

advance of luxury, and imposed a tax on every column of foreign marble brought to Rome, but evidently this law was not long in force, as Cicero, in writing to Atticus concerning some columns says, 'you may perhaps find that I am not liable to the pillar tax. However, I think I was told by Camillus that the law had been altered.'<sup>1</sup>

It was not until the reign of Augustus, however, that the passion for marbles exceeded all bounds. Augustus himself, for more than forty years, lived in a house the porticoes of which were supported by columns of Lapis Albanus and unadorned by pavements of precious marbles; but it was his boast that he found Rome of unbaked brick and left it of marble. The Emperor obtained this result, seconded by his friend and minister, Agrippa, and succeeded in leaving behind him truly a city of marble; to which the Pantheon bears sufficient witness.

It was thought that marble-faced walls rendered the rooms fresher, and Martia<sup>2</sup> jested at those 'who lived surrounded by the cold stones of Sparta in order to temper the heat'; and Sidonius Apollinarius (A. D. 431) in offering his house to a friend says, 'it is naturally fresh, but not rich in strange marbles.'<sup>2</sup>

Tibullus noted that the excessive transport of marble crowded the streets of Rome with drays and carts laden with columns, and Ovid says, 'Decrescunt effosso marmore montes.'<sup>3</sup> Juvenal describes in the following verse the hugeness of the blocks brought to Rome from Carrara, and the consequent dangers to which the people were exposed:—

'Hark! groaning on, th' unwieldy wagon spreads  
Its cumbrous freight, tremendous! o'er our heads,

<sup>1</sup> *Letters of Cicero* (trans. Evelyn S. Shuckburgh).

<sup>2</sup> Corsi, *Delle Pietre Antiche*.

<sup>3</sup> 'As the marble is quarried the mountains shrink.'