

WHAT ROME WAS BUILT WITH 9

forums and private houses in the luxurious days of the Empire can hardly be exaggerated. The Roman baths were particularly ornate and luxurious, and Seneca in speaking of certain of them says:—

‘What noble statues! What vast pillars supporting nothing; but placed there for mere ornament, and the vain ostentation of expense! What large and far-sounding cascades! What, we are arrived to such a pitch of delicacy and extravagance that we cannot tread but upon precious stones.’¹ The wall-linings, columns and pavements of the Baths of Caracalla were one mass of gorgeous material; the rich Numidian yellows, Phrygian purples, and deep yellows, reds and browns of the Oriental alabaster forming striking contrasts with the whites of Luni, the red porphyries, green serpentines and Egyptian granites.

The emperors themselves, moved by an inordinate desire of obtaining marble, through confiscation or purchase took possession of all the most celebrated and valuable quarries, the smaller and less known ones alone remaining the property of private individuals. Suetonius narrates how Tiberius stole quarries both from private individuals and from cities.² No wonder that the prices of private mansions reached fabulous sums. For example: Messala bought the house of Antonius for a sum corresponding to £33,000. Cicero gave for the house of Crassus £31,000. The house of Claudius had cost £131,000, that of Scaurus was valued at £885,000.³ And these were prices during Republican times! Every building of any importance or pretence glistened within and without with columns, walls,

¹ Seneca, *op. cit.*, to Lucilius, Epistle 86.

² Bruzza, *Iscrizioni dei Marmi Grezzi*.

³ Rodolfo Lanciani, *Ancient Rome*.