear from this erroneous description of the book, that D'Israeli had never gone beyond

* Abdeker, p. 75. Lond. 1754.

the title-page of "Abdeker." It is a collection of ridiculous and nonsensical receipts for preserving beauty such as those that I have quoted. Where fatness is not fashionable, for instance, Camus tells us that a woman may cure herself of it by wearing a girdle of salt about her waist. Where fatness is admired, as in Egypt, he tells us a rather more natural process which is had recourse to in order to obtain the desired beauty.

"The women of Egypt," he says, "in order to acquire this degree of fatness, bathe themselves several days in lukewarm water. They stay so long in these baths, that they eat and drink therein. During the time they are in the bath, they take every half-hour some broth made of a fat pullet, and stuffed with sweet almonds, hazel-nuts, dates, and pistachio nuts. (These, it may be remarked, are the identical materials with which pullets are stuffed in Mussulman houses in Cairo at this day.) After taking this sort of broth four times, they eat a fat pullet all but the head. When they come out of the bath, they are rubbed over with per-

fumes and sweet-scented pomatum, and after that some of them take myrobalans before they go to bed; others take a draught prepared with gum tragacanth, and sugar-candy."

Besides this famous bath, Poppæa had other cosmetics which have obtained celebrity. Juvenal, in noticing the coatings of bread which the Roman women and Roman voluptuaries, like the Emperor Otho, laid on their faces to improve the delicacy of their complexions, mentions the ointments of Poppæa—*pinguia Poppæana.* These ointments were removed when the Roman women prepared for company. The bitter satirist tells us that the licentious wife smeared the lips of her husband with plasterings and grease, but went to her paramour with these coatings removed, and her skin purely washed and perfumed.*

Besides bathing in asses' milk, and using the famous ointments which continued long after to bear her name, Poppæa, it is believed, sought, like Otho, her second husband, to improve the

* Juvenal, "Sat." lib. IV, 460.

fairness of her face by the application to it of bread steeped in milk.

The luxurious life of Poppæa was encouraged by Nero, whose passion for her was fanatical. It is said that he caused to be made for her a golden comb, and when one of her amber hairs fell out, he made it be fastened in gold, and placed it on the head of Juno's statue in her temple. It is to this circumstance, which is mentioned somewhere in one of Plutarch's treatises, though I am unable to give the reference, that Jeremy Taylor evidently alludes, in a passage in his beautiful treatise, "The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living," and where he is speaking of persons who, in the midst of great enjoyments, pine away on account of trifling vexations. "Such a person," he says, "is fit to bear Nero company in his funeral sorrow for the loss of one of Poppæa's hairs, or help to mourn for Lebia's sparrow."*

Besides her expensive bath, Xiphelin tells us that the mules on which Poppæa rode were

* Jeremy Taylor, "Holy Living," 149. Lond. 1840.

led by golden cords. It appears that she did not trust altogether to the powers of her mind, excellent as they were, for preserving her influence. One day, observing as she looked in her mirror some traces of the decay of her beauty, she expressed a desire that she might die rather than grow old. When Anne of Austria, the wife of Louis XIII., noticed during her last sickness that her beautiful hands had begun to swell, she said: "It is time for me to depart!"

All historians agree in ascribing to Poppæa the most consummate art in the management of her beauty, and in attracting admiration. She could be licentious, Tacitus tells us, with an appearance of modesty. She seldom went abroad, and when she did so she veiled the half of her face, in order not to satisfy the desire of gazing at her; or, as he maliciously adds, because this fashion became her best. Tacitus has described with great skill the arts by which she captivated Nero, professing herself to be overcome by the emperor's beauty. Her skill

in heightening, by every artifice, the effect of her charms, has become almost proverbial.

Our great dramatist, Massinger, has in more than one of his plays, referred to Poppæa, as an accomplished mistress of the arts of attraction and seduction. Thus, in the "Duke of Milan," (Act ii. sc. 2.)

> "And she that lately
> Rivall'd Poppæa in her varied shapes."

In the "Picture," (Act ii. sc. 2.)

> "And in corrupting him I will outgo
> Nero's Poppæa."

And again, in "A very Woman," Leonora says of Almirah:—

> "But so adorned, as if she were to rival
> Nero's Poppæa or the Egyptian Queen."

Poppæa's practice of bathing in milk as well as bathing in wine has not been unknown in modern times. Milk, it appears, is used for preserving beauty; wine for recovering it. D'Israeli refers to a complaint of the Earl of

Shrewsbury, who had the custody of Mary, Queen of Scots, during her imprisonment at Fotheringhay, of the expenses of the Queen for wine to her bath. "A learned Scotch physician," says D'Israeli, "informed me that white wine was used for these purposes. They also made a bath of milk. Elder beauties bathed in wine to get rid of their wrinkles; and perhaps not without reason, wine being a great astringent. Unwrinkled beauties bathed in milk to preserve the softness and sleekness of the skin."*

The celebrated Diana of Poitiers, who is described as still very beautiful in old age, according to a story preserved by Brantome, though she used no painting, took the *aurum potabile* and other drugs every morning, to keep her charms fresh.†

The Lady Venetia Stanley, the wife of Sir Kenelm Digby, by advice of her husband, who dived into all kinds of mysteries, and was filled with every sort of superstition, was put on a

* "Curiosities of Literature," p. 82. Lond. 1843.

† Brantome, "Dames Galantes," Œuvres, IV, p. 179.

diet of capons fed with vipers, which the learned knight had ascertained to be a certain method of preserving beauty to extreme old age.

An amiable desire to please has led to yet more heroic efforts on the part of women. Montaigne tells us, as of a thing well known in his time, of a lady in Paris who caused herself to be flayed, in order to acquire the freshness of a new skin;* and in the works of the Duchess of Newcastle, where she speaks of ladies pulling the hair out of their eyebrows, and leaving only a thin row, she tells us of others "peeling the first skin off the face with oil of vitriol, that a new skin may come in its place, which," she adds, "is apt to shrivel the skin underneath."

Josephus, "the learned and warlike Jew" and unprincipled politician, made use of the influence of Poppæa to advance his own interest, and is pleased to call her "a worshipper of the gods" (Θεοσεϐης). Tacitus has, after his usual manner, drawn her character by a few vivid strokes. He allows her every accomplishment,

* Montaigne, "Essais," lib. I, c. 40.

beauty of person, excellent powers of conversation, and a good understanding, but denies her the possession of virtue.

The burial of Poppæa was unusual. Her death is attributed to her receiving a kick from Nero, when she was great with child. The emperor had lost temper at a joke which she made. "The body," says Tacitus, who is willing to admit, what appears to be the truth, that she was really loved by Nero, "was not burned with fire, after the Roman fashion, but interred with perfumes in the tomb of the Julii."* At the celebration of her obsequies, Nero pronounced an eulogium on her beauty.

Poppæa was deified, and a temple was erected to her honour bearing the inscription "Sabinæ Deæ Veneri, Matronæ fecerunt."

* Tacitus, "Annales," lib. xvi, c. 6.

OTHO.

THE Emperor Otho appears in well-authenticated history as the realisation of what we read in those imperfect and dreamy, but interesting records, on which romance and poetry have had room and encouragement to work, of the Assyrian monarch Sardanapalus. Otho was brave in war, habitually calm in soul, benevolent and kind, and wholly given up to the most effeminate luxury. His reign was like a dream, it lasted just ninety days. In his boyhood, he was much given to wild midnight frolics, for which he was often beaten. He became the favourite of Nero, and took Poppæa from her

husband, but was obliged reluctantly to yield her up to the emperor. In his banishment, which he owed to the jealousy of Nero, he is allowed to have administered the affairs of the province committed to his charge with moderation and forbearance.* Like all the Roman emperors about that time, he believed in magic. Galba, before him, had had his elevation to the throne predicted to him by a soothsayer; and Vitellius, after him, had his fortune also foretold him. Seleucus, the magician, prophesied to Otho that he would survive Nero, but would only reign a short time. He helped the fulfilment of the prophecy by his extreme liberality to the soldiers of the guard,† who soon began to see clearly, and to declare plainly, that Otho was worthy of the empire.

