upon menial drudgery. Born at an Umbrian village during the first Punic war, not far from the year when Regulus was taken,* he came to Rome at an early age, and after he began to write, produced a score or more of plays which captivated both the learned and the uneducated by their truth to the life that they depicted, and they held their high reputation long after the death of the author. Moderns have also attested their merit, and our great dramatist in his amusing *Comedy of Errors* imitated the *Menæchmi* of this early play-wright.†

Publius Terentius Afer, commonly known as Terrence, the second and last of the comic poets, was of no higher social position than Plautus, and was no more a Roman than the other writers we have referred to, for he was a native of Carthage, Rome's great rival, where he was born at the time that Hannibal was a refugee at the court of Antiochus at Ephesus. In spite of his foreign origin, Terence was of sufficient ability to exchange the slave-pen of Carthage for the society of the best circles in Rome, and he attained to such purity and ease in the use of his adopted tongue that Cicero and Cæsar scarcely surpass him in those respects. His first play, the *Andria* (the Woman of Andros), was produced

* See page 133.

† Rude farces, known as *Atellanæ Fabulæ*, were introduced into Rome after the contact with the Campanians, from one of whose towns, Atella, they received their name. Though they were at a later time divided into acts, they seem to have been at first simply improvised raillery and satire without dramatic connection. The Atellan plays were later than the imitations of Etruscan acting mentioned on page 110.

in 166 B.C., the year before Polybius and the other Achæans were transported to Rome.* It has been imitated and copied in modern times, and notably by Sir Richard Steele in his *Conscious Lovers*. Andria was followed by *Hecyra* (the Stepmother), *Heauton-timoroumenos*, (the Self-Tormentor), *Eunuchus* (the Eunuch), *Phormio* (named from a parasite who is an active agent in the plot), and *Adelphi* (the Brothers), the plot of which was mainly derived from a Greek play of the same title. This foreign influence is further shown in the names of these plays, which are Greek.

Cato, the Censor, found time among his varied public labors to contribute to the literature of his language. His *Origines* and other works have already been mentioned.† The varied literary productions of Cicero have also come under our notice,‡ but they deserve more attention, though they are too many to be enumerated. Surpassing all others in the art of public speaking, he was evidently well prepared to write on rhetoric and oratory as he did; but his general information and scholarly taste led him to go far beyond this limit, and he made considerable investigations in the domains of politics, history, and philosophy, law, theology, and morals, besides practising his hand in his earlier years on the manufacture of verses that have not added to his reputation. The writings of Cicero of greatest interest to us now are his orations and correspondence, both of which give us intimate information concerning life and

* See page 164; and portrait, page 141.

† See pages 153 and 239.

‡ See page 202.

events that is of inestimable value, and it is conveyed in a literary style at once so appropriate and attractive that it is itself forgotten in the impressive interest of the narrative. The period covered by the eight hundred letters of Cicero that have been preserved is one of the utmost importance in Roman history, and the author and his correspondents were in the hottest of the exciting movements of the time.

When he writes without reserve, he gives his modern readers confidential revelations of the utmost piquancy; and when he words his epistles with diplomatic care, he displays with equal acuteness, to the student familiar with the intrigues of public life at Rome at the time, the sinuosities of contemporary statesmanship and the wiles of the wary politician, and the revelation is all the more entertaining and important because it is an unintentional exhibition. The orations of Cicero are likewise storehouses of details connected with public and private life, gathered with the minute care of an advocate persistently in earnest and determined not to allow any item to pass unnoticed that might affect the decision of his cause.

The learned Varro, already mentioned, deserves far more attention than we can afford him. He had the advantage at an early age of the acquaintance of a scholar of high attainments in Greek and Latin literature, who was well acquainted also with the history of his own country, from whom he imbibed a love of intellectual pursuits. During the wars with the pirates (in which he obtained the naval crown)

and with Mithridates, he held a high command, and after supporting Pompey and the senate during the civil struggles, he was compelled to surrender to Cæsar (though he was not changed in his opinions), and passed over to Greece, where he was finally overcome by the dictator, and owed his subsequent opportunities for study to the clemency of his conqueror, who gave him pardon after the battle of Pharsalia. All the rest of his life was passed aloof from the storm that raged around him, the circumstances of his proscription and pardon being the only indication of his personal connection with it. He died in the year 28 B.C., after the temple of Janus had been closed the third time, when Augustus had entered upon the enjoyment of his absolute power.

Of nearly five hundred works that Varro is said to have written, one only has come down to our time complete, though some portions of another are also preserved. The first is a laboriously methodical and thorough treatise on agriculture. The other work (a treatise on Latin grammar) is of value in its mutilated and imperfect state (it seems never to have received its author's final revision), because it preserves many terms and forms that would otherwise have been lost, besides much curious information concerning ancient civil and religious usages. In regard to the derivation of words, his principles are sound, but his practice is often amusingly absurd. We must remember, however, that the science of language did not advance beyond infancy until after our own century had opened. The

great reputation of Varro was founded upon a work now lost, entitled "Book of Antiquities," in the first part of which he discussed the creation and history of man, especially of man in Italy from the foundation of the city in 753 B.C. (which date he established), not omitting reference to Æneas, of course, and presenting details of the manners and social customs of the people during all their career. In a second part Varro gave his attention to Divine Antiquities, and as St. Augustine drew largely from it in his "City of God," we may be said to be familiar with it at second hand. It was a complete mythology of Italy, minutely describing every thing relating to the services of religion, the festivals, temples, offerings, priests, and so on. Probably the loss of the works of Varro may be accounted for by their lack of popular interest, or by their infelicities of style, which rendered them little attractive to readers.

Julius Cæsar must be included among the authors of Rome, though most of his works are lost, his *Commentaries* (mentioned on p. 226) being the only one remaining. This book is written in Latin of great purity, and shows that the author was master of a clear style, though the nature of the work did not admit him to exhibit many of the graces of diction. The Commentaries seem to have been put into form in winter quarters, though roughly written during the actual campaigns. Cæsar always took pleasure in literary pursuits and in the society of men of letters.

