THE TEXT OF THE SATYRICON- CRITICAL INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION, FOOTNOTES

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The Text of the Satyricon- Critical Introduction, Translation, Footnotes

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Critical Introduction

Introduction

Wall painting (1st century AD) from the House of the Triclinium in Pompeii, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Naples, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. This restored wall fresco depicts a *convivium* (dinner party for the wealthy). The individuals depicted as smaller in stature in front of the reclining guests are almost certainly slaves. The dining room (*triclinium*) in which this fresco was found also contains frescoes depicting later, rowdier stages of a dinner party.

On the Author:

The *Satyricon*, which has come down to us in fragmentary form, appears to have been written during the reign of Emperor Nero (c. 54-68 CE). Surviving manuscripts of the *Satyricon* attribute it to "Petronius Arbiter," while some ancient authors simply refer to the author as "Arbiter." While it cannot be conclusively proved, the name "Arbiter" may be linked to the historian Tacitus' unflattering description of a courtier named Petronius in his *Annals* (XVI.17, 18-20):

"Within a few days, indeed, there perished in one and the same batch, Annaeus Mela, Cerialis Anicius, Rufius Crispinus and Petronius. . . . With regard to Caius Petronius, his character and life merit a somewhat more particular attention. He passed his days in sleep, and his nights in business, or joy and revelry. Indolence was at once his passion and his road to fame. What others did by vigor and industry, he accomplished by his love of pleasure and luxurious ease. Unlike the men who profess to understand social enjoyment, and ruin their fortunes, he led a life of expense, without profusion; an epicure, yet not a prodigal; addicted to his appetites, but with taste and judgment; a refined and elegant voluptuary. Lively and airy in his conversation, he charmed by a certain graceful negligence, the more engaging as it flowed from the natural frankness of his disposition. With all this delicacy and careless ease, he showed, when he was governor of Bithynia, [1] and afterwards in the year of his consulship, that vigor of mind and softness of manners may well unite in the same person. With his love of sensuality he possessed talents for business. From his public station he returned to his usual gratifications, fond of vice, or of pleasures that bordered upon it. His gaiety recommended him to the notice of the prince. Being in favor at court, and cherished as the companion of Nero in all his select parties, he was allowed to be the arbiter of taste and elegance. Without the sanction of Petronius nothing was exquisite, nothing rare or delicious."

"Hence the jealousy of Tigellinus, who dreaded a rival in the good graces of the Emperor almost his equal; in the science of luxury his superior. Tigellinus determined to work his downfall; and accordingly addressed himself to the cruelty of the Prince,-- that master passion, to which all other affections and every motive were sure to give way. He charged Petronius with having lived in close intimacy with Scaevinus, the conspirator; and to give color to that assertion, he bribed a slave to turn informer against his master. The rest of the domestics were loaded with irons. Nor was Petronius allowed to make his defense. Nero at that time happened to be on one of his excursions into Campania. Petronius had followed him as far as Cumae, but was not allowed to proceed further than that place. He scorned to linger in doubt and fear, and yet was not in a hurry to leave a world which he loved. He opened his veins, and closed them again, at intervals losing a small quantity of blood, then binding up the wound, as his own inclination prompted. He conversed during the whole time with his usual cheerfulness, never changing his habitual manner, nor talking sentences to show his contempt of death. He listened to his friends, who endeavored to entertain him, not with grave discourses on the immortality of the soul or the moral wisdom of philosophers, but with strains of poetry and verses of a lively and natural turn. He distributed presents to some of his servants, and ordered others to be chastised. He walked out for his amusement, and even lay down to sleep. In this last scene of his life he acted with such calm tranquility, that his death, though an act of necessity, seemed no more than the decline of nature. In his will he scorned to follow the example of others, who like himself died under the tyrant's stroke; he neither flattered the Emperor nor Tigellinus nor any of the creatures of the court. But having written, under the fictitious names of profligate men and women, a narrative of Nero's debauchery and his new modes of vice, he had the spirit to send to the Emperor that satirical romance, sealed with his own seal,-- which he took care to break, that after his death it might not be used for the destruction of any person whatever."

"Nero saw with surprise his clandestine passions and the secrets of his midnight revels laid open to the world. To whom the discovery was to be imputed still remained in doubt. Amidst his conjectures, Silia, who by her marriage with a Senator had risen into notice, occurred to his memory. This woman had often acted as procuress for the libidinous pleasures of the prince, and lived besides in close intimacy with Petronius. Nero concluded that she had betrayed him, and for that offense ordered her into banishment, making her a sacrifice to his private resentment."

