

tion of their time and attention was devoted to good living and especially to drinking. A learned historian relates that at each of the regular daily dinners given by Darius more liquor was consumed than our large cities use in a month.

The following lines describe one of the suppers of King Cambyses :—

The great banqueting-hall was as bright as day—even brighter—from the light of thousands of candles whose rays were reflected in the gold plates forming the paneling of the walls. A table of interminable length stood in the middle of the hall, overloaded with gold and silver cups, plates, dishes, bowls, jugs, goblets, ornaments and incense altars, and looked like a splendid scene from fairy-land.

“The king will soon be here,” called out the head steward of the table, one of the great court lords, to the king’s cup bearer, who was a member of the royal family. “Are all the wine-jugs full? Has the wine been tested? Are the goblets ranged in order? And the skins sent by Polykrates, have they been emptied?”

“Yes,” answered the cup-bearer, “everything is ready, and that Chian wine is better than anything I ever tasted; indeed, in my opinion, even the Syrian is not to be compared to it. Only taste it.”

So saying, he took a graceful little golden goblet from the table in one hand, raised a wine-pitcher of the same costly metal with the other, swung the latter high into the air and poured the wine so cleverly into