Valerius Catullus, a contemporary of the writers just named, was born when Cinna was Consul (B.C.

87), and died at the age of thirty or forty, for the dates given as that of his death are quite doubtful. His father was a man of means and a friend of Cæsar, whom he frequently entertained. Catullus owned a villa near Tibur, but he took up his abode at Rome when very young, and mingled freely in the gayest society, the expensive pleasures of which made great inroads upon his moderate wealth. Like other Romans, he looked to a career in the provinces for means of improving his fortune, but was disappointed, and like our own Chaucer, but more frequently, he pours forth lamentations to his empty purse. He was evidently a friend of most of the prominent men of letters of his time, and he entered freely into the debauchery of the period. Thus his verse gives a representation of the debased manners of the day in gay society. His style was remarkably felicitous, and it is said that he adorned all that he touched. Most of his poems are quite short, and their subjects range from a touching outburst of genuine grief for a brother's death to a fugitive epigram of the most voluptuous trivality. His verses display ease and impetuosity, tumultuous merriment and wild passion, playful grace and slashing invective, vigorous simplicity and ingenious imitation of the learned stiffness and affectation of the Alexandrian school. They are strongly national, despite the author's use of foreign materials, and made Catullus exceedingly popular among his countrymen.

Lucretius (Titus Lucretius Carus) was a native of Italy, whose birth is said to have occurred B.C. 95.

His death was caused by his own hand, or by a philtre administered by another, about 50 B.C., and very little is known about his life. His great work, entitled About the Nature of Things (*De Rerum Natura*), is a long poem, in which an attempt is made to present in clear terms the leading principles of the philosophy of Epicurus, and it is acknowledged to be one of the greatest of the world's didactic poems. He undertakes to demonstrate that the miseries of men may be traced to a slavish dread of the gods; and in order to remove such apprehensions, he would prove that no divinity ever interposed in the affairs of the earth, either as creator or director. The Romans were not, as we have had occasion to observe, inclined to philosophic pursuits, and Lucretius certainly labored with all the force of an extraordinary genius to lead them into such studies. He brought to bear upon his task the power of sublime and graceful verse, and it has been said that but for him "we could never have formed an adequate idea of the strength of the Latin language. We might have dwelt with pleasure upon the softness, flexibility, richness, and musical tone of that vehicle of thought which could represent with full effect the melancholy tenderness of Tibullus,* the exquisite ingenuity of Ovid,† the inimitable

* Albius Tibullus was a poet of singular gentleness and amiability, who wrote verses of exquisite finish, gracefully telling the story of his worldly misfortunes and expressing the fluctuations that marked his indulgence in the tender passion, in which his experience was extensive and his record real. He was a warm friend of Horace.

† Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso) was born March 20, B.C. 43, and did not compose his first work, The Art of Love (*Ars Amatoria*), until

felicity and taste of Horace, the gentleness and high spirit of Virgil, and the vehement declamation of Juvenal, but, had the verses of Lucretius perished, we should never have known that it could give utterance to the grandest conceptions with all that sustained majesty and harmonious swell in which the Grecian Muse rolls forth her loftiest outpourings."

Caius Sallustius Crispus (Sallust) was born the year that Marius died (B.C. 86) of a plebeian family, and during the civil wars was a partisan of Cæsar, whom he accompanied to Africa, after having brought to him the news of the mutiny of his troops in Campania (B.C. 46).* Left as governor, Sallust seems to have pursued the methods common to that class, for he became immensely rich. Upon his return from Africa, he retired to an extensive estate on the Quirinal Hill, and lived through the direful days which followed the death of Cæsar. He died in the year 34 B.C., his last years being devoted to dilligent pursuits of literature. His two works are *Catilina*, a history of the suppression of the conspiracy of Catiline, and *Jugurtha*, a history of the war against Jugurtha, in both of which he took great pains with his style. As he witnessed many of the events he

he was more than fifty years of age. He wrote subsequently The Metamorphoses, in fifteen books; The Fasti, containing accounts of the Roman festivals; and the Elegies, composed during his banishment to a town on the Euxine, near the mouth of the Danube, where he died, A.D. 18. Niebuhr places him after Catullus the most poetical among the Roman poets, and ranks him first for facility. He did not direct his genius by a sound judgment, and has the unenviable fame of having been the first to depart from the canons of correct Greek taste.

* See page 245.

described, his books have a great value to the student of the periods. Roman writers asserted that he imitated the style of Thucydides, but there is an air of artificiality about his work which he did not have the skill to conceal. He has the honor of being the first Roman to write history, as distinguished from mere annals.

Livy (Titus Livius) was born in the year of Cæsar's first consulship (B.C. 59), at Patavium (Padua), and died A.D. 17. His writings, like those of Ovid, come therefore rather into the period of the empire. His great work is the History of Rome, which he modestly called simply *Annales*. Little is known of his life, but he was of very high repute as a writer in his own day, for it is said by Pliny that a Spaniard travelled all the way from his distant home merely to see him, and as soon as his desire had been accomplished, returned. Livy's history comprised one hundred and forty-two books, of which thirty-five only are extant, though with the exception of two of the missing books valuable epitomes are preserved. Though wanting many of the traits of the historian, and though he was of course incapable of looking at history with the modern philosophic spirit, Livy was honest and candid, and possessed a wonderful command of his native language. His work enjoyed an unbounded popularity, not entirely to be accounted for by the fascinations of his theme. He realized his desire to present a clear and probable narrative, and no history of Rome can now be written without constant reference to his pages.

