

that is, having glass windows to the ground, and so opening on to the flowery terrace. Against the wall opposite to her hangs a mirror of polished silver, sufficient to reflect a whole standing figure; on a porphyry-table beside it is a collection of the innumerable rare cosmetics and perfumes, of which the Roman ladies had become so fond, and on which they lavished immense sums. On another, of Indian sandal-wood, was a rich display of jewels and trinkets in their precious caskets, from which to select for the day's use.

It is by no means our intention, nor our gift, to describe persons or features; we wish more to deal with minds. We will, therefore, content ourselves with saying that Fabiola, now at the age of twenty, was not considered inferior in appearance to other ladies of her rank, age, and fortune, and had many aspirants for her hand. But she was a contrast to her father in temper and in character. Proud, haughty, imperious, and irritable, she ruled like an empress all that surrounded her, with one or two exceptions, and exacted humble homage from all that approached her. An only child, whose mother had died in giving her birth, she had been nursed and brought up in indulgence by her careless, good-natured father; she had been provided with the best masters, had been adorned with every accomplishment, and allowed to gratify every extravagant wish. She had never known what it was to deny herself a desire.

Having been left so much to herself, she had read much, and especially in profounder books. She had thus become a complete philosopher of the refined, that is, the infidel and intellectual epicureanism, which had been long fashionable in Rome. Of Christianity she knew nothing, except that she understood it to be something very low, material, and vulgar. She despised it, in fact, too much to think of inquiring into it. And as to Paganism, with its gods, its vices, its fables, and its idolatry, she merely scorned it, though outwardly she followed it. In fact, she believed in nothing beyond the present life, and thought of nothing except its refined enjoyment. But her very pride threw a shield over her virtue; she loathed the wickedness of heathen society, as she despised the frivolous youths who paid her jealously exacted attention, for she found amusement in their follies. She was considered cold and selfish, but she was morally irreproachable.

If at the beginning we seem to indulge in long descriptions, we trust that our reader will believe that they are requisite, to put him in possession of the state of material and social Rome at the period of our narrative; and will make this the more intelligible. And should he be tempted to think that we describe things as over-splendid and refined for an age of decline in arts and good taste, we beg to remind him that the year we are supposed to visit Rome is not as remote from the better periods of Roman art, for example, that of the Antonines, as our age is from that of Cellini, Raffaele, or Donatello. Yet in how many Italian palaces are still preserved works by these great artists, fully prized, though no longer imitated? So, no doubt, it was with the houses belonging to the old and wealthy families of Rome.

We find, then, Fabiola reclining on her couch, holding in her left hand a silver mirror with a handle, and in the other a strange instrument for so fair a hand. It is a sharp-pointed stiletto, with a delicately carved ivory handle, and a gold ring to hold it by. This was the favorite weapon with which Roman ladies punished their slaves, or vented their passion on them, upon suffering the least annoyance, or when irritated by pettish anger. Three female slaves are now engaged about their mistress. They belong to different races, and have been purchased at high prices, not merely on account of their appearance, but for some rare accomplishment they are supposed to possess. One is a black, not of the degraded negro stock, but from one of those races, such as the Abyssinians and Numidians, in whom the features are as regular as in the Asiatic

people. She is supposed to have great skill in herbs, and their cosmetic and healing properties, perhaps also in more dangerous uses—in compounding philtres, charms, and possibly poisons. She is merely known by her national designation as Afra. A Greek comes next, selected for her taste in dress, and for the elegance and purity of her accent; she is therefore called Graia. The name which the third bears, Syra, tells us that she comes from Asia; and she is distinguished for her exquisite embroidering, and for her assiduous diligence. She is quiet, silent, but completely engaged with the duties which now devolve upon her. The other two are garrulous, light, and make great pretence about any little thing they do. Every moment they address the most extravagant flattery to their young mistress, or try to promote the suit of one or other of the profligate candidates for her hand, who has best or last bribed them.

"How delighted I should be, most noble mistress," said the black slave, "if I could only be in the triclinium this evening as you enter in, to observe the brilliant effect of this new stibium on your guests! It has cost me many trials before I could obtain it so perfect: I am sure nothing like it has been ever seen in Rome."

"As for me," interrupted the wily Greek, "I should not presume to aspire to so high an honor. I should be satisfied to look from outside the door, and see the magnificent effect of this wonderful silk tunic, which came with the last remittance of gold from Asia. Nothing can equal its beauty; nor, I may add, is its arrangement, the result of my study, unworthy of the materials."

"And you, Syra," interposed the mistress, with a contemptuous smile, "what would you desire? and what have you to praise of your own doing?"

"Nothing to desire, noble lady, but that you may be ever happy; nothing to praise of my own doing, for I am not conscious of having done more than my duty," was the modest and sincere reply.

It did not please the haughty lady, who said, "Methinks, slave, that you are not over given to praise. One seldom hears a soft word from your mouth."

"And what worth would it be from me," answered Syra: "from a poor servant to a noble dame, accustomed to hear it all day long from eloquent and polished lips? Do you believe it when you hear it from *them*? Do you not despise it when you receive it from *us*?"

A look of spite was darted at her from her two companions. Fabiola, too, was angry at what she thought a reproof. A lofty sentiment in a slave!

"Have you yet to learn then," she answered haughtily, "that you are mine, and have been bought by me at a high price, that you might serve me as I please? I have as good a right to the service of your tongue as of your arms; and if it please me to be praised, and flattered, and sung to, by you, do it you shall, whether *you* like it or not. A new idea, indeed, that a slave has to have any will but that of her mistress, when her very life belongs to her!"

"True," replied the handmaid, calmly but with dignity, "my life belongs to you, and so does all else that ends with life—time, health, vigor, body, and breath. All this you have bought with your gold, and it has become your property. But I still hold as my own what no emperor's wealth can purchase, no chains of slavery fetter, no limit of life contain."

"And pray what is that?"

"A soul."

"A soul!" re-echoed the astonished Fabiola, who had never before heard a slave claim ownership of such a property. "And pray, let me ask you, what you mean by the word?"

"I cannot speak philosophical sentences," answered the servant, "but I mean that inward living consciousness within me, which makes me feel to have an existence with, and among, better things than surround me, which shrinks sensitively from destruction, and instinctively from what is allied to it, as disease is to

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