In person, Otho was like a woman, and he paid more than a woman's regard to his toilet. His father is said to have resembled in face the Emperor Tiberius,‡ and scandal reputed him his

* Suetonius, "Otho," c. 3.

† Tacitus, "Hist." lib. I. c. 13.

‡ Suetonius, "Otho," I.

son. It would be desirable, for the sake of poetic effect, that we could believe that this elegant voluptuary, this effeminate but heroic creature, was perfectly graceful in his figure. But, alas! the evidence of Suetonius destroys the dream of his being a sort of Apollo—the embodiment of a Greek sculptor's conception of a beautiful Sybarite; and we learn with pain that Otho was badly formed in the feet, and besides was bandy-legged (*male pedatus, scambusque*).*

The emperor was of the middle size. He used adornings, says Juvenal, such as were not used either by the Assyrian Semiramis, or by the sad Cleopatra at Actium.† Like Sardanapalus, he painted his face; and like the brave Parthian Surena, he prepared for battle by dressing himself before a mirror. His body was smoothed, and freed from hairs; and he practised shaving daily, preventing the growth of any appearance of a beard by the use of certain medicaments known in his time. To

* Suetonius, "Otho," 12.

† Juvenalis, "Sat." lib. II. c. 107.

make his face fair and soft, he applied to it a paste made of bread. To conceal the thinness of the hair on his head, he wore a false head-dress. Yet this voluptuary could fight like a lion, and could cheerfully endure misfortune, and smile in the face of death, and could feel tenderly for the sorrows of others, and could desire to see the whole world happy.

The death of Otho—if suicide were in any case permissible—must be allowed to be much finer than that of the younger Cato; and even Christian writers have not been able to refrain from admiration of some of the circumstances of his last moments. After hearing of the victory of Vitellius, he parted with his friends as night came on, kissing them as usual. He also furnished those who wished to leave the country with money sufficient to carry them off; and he destroyed all letters and papers which after his death might point out his friends and followers to the vengeance of the conqueror. He restrained the exercise of any force on those who wished to desert to Vitellius. He wrote two consolatory letters to his sister,

and another to Messalina, the widow of Nero, whom he loved, commending to her his memory. He then, in the true Greek spirit, said: "Let us add this night also to our lives," and threw himself on his couch, directing that free admission should be given to all who wished to see him.

At midnight he made choice of a poignard, and placing it below his pillow, fell into a sound sleep. At daybreak, he awoke and stabbed himself fatally under the left breast. The soldiers, aroused by the noise of his fall, rushed in, and washed his hands and his feet, as well as the wound, with their tears, giving way to the most passionate grief. Several of them stabbed themselves, and threw themselves on his dead body. Others, at a distance, on hearing of his death, also slew themselves. The body was quickly interred. It had been Otho's request; he feared that his remains might be mutilated by the brutal Vitellius, and he desired that his mangled body might not be a disagreeable object.

The ancients admired fine deaths; and the

contemporaries of Otho were in raptures at the details of his last moments. Tacitus has dwelt with undisguised pleasure on the particulars which we have on record. Suetonius tells us that even those who hated the living Otho now praised him dead, and allowed that he had slain Galba not for the sake of reigning, but to restore liberty to Rome. And Dion, who is more severe on the general character of Otho than the other historians, concludes the history of his life by saying that "though he had lived most wickedly, he died most beautifully (καλλιστα απεθανε); and the government which he had most criminally usurped, he laid down with the greatest virtue."

COMMODUS.

There are some of the Roman emperors whose wickedness assumed so revolting a character that, in describing their manners, it becomes necessary not so much to collect together, as to make a selection from, the ample materials furnished by the plain-speaking and, to modern notions, indelicate narratives of their historians. Such a man as I have already noticed was Tiberius; and such a man was also the infamous and hateful Commodus, the undoubted son of the wicked Faustina, and the reputed and legitimate son of the philosophic Marcus Antoninus.

The faithful and elegant Herodian, the Augustan historian Ælius Lampridius, and Dion Cassius all join in great harmony in presenting us with a complete portrait of this very singular and very wicked man.

Commodus was eminently handsome and beautiful. Herodian calls him the most beautiful man of his age. His person united dignity and elegance. His face, he says, was at once beautiful and manly; his eyes were shining; his hair was of that kind which the ancients admired either in man or woman, yellow and crisped. When he walked in the sun, this historian tells us, his locks glittered like fire, so that some believed they were sprinkled with gold-dust.

Ælius Lampridius was one of those who held this belief, for he tells us that Commodus's hair was always dyed and illuminated with filings of gold. It is well known that some of the emperors about this period sprinkled their hair with gold-dust. Those, however, who thought that the glitter in his hair was natural, regarded it as an evidence of

his divine origin. Commodus, monster of wickedness as he was, was deified by the senate; but those who were learned in court scandal believed the Roman emperor to be the fruit of his profligate mother's love for one of the common boatmen.

Ælius, who tells us that Commodus was of middle stature, detracts somewhat from the extreme beauty attributed to him by Herodian, when he tells us that his face was like that of a drunkard; but this remark has been thought to refer to the gleaming of his eyes. Commodus was both a glutton and a drunkard. Dion tells us that he drank largely, and Herodian much more impressively conveys the same fact to his readers in relating the last scenes of the emperor's life. He represents his mistress Marcia, when she finds her name standing first on the emperor's tablets in the list of persons to be put to death, exclaiming: "Ah! well done, Commodus! And are these the rewards of my kindness and love? Is it this I have deserved of thee for having for so many years borne with thy reproaches and thy

drunkenness. But these things shall not succeed with thee, a drunken man, against a sober woman!"

In speaking farther of his extreme beauty, Herodian tells us that there was a soft down on Commodus's cheeks like that which appears on flowers. Ælius informs us that this monster, who was in the habit of cutting off people's noses and ears for his amusement, was afraid to trust himself in the hands of a barber, and used to burn his hair and beard.

Commodus received the highest education which the most learned teachers of the age could impart to him. His father, the philosophic emperor, had spared no expense in engaging the most eminent masters in every kind of knowledge for the instruction and cultivation of the mind of this strange young man.

It is historically true that, like Nero, he commenced his reign with the universal love of his people in his favour. All Rome met him on his entrance after the death of Marcus, and strewed his path with garlands and flowers.

Ælius represents him as abominably wicked from his very childhood. On the other hand, Dion tells us that, at the age of nineteen, when he became emperor, he was of an open, simple, and somewhat timid disposition, and easily led to evil; and Herodian, in one part of his narrative, so far confirms this statement when he says that "sometimes the memory of his father, and then reverence for his friends, restrained this young man, but presently a certain malignant and invidious fortune overthrew the rectitude and moderation of his mind!"

What progress he made in the learned studies prescribed to him by the pedants with whom his boyhood was surrounded, does not clearly appear. Ælius says his discourse was unpolished. He was, however, like Nero, whom in so many respects he resembled, the master of a variety of accomplishments more or less becoming a prince. He danced, and sung, and played on the pipe; but these were also accomplishments of the amiable Epaminondas. Commodus was, besides, a chariot-driver, a gladiator, and a mimic or buffoon.

He frequented taverns, and places lower than taverns, and there made himself generally useful. It is mentioned, to his deep discredit, that he played at dice. The ancients attached to playing at games of chance something like the same infamy which the Mussulmans do. The eulogists of Augustus notice as a crime in him that he played at dice.

