

that he who did not spare the living poets, Lucan and the philosophic Seneca, would pay much respect to the ashes of the dead. He built on this site his splendid palace, adorned and enriched with all that a luxurious taste could suggest and the utmost prodigality and power could supply, and hence it received the name of the Golden House. In fact it almost realized the conceptions of Eastern imagination, when it depicts the work of the Genii of their romance. It was less remarkable, however, for the profusion of gold, ivory, mother of pearl, and gems with which its walls and ceilings were inlaid or adorned—and for its paintings, statues, and other rich and precious works of art, both within and without the buildings—than for their immense magnitude and the prodigious extent and variety of the whole. Taking advantage of the vast space which the fire had left vacant, and removing whatever buildings still stood in his way, Nero covered the whole, not merely with the palace strictly so called; but as forming a part of it, with wide spreading fields, woods, wildernesses—an artificial lake like an inland sea—hills, gardens, vineyards, and orchards; extending over the Esquiline and Palatine hills. But this too with all its splendour, gave place afterwards to the magnificent baths of Titus, which spread all along the Esquiline. Two arches, on which they were supported, were laid immediately over the other. All are now involved in one common ruin. But beneath these baths, the chambers of Nero's Golden House have been disclosed by excavations, and some of the still older remains, as it has been supposed, of Mæcenæ's Villa, also. On the ceiling of some of the rooms, thus laid open to view, are fresco paintings, in rich vivid colours; as fresh and fair as if finished but yesterday.

Nothing perhaps more strongly marks the luxurious character of the age, and the pomp and prodigality of these Roman Emperors, than the *Thermæ* or Baths which they erected; outvying each other in these costly structures. Those of Titus, great and extensive as they were, can hardly be put in comparison with the Baths of Caracalla. They bear his name, and were originally built by him—but they were much enlarged by the Emperors Heliogabalus and Alexander Severus, his successors. They were situated between the Aventine and Calian hills, and a little outside of the old *Porta Capena*, memorable in the early history of Rome for a deeply tragic event. It was there that the survivor of the three *Horatii*, fresh from his victory, and smarting from his wounds, met his sister, and was reproached by her for the death of her lover, who had fallen in the combat. In a moment of indignation and excitement he plunged his sword into the breast of the unhappy maiden. These Baths too are in ruins, but what remain of them furnish us with a better idea of their character and extent than any other which are found in Rome. They were on the east of the Aventine, between that and the Appian way, and occupied a circuit of nearly a mile.

It may be a subject of wonder to us how such an extensive area could be occupied by Baths alone. But Imperial luxury included a great deal under that name. The buildings indeed which properly and exclusively were devoted to the purposes of bathing were themselves immense. They included separate rooms for cold, tepid, warm and steam baths, which opened into wide and spacious halls; one of these—it will serve to mark the character of the whole—was so large, that in it were 1600 marble seats, for the convenience of the bathers. There was besides an immense capacious basin for swimmers. But to these must be added the numerous apartments which the convenience of all these bathers would require—libraries for reading—halls for recitations and lectures—an odeum for music—a gymnasium—and an enclosed place for exercise, when the weather would not permit it abroad. There were temples for the tutelary deities and others, in the same grounds; and courts and open walks planted with shrubs and trees, so that we may perhaps form some idea to ourselves of these