

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