Jeremy Taylor, in his treatise on "Holy Living," has an enumeration of kings who degraded themselves by exercising callings otherwise useful, but unsuitable to their stations. "Some there are," he says, in the section on "Care of our Time," "that employ their time in affairs infinitely below the dignity of their persons; and being called by God, and by the republic to help to bear great burdens, and to judge a people, do enfeeble their understandings and disable their persons by sordid and brutish business. Thus Nero went up and down Greece, and challenged the fiddlers at their trade. Æropus, a Macedonian king, made lanterns. Harcatius, the king of Parthia, was a mole-catcher; and Biantes, the Lydian, filed

needles." He does not mention that Commodus practised the art of the potter and made cups.

Commodus was the strongest man of his time, and his dexterity in killing wild beasts in the arena made him a favourite with the populace, as, indeed, he continued to be during the greater part of his reign. His delight was to personate Hercules, and he went about with a large club in his hand and a lion's hide thrown over his shoulders. The people, who delighted in seeing him slaying ferocious animals, and even exercising his great strength in killing the harmless cameleopard, were disgusted when they saw their emperor enter the arena as a naked gladiator.

Amongst his other wild freaks, in which he reminds us of Nero and Caligula, Commodus offered sacrifices to Isis in his palace, and appeared dressed as one of her priests with his head shaved. In her processions he was accustomed to carry the image of "the dog Anubis," and to beat the bare heads of the other priests with the snout of the beast.

This man, with the beauty of Apollo and the strength of Hercules, indulged in every sensuality and effeminacy. He was at once a glutton and a drunkard. He used the bath seven or eight times a day, and was in the habit of eating in the bath—a fashion amongst Oriental women which induces that fatness which is regarded as beauty. In the theatre, Commodus sat in female attire and drunk before the whole audience. A woman, says Dion, presented him with the most delicious wine artificially cooled; and when he took the draught, the whole audience wished him "health."

There was a resemblance in three points between Commodus and Cæsar Borgia: both were extremely beautiful, prodigiously strong, and enormously wicked.

CARACALLA.

THIS contemptible man, who was killed at the early age of twenty-nine, was even at that age disgraced in the eyes of his subjects by his baldness, besides being otherwise by nature ill-favoured and of small stature. In mere boyhood the Augustan historian represents him as gentle, pleasant, affable, benevolent, liberal, compassionate, shedding tears or turning away his eyes from sights of cruelty.* Writers and readers delight in strong contrasts, and especially in making wonderful and unnatural con-

* Ælius Spartianus, "Hist. August. Scriptores," lib. I, 706. Lugd. Batav. 1671.

trasts between the boyhood and the maturity of celebrated men. These stories about the amiable virtues of the monster Caracalla, are, I suspect, fictions and imaginations created to feed the popular love of romance. Thus a thousand stories are told about the stupidity, in boyhood, of men who afterwards displayed the greatest genius. Sir Walter Scott is given as an instance. Yet that a boy could be stupid at ten years of age and intellectual at twenty, may be safely pronounced to be, if not an impossibility—because there is nothing that mortals are entitled to pronounce impossible—yet certainly a circumstance that never once happened in this world.

These monstrous fables issue from the cloudy brains of schoolmasters, the most ignorant of all judges of character and intellect. A schoolmaster calls that boy clever who is dull enough and mechanical enough and sufficiently devoid of a mind of his own, to diligently imbibe the generally worthless instruction which he communicates to him; and he bestows the name of dunce on the other boy who has enough of

intrepidity about him to select his studies for himself, and to regard his master's intellect with anything but unquestioning veneration.

However it may have been with the boyhood of Caracalla, the same historian who speaks so highly of his early virtues, represents him as a most ferocious and bloodthirsty youth, and at the same time in his aspect severe, gloomy, and truculent. Herodian describes with much minute detail and great fidelity to nature, the rise, progress, and manifestations of the hatred between him and his half-brother Geta. Dion gives us a strange and most picturesque account of the murder of Geta in the arms of his mother, the beautiful Julia. The brothers, at the instance of the treacherous Caracalla, had agreed to meet in the empress's bed-chamber, to be reconciled in her presence. Caracalla surrounded the palace with soldiers. The picture is not complete unless we recollect that Geta was a youth of twenty-five years of age. He was killed in his mother's arms, while "he hung on her neck and clasped her breasts, and weeped, and cried 'Mother! mother! pa-

rent! parent! help me! I am killed!' while Julia was bathed in his blood."* The words given below may be received as the real language used by Geta, which might be learned by Dion, living at the time. Both Caracalla and Geta were well instructed in Greek in their childhood. It will be observed that Herodian represents Caracalla as stabbing Geta with his own hand. Dion attributes his death to the hired soldiers. Throughout his after-life, Caracalla used sometimes to make jokes on the murdered Geta; at other times to shed tears when his name was mentioned, or when he happened to cast his eyes on an image or statue of him.

Caracalla's want of hair would have subjected him to ridicule with the Romans even if he had been a man of virtue. On one occasion in

* Μητερ μητερ, τεκουσα, τεκουσα, βοηθει, σφαζομαι. Dion, "Hist. Rom." lib. LXXVII, p. 871. (Leunclavius) Hanoviæ, 1606. A language like the English, without the terminational distinctions of gender, cannot do justice to this curious passage. In the Latin it is pretty faithfully rendered: Mater mater, *genetrix, genetrix*, &c.

particular it made him the object of contemptuous laughter to the rabble. This mean-looking man had a passion for imitating and acting the characters of Achilles and Alexander, both famous with the ancients for their beauty. Amongst his other wild frolics, Caracalla proceeded to Troy, and visited what was believed to be the tomb of the swift-footed son of Thetis, magnificently decked with crowns and flowers. Then, in the character of Achilles, he made a funeral of his deceased friend Festus, as his beloved Patroculus. The pile was reared, the sacrifices were offered, the wine was poured out, and the winds were invoked. But when, after the fashion of Achilles and the rites of mourning amongst the Greeks, he had to cut off his locks and throw them into the flames, the spectators burst out into a shout of laughter, when he could only get a few scattered hairs to sacrifice.*

This degraded monster's favourite, however, was the heroic Alexander. In order to keep alive the memory of the Macedonian hero, as if

* Herodian, IV, 14.

it were in danger of perishing without his care, Caracalla busied himself in erecting statues and images of him in all the temples. He had, Dion tells us, armour such as was worn, and cups such as were used by Alexander. Amongst other monuments of the emperor's folly, Herodian had seen a double-faced image, one side of which was the portrait of Alexander, and the other that of Caracalla. The emperor himself wore the Macedonian dress, and had a chosen band of young men in his army whom he called "the Macedonian phalanx," all the captains of which he caused to be called by the name of Alexander's generals. Dion remarks that Caracalla, cruel to all else, was kind and generous to his soldiers in imitation of Alexander.

He proceeded to Alexandria, and there he visited the monument of Alexander, on which he deposited his rich vestments, his rings, and other ornaments. All this, of course, served not to promote his glory, but just to provoke the ridicule of the people of Alexandria, who, says Herodian, as I have mentioned before in

the sketch of Alexander, laughed at him, that he, a man of small stature, should ape Alexander and Achilles, those very valiant and great warriors.

Caracalla laboured under ill-health, arising, says Dion, from manifest and secret diseases. Like Caligula, he was troubled with visions of spectres. In his delirium he was terrified by the apparitions of his father and his brother brandishing swords. In order to learn a remedy for his malady, he invoked the spirits of the dead, and especially of his father and of Commodus, and Commodus is said to have given him answers by no means of a soothing or cheering kind. He consulted also the magicians, who predicted his death by the hand of Macrinus.