Such is the scant information we have, supplemented by a few later additions. The author of the *Satyricon* appears to have been Caius [Titus] Petronius; he was perhaps from the Roman equestrian class and may have been born in what is now Marseilles, France. He appears to have served at one point as organizer for Nero’s notorious revelries. Pliny and Plutarch add one further detail, that prior to his death, Petronius broke to pieces a priceless Murrhine vase to prevent its falling into Nero’s clutches. Although most scholars agree that the author of the *Satyricon* is the same individual described by Tacitus, the *Satyricon* is almost certainly not the “tell-all” work he is said to have written in his dying days.

Footnote:

[1] Bithynia was a Roman province located adjacent to the Black Sea region in Asia Minor on the fringes of the Roman empire.

The Surviving Text:

Considered one of the inspirational texts of classical literature, the *Satyricon* survives only in fragments. Even in its original form, it was an experimental composite of multiple genres -- two types of satire and Greek romance -- and forms -- a narrative frame tale with interspersed episodic stories and verse. Both the *Satyricon* and Apuleius’ *The Golden Ass* (also known as the *Metamorphoses*)

are two examples of a Roman genre which would eventually, over centuries, develop into what we recognize as the novel. The surviving portions of what was originally a much longer text describe the picaresque adventures of the narrator, Encolpius, and his slave and lover Giton, a sixteen-year-old boy (see the plot summary below).

Encolpius, a former gladiator, and most of the main characters are far from heroic and the Latin used oscillates between polished verse and everyday slang. Humor, irony, caricature, parodies of "classic" literature and philosophy, vivid and convincing character portrayal, satire and social commentary predominate. Petronius lampooned "educated" Romans for eschewing daily reality for the philosophical and literary "truths" and epic legends seen as essential for entry into the corridors of power. Ironically, his own work became popular quite quickly. The *Satyricon* is the literary equivalent of archaeological finds from contemporary Pompeii, including graffiti, shops, brothels, apartment blocks (*insulae*) as well as the homes of the newly rich (prosperous traders, merchants) and the aristocratic elite whose culture they aspired to and imitated through frescoes of Greek and Roman legends (as well as earthier topics). [2]

Despite, or perhaps because of, its bawdy content, the *Satyricon*, particularly the section on Trimalchio and his feast, has influenced many later artists and writers. Oscar Wilde alluded to *The Satyricon* in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, while F. Scott Fitzgerald nearly titled *The Great Gatsby* "Trimalchio," and made a direct comparison between Trimalchio and Gatsby in chapter seven. Trimalchio's image of the bottled Cumaean Sibyl as desiring only to die was quoted by T. S. Eliot in *The Wasteland*, and by the science fiction writer Isaac Asimov in his short story "All the Troubles of the World." In 1969, the Italian film-makers Federico Fellini and Gian Luigi Polidoro both adapted *Satyricon* to the screen. The form of the *Satyricon* directly influenced the growth of "picaresque" novels full of improbable adventures and escapades by a central protagonist and his/her companions/sidekicks, such as *Tom Jones*, *Tristam Shandy*, *Moll Flanders*, *Vanity Fair*, *Don Quixote*, and *The Three Musketeers*.

Petronius' work makes many allusions to Greek and Latin "high" literature while mocking those with pretensions to learning. He quotes *The Odyssey* as well as near-contemporaries Horace and Virgil. Many of the cast of characters below are given "Greek" rather than "Roman" (Latin) names for that very reason. All of the names, in best Dickensian fashion, indicate something of the person's character.

Footnotes:

[2] See, for example the spectacular and almost exactly contemporary House of the Vettii, home to two freedmen, in Pompeii.

Cast of characters:

Encolpius ("Crotch"): a retired gladiator, the narrator.

Ascyltos ("Unflappable"): Encolpius' former lover, sometime comrade and rival.

Giton ("Cuddles" or "Squeeze"): Encolpius' teenaged slave and lover.

Agamemnon and Menelaus: teachers of rhetoric named after the two Spartan kings who led the Greek forces during the Trojan War.

Quartilla ("Fourth"): female follower of Priapus.

Pannychis ("All-Night Party"): underage female attendant to Quartilla.