Horace (Quintus Horatius Flaccus) was born on

the river Aufidus, in the year 65 B.C., and was son of a freeman who seems to have been a publican or collector of taxes. At about the age of twelve, after having attended the local school at Venusia, to which the children of the rural aristocracy resorted, he was taken to Rome, where he enjoyed the advantages of the best means of education. He studied Livius Andronicus, and Homer, and was flogged with care by at least one of his masters. He was accompanied at the capital by his father, of whom he always speaks with great respect, and because he mingled with boys of high rank, was well dressed and attended by slaves. The gentle watchfulness of the father guarded Horace from all the temptations of city life, and at the age of eighteen he went to Athens, as most well-educated Romans were obliged to, and studied in the academic groves, though for a while he was swept away by the youthful desire to acquire military renown under Brutus, who came there after the murder of Cæsar. Like the others of the republican army, he fled from the field of Philippi, and found his military ardor thoroughly cooled. He thenceforth devoted himself to letters. Returning to Rome, he attracted notice by his verses, and became a friend of Mæcenas and Virgil, the former of whom bestowed upon him a farm sufficient to sustain him. His life thereafter was passed in frequent interchange of town and country residence, a circumstance which is reflected with charming grace in his verses. His rural home is described in his epistles. It was not extensive, but was pleasant, and he enjoyed it to the utmost. His poetry is deficient in the highest prop-

erties of verse, but as the fresh utterances of a man of the world who was possessed of quick observation and strong common-sense, and who was honest and bold, they have always charmed their readers. The Odes of Horace are unrivalled for their grace and felicitous language, but express no great depth of feeling. His Satires do not originate from moral indignation, but the writer playfully shoots folly as it flies, and exhibits a wonderful keenness of observation of the ways of men in the world. His Epistles are his most perfect work, and are, indeed, among the most original and polished forms of Roman verse. His Art of Poetry is not a complete theory of poetic art, and is supposed to have been written simply to suggest the difficulties to be met on the way to perfection by a versifier destitute of the poetic genius. The works of Horace were immediately popular, and in the next generation became text-books in the schools.

Cornelius Nepos was a historical writer of whose life almost no particulars have come down to us, except that he was a friend of Cicero, Catullus, and probably of other men of letters who lived at the end of the republic. The works that he is known to have written are all lost, and that which goes under his name, The Biographies of Distinguished Commanders (*Excellentium Imperatorum Vitæ*), seems to be an abridgment made some centuries after his death, and tedious discussions have been had regarding its authorship. The lives are, however, valuable for their pure Latinity, and interesting for the lofty tone in which the greatness of the Roman people

is celebrated. The life of Atticus, the friend and correspondent of Cicero, is the one of the biographies regarding which the doubts have been least. The work is still a favorite school-book and has been published in innumerable editions.

This brief list of celebrated writers whose works were in the hands of the reading public of Rome during the time of the republic, must be closed with reference to Virgil (Publius Vergilius Maro), the writer who stands at the head of the literature of Rome, sharing his pre-eminence only with his younger friend, Horace. Born on his father's small estate near Mantua, Virgil studied Greek at Naples, and other branches, probably, at Rome, where in time he became the friend of the munificent patron of letters, Mæcenas, with whom we have already seen him on the noted journey to Brundusium. It was at the instigation of Mæcenas that Virgil wrote his most finished work, the agricultural poem entitled *Georgica*, which was completed after the battle of Actium (B.C. 31), when Augustus was in the East. It had been preceded by ten brief poems called Bucolics (*Bucolica*, Greek, *boukolos*, a cowherd), noteworthy for their smooth versification and many natural touches, though they have only the form and coloring of the true pastoral poem. The Æneid, which was begun about 30 B.C., occupied eleven years in composition, and yet lacked the finishing touches when the poet was on his death-bed. His death occurred September 22, B.C. 19, at Brundusium, to which place he had come from Greece, where he had been in company with Augustus, and

he was buried between the first and second milestones on the road from Naples to Puteoli, where a monument is still shown as his.

Though always a sufferer from poor health, and therefore debarred from entering upon an oratorical or a military career, Virgil was exceptionally fortunate in his friendships and enjoyed extraordinary patronage which enabled him to cultivate literature to the greatest advantage. He was fortunate, too, in his fame, for he was a favorite when he lived no less than after his death. Before the end of his own generation his works were introduced as text-books into Roman schools; during the Middle Age he was the great poet whom it was heresy not to admire; Dante owned him as a master and a model; and the people finally embalmed him in their folk-lore as a mysterious conjurer and necromancer. His *Æneid*, written in imitation of the great Greek poem on the fall of Troy, is a patriotic epic, tracing the wanderings, the struggles, and the death of Æneas, and vaunting the glories of Rome and the greatness of the royal house of the emperor.

Thus, through long ages the Roman wrote, and thus he was furnished with books to read. For centuries he had no literature excepting those rude ballads in which the books of all countries have begun, and all trace of them has passed away. When at last, after the conquest of the Greek cities in Southern Italy, the Tarentine Andronicus began to imitate the epics of his native language in that of his adoption, the progress was still quite slow among a people who argued with the sword and saw little to interest

them in the fruit of the brain. As the republic totters to its fall, however, the cultivators of this field increase, and we must suppose that readers also were multiplied. At that time and during the early years of the empire, a Mæcenas surrounded himself with authors and stimulated them to put forth all their vigor in the effort to create a native literature.

On the Esquiline Hill there was a spot of ground that had been a place of burial for the lower orders. This the hypochondriacal invalid Mæcenas bought, and there he laid out a garden and erected a lofty house surmounted by a tower commanding a view of the city and vicinity. Effeminate and addicted to every sort of luxury, Mæcenas calmed his sometimes excited nerves by the sweet sound of distant symphonies, gratified himself by comforting baths, adorned his clothing with expensive gems, tickled his palate with dainty confections of the cook, and regaled himself with the loftier delights afforded by the companionship of the wits and virtuosi of the capital. Magnificent was the patronage that he dispensed among the men of letters; and that he was no mean critic, his choice of authors seems to prove. They were the greatest geniuses and most learned men of the day. At his table sat Virgil, Horace, and Propertius, besides many others, and his name has ever since been proverbial for the patron of letters. No wealthy public man has since arisen who could rival him in this respect.

XX.

THE ROMAN REPUBLICANS SERIOUS AND GAY.