Various prodigies foretold his fate. He was in the habit of keeping tame lions about him. His favourite lion was called Acinax. This beast used to dine at his table, and at night to lie in bed with him, and the emperor was observed frequently to kiss him in public. Shortly before his death, as he was passing

through a certain gate where Acinax was, unobserved by him, the favourite lion laid hold of his robe and tore it. In the repositories of this hateful criminal, a variety of poisons, procured by him at great expense from the East, were discovered and consigned to the flames.

HELIOGABALUS.

We have a profusion of materials regarding the person, habits, and fashions, as well as the follies and vices of Heliogabalus, that strange compound of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Vitellius, and Commodus, with the Assyrian Sardanapalus; for there was a more Orientalt aste about this effeminate creature than about any other of the Roman emperors. The circumstance was observed by the populace, who, as we learn from Dion, amongst the other epithets which they bestowed on him, called him Sardanapalus and Assyrius.*

* Dion, "Hist." lib. LXIX, p. 906.

This boy, for he was but a mere youth when he was killed, had before his death rivalled the varied wickedness of all the worst of his predecessors. The Augustan historian Ælius Lampridius is copious to overflowing in all manner of details about his daily life, and between him and the curious Dion and the elegant Herodian, which two last historians may have seen the emperor, we have the complete picture of this monster of depravity. Lampridius in his narrative refers to many records which he says were compiled of the private life of Heliogabalus, and especially to a biography of him by Marius Maximus. In the midst of all the horrible details with which he furnishes us, Lampridius professes to have made merely a decent selection out of the materials before him, omitting the more infamous particulars, and veiling in as modest language as he could command what he was obliged as a faithful historian to relate. From his selection, a re-selection is all that can be made fit for presentation to modern readers.

Lampridius, in his voluminous description,

does not allude to the figure and face of Heliogobalus. This we have, however, described by Herodian, who more than once alludes to the great beauty of his countenance, regretting that he spoiled it with painting and unguents. Herodian's description of the appearance of the young emperor as the priest of the god Heliogabalus, whose name and honours he afterwards assumed, is exceedingly striking and picturesque. Bassianus (Heliogabalus's name was Bassianus Antoninus) and his younger brother, Alexianus, afterwards Alexander Severus, were both priests of the Assyrian god Heliogabalus, or the Sun.

"Bassianus, as the elder," says Herodian, "discharged the office of chief priest. He walked in the Eastern dress, wearing a cloak interwoven with gold, having long sleeves, and which, falling down to his feet, covered all his limbs to the toes. His other robes were of purple, entwined with gold. On his head he bore a coronet, glittering with precious stones of various colours. He was then in the flower of his youth, and the most

beautiful man of the times. Hence, with his personal charms, his boyhood, and the remarkably effeminate dress which he wore, he was naturally compared with the most beautiful pictures of Bacchus."*

It will be observed that the historian censures as effeminate the close dress of Heliogabalus. It is probable that the emperor, who indulged in every art and device of lasciviousness, entertained the Eastern notion that a close dress is the costume of indecency, and that virtue and innocence are betokened by looseness of garments, and an approach to nudity.

It is somewhat curious, that the figures of the effeminate Sardanapalus, and of the licentious Semiramis, and the statues and medals of the Byzantine Theodora, who rivalled the wickedness of the most wicked of the ancients, represent them as completely wrapped up in their robes, from the throat to the toes. At this day, the virtuous Malabar woman goes all uncovered above the waist, while almost

* Herodian, lib. v, c. 5.

everywhere in the East, the dancing-girl—who is unchaste by religious obligation—is loaded with clothes.

It was while celebrating the worship of his god, and leading his chorus round the altar, in Oriental fashion, to the sound of flutes and pipes, and other musical instruments, that the Roman soldiers beheld their future emperor, and were struck with his extreme beauty.

The directors and guides of Heliogabalus's youth were his mother, who is called Semiriama, or Soæmis, and his grandmother, Mæsa, and both of these women he seems to have honoured and loved. His mother, who is described as the most profligate woman in Rome, rivalling in licentiousness the Messalina of a former age, instructed him in all manner of wickedness.

The emperor introduced both his mother and his grandmother into the senate; and there was then a senate occupied with legislation on women's interests and affairs. This senate declared what dress women were to

wear, what orders of them should give place to other orders, who should salute each other with a kiss, which classes should be carried on a horse, an ass, a mule, or an ox, or on a couch, or in a chair; and whether the chair should be covered with skin, or bone, or ivory, or silver, and who should or should not wear gold and gems in their shoes. These golden shoes were afterwards prohibited in the simple reign of Alexander Severus.*

When he became emperor, Heliogabalus forbade the worship in Rome of any other god, except that Syrian divinity whose name he bore, and whom he represented. All the other worships he treated with contempt, profaning the altars, violating the vestal virgins, and seeking to extinguish the sacred fire.

The election of the emperor took place when he was in the East. He proceeded to Nicomedia, and there spent the winter. Here we have a vivid picture of his mode of life by Herodian. "He presently began to riot

* Ælius Lampridius, "Hist. August. Scriptores," lib. I, 798.

in licentiousness, celebrating the worship of his god with dances, clothed in a luxurious robe interwoven with purple, and wearing bracelets and necklaces, and other golden ornaments and coronets, after the form of the tiara, and adorned with gold and precious stones. The fashion of his robe was compounded of the sacred stole of Phœnicia and the soft attire of the Mede. The Roman and Greek garments being made of wool, 'the vilest of things,' as he used to say, nothing pleased him but the webs of Syria; and in celebrating the worship of his god, he walked abroad to the sound of pipes and drums."*

All this is intensely Oriental. Heliogabalus had completely understood and assumed the Eastern character.

The following account from Herodian gives a complete picture of an Oriental religious festival. Heliogabalus had resolved to lead out his god in a splendid procession, and made great sports, and spectacles, and feasts for the people on the occasion. The deity was placed on a chariot,

* Herodian, lib. v, c. 11.

ornamented with gold and precious stones, and in this way was drawn from the town to the country.

In the chariot were yoked horses of great size, and of a spotless white colour, and conspicuous from their splendid trappings. Heliogabalus held the reins, but he did not ascend, nor did any mortal mount the chariot, which appeared to be driven by the god himself. So in the Indian processions of Vishnu, the car pulled by his worshippers, appears to be guided by the divinity himself. Heliogabalus, with the reins in his hands, ran backwards, with his eyes fixed on the idol, and in this way completed the whole procession. To prevent his slipping his foot, gold-dust was sprinkled on the road, and the soldiers guarded him on each side for fear he might fall. The people, in the meantime, ran in crowds, with torches in their hands, scattering about flowers and garlands.

The images of the gods, and all the ornaments and furniture of the temples, and the soldiers with the Roman ensigns accompanied this exhibition. Lofty towers were erected,

which, after the procession, the emperor ascended, and threw down amongst the people gold and silver cups, and garments of every kind. In the crushing made to lay hold of these prizes, many were suffocated, others were trodden under foot, and others fell on the spears of the soldiers. The emperor, in the meantime, was seen driving about, or dancing in the most effeminate manner, with his eyes and his cheeks painted; "disfiguring," says the historian, "his naturally beautiful countenance with disgraceful colours."*

Dion represents Heliogabalus as obtaining the empire through the valour of his mother and grandmother, who appeared in the field against Macrinus his rival; and when the soldiers were giving way, rallied them, and brought them back to victory.†

The grandmother Mæsa is described by Herodian as a woman of a masculine spirit, and vexed at the effeminate vices of Heliogabalus. She earnestly entreated her grandson, before he

* Herodian, lib. v, c. 12.