Trimalchio ("Triple King"): a ridiculously rich freedman.

Fortunata ("Lucky Woman"): Trimalchio's wife, perhaps a former entertainer or prostitute.

Habinnas: a stonemason.

Scintilla ("Little Spark" or "Flashy"): Habinnas's wife.

Hermeros ("Lusty Hermes"): Trimalchio's friend.

Phileros ("Lusty Lover"): Trimalchio's friend.

Niceros ("Lusty Victor"): Trimalchio's friend.

Bargates: caretaker of the apartment block (*insula*). His name, like Habinnas, may be of Semitic origin.

Eumolpus ("Beautiful Bard"): the disreputable and starving pedant and poet.

Lichas ("Licker"): a vindictive merchant and sea-captain, perhaps named after a servant who betrayed Hercules and died for it.

Tryphaena ("Fancy Lady"): a beautiful woman who "travels the world for her pleasures," perhaps exiled for having violated Augustus' anti-adultery laws.

Circe: a young married matron of Croton.

Chrysis ("Golden Girl"): maid to Circe.

Proselenos ("She who goes before the Silen"): aged maid of Circe. A Silen was a deity of debauchery.

Oenothea ("Goddess of wine"): a witch who attempts to cure Encolpius.

Philomena (in myth, sister of Procne): a woman who pimps her children to Eumolpus.

Plot Reconstruction:

Narrated by the retired gladiator and central protagonist, Encolpius, the first surviving sections feature Encolpius traveling with a former lover and companions, Ascyltos,to rejoin Encolpius' slave, Giton, who has remained at Encolpius's lodgings. Encolpius is in a Greek-speaking town in Campania. Standing outside a school, he attacks the current system of education based on studying certain works of Greek and Latin literature and public speaking or oratory (think English literature blended with speech or debate class) (1–2). He engages in debate with the sophist Agamemnon (3–5) before discovering that Ascyltos has slunk off (6). In search of Ascyltos and Giton, Encolpius asks an old woman for directions to his lodgings, and is taken to a brothel instead. There, Encolpius meets Ascyltos (7–8) and Giton (8), who complains that Ascyltos made sexual advances (9). After a hot-tempered fight, the friends reconcile but plan to split up at a future date (9–10). Encolpius then tries to make love to Giton, but Ascyltos assaults Encolpius after catching him with Giton (11). After going to the market, the three men become embroiled in a dispute over stolen goods (12–15). When they return to their rented lodgings, a worshipper of Priapus, Quartilla, accuses them of attempting to discern the cult's mysterious secret rituals (16–18). Taken captive by Quartilla, her female servants and an elderly male prostitute, the companions are sexually assaulted (19–21), then given dinner and drawn into further escapades (21–26). This portion of the "novel" ends with Encolpius and Quartilla kissing while voyeuristically spying on the sixteen-year-old Giton having sex with a very young girl (26).

Perhaps the most famous portion of the *Satyricon* is the description of Trimalchio's dinner party, which follows the conventions of Menippean satire. One of Agamemnon's slaves invites Encolpius and his companions to dine at the estate of the fabulously wealthy freedman, Trimalchio. After a bit of scene-setting in the estate's baths and halls (26–30), the guests (mostly freedmen and their spouses) enter the dining room. Once Trimalchio joins them, more and more ridiculously extravagant delicacies are served while Trimalchio boasts of his wealth and "learning" (31–41). After Trimalchio leaves to relieve himself, the guests engage in conversation among themselves about universal concerns: neighbors, weather, hard times, public games, their children (41–46). Trimalchio returns (47), more courses appear, and while arguing with Agamemnon, Trimalchio claims he saw the Sibyl of Cumae, encased in a flask, forever deathless (48). The guests amuse each other with stories about werewolves (62) and witches (63). A prosperous stonemason named Habinnas belatedly arrives; his wife Scintilla (65), compares her jewellery to that of Trimalchio's wife Fortunata (67). Trimalchio announces his will and instructs Habinnas on the construction of Trimalchio's monumental tomb (71). Having had enough, Encolpius and his companions attempt to abscond when the other guests proceed to the estate's baths (72). Stopped by a porter, they escape under cover of Trimalchio's mock funeral; the night watchmen hear the horns, think a fire has broken out and storm the estate to put it out (78).