IT is easier to think of the old Roman republicans as serious than gay, when we remember that they considered that their very commonwealth was established upon the will of the gods, and that no acts—at least no public acts—could properly be performed without consulting those spiritual beings, which their imagination pictured as presiding over the hearth, the farm, the forum—as swarming throughout every department of nature. The first stone was not laid at the foundation of the city until Romulus and Remus had gazed up into the heavens, so mysterious and so beautiful, and had obtained, as they thought, some indication of the fittest place where they might dig and build. The she-wolf that nurtured the twins was elevated into a divinity with the name Lupa, or Luperca (*lupus*, a wolf), and was made the wife of a god who was called Lupercus, and worshipped as the protector of sheep against their enemies, and as the god of fertility. On the fifteenth of February, when in that warm clime spring was beginning to open the buds, the shepherds celebrated a feast in honor of Lupercus. Its ceremonies, in some part symbolic of purification, were rude and almost sav-

age, proving that they originated in remote antiquity, but they continued at least down to the end of the period we have considered, and the powerful Marc Antony did not disdain to clothe himself in a wolf-skin and run almost naked through the crowded streets of the capital the month before his friend Julius Cæsar was murdered.* It was a fitting festival for the month of which the name was derived from that of the god of purification (*februare*, to purify).

It was at the foot of a fig-tree that Romulus and Remus were fabled to have been found by Faustulus, and that tree was always looked upon with special veneration, though whenever the Roman walked through the woods he felt that he was surrounded by the world of gods, and that such a leafy shade was a proper place to consecrate as a temple. A temple was not an edifice in those simple days, but merely a place separated and set apart to religious uses by a solemn act of dedication. When the augur moved his wand aloft and designated the portion of the heavens in which he was to make his observations, he called the circumscribed area of the ethereal blue a temple, and when the mediæval astrologer did the same, he named the space a "house." On the Roman temple an altar was set up, and there, perhaps beneath the spreading branches of a royal oak, sacred to Jupiter, the king of the gods, or of an olive, sacred to Minerva, the maiden goddess, impersonation of ideas, who shared with him and his queen the highest place among the

* See page 248.

Capitoline deities, prayers and praises and sacrifices were offered.

When the year opened, the Roman celebrated the fact by solemnizing in its first month, March, the festivity of the father of the Roman people by Rhea Silvia, the god who stood next to Jupiter; who, as Mars Silvanus, watched over the fields and the cattle, and, as Mars Gradivus (marching), delighted in bloody war, and was a fitting divinity to be appealed to by Romulus as he laid the foundation of the city.* As spring progressed, sacrifices were offered to Tellus, the nourishing earth; to Ceres, the Greek goddess Demeter, introduced from Sicily B.C. 496, to avert a famine, whose character did not, however, differ much from that of Tellus; and to Pales, a god of the flocks. At the same inspiring season another feast was observed in honor of the vines and vats, when the wine of the previous season was opened and tasted.†

In like manner after the harvest, there were festivals in honor of Ops, goddess of plenty, wife of that old king of the golden age, Saturnus, introducer of social order and god of sowing, source of wealth and plenty. The festival of Saturnus himself occurred on December 17th, and was a barbarous and joyous harvest-home, a time of absolute relaxation and unrestrained merriment, when distinctions of rank were

* See page 19.

† This was the *Vinalia urbana* (*urbs*, a city), but there was another festival celebrated August 19th, when the vintage began, known as the *Vinalia rustica*, when lambs were sacrificed to Jupiter. While the flesh was still on the altar, the priest broke a cluster of grapes from a vine, and thus actually opened the wine harvest.

forgotten, and crowds thronged the streets crying, *Io Saturnalia!* even slaves wearing the *pileus* or skull-cap, emblem of liberty, and all throwing off the dignified toga for the easy and comfortable *synthesis*, perhaps a sort of tunic.

Other festivals were devoted to Vulcanus, god of fire, without whose help the handicraftsmen thought they could not carry on their work; and Neptunus, god of the ocean and the sea, to whom sailors addressed their prayers, and to whom commanders going out with fleets offered oblations. Family life was not likely to be forgotten by a people among whom the father was the first priest, and accordingly we find that every house was in a certain sense a temple of Vesta, the goddess of the fireside, and that as of old time the family assembled in the atrium around the hearth, to partake of their common meal, the renewal of the family bond of union was in later days accompanied with acts of worship of Vesta, whose actual temple was only an enlargement of the fireside, uniting all the citizens of the state into a single large family. In her shrine there was no statue, but her presence was represented by the eternal fire burning upon her hearth, a fire that Æneas was fabled to have brought with him from old Troy. The purifying flames stood for the unsullied character of the goddess, which was also betokened by the immaculate maidens who kept alive the sacred coals. As Vesta was remembered at every meal, so also the Lares and Penates, divinities of the fireside, were worshipped, for there was a purification at the beginning of the repast and a libation poured

upon the table or the hearth in their honor at its close. When one went abroad he prayed to the Penates for a safe return, and when he came back, he hung his armor and his staff beside their images, and gave them thanks. In every sorrow and in every joy the indefinite divinities that went under these names were called upon for sympathy or help.

In the month of June the mothers celebrated a feast called *Matralia*, to impress upon themselves their duties towards children; and at another they brought to mind the good deeds of the Sabine women in keeping their husbands and fathers from war.* This was the *Matronalia*, and the epigrammatist Martial, who lived during the first century of our era, called it the Women's Saturnalia, on account of its permitted relaxation of manners. At that time husbands gave presents to their wives, lovers to their sweethearts, and mistresses feasted their maids.

The *Lemuria* was a family service that the father celebrated on the ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth of May, when the ghosts of the departed were propitiated. It was thought that these spirits were wont to return to the scenes of their earthly lives to injure those who were still wrestling with the severe realities of time, and specially did they come up during the darkness of night. Therefore it was that at midnight the father rose and went forth with cabalistic signs, skilfully adapted to keep the spectres at a distance. After thrice washing his hands in pure spring water, he turned around and took certain black beans into his mouth, and then threw them

* See page 26.

behind him for the ghosts to pick up. The goodman then uttered other mystic expressions without risking any looks towards the supposed sprites, after which he washed his hands, and beat some brazen basins, and nine times cried aloud: "Begone, ye spectres of the house!" Then could he look around, for the ghosts were harmless.