† Dion, "Hist." lib. LXXVIII, p. 889.

marched to Rome, to lay aside his Syrian robes, and assume the Roman dress, and not to offend the people by appearing in a costume which they regarded as only suitable for a worthless woman. The emperor did everything that he was beseeched not to do. He resolved to prepare the people of Rome to see him in all his Eastern adornments.

For this purpose he caused a full-length figure of himself to be made, as he appeared in his sacerdotal robes, and sent it before him to Rome, where it was erected on an elevation in a conspicuous place, in order that when the senate met, they might burn frankincense, and pour out libations of wine to him. "When Heliogabalus himself thereafter entered Rome," says Herodian, "the people saw nothing that was new to them."

His entrance to Rome, the emperor signalised by a largess of corn to the people, and then by a sacrifice to his god on the most magnificent scale. He built a vast and most beautiful temple, and placed several altars around it, at which every morning hecatombs of bulls, and

immense numbers of birds were sacrificed. Odours and incense were heaped up on the sacrifices, and the richest wines were mingled in profusion with the blood of the victims. Women danced round the altars in a circle, with cymbals and tabours in their hands. The noblest in the land carried the articles required for the sacrifices on their heads, clothed with the long Phœnician robes, and wearing the linen shoes of the Phœnician priesthood.*

In his familiarity with the gods and goddesses, Heliogabalus bears most resemblance to Caligula, who fell in love with the moon, and implored her to share the imperial bed. Heliogabalus used to have the "Judgment of Paris" acted in his palace, he himself performing not the part of Paris, but of the goddess of beauty. He also sometimes appeared as Venus, lamenting the cruel fate of Adonis—as indicating the grief which would be felt for himself when he should be removed from the world. The lamentation for Adonis, the Syrian Thammuz, was, however, a piece of worship known

* Herodian, lib. v, c. 12, 13.

throughout the Roman empire, and in particular was a favourite part of the religious rites of Syria, which Heliogabalus brought into fashion. How beautifully, and in what an Eastern, spirit has Milton described this worship when enumerating the heathen divinities amongst the fallen angels in hell!

> "Thammuz came next behind,
> Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
> In am'rous ditties all a summer's day;
> While smooth Adonis from his native well
> Ran purple to the sea, suppos'd with blood
> Of Thammuz yearly wounded; the love tale
> Infected Sion's daughters with like heat
> Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
> Ezechiel saw when by the vision led,
> His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
> Of alienated Judah."

Heliogabalus, however, assumed the character and costume of all the gods and goddesses. He was one day Cybele, the great mother of the gods, and like her had his chariot drawn by lions. The next day he was Bacchus, and his chariot was drawn by the Indian tigers.

Heliogabalus married and repudiated two or three beautiful but mere mortal women before he took a wife from Olympus. He divorced Cornelia Paula because he discovered a spot on her body; and then compelled the vestal virgin, Aquila Severa, to marry him, in order that from himself, the high priest, and her as a vestal, a celestial progeny might be begotten. He next took to his bed the image of Pallas, which had been kept sacred from the sight of men in her temple since the time when, according to tradition, it had been brought from burning Troy. The emperor introduced the goddess at court as his wife. He grew tired, however, of the martial maid, and took in her place the Syrian Ashtaroth or Diana, alleging that there was much suitability in the match between him and her—a marriage of the sun with the moon. The nuptials were celebrated publicly and privately with the utmost splendour.

In his magnificence, Heliogabalus was truly Oriental. He had beds and couches of solid silver. He adorned others of his beds with

gold. His chariots glittered with gems. They were drawn sometimes by elephants, sometimes by stags, and sometimes by beautiful naked women. His drinking and cooking vessels were of silver. He was guilty of the luxury which, at a later period, St. Chrysostom charges as a sin against the Christian ladies of Constantinople—of using vessels of the most precious material for the most ignoble purposes. He had cups artificially perfumed for drinking, and others on which lascivious designs were sculptured; an iniquity not confined to ancient and heathen times. At table he reclined on couches stuffed with the fur of hares or the down of partridges. He wore cloaks heavy with gems, and used to say that he was burdened with a load of pleasure. He had gems in his shoes, sculptured with designs by the finest artists. He wore a diadem of precious stones that he might resemble a beautiful woman. He is said to have been the first Roman who wore robes of entire silk. He never, it is said, wore a ring for more than one day, or twice put on the same shoes.

In his more refined and elegant luxuries he was the rival of the ancient Demetrius Poliorcetes. He had beds and couches of roses, and walked amongst lilies, violets, hyacinths, and narcissuses. When he wished to add the piquant flavour of cruelty to his enjoyments, he would stifle a courtier to death in a bed of flowers. He swam in water perfumed with saffron and precious unguents; and wine and aromatics were poured into his fish-ponds and his baths.

In eating and drinking he appears not so much as a glutton, but as the chief of all royal epicures—the equal in gastronomic science of the renowned Apicius. He joined with all who studied the pleasure of the palate in admiration of the dish which the Romans made of the teats of a newly farrowed pig—the most celebrated of ancient luxuries. After the example of Apicius he indulged in dishes made of the tender parts of the heel of the camel, and of combs torn from the heads of living cocks. This latter delicacy, Casaubon, in his commentary on the passage in the Augustan historian in

which it is referred to, tells us, is at this day—that is, in his day, two hundred years ago—passionately sought after by men of learned palates. Like Vitellius, he seems to have had his appetite whetted by the expensiveness of the dishes which he procured; and like him he took a pleasure in sacrificing the rarest and most beautiful birds, for the sake of eating their heads, their brains, or their tongues. At one entertainment he displayed on his table the heads of six hundred ostriches, whose brains as well as those of the flamingo and the thrush, were amongst his favourite repasts. He also indulged in the tongues of peacocks and nightingales, believing that they had a medical virtue in averting epilepsy. He also made dishes of the entrails and sometimes of the beards of the mullet, of the eggs of partridges, and the heads of pheasants, peacocks, and parrots. We wonder at the destruction of creatures so lovely to the sight as the peacock, the flamingo, and the pheasant, for the particle of delicate eating to be got from them; but epicurism and gluttony consume and destroy all the other tastes.

The Abbé Dubois, in his curious work on India, notices with regret that the prospect of the immense influence over the minds of the Hindus which they would have acquired if they would only have consented to abstain from one single article of food—the flesh of the cow; the representative on earth of the goddess Bhavani, would not restrain the English from horrifying the heathen by eating of that one article, even in the unsavoury condition in which it is found in India. A devout Danish missionary, of the Moravian sect, is still more severe on the same subject. He tells us that whenever an English child is shown any pretty bird or fish, its first question about it is: "Is it good for eating?"

We presume that Heliogabalus knew the rich merits of the goose's liver, though he may have been ignorant of that terrible cruelty which Christian cooks, in modern times, are guilty of practising to please Christian palates in the preparation of the celebrated fat liver; but it is recorded of him that, while he put grapes into his horses' mangers and fattened

his lions on parrots and pheasants, he fed his dogs with the livers of geese.

The genius of Heliogabalus shone particularly bright in the cooking of fish. In this department he is said to have invented new modes unknown to Apicius; but with a refined hatred of things common and cheap, he would never taste fish at all when he was near the sea, but always took delight in them when far removed from water, just as he took a fancy for having snow brought to him in midsummer. He offered rewards for the discovery of new dishes of exquisite flavour, and he had a humorous way of stimulating the invention of those around him in this science. When a courtier, after exerting his best skill to please him, produced a dish which he did not relish, he made the ingenious artist himself continue to eat of that dish and of nothing else, till his faculties, sharpened by disgust, enabled him to find out something superior for his master.