Returning to their shared lodgings, Encolpius makes a pass at Giton, then falls into a drunken stupor while Ascyltos seduces Giton (79). Encolpius awakes to find his travelling companions in bed, and he and Ascyltos agree to part ways. Giton, however, decides to abandon Encolpius for Ascyltos (80). Fantasizing about revenge, Encolpius is disarmed of his sword by a soldier (81–82). After admiring a display of artwork, Encolpius meets with an elderly poet, Eumolpus. The two commiserate about their mishaps (83–84), and Eumolpus relates his grooming and seduction of a boy he was tutoring in Pergamon (85–87). After lamenting the decline of art and literature in comparison to the old masters (88), Eumolpus explains a picture depicting the capture of Troy with some verses he had composed on that theme (89). Pedestrians nearby prove unappreciative and pelt Eumolpus with stones (90). Encolpius invites Eumolpus to dinner. As Encolpius returns home to prepare, he encounters Giton, who reinstates himself in Encolpius' good graces (91). When Eumolpus arrives, he reports that there was a man (Ascyltos?) searching for "Giton" at the public baths (92). Encolpius conceals Giton's identity, but he and the Eumolpus quickly both attempt to win Giton's affections, leading to a brawl (93–94)

between the poet and those living in the apartment block (95–96). Arriving with a municipal slave, Ascyltos searches for Giton, who hides under a bed (97). Eumolpus threatens to reveal Giton but eventually makes peace (98).

In the next surviving scene preserved, Encolpius and company take ship (99). Too late, Encolpius realizes that the captain, Lichas of Tarentum, is his old nemesis, and that he has had previous encounters with another passenger, Tryphaena, whom Giton does not want to be recognized by (100–101). Despite hilarious attempts to disguise themselves as Eumolpus' slaves (103), Encolpius and Giton are both discovered (105). Eumolpus comes to their defense (107), fighting erupts (108) and peace eventually results (109). To prevent further conflict, Eumolpus tells the pan-Mediterranean tale of the widow of Ephesus. Although planning to pine away in starvation in her husband's tomb, she succumbs to the advances of a soldier set to guard the bodies of crucified criminals and when one turns up missing, substitutes her husband's corpse to save her new lover from death (110–112). After being shipwrecked (114). Encolpius, Giton, Eumolpus, and his servant Corax survive (115). The band soon learns they are near Crotona, a city inhabited by infamous legacy-hunters (116). Eumolpus suggests he poses as a wealthy invalid without heirs while the others pretend to be his slaves (117). He lectures his captive audience about the need for elevated subject matter in poetry (118), inflicting on them a long poem about the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great (119–124). The Crotonians prove more than welcoming (125). A female servant, Chrysis, flatters Encolpius and brings along her appropriately named mistress, Circe, who propositions him. However, Encolpius proves impotent (126–128), and rebuked by Circe, he attempts to cure himself by abstaining from Giton (129–130). To their next tryst Circe brings an aged enchantress, Proselenos, who attempts a cure (131). Encolpius' failure to perform means Circe has both him and Chrysis whipped (132).

Although Encolpius is tempted to unman himself, he instead prays at Priapus' temple (133). Proselenos arrives with the priestess and sorceress Oenothea, who promises to cure Encolpius and begins cooking (134–135). In the women's absence, Encolpius is pecked by geese sacred to Priapus and kills one of them, and pays blood-money to the distraught Oenothea (136–137). Oenothea eviscerates the goose, and foretells Encolpius' future by reading its liver (137). She then whips out a "leather dildo" with which she and Proselenos threaten to penetrate Encolpius (138). Encolpius escapes, and finds that Chrysis has taken a shine to him (138–139). Thinking Emolpus is wealthy and childless, an older legacy-huntress, Philomela, places her son and daughter with him to be "educated." Eumolpus seduces the daughter with the assistance of his servant, Corax. Enamored of the son, Encolpius finds he is no longer impotent (140). As the legacy-hunters become impatient and suspicious, Eumolpus has his will read out to the citizens, who find out that in order to inherit, they must eat his corpse (141).

