

Vinicius, the Pagan, is introduced to the reader by Petronius his uncle, as "a beautiful and athletic young man, who knew how at the same time to preserve a certain æsthetic measure in his profligacy"; his uncle would almost require an introduction to Vinicius—the christian—who writes him: "It is not the Parcae, who spin out our lives so agreeably; it is Christ who is blessing us, our beloved God and Saviour.... Thou didst say that our teaching was an enemy of life; and I answer thee now, that if from the beginning of this letter I had been repeating the three words "I am happy!" I could not have expressed my happiness to thee. To this thou wilt answer, that my happiness is Lygia. True, my friend. Because I love her immortal soul, and because we both love each other in Christ; for such love there is no separation, no deceit, no change, no old age, no death. For, when youth and beauty pass, when our bodies wither and death comes, love will remain. Before my eyes were open to the light I was ready to burn my own house even, for Lygia's sake; but now I tell thee that I did not love her, for it was Christ who first taught me to love. In Him is the source of peace and happiness." Vinicius' troubles are over:

"Like rainbow's light,  
Thy various tints unite,  
And form in heaven's sight,  
One arch of peace!"

There is but one sad religious chord struck in the triumph of Christianity; our hearts feel sore for poor deluded Petronius who lives and dies a pagan. Would that this soul also had been gathered into the Father's fold! But, alas! The leprous distillation of sceptical philosophy had vitiated that superior

mind. A man, lost at night in a swampy place, is often beguiled by a lambent, flickering flame of light that dances in childish glee as it recedes farther and farther, enticing the weary traveler into the deepest morasses of the marsh. The will-o-the-wisp, false glitter that burnt deeply in the animal passions blackened Petronius' imagination, consumed the pure gold of his heart and left it a shapeless, worthless mass—the unholy ashes of man's beastly desires. Petronius journeyed through life on the wide-gauge road that led to perdition; the engineer of the on-rushing train—his own conscience—warned him in vain, that a mine was about to be sprung upon him. He is crushed through his own blind folly. Foolish mortal, recognizing the superiority of the Christian religion, he would not embrace it; he preferred to be termed the "arbiter elegantiarum." Let him tell the tale himself "No, happy husband of the Aurora princess! thy religion is not for me. Am I to love the Bithynians who carry my litter, the Egyptians who heat my bath? Am I to love Abenobarbus and Tizellinus? I swear by the white knees of the Graces, that even if I wished to love them I could not. In Rome there are a hundred thousand persons at least who have either crooked shoulders, or big knees, or thin thighs, or staring eyes, or heads that are too large. Dost thou command me to love these too? Where am I to find the love since it is not in my heart?" Petronius' cutting, biting, sarcastic letter to Nero is the signal from the master of ceremonies, to announce that all is ready; the farewell speech in the banquet signalled the air-ship of life into higher regions where the ill-starred, self-deluded explorer of the great hereafter would