Like Nero and Caligula, Heliogabalus had his jocularities—generally practical ones—sometimes merely absurd, sometimes characteris-

tically cruel. His most harmless entertainments in this way consisted in the suppers which he would give one night to eight men all of them blind of one eye, sometimes to eight bald, sometimes to eight afflicted with gout, then to eight deaf men, eight black men, eight tall, and eight fat men. He kept lions and leopards, which lay at table with him, in order to frighten his friends. He would get a company filled with drink, and after locking them up for the night would let loose amongst them lions, leopards, and bears, with their claws pared, to terrify them; and many, it is said, died of the fright.

At other times, when daylight would break in on the company who had been drinking the night before, they would find themselves in the arms of ugly black old women. At other times, he made sham entertainments, like the Barmecide's feast in the Eastern tale, setting his guests down to dishes made of wax, ivory, or stone, painted after nature. He collected serpents together, and let them loose to bite his visitors. He would tie his courtiers to a wheel,

and have them whirled round in water, calling them, in allusion to the mythological fable, his "Ixionite friends."

Fearing a violent death from the vengeance of the people, Heliogabalus had made preparations, which turned out to be all in vain, for terminating his existence in an elegant manner. He had poisons mixed up with the most precious articles, he had ropes of purple and crimson silk ready to strangle himself with, and golden swords to stab himself with. He had also a high tower built, with rich adornings, where he might breathe out his last in royal state.

The manner of his death was just the reverse of all that he desired. After being slain, his body was first thrown into the common sewer, then dragged through the streets, and cast into the Tiber. According to Herodian and Dion, the same indignities were inflicted on the body of his mother, who was killed at the same time. Dion represents Heliogabalus as having been slain in her arms, and states that both their heads were cut off,

and their bodies stripped naked, and that the one was thrown into one place of the river, and the other into another.

We have a curious picture of Roman manners in these days in the record of the various names of contempt and derision which were bestowed on Heliogabalus in his lifetime, and after his death. The most complimentary were those of "Sardanapalus" and "Assyrius," in allusion to the eastern luxury of the emperor. From the licentious amours of his mother, he derived, according to some authorities, the title of "Varius," indicative of the uncertainty of his paternity;* though another derivation has been assigned to this epithet. After his death he was called "Tractitius," from having been dragged through the streets, and "Tiberinus," from having been cast into the Tiber. His name of "Impurus" was, perhaps, conferred upon him from his body having been thrown

* Et aiunt quidem, *Varii* etiam nomen idcirco eidem inditum a condiscipulis, quod vario semine de meretrice utpote, conceptus videretur.—*Ælius Lampridius*, "*Hist. August. Script.*," lib. I, 794.

into the common sewer, though this title was at least as well merited by him in life as in death. Heliogabalus had lived like Vitellius, and the circumstances of their deaths were remarkably similar.

ZENOBIA.

THE person and habits of Zenobia, the celebrated Queen of Palmyra, have in some degree become familiar to the general reader, from the notice of them which Gibbon, transcribing from the full details furnished by the Augustan historian, Trebellius Pollio, has embodied in his fascinating work. It is rarely indeed that the character of Gibbon suffers from a comparison of his text with his authorities and references, and in matters of curious interest he is seldom chargeable with want of sufficient copiousness. He has, however, by no means exhausted the personal description of Zenobia, and to

some important particulars about her habits he has made no allusion.

Zenobia, says Pollio, was the most noble and the most beautiful of all the women of the East.* Her complexion, he tells us, was brown, as is noticed by the monk in Chaucer:

> "I say not that she had moche fairnesse,
> But of hire schepe she might not be amended."†

Yet it should be recollected that Zenobia was descended of the Macedonian princes of Egypt, and reckoned Cleopatra amongst her ancestresses. Her eyes were black and sparkling beyond measure,‡ says Pollio; her spirit was divine, and her beauty incredible. Her teeth

* Trebellius Pollio, "Hist. August. Script." lib. II, p 299. Ludg. Bat. 1671.

† Chaucer, "Monke's Tale," b. XIV, 259.

‡ Oculis supra modum vigentibus, nigris. Salmasius tells us that the Palatine manuscript, instead of *vigentibus*, read *ingentibus*. Gibbon has, with great art, given Zenobia the full benefit of both readings, besides adding a compliment of his own. "Her *large* black eyes," he says, "sparkled with uncommon fire, tempered with the most attractive sweetness."

were so white, that some thought she wore pearls instead of teeth. This is the most distinctly Oriental feature in the picture of Zenobia. There are teeth sufficiently white to be found in Europe, if they be diligently sought after; but the tooth which is most accurately described as "pearly," having an appearance of half transparency, is purely Asiatic.

Her voice, says Pollio, was clear and, he adds, manly. She lived in royal pomp, after the manner of the Persians, and like the sovereigns of Persia, received divine honours. She feasted after the fashion of the Romans. She went to the public assemblies with a helmet on her head, and a purple-bordered robe, with jewels hanging from the fringe, her under robe bound about her waist with a clasp, and her arms often bare. On her shoulders she wore an imperial tunic, or small cloak, after the usage of Queen Dido.

She was at once prudently liberal, says Pollio, and economical, beyond a woman's fashion, of her treasury. She used a chariot in driving, seldom taking a coach, and often rode

on horseback. She frequently walked on foot three or four miles with the soldiers.

" She marched at the head of her troops," says Father le Moyne, " always the first at the fight, and the last to retreat. Her eyes, indeed, were the common fire of the camp ; the most cowardly were warmed at them, and drew from them vigour and courage; and when she harangued her men on a day of assault, or of battle, she left nothing for the clarion or the trumpets to do."*

Temperance in the use of wine was not amongst her virtues—a circumstance remarkable in a woman so renowned for her singular chastity—but she had great powers in bearing liquor. She drank often with her generals, says Pollio, though otherwise she was sober; she drank also with the Persians and the Armenians that she might overcome them.

At her feasts she used vessels of gold adorned with gems, such as Cleopatra was wont to display. She preferred being attended by eunuchs

* " Galerie des Femmes Fortes," par le Père le Moyne, p. 210. Paris, 1663.

of grave years rather than by women. She made her sons speak Latin, so that it was only rarely and with difficulty that they spoke Greek. She herself was not wholly ignorant of Latin, says the historian, but modesty prevented her from speaking it. She spoke the Egyptian language perfectly, and was so well acquainted with Oriental history, that she is said to have written a compendious account of it.*

It is somewhat remarkable that Gibbon, one of whose great weaknesses was the pleasure which he felt in speaking to the discredit of women, and who, in the history of this very Zenobia, has founded a censure of the sex not merely unjust but at direct variance with truth, has omitted all notice of the vice of drunkenness with which Zenobia has been charged, and of which there is little doubt that she was really guilty. It is true that Pollio tells us her reason for drinking; but both men and women readily find reasons, quite satisfactory to themselves, for indulging in their darling sins. The jolly English Churchman, who has enumerated in

* "Hist. August." lib. II, 335.

three Latin verses the five reasons for drinking, has judiciously made reason fifth so broad as to include in it anything that any person at any time may be pleased to consider as a reason.* The Roman writer's statement is about as valid a vindication of Zenobia as the defence made by Mr. Alison the historian, of Pitt's deep drinking. "Though he often," says Mr. Alison, in a passage of rich, though perfectly unintended, humour, "drank deeply, it was only to restore nature after the incessant exhaustion of his parliamentary efforts."† Mr. Alison just shows that Pitt had no worse and no better reason for "drinking largely" than other large drinkers have, or than drinking weavers and cobblers have, while the defence embodies a belief in the dangerous doctrine that "drinking largely" as Pitt did, restores nature when it is exhausted.

* The famous lines are by Dean Aldrich:

"Si recte memini, causæ sunt quinque bibendi,
Hospitis adventus, præsens sitis autque futura,
Aut vini bonitas, aut quælibet altera causa."

