

place of the sacred Apis bulls, a huge cavern hewn out of the rock with winding passages on either side of which were chambers containing immense granite sarcophagi beautifully made and covered with hieroglyphics. These date from 1500 B.C. We next explored the tomb of Thi, an official in the reign of a king of the fifth dynasty, about 3500 B.C. This was a most interesting tomb consisting of several chambers hewn in the rock, the walls covered with hieroglyphics beautifully carved and painted illustrating different methods of hunting and scenes in domestic life. Some of the animals were drawn to the life, but the human figures showed the conventional stiffness and sameness with which one is so familiar. This was about as much as our brains could take in, so as it was very hot we lay down in the shade and had a quiet smoke. Before leaving we walked over to the famous step pyramids about half a mile further on, supposed to date from 4200 B.C., built as the name indicates, in six huge steps instead of in the usual steady incline. From here we could see the pyramids of Maydoom in the distance. These pyramids were built as tombs by kings of the various dynasties and the probabilities are they were not intended for anything in addition.

We returned the same way, finding the cool of the afternoon very grateful and enjoying the sunset over the desert.

The journey proved rather long for the donkeys in spite of our care of them and we concluded that camels would have been the best in spite of their uncomfortable paces.

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PAGANS AT PLAY.

It is probable that few of us who are in the habit of attending pantomimes, circuses, race-meetings, or athletic sports, ever take the trouble to glance backwards in order to compare these modern spectacles, their conduct and arrangements, with their prototypes of two thousand years ago. One thing is certain—namely, that if a Roman who had witnessed the shows organized by Julius Caesar or Nero could have the opportunity of assisting at even the most thrilling of our nineteenth-century entertainments, he would be terribly bored, and would go away loudly lamenting the decadence of modern pleasures and the squeamishness of modern pleasure seekers. He would look back with regretful longing to the splendid realism of the colossal spectacles that took place annually under the Empire—the large sums that were spent, the blood that was shed, and the lives that were sacrificed, in order “to make a Roman holiday.”

It was easy for an Emperor to achieve popularity in pagan Rome. Not freedom, not reform, not education, but “bread and games” were all that the people demanded, and perhaps in their hearts the games were held more necessary than the bread. Under the Republic, there were seven performances annually lasting in all about sixty-six days. These were paid for by the State, and usually cost a couple of thousand pounds of our money. Sometimes, however, games were given by some public-spirited individual who desired to gain popularity, or by sorrowing mourners at the funeral of friends or relations. Under the Empire the time occupied by these spectacles was increased to a hundred and seventy-three days annually, and even more, while the cost of a brilliant show rose to seven or eight thousand pounds. The games, which usually began at sunrise and lasted till sunset, consisted of three distinct kinds: i.e. horse-and-chariot races, combats between gladiators, and combats between men and wild beasts; but into these many variations were introduced. The performances

were advertised by means of *affiches* pasted on walls or buildings. On one of these placards, discovered at Pompeii, it is announced that shelter will be provided for the spectators in case of rain; in another that the arena will be well watered, in order that the dust may be laid. The night before the spectacle began a great banquet was given to the gladiators, presumably the volunteers or hired champions. At daybreak these heroes marched in procession to the amphitheatre, and after the signal had been given by a blast of trumpets, the fun began. Any symptom of fear on the part of a gladiator roused the fiercest wrath of the assembled multitudes, and the timid or hesitating were encouraged with whips and red-hot irons. During the pauses for rest and refreshment, fresh sand was sprinkled on the blood-stained arena, and the dead were carried out by men wearing the mask of Mercury. Other officials, under the disguise of the Etruscan demon Charon, brought hot irons, with which they made sure that the apparent corpses were really dead, and not shirking. Biers were in readiness to carry the bodies to the mortuary chamber; and here, if a spark of life was found yet lingering in any poor mangled wretch, he was promptly put out of his misery.

New effects had constantly to be devised in order to stimulate the interest of the people, who become sated with blood and horrors. Combats by lamplight were organized, as well as contests between dwarfs and even women, but the latter was soon forbidden. The introduction of wild beasts into the arena added a fresh sensation to the public games. The first animal combat took place in the year B.C. 186. Bulls, bears, stags, and many other beasts, exotic or home bred, fought together or with men, who were called *bestiaries*. A hundred years later rarer creatures were introduced, such as crocodiles, hippopotami, rhinoceroses, and even the giraffe. The appearance of such animals says much for the cleverness of the hunters employed to cater for the Roman spectacles, since from gladiatorial days down to the early part of the present century no giraffes or hippopotami were brought to Europe, owing to the extreme difficulty of capturing them alive. At the *fete* of a hundred days given by Titus in the year 80, five thousand savage beasts of various kinds were shown in one day, and at the spectacle given by Trajan, which lasted four months, no less than eleven thousand animals were exhibited. The animals were usually introduced into the arena ornamented with variegated scarves, metal plaques, gold leaf, and tinsel. They were also painted in gaudy colours. Bulls were painted white, sheep purple, ostriches vermilion, and the lions had their manes gilded. The Roman animal trainers must have been men of extraordinary genius, and would certainly have put our modern trainers to the blush. We hear of Julius Caesar being lighted to his house by elephants carrying torches in their trunks, and Mark Antony being drawn through the streets by lions harnessed to his chariot. In one of the spectacles given by Domitian, a performing lion carried hares into the arena in his mouth without hurting them, let them go, and caught them again. Elephants wrote Latin verses, and danced on the tight rope. Pliny tells of one of these animals who learnt less quickly than its fellows, and being anxious, presumably, to catch them up, or to escape punishment, was discovered rehearsing its lesson in the middle of the night.

Far more horrible and demoralizing than the combats were the wholesale executions of prisoners, who were bound to posts in the middle of the arena, and devoured by the beasts that were let loose upon them. Sometime the poor creatures were provided with arms, which only served to prolong their agonies for a few moments. In the year 47,