Thus the Roman forefathers worshipped personal gods, but they did not, in the early times, follow the example of the imaginative Greeks, and represent them as possessing passions like themselves, nor did they erect them into families and write out their lines of descent, or create a mythology filled with stories of their acts good and bad. The gods were spiritual beings, but the religion was not a spiritual life, nor did it have much connection with morality. It was mainly based on the enjoyment of earthly pleasures. If the ceremonious duties were done, the demands of Roman religion were satisfied. It was a hard and narrow faith, but it seemed to tend towards bringing earthly guilt and punishment into relation with its divinities, and it contained the idea of substitution, as is clearly seen in the stories of Curtius, Decius Mus, and others.*

As time passed on the rites and ceremonies increased in number and intricacy, and it became necessary to have special orders to attend to their observance, for the fathers of the families were not able to give their attention to the matter sufficiently.

* "When the gods of the community were angry, and nobody could be laid hold of as definitely guilty, they might be appeased by one who voluntarily gave himself up."—MOMMSEN, Book I., chapter 12.

Thus the colleges of priests naturally grew up to care for the national religion, the most ancient of them bearing reference to Mars the killing god. They were the augurs and the pontifices, and as the religion grew more and more formal and the priests less and less earnest, the observances fell into dull and insipid performances, in which no one was interested, and in time public service became not only tedious, but costly, penny collections made from house to house being among the least onerous expedients resorted to for the support of the new grafts on the tree of devotion.

As early as the time of the first Punic war, a consul was bold enough to jest at the auspices in public. Superstitions and impostures flourished, the astrology of ancient Chaldea spread, the Oriental ceremonies were introduced with the pomps that accompanied the reception of the unformed boulder which the special embassy brought from Pessinus when the weary war with Hannibal had rendered any source of hope, even the most futile, inspiring.* Then the abominable worship of Bacchus came in, and thousands were corrupted and made vicious throughout Italy before the authorities were able to put a stop to the midnight orgies and the crimes that daylight exposed.

Cato the elder, who would have nothing to do with consulting Chaldeans or magicians of any sort, asked how it were possible for two such ministers to meet each other face to face without laughing at their own duplicity and the ridiculous superstition of

* B.C. 204. See page 153.

the people they deceived.* Cato was very much shocked by the preaching of three Greek philosophers: Diogenes, a stoic; Critolaus, a peripatetic; and Carneades, an academic, who visited Rome on a political mission, B. C. 155; because it seemed to him that they, especially the last, preached a doctrine that confounded justice and injustice, a system of expediency, and he urged successfully that they should have a polite permission to depart with all speed. The philosophers were dismissed, but it was impossible to restrain the Roman youth who had listened to the addresses of the strangers with an avidity all the greater because their utterances had been found scandalous, and they went to Athens, or Rhodes, to hear more of the same doctrine.

Thus in time the simplicity of the people was completely undermined, and while they became more cosmopolitan they also grew more lax. They used the Greek language, and employed Greek writers, as we have seen, to make their books for them, which, though bearing Greek titles, were composed in Latin. The public men performed in the forenoon their civil and religious acts; took their siestas in the middle of the day; exercised in the Campus Martius,

* It had been in early times customary to dismiss a political gathering if a thunder-storm came up, and the augurs had taken advantage of the practice to increase their own power by laying down an occult system of celestial omens which enabled them to bring any such meeting to a close when the legislation promised to thwart their plans. They finally reached the absurd extreme of enacting a law, by the terms of which a popular assembly was obliged to disperse, if it should occur to a higher magistrate merely to look into the heavens for signs of the approach of such a storm. The power of the priests under such a law was immeasurable. (See pages 236 and 247).

swimming, wrestling, and fencing, in the afternoon; enjoyed the delicacies of the table later, listening to singing and buffoonery the while, and were thus prepared to seek their beds when the sun went down. At the bath, which came to be the polite resort of pleasure-seekers, all was holiday; the toga and the foot-coverings were exchanged for a light Greek dressing-gown, and the time was whiled away in gossip, idle talk, lounging, many dippings into the flowing waters, and music. Pleasure became the business of life, and morality was relaxed to a frightful extent.

When we consider the gay moods of the Roman people we turn probably first to childhood, and try to imagine how the little ones amused themselves. We find that the girls had their dolls, some of which have been dug out of ruins of the ancient buildings, and that the boys played games similar to those that still hold dominion over the young English or American school-boy at play. In their quieter moods they played with huckle-bones taken from sheep, goats, or antelopes, or imitated in stone, metal, ivory, or glass. From the earliest days these were used chiefly by women and children, who used five at a time, which they threw into the air and then tried to catch on the back of the hand, their irregular form making the success the result of considerable skill. The bones were also made to contribute to a variety of amusements requiring agility and accuracy; but after a while the element of chance was introduced. The sides were marked with different values, and the victor was he who threw the highest value, fourteen, the numbers

cast being each different from the rest. This throw obtained at a symposium or drinking party caused a person to be appointed king of the feast.

One of the oldest games of the world is that called by the Romans little marauders (*latrunculi*), because it was played like draughts or checkers, there being two sets of "men," white and red, representing opposed soldiers, and the aim of each player being to gain advantage over the other, as soldiers do in a combat. This game is as old as Homer, and is represented in Egyptian tombs, which are of much greater antiquity than any Grecian monuments. In this game, too, skill was all that was needed at first, but in time spice was given by the addition of chance, and dice (*tessera*, a die) were used as in backgammon; but gambling was deemed disreputable, and was forbidden during the republic, except at the time of the Saturnalia, though both Greeks and Romans permitted aged men to amuse themselves in that way.*

The games of the Romans range from the innocent tossing of huckle-bones to the frightful scenes of the gladiatorial show. Some were celebrated in the open air, and others within the enclosures of the circus or the amphitheatre. Some were gay, festive, and abandoned, and others were serious and tragic. Some were said to have been instituted in the earliest days by Romulus, Servius Tullius, or Tarquinius Priscus, and others were imported from abroad or