† Alison, "Hist. of Europe," vol. III, p. 114. Edit. 1847.

Towards Herod, the only son of her husband, Odenathus—for Zenobia had a husband, though the readers of her history are apt to forget the circumstance—Pollio tells us that she displayed the spirit of a step-mother. Herod was an effeminate creature, wholly given up to Oriental luxury, delighting in pavilions and tents ornamented with gold. Odenathus, "moved by the affection of paternal indulgence," says Pollio, sent to Herod the concubines, riches and gems, which he captured in war.* Such a Sybarite was not likely to disturb the rule of a woman of the masculine and warlike soul of Zenobia.

Father le Moyne, in his rhapsodical work on great women, has given a prominent place to Zenobia, "who," he says, "united all the graces of her own sex to all the virtues of ours." He speaks of her daughters, of whom I have not elsewhere heard, as having the generosity, and wearing the dress of Amazons. She, herself the descendant of Cleopatra, he says, inherited the beauty, the wit, and the magni-

* "Hist. Aug." lib. II, 301.

ficence of that celebrated queen. She had, besides, other virtues of her own, being chaste and magnanimous, eloquent and acute. Her beauty, says the gallant priest, was a beauty majestic and military, a beauty of command and of action. Her heroic figure, he goes on to say, her assured countenance, her haughty and hardy grace, her eyes brilliant and full of fire, and all her exterior was like that which painters have given to virtue and victory. Her body, so perfect, was inhabited by a mind yet more perfect; like a fine intelligence in a fair star. The Roman historians, who for state reasons have blackened the reputation of Cleopatra more than the sun of Egypt had blackened her face, have not touched the honour of her descendant. She was more chaste, he adds, in marriage, than their vestals were in their virginity; and when Odenathus was taken from her, she still remained married to his name and memory.

After a very long and flowery eulogium on Zenobia, from which what I have here given are mere pickings, the good father concludes the whole by dealing with Zenobia as honest

Launcelot Gobbo does with the Jew's daughter. "I was always plain with you," says Launcelot, "and so now I speak my agitation of the matter; therefore be of good cheer, for truly I think you are damned." So Father le Moyne tell us that with all her virtues, Zenobia is now in hell in the midst of everlasting torments. The following piece of raving is what he calls the *réflexion morale* on her case.

"It is a pity that a generosity so high, a constancy so heroic, a chastity so invincible, graces so modest, so many virtues of peace and war are damned; and that Zenobia the brave, the temperate and the chaste, has certainly as bad an eternity as Messalina the dissolute and debauched. The pagan virtues, whatever beauty they may have, or however adorned they may be, are but foolish virgins. The heavenly bridegroom knows them not, and whatever importunity they may make, the gates of his palace will never be opened to them. The chastity, the temperance, the modesty, the fidelity which will not go to him with the lamp burning, and shall not be presented to him by faith and

by charity, shall not be at his marriage. And if there be no place there for temperate and modest pagan women, who shall not have been warned to prepare their lamps and to follow the guides that are agreeable to the bridegroom, what will become of the licentious and disorderly Christian women who shall have broken their lamps and despised and rejected their guides? Certainly if it is written that repentant Nineveh shall condemn Jerusalem the incorrigible, it is much to be feared that the great Zenobia, and other virtuous pagan women will rise at the general judgment and bear testimony against our ladies who refute their belief by their lives; who reprove by their softness and their luxury the power of Christianity and the austerity of the Gospel; who love better to lose eternal crowns than to part with the little half-withered flowers which only infect them with their bad odour, and sting them with their prickles."

The edition of Le Moyne's work from which I have made these extracts, contains a portrait of Zenobia in full armour; her helmet plumed, a rich necklace plaited across her breast, and a

hunting spear in her hand; while in the background she is represented on horseback engaged in combat with a lion. She did not, says Father le Moyne, "chase the swans which are harmonious and loveable, and only armed with plumes, nor the bees which carry honey about them, and respect innocent persons and virgins."

Pollio tells us that Zenobia shared with her husband in the pursuit of the lion, the leopard, the bear and other wild beasts.

The courage of Zenobia deserted her when she fell into the hands of the Romans. She became afraid of death, and charged her guilt in resisting the power of Aurelian on the bad advice of her friends. Her secretary, the celebrated Longinus, was amongst those who fell a sacrifice to the unworthy means which she adopted to save her life. Aurelian treated her as Octavius intended to treat Cleopatra. After the barbarous Roman fashion, she was led in triumph by Aurelian in his procession, covered with ornaments, which only made her humiliation more conspicuous. She was adorned

with gems of such size as to be a burden to carry; and it is a picturesque and affecting circumstance mentioned by Pollio, that she very often stopped on the way declaring that she could not bear the weight with which she was loaded. Her hands and her feet were bound with gold; and a large golden chain was placed round her neck and carried before her by one of her Persian attendants. It is spoken of as an act of clemency that the emperor permitted her to live, and gave her a possession near the palace of Adrian, which was afterwards called by her name, and where she lived in the style of a Roman matron.

Upon the means adopted by Zenobia, with a view to save her life, Gibbon, as I have already noticed, has made a remark, which is the reverse of being well-founded. "As female fortitude," he is pleased to say, "is commonly artificial, so it is seldom steady and consistent." He would have been speaking according to facts, if he had said that while the fortitude of men is often artificial, blustering and shallow, and incapable of confronting

adversity, that of women is commonly natural, calm and consistent, and acquires strength and cheerfulness amidst trials and sufferings.

The case of a woman exposing the lives of others to danger, in order to save her own, is very uncommon; with men it has been so usual, that it is only the exceptions which have been considered worthy of record. Hence it is that the terror of Zenobia has been so much noticed. It must be admitted that her conduct was unworthy of a woman, and the blot on her memory is that she unhappily followed the example of many men before her, rather than the lessons which she might have learned from her own sex.

When the first conspiracy against Nero was discovered, the woman Epicharis, who knew of the whole contrivance, persisted, under the torture, in refusing to answer any questions that might involve the safety of any of her accomplices. And when all Nero's senators, and all the men around him, including, it is to be feared, the philosopher Seneca, joined, either passively or actively, in the accusations raised against Octavia,

at the instigation of the emperor, when he became desirous of getting rid of her, for the sake of Sabina, her maid-servant Pythias alone refused, for court-favour, to deny or even conceal the truth, and under the severest tortures still asserted the perfect purity of her mistress;* rendering to an oppressed woman the greatest and noblest service which can be rendered to those who cannot be delivered from death; for posterity accepts the evidence of this solitary witness, and rejects the whole opposite testimony which terror and bribery were able to procure against Octavia.

Nay, the sentiment of heroic endurance which sustains women under the most terrible sufferings so much more than it does men, is not confined to those who have been trained to fortitude by a life of virtue. Anne Boleyn and Mary Queen of Scots died as calmly as did Lady Jane Grey or Marie Antoinette; and ancient history records that Leaina, a courtezan of Athens, engaged in the famous

* Dion, "Hist." lib. LXII, p. 707.

conspiracy of Harmodius and Aristogiton endured with courage and joy the most exquisite tortures, rather than reveal what she knew of the plot.

JULIAN THE APOSTATE.

We may become familiarly acquainted with Julian the Apostate from various sources, but particularly from the admirable narrative of his officer, Ammianus Marcellinus. He was of middle stature; *mediocris staturæ* is the expression of Ammianus, his friend, and I must adhere to it. Julian, it may be remarked, has been called a little man, and the people of Antioch ridiculed him as a short man (*homo brevis*). Ammianus also tells us, that when all Constantinople turned out to see the new emperor, the hero of so many victories, the people were surprised at his

youth, and his small person (*adultum juvenem, exiguo corpore*).*

All this, however, is, I think, quite consistent with the belief, which I do not doubt is the true one, that Julian was just as Ammianus says, of middle stature. The satirical humour of the Antiochians would not stick closely to dry facts; and the mob of Constantinople would expect their heroic sovereign to be a man of gigantic stature, as all ideal warriors are in popular belief.

