

Empress Octavia

place, bore the populace; it wants stronger fare, and while the men struggle, gasping and panting, the occupants of the galleries talk on without even looking at the bloodless battle.

"Agrippina, Agrippina," now runs in a whisper from seat to seat. "See how proudly she moves."

Nero's mother enters her box. Tigellinus ventures to approach the dozing ruler and inform him of her arrival. The Emperor's face darkens, it is true, but swiftly controlling himself, he shakes off the last remnant of drowsiness, salutes the Empress, nay, even sends a slave to invite her to witness the games at his side, and Agrippina then appears in her son's box, where he embraces her before the whole populace. Otho, with his beautiful wife, Poppæa Sabina, now appears in a row of seats at the right of the Emperor's chair. Vatinius, the Cæsar's jester, succeeds in giving his master a secret sign which the latter had evidently arranged with the dwarf; for, as soon as he receives it, Nero turns his head toward Otho's box, a faint flush mounts into his face, and he speaks with twofold graciousness to his mother. Sabina, too, blushes and whispers to her husband. It does not escape the notice of the