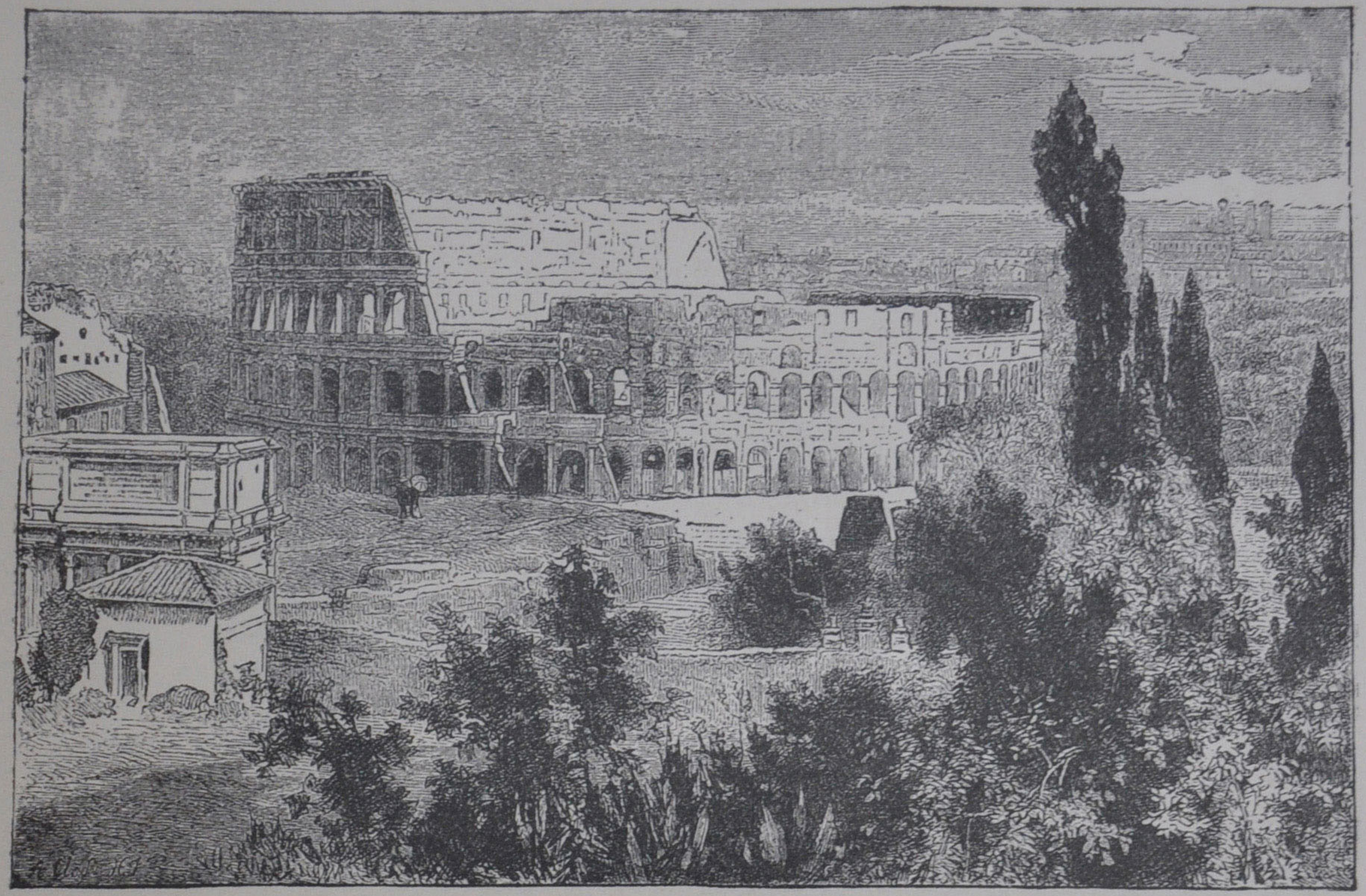
* A gambler was called *aleator*, and sometimes his implement was spoken of as *alea*, which meant literally gaming. When Suetonius makes Cæsar say, before crossing the Rubicon, "The die is cast," he uses the words *Jacta alea est!*

grew up naturally as the nation progressed in experience or in acquaintance with foreign peoples. The great increase of games and festivals and their enormous cost were signs of approaching trouble for the republic, and foretold the terrible days of the empire, when the rabblement of the capital, accustomed to be amused and fed by their despotic and corrupt rulers, should cry in the streets: "Give us bread for nothing and games forever!" It was gradually educating the populace to think of nothing but enjoyment and to abhor honest labor, and we can imagine the corruption that must have been brought into politics when honors were so expensive that a respectable gladiatorical show cost more than thirty-five thousand dollars (£7,200). If money for such purposes could not be obtained by honest means, the nobles, who lived on popular applause, would seek to force it from poor citizens of the colonies or win it by intrigue at home.

There were impressive games celebrated from the fourth to the twelfth of September, called the great games of the Roman Circus, but it is a disputed point what divinities they were in honor of. Jupiter was thought surely to be one, and Consus another, by those who believed the legends asserting that they were a continuation of those established by Romulus when he wished to get wives from the Sabines. Others think that Tarquinius Priscus, after a victory over the Latins, commemorated his success by games in a valley between the Aventine and the Palatine hills, where the spectators stood about to look on, or occupied stages that they erected for their sepa-

rate use. The racers went around in a circuit, and it is perhaps on this account that the course and its scaffolds was called the circus (*circum*, round about). The course was long, and about it the seats of the spectators were in after times arranged in tiers. A division, called the *spina* (spine), was built through the central enclosure, separated the horses running in one direction from those going in the other.

A variety of different games were celebrated in the circus. The races may be mentioned first. Sometimes two chariots, drawn by two horses or four each (the *biga* or the *quadriga*), entered for the trial of speed. Each had two horsemen, one of whom, standing in the car with the reins behind his back to enable him to throw his entire weight on them, drove, while the other urged the beasts forward, cleared the way, or assisted in managing the reins. Before the race lists of the horses were handed about and bets made on them, the utmost enthusiasm being excited, and the factions sometimes even coming to blows and blood. The time having arrived, the horses were brought from stalls at the end of the course, and ranged in line, a trumpet sounded, or a handkerchief was dropped, and the drivers and animals put forth every exertion to win the prize. Seven times they whirled around the course, the applause of the excited spectators constantly sounding in their ears. Now and then a biga would be overturned, or a driver, unable to control his fiery steeds, would be thrown to the ground, and, not quick enough to cut the reins that encircled him



RUINS OF THE COLOSSEUM, SEEN FROM THE PALATINE HILL.

with the bill-hook that he carried for the purpose, would be dragged to his death. Such an accident would not stop the onrushing of the other competitors, and at last the victor would step from his car, mount the *spina*, and receive the sum of money that had been offered as the prize.

