

a young military officer under the Emperor Adrian, and to whom we shall refer hereafter,—were there no fascinations in Rome for persons of his age and station? The answer is to be found in the pages of the poets and historians of the age with which the classical scholar is familiar, and which reveal a state of morals in striking contrast to the purity of the Christian character. But even if those authors were silent, we have preserved to us by the providence of God ancient cities with their contents, which give a far better view of the manners of the luxurious Greeks and Romans, and of the temptations which surrounded the believer. He who visits the Catacombs sees what may be considered to a great extent as the *positive* side of the Christian character,—the sufferings which he endured;—he who would desire to see the *negative* side,—the self-denial which he exercised—must go farther,—he must extend his excursion to the exhumed cities of Magna Græcia. Let him go to Pompeii;—let him walk up and down the silent streets of that city of the dead, and minutely mark the writings and characters on the walls;—let him enter the houses, and penetrate to the secret recesses—thence let him go to the Bourbonic Museum at Naples, where everything that was movable of the contents of the city is stored, and then he will have a true insight into the depravity of the human heart when left to itself. No language is too strong to denounce the gross licentiousness which prevailed amid all the elegancies and refinements of the arts in those days, and which betrays itself here in varied form to the eye of the spectator, penetrating and polluting even the boudoir of the lady. And if such was the state of Pompeii, a small provincial town, what must have been the tone of morals in imperial Rome itself? Was not the cup of pleasure then filled to the brim and presented to the Christian's lips? Were there not those among his heathen friends who would look upon him as absurdly singular, and would point out how easy it was to follow the tide, and to float gaily down life's stream, enjoying the sunshine that sparkled on its surface, and the roses which decked its margin, without troubling himself with a dark and mysterious future? Such were the Epicurean ideas then in vogue, and to which the heart