

"No, no!" answered the multitude, with thundering echo.

They swayed and surged from place to place; compact masses crowded against each other, possessed with fury, as if they would rend themselves in pieces to give vent to the wrath produced by the conditions of the conqueror.

Sonnica had disappeared; but Actæon saw her return to the Forum followed by a cordon of people—slaves, women, soldiers, bearing upon their backs the rich furniture from the villa which had been stored in the warehouse; the chests of jewels, the sumptuous tapestries, ingots of silver, and boxes of gold dust. The multitude observed this procession of riches without guessing Sonnica's purpose.

"No! No!" repeated the Greek woman, as if talking to herself.

She was infuriated at the conqueror's proposals. She imagined herself departing from the city with no other fortune than the tunic she wore and another over her arm, compelled to beg along the highway, or to labour in the fields as a slave, persecuted by the fierce soldiers of many nations!

"No! No!" she repeated energetically, making her way through the crowd to the fire in the centre of the Forum.

She was magnificent with her auburn hair loosened in her excitement, her tunic rent by struggling through the multitude, her eyes flashing with the expression of a Fury who found an acrid satisfaction in destruction. Of what use were riches? Of what use was life? Her desperate energy was spurred by the bitterness which she had tasted an hour ago before the body of her slave.