Slaves and Freed Persons in Roman Society:

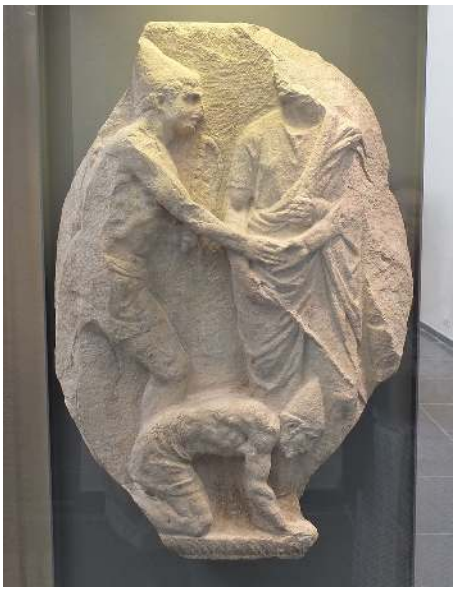
Portion of a marble relief depicting slaves led by a helmeted man, from Smyrna (Turkey), 200 CE. From the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

The concept and practice of slavery was deeply embedded in Roman society. In the early periods of Roman history, most farms were worked by free laborers paid on a daily basis by landowners. However, Rome's expansionist wars had two consequences: laborers were called to serve in the army and foreigners captured during wars became cheaply available as slaves. The consequence was that, by the height of the Roman empire's expansion, most free Romans owned slaves. Many slaves were formerly free individuals and some were highly educated and/or skilled. Greeks, for example, were favored as tutors for rich Roman children. Skilled slaves were often hired out to others or allowed to work semi-independently in workshops, with a portion of the profits going to their master. Sometimes slaves were even allowed to start their own business on the condition they pay an annual sum to their owner.

Slaves played a key role in virtually every facet of Roman life, serving as agricultural laborers, cooks, tailors, physicians, and nannies. A wealthy free Roman might be wakened and dressed by a slave, eat food grown and prepared by slaves, dictate letters to slaves, be accompanied by slaves to the market and the public baths, etc. Household slaves sometimes forged very close relationships with their owners' families, although brutality was also not uncommon. This was particularly true of individuals legally condemned to slavery for the state who worked in brutal conditions in quarries and mines and as rowers on ships. Because slavery in Rome was not based on race, many slaves could potentially "pass" as a free Roman and so Roman law strictly limited slaves' rights and passed harsh statutes punishing runaway slaves and slave rebellions.

Most slaves, therefore, hoped for freedom. There were two main ways to obtain freedom. A slave could purchase freedom or be freed by his master. This act of freeing a slave was known as manumission and consisted of a formal renunciation of ownership and bestowal of a freedman's cap (*pileus*) performed in front of a public official, usually a judge. In some instances, the owner would simply announce a slave's freedom in front of friends and family (or in a will), or invited them to dine as an equal with the family. Once freed, former slaves joined the ranks of the "libertini" or freedpersons, although they remained the clients of their former

masters (now their patrons). Many freed persons worked in trade or as artisans. A very few became rich and powerful men, but by law, they could never obtain true legal and social equality with free-born citizens (for example, they could vote but not hold public office), although their children could. Many nonetheless desired to be seen as of equal worth to the patrician classes and so emulated their lifestyles and burial customs, including splendid tombs.



Photograph by Ad Meskens, Relief depicting the manumission of slaves. Marble, 1st century B.C. Musée Royal de Mariemont, inv. B.26. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Death and Burial in Ancient Rome:

Because, similar to the Greeks, Romans believed that the soul of the dead could only properly rest once the body had been appropriately buried, funeral ceremonies stretched over a week. Relatives closed the deceased's eyes while calling out the dead person's name, then ritually washed and arranged the body, which lay in state near the home's front entryway, so that friends and family members could pay their respects. Once respects were paid, a funeral procession accompanied the body to the tomb. Depending on the family's wealth, it could be simple and quiet or an elaborate affair led by musicians, jesters and men wearing wax masks resembling the deceased, followed by the body carried on a litter, and finally, family, freedpersons, and friends. High status individuals might even be honored by a public speech in the forum and paraded around the city before proceeding to the cemetery outside the city. The Romans practiced both cremation and inhumation. Either way, the remains were laid in a tomb or grave with tokens and gifts to ensure that they did not return and visit bad fortune on their family. After burial, the family engaged in a formal nine days of mourning. The tombs of the wealthy lined the public roads leading to the city, and were designed to have a lavishly decorated front viewed by those passing in and out of the city. Carvings could include portraits, inscriptions, and items that indicated the way the individual wished to be remembered and their wealth and lifestyle.

