

images, made of homely pottery, that are set in our Roman shrines. Yet, our own gods have ever been propitious, and I have faith they will continue so, if we only let them be. (Vehement cheering.) Before this Oppian law was passed, Pyrrhus sent Cineas with gifts for men, and women, too, but nobody accepted any, and why? Because there were then no luxurious ideas to be kept in check, nothing to call for such a law. You must suffer from a disease before you need a remedy. (Hear.) But were Cineas to come again, he would find people in the streets not ashamed to accept his bribes, nay, holding their hands out for them in public places. (Shouts of applause, and voices "Boodle," "Guelicus," "via ferrea," etc.) I shall spare you a dissertation on abstract principles, but pray remember, that to be ashamed of honest poverty, is as unworthy as to boast of exceptional riches, while it is wrong for the rich to so display their wealth as to make their poorer fellow-citizens feel shame or envy. This law restrains the pride of the rich and prevents the humiliation of the poor. Abolish it, and what jealousies, what incitements to lavish expenditure you introduce! Unhappy the man who will be asked to buy what he cannot afford, or if he can afford it, what he thinks his wife ought not to wear. He will be forced to behold another giving what he has withheld, for the next request will be made, not to him, but to some unwelcome "friend." What else is meant by this canvassing for votes? If the law should be abolished, away with all control of your wives' expenditure for dress. Remember, when you go to the polls, that it is better not to accuse a criminal, than to lay an information and see him acquitted, better not to dispute the law, than to strive against the rising tide of luxury that will follow its repeal. I think the Oppian law should be long retained on the statute book, but, Romans, the question is in your hands, and

may the gods guide you to a correct verdict." (Prolonged applause).

Hardly had the cheers subsided which the earnest speech of Cato had called forth, when the dissenting tribunes rose to speak. They followed in the same strain, but briefly. After the consul, they did not receive the most attentive hearing, so, when the tribune Lucius Valerius arose—on whose motion the referendum was being made—he passed their arguments by, and with pleasant voice and easy gesture proceeded to undermine the edifice Cato had built up.

"Fellow-citizens," he began, (it puts an assembly in good humor to call them fellow-citizens,) "If persons of private station had alone addressed you, I should not have spoken, but when the consul comes to lend his great authority to the negative, and supports his views with a long and brilliant speech, a few words are called for in reply. (Hear.) He occupied more time, though, in finding fault with all our wives than in arguing against my motion, nor could I quite understand whether he was not blaming us, too, for permitting the agitation my proposition is meant to quell. I pass that by: it is scarcely to the point. He calls it sedition and conspiracy when our wives ask us in a frank and open manner to remove, in the flourishing and peaceful times we are now enjoying, a disability imposed during the stress of a severe war. We have heard this simple request twisted by the eloquence of Marcus Cato into I know not what. It needed high-sounding words to improve his argument, and the consul has them at command; he is a weighty speaker, but we know how savage he can be at times, for all his nature is so kind. (A laugh.) Now, fortunately for my purpose, the consul once wrote a book. (Laughter.) A book about "old times." (Great laughter.) There he recounts, and not without just pride, the conspicuous part our Roman women have, more than once, played in public af-