Another game was the Play of Troy, fabled to have been invented by Æneas, in which young men of rank on horses performed a sham fight. On another occasion the circus would be turned into a camp, and equestrians and infantry would give a realistic exhibition of battle. Again, there would be athletic games, running, boxing, wrestling, throwing the discus or the spear, and other exercises testing the entire physical system with much thoroughness. One day the amphitheatre would be filled with huge trees, and savage animals would be brought to be hunted down by criminals, captives, or men especially trained for the desperate work, who made it their profession.

For the purposes of these combats the circus was found not to be the best, and the amphitheatre was invented by Curio for the celebration of his father's funeral games. It differed from a theatre in permitting the audience to see on both sides (Greek *amphi*, both), but the distinctive name was first applied to a structure built by Cæsar, B.C. 46. The Flavian Amphitheatre, better known as the Colosseum, of which the ruins now stand in Rome, was the culmination of this sort of building, and affords a good idea of the general arrangement of those that were not so grand. That of Cæsar was, however, of

wood, which material was used in constructing theatres also; the first one of stone was not erected until 30 B.C., when Augustus was consul.*

Variety was given to the exhibitions of the amphitheatre by introducing sufficient water to float ships, and by causing the same wretched class that fought the wild beasts to represent two rival nations, and to fight until one party was actually killed, unless preserved by the clemency of the ruler.

It must not be supposed that all these exhibitions were known in early times, for, in reality, they were mostly the fruit of the increased love of pleasure that characterized the close of the period of the republic, and reached their greatest extravagance only under the emperors.

The departure of a Roman from this world was considered an event of great importance, and was attended by peculiar ceremonies, some of which have been imitated in later times. At the solemn moment the nearest relative present tried to catch in his mouth the last expiring breath, and as soon as life had passed away, he called out the name of the departed and exclaimed "Vale!" (farewell). The ring had been previously taken from the finger, and now the body was washed and anointed by undertakers, who had been called from a place near the temple of Venus Libitina, where the names of all

* History gives an account of one edifice of this kind made of wood that fell down owing to imperfect construction, killing many thousand spectators, and of another that was destroyed by fire. Pompey's theatre of stone, built B.C. 55, has already been mentioned (page 231).

who died were registered, and where articles needed for funerals were hired and sold.*

A small coin was placed in the mouth of the deceased to pay Charon the ferryman who was to take it across the rivers of the lower world, the body was laid out in the vestibule, with its feet toward the door, wearing the simple toga, in the case of an ordinary citizen, or the toga *prætexta* in case of a magistrate, and flowers and leaves were used for decorations as they are at present. If the deceased had received a crown for any act of heroism in life, it was placed upon his head at death. We have already seen that cypress was put at the door to express to the passer-by the bereavement of the dwellers in the house. If the person had been of importance, the funeral was public, and probably it would be found that he had left money for the purpose; but if he had omitted to do that, the expenses of burial would devolve on those who were to inherit his property. These charges in case of a poor person would be but slight, the funeral being celebrated; as in the olden times of the republic, at night and in a very modest style.

The master of the funeral, as he was called, attended by lictors dressed in black, directed the ceremonies in the case of a person of importance. On the eighth day the body would be taken to its cremation or burial, accompanied by persons wearing masks, representing the ancestors of the deceased

* Libitina was an ancient Italian divinity about whom little is known. She has been identified with both Proserpina (the infernal goddess of death and queen of the domain of Pluto her husband) and with Venus.

and dressed in the official costumes that had been theirs, while before it would be borne the military and civic rewards that the deceased had won. Musicians playing doleful strains headed the procession, followed by hired mourners who united lamentations with songs in praise of the virtue of the departed. Players, buffoons, and liberated slaves followed, and of the actors one represented the deceased, imitating his words and actions. The couch on which the body rested as it was carried was often of ivory adorned with gold, and was borne by the near relatives or freedmen, though Julius Cæsar was carried by magistrates and Augustus by senators.

Behind the body the relatives walked in mourning, which was black or dark blue, the sons having their heads veiled, and the daughters wearing their hair dishevelled, and both uttering loud lamentations, the women frantically tearing their cheeks and beating their breasts. As the procession passed through the forum it stopped, and an oration was delivered celebrating the praises of the deceased, after which it went on through the city to some place beyond the walls where the body was burned or buried. We have seen that burial was the early mode of disposing of the dead, and that Sulla was the first of his gens to be burned.* In case of burning, the body was placed on a square, altar-like pile of wood, still resting on the couch, and the nearest relative, with averted face, applied the torch. As the flames rose, perfumes, oil, articles of apparel,

* See page 197.

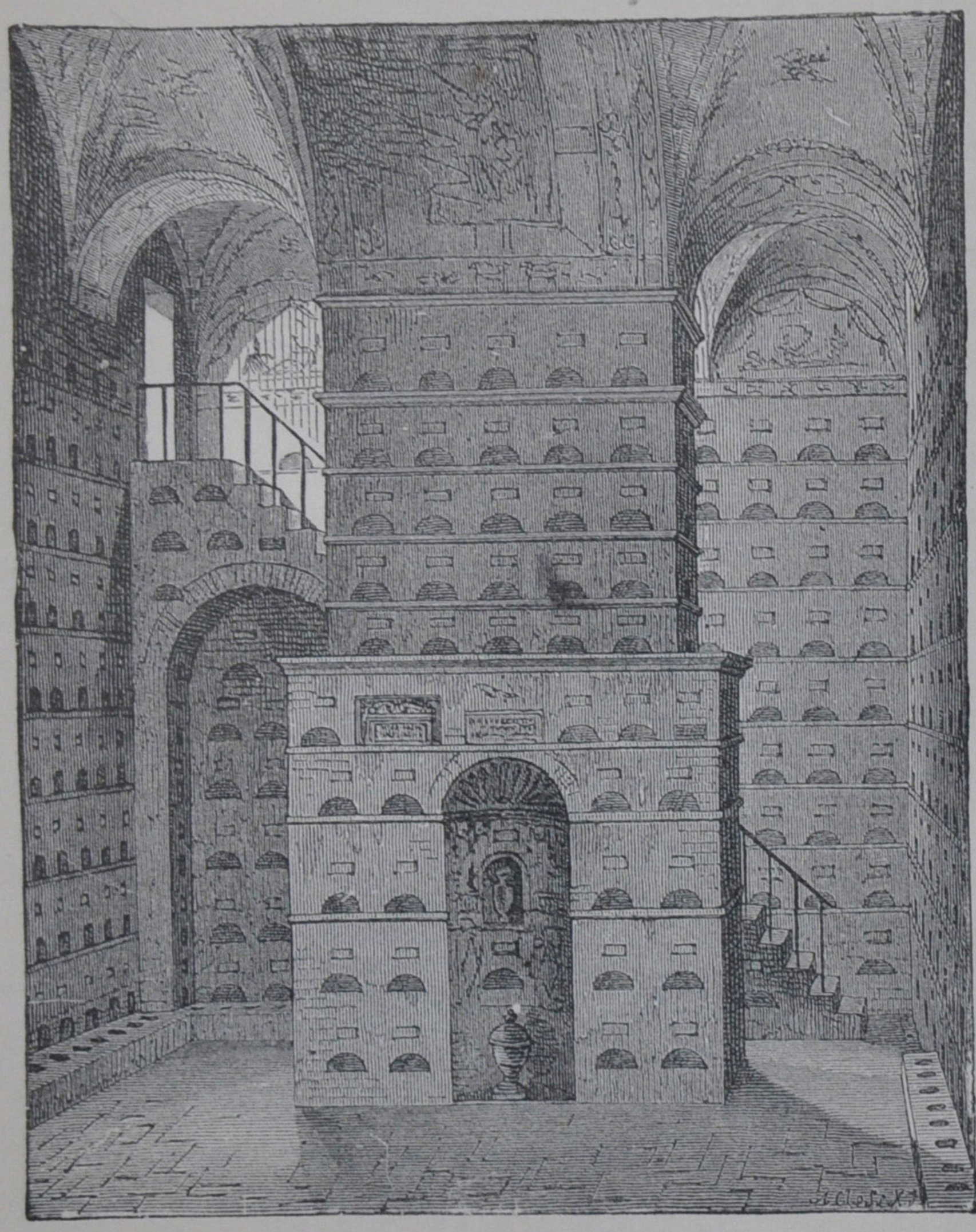
and dishes of food were cast into them. Sometimes animals, captives, or slaves were slaughtered on the occasion, and, as we have seen, gladiators were hired to fight around the flaming pile.*

When the fire had accomplished its work, and the whole was burned down, wine was thrown over the ashes to extinguish the expiring embers, and the remains were sympathetically gathered up and placed in an urn of marble or less costly material. A priest then sprinkled the ashes with pure water, using a branch of olive or laurel, the urn was placed in a niche of the family tomb, and the mourning relatives and friends withdrew, saying as they went *Vale, vale!* When they reached their homes they underwent a process of purification, the houses themselves were swept with a broom of prescribed pattern, and for nine days the mourning exercises, which included a funeral feast, were continued. In the case of a great man this feast was a public banquet, and gladiatorial shows and games were added in some instances, and they were also repeated on anniversaries of the funeral.

The public buried the illustrious citizens of the nation, and those whose estates were too poor to pay such expenses; the former being for a long time laid away in the Campus Martius, until the site became unhealthy, when it was given to Mæcenas, who built a costly house on it. The rich often erected expensive vaults and tombs during their own lives, and some of the streets for a long distance from the city gate were bordered with ornamental

* See pages 158 and 210.

but funereal structures, which must have made the traveller feel that he was passing through unending burial-places. If a tomb was fitted up to contain



A COLUMBARIUM.

many funeral ash-urns, it was known as a columbarium, or dove-cote (*columba*, a dove), the ashes of the freedmen and even slaves being placed in niches

covered by lids and bearing inscriptions. The Romans ornamented their tombs in a variety of ways, but did not care to represent death in a direct manner. The place of burial of a person, even a slave, was sacred, and one who desecrated it was liable to grave punishment—even to death,—if the bodies or bones were removed. Oblations of flowers, wine, and milk were often brought to the tombs by relatives, and sometimes they were illuminated.

Almost every country lying under a southern sun is accustomed to rejoice at the annual return of flowers, and ancient Rome was not without its May-day. Festivals of the sort are apt to degenerate morally, and that, also, was true of the Floralia, as these feasts were called at Rome. It is said that in the early age of the republic there was found in the Sibylline books a precept commanding the institution of a celebration in honor of the goddess Flora, who presided over flowers and spring-time, in order to obtain protection for the blossoms. The last three days of April and the first two of May were set apart for this purpose, and then, under the direction of the ædiles, the people gave themselves up to all the delights and, it must be confessed, to many of the dissipations of the opening spring. The amusements were of a varied character, including scenic and other theatrical shows, great merriment, feasting, and drinking. Dance and song added to the gay pleasures, and flowers adorned the scenes that met the eye on every hand. Probably no particular deity was honored at these festivals at first. They were simply the unbending of the rustics after the

cold of winter, the rejoicings natural to man in spring; but finally the personal genius of the flowers was developed and her name given to the gay festival.

The rustic simplicity represented well the primal homeliness of the nation during the heroic ages; the orgies of the crowded city may be put for the growing decay of the later period when, enriched and intoxicated by foreign conquest and maddened by civil war, the republic fell, and the way was made plain for the great material growth of the empire, as well as for the final fall of the vast power that had for so many centuries been invincible among the nations of the earth;—a power which still stands forth in monumental grandeur, and is to-day studied for the lessons it teaches and the warnings its history utters to mankind.

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