Click on this link to see images of the marble cinerary urn provided by Vitalis, a former slave of the Emperor and Scribe of the Bedchamber, for his wife Vernasia Cyclas. The "AUG.L" indicates he was a former imperial slave (British Museum).

Further Resources:

Sarah Ruden, trans., *Petronius: Satyricon* (Indianapolis/London, 2000). This fresh translation includes commentaries on important aspects of the *Satyricon* omitted here.

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The Reconstructed Text- Part One

THE SATYRICON: RECONSTRUCTED TEXT

The surviving fragments begin far after the opening escapades of the novel. The principal characters (Encolpius, Ascyltos, and Giton) find themselves at a school in a Roman city, perhaps Puteoli. Encolpius rants about the pathetic state of rhetoric to Agamemnon, a teacher of that subject.

Rhetoric and Life in the City:

[ch. 1] "Is it not much the same type of madness that afflicts our declaimers, who shout: "These wounds I got, defending our common liberties; this eye I lost on your behalf. Give me a helping hand to lead me to my children, for my poor maimed limbs refuse to bear my weight." Even such extravagances might be borne, if they really served to guide beginners in the way of eloquence; but all pupils gain by these high-flown themes, these empty sounding phrases, is this, that on entering the forum they imagine themselves transported into a new and strange world. This is the reason, in my opinion, why young men grow up such blockheads in the schools, because they neither see nor hear one single thing connected with the usual circumstances of everyday life, nothing but stuff about pirates lurking on the seashore with fetters in their hands, tyrants issuing edicts to compel sons to cut off their own fathers' heads, oracles in times of pestilence commanding three virgins or more to be sacrificed to stay the plague, — honey-sweet, well-rounded sentences, words and facts alike as it were, besprinkled with poppy and sesame.

[ch. 2] Under such a training it is no more possible to acquire good taste than it is not to stink, if you live in a kitchen. Give me leave to tell you that you rhetoricians are chiefly to blame for the ruin of oratory, for with your silly, idle phrases, meant only to tickle the ears of an audience, you have enervated and debauched the very substance of true eloquence. Young men were not bound down to declamations in the days when Sophocles and Euripides [3] found the very words they wanted to best express their meaning. No cloistered professor had as yet darkened men's intellects, when Pindar and the nine Lyric bards [4] shrank from emulating the Homeric note. And not to cite poets exclusively, — I cannot see that either Plato [5] or Demosthenes [6] ever practiced this sort of mental exercise. A noble, and so to say chaste, style is not overloaded with ornament, not turgid; its own natural beauty gives it elevation. Then after a while this windy, extravagant deluge of words invaded Athens from Asia, [7] and like a malignant star, blasting the minds of young men aiming at lofty ideals, instantly broke up all rules of art and struck eloquence dumb. Since that day who has reached the perfection of Thucydides, the glory of Hyperides? [8] No! Not a poem has been written of bright and wholesome complexion; but all, as if fed on the same unhealthy diet, have lacked stamina to attain old age. Painting moreover shared the same fate, after Egypt presumptuously invented a compendious method for that noble art.

[ch. 3] Such and suchlike reflections I was indulging in one day before a numerous audience, when Agamemnon came up, curious to see who it was they were listening to so attentively. Well! he declined to allow me to declaim longer in the Portico than he had himself sweated in the schools; but "Young man," he cries, "seeing your words are something better than mere popular commonplaces, and — a very rare occurrence — you are an admirer of sound sense, I will confide to you a professional secret. In the choice of these exercises it is not the masters that are to blame. They are forced to be just as mad as all the rest; for if they refuse to teach what pleases their scholars, they will be left, as Cicero says, [9] to lecture to empty benches. Just as false-hearted sycophants, scheming for a seat at a rich man's table, make it their chief business to discover what will be most agreeable hearing to their host, for indeed their only way to gain their end is by cajolement and flattery; so a professor of rhetoric, unless like a fisherman he arm his hook with the bait he knows the fish will take, may stand long enough on his rock without a chance of success.

[ch. 4] "Whose fault is it then? It is the parents who deserve censure, who will not give their children the advantages of a strict training. In the first place their hopes, like everything else, are centered in ambition, and so being impatient to see their wishes fulfilled, they hurry lads into the forum when still raw and half taught, and indue mere babes with the mantle of eloquence, an art they admit themselves to be equaled by none in difficulty. If only they would let them advance step by step in their tasks, so that serious students might be broken in by solid reading, steady their minds with the precepts of philosophy