

the narrow neck of the little vessel that not a drop was lost, though the liquid formed a wide curve in its descent. He then presented the goblet to the head steward with the tips of his fingers, bowing gracefully as he did so.

The latter sipped the delicious wine, testing its flavor with great deliberation, and said, on returning the cup: "I agree with you, it is indeed a noble wine, and tastes twice as well when presented with such inimitable grace. Strangers are quite right in saying that there are no cup-bearers like the Persians. Here, you fellow! draw the curtain back," he cried to the door-keeper, "the guests are coming. Look sharp you dogs, and do your duty!" And forward he went to meet the guests as they entered, and, assisted by other noble staff-bearers (chamberlains and masters of the ceremonies), led them to their appointed places.

When they were all seated, a flourish of trumpets announced that the king was near. As he entered the hall every one rose, and the multitude received him with a thundering shout of "Victory to the king!" again and again repeated.

The way to his seat was marked by a purple Sardinian carpet, only to be trodden by himself.

The king himself was more moderate than usual to-day, but he encouraged his guests to drink, enjoying their noisy merriment and overflowing mirth.

The uproar and confusion rose with every fresh wine-cup. They forgot the dignity of the place where they