The hair on Julian's head was soft, as if he had carefully combed it; his beard was shaggy, ending in a point. As in his mind, Julian, in some respects, bore a likeness, though with a marked inferiority in point of intellect, to the most illustrious of the emperors, so in his face there were two features in which he resembled Cæsar. He had, like Cæsar, the beautiful bright eyes which expressed every emotion of the mind; like Cæsar also, his mouth was rather large. His eyebrows were fine; his lower lip fell down a

* Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. XXII, c. 2, sec. 5.

little. He had a very straight neck, somewhat bent; and large and broad shoulders. From his head, says the historian, to the very tips of his nails, there was a proportion in all his parts; and he excelled in strength and swiftness.*

I ought to add, that in the view of St. Gregory Nazianzen, Julian's shoulders were continually in motion, his eyes wild and wandering, his walk irregular, his head always moving this way or that way.

One of the coins of Julian represents him without a beard, as he was at the period when he outwardly professed Christianity. In the coins on which he has the imperial title of "Augustus," he has the rough, shaggy beard attributed to him. On his head is a fillet, sometimes highly ornamented, apparently formed of strings of beads. Ammianus gives an amusing account of his coronation, when the soldiers raised him on their shields, and saluted him as emperor.

He was beseeched to assume the diadem;

* Ammianus, lib. xxv, c. 4, sec. 22.

he said he had no such thing about him. The soldiers said that his wife's necklace, or an ornament from her head-dress would do. Julian objected, that he thought at the outset of his reign to wear a woman's toy would be a bad omen. The soldiers were then about to make a coronet out of part of a horse's trappings, but this also Julian resisted. The dispute was put an end to by one of his officers, whose name, Maurus, has been preserved, who took the collar which he wore as the badge of his rank, and placed it on the head of the general, who accepted the throne, and distributed the usual presents.*

Julian's rough beard subjected him to ridicule at various times. I am afraid that it was the affectation of looking like a philosopher that led Julian to cultivate his beard. From Julius, who was always shaved, to Julian, none of the emperors, with the exception of Adrian, had worn a beard. The Greek emperors after Justinian, who was smoothly shaved, wore their beards long. Amongst the Romans, it is said,

* Ammianus, xxv, c. 4. sec. 22.

the fashion of shaving daily had been introduced by the great Scipio, whom Cæsar perhaps wished to imitate in this—while the example of Cæsar would stamp the fashion as imperial. The flatterers of the weak and mean Constantius at the time that they did not foresee Julian's elevation to the throne jeered at his person and habits. They called him a goat, and the shaggy Julian, a talking mole (*loquacem talpam* is the expression in Ammianus), an ape in purple, and a Greek literary puppy (*litterio Græcus*).

On his visit to the Christian city of Antioch, the people sung songs in derision of his character and his religion, and did not forget to deride his beard. They called him a little man stretching out his shoulders, and carrying his goat's beard before him, and walking big like a man of stature. He was also called the priest's assistant (*victimarius*), in allusion to his numerous sacrifices, and his carrying the sacrificial things in the processions, surrounded by a troop of women.

Julian felt these attacks, but suppressed his anger, and revenged himself not like an em-

peror or a soldier, but like a philosopher, or—if it might be so said of the champion of fallen paganism—like a Christian, by writing in reply to his libellers the piece called "Misopogon," in which he apologised for his own peculiarities, and satirised the vices of the people of Antioch; and this reply he caused to be affixed to the gates of their dissolute capital.

With all his great virtues, the pedantry and affectation of Julian furnished fair materials for satire. What of his habits has been passed over in silence by Ammianus, his own ostentation has supplied. He had the vanity to distinguish himself not merely by the simplicity of his habits, but by his filthiness. We learn from himself that he was almost wholly covered with hair. His beard was not merely shaggy, but, to use the genteel expression of Gibbon, it was also "populous." Fanaticism produces similar results in all ages and countries, and under every varying form of faith. Many Christian saints have believed that God takes delight in all manner of filthiness; and Cardinal Bellarmier, undoubtedly a good man, had the same

passion for the comfort and nourishment of small vermin as Julian had.

In that portion of the very critical review of Julian's character which Ammianus devotes to the enumeration of his defects, we are told, amongst other points well known to his detractors and his friends, that his tongue was too loose, and rarely silent; and that his greed of approbation made him keep company with unworthy persons.

Julian in his early days had devoted some attention to the study of music. He was also taught the Pyrrhic dance, a military movement to the sound of flutes, but seems to have thought this exercise unworthy of him.

In his diet Julian, we are told by Ammianus, was as abstemious as if his food had been regulated by the sumptuary laws of Lycurgus. He rejected the pheasants and other delicacies prepared for him, and contented himself with the meals of the common soldiers; and he would eat his hasty and coarse fare, standing after the military fashion. The scantiness and weakness of his food astonished his friends. From other

sources we learn that Julian was almost a vegetarian, being one of those who fancy that a vegetable diet preserves the health both of the body and of the mind. To Julian's diet producing its usual effects on his head and stomach, we may attribute his belief that he held personal conferences with the gods and goddesses of his faith. His religion was of a gloomy nature, and not that rich and cheerful "prodigality of faith" which was the character of Grecian paganism in its palmy days. His melancholy vision of the genius of Rome leaving his tents may be ascribed to his dyspeptic supper. He had been feeding on pulse, the diet of ancient Rome in the days of its simplicity.*

Ammianus admits that the religion of Julian was mingled with superstition; and the heathens, while they loved him, ridiculed his numerous and expensive sacrifices and observances. As a Platonist, Julian believed in the transmigration of souls. The ecclesiastical writer, Socrates, tells us, and on this point I do not see that

* Ammianus, lib. xxv, c. 11, sec. 2.

there is any occasion to reject his testimony, that Julian believed that the soul of Alexander the Great inhabited his body; that he was, indeed, Alexander in the person of Julian.* Basilina, his mother, when about to be brought to bed dreamed that she was delivered of Achilles, and after waking, and while she was relating her dream to her attendants, she brought Julian into the world.

After the ancient fashion Julian sought to learn the secrets of the future by inspecting the entrails of beasts. The Christian writers accuse him of using human sacrifices at the celebration of his nocturnal rites. At Carrhæ, in the temple of the moon, there was found, it is said, after his death, the body of a woman hung up by the hair, with the arms extended, and the belly opened. Julian is also charged with having killed a great number of children in the performance of magical ceremonies. Theodoret and St. Gregory Nazianzen are the authorities for these stories, and their testimony wants con-

* Socrates, "Hist. Eccles." lib. III, c. 21. Paris, 1668.

firmation. A story is told by the monk Zonaras, which has more than one parallel in history. It is said that a youth with yellow hair appeared to Julian in a dream, while he was at Antioch, and told him he would die in Phrygia.* The spot where he was killed, it appears, bore that name; but Julian was misled by believing the prediction to refer to the large country of Phrygia.

Julian divided his time into three parts; devoted to study, business, and rest. He could, whenever he wished, awake from sleep, an unhappy gift, the fruit, most probably, of his spare vegetable diet. He rose, says Ammianus, in the middle of the night, not from downy plumes or silken beds shining with ambiguous lustre,† but from a rough carpet. He then prayed silently to Mercury, and next directed his attention to public business, and afterwards to the

* Joa. Zonaræ Monachi Annales, lib. II, p. 28. Paris, 1687.

† "Non e plumis vel stragulis sericis, ambiguo fulgore nitentes," says Ammianus. Is this changing colour silk?

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