

"Yet you seem to bear your bondage very comfortably," laughed the light-hearted Greek, "and had I your fortune, so would I."

"Mehercule! the fetters gall though they be golden," ejaculated the soldier, lashing his steeds into swifter flight, as if to give vent to his nervous excitement. "I plunge into folly to forget that I am a slave. Lost a hundred thousand sesterees at dice last night. The empire is hurrying to chaos. There are no paths of honour and ambition open to a man. One must crouch like a hound or crawl like a serpent to win advancement in the state. I tell you the degenerate Romans of to-day are an effete and worn out race. The rude Dacians beyond the Tiber possess more of the hardy virtues of the founders of the Republic than the craven creatures who crawl about the feet of the modern Colossi, who bestride the world and are worshipped almost as gods. And unless Rome mends her ways they will be the masters of the Empire yet."

"One would think you were Cato the Censor," laughed the Greek. "For my part, I think the best philosophy is that of my wise countryman, Epicurus—'to take the times as they come, and make the most of them.' But here we are at the *Thermæ*."

Giving his horses to one of the innumerable grooms belonging to the establishment, Rufus and his friend disappeared under the lofty arched entrance of the stately Baths of Caracalla.

JAPANESE POEM.

GRAND is the heaven above me,
Grand and cruel and lone;
For it hath no voice to answer
The heart that maketh a moan.

"Why are these sorrows and sighings,
Why are these partings and cryings?"
I plead in my pain;
But its vastness is void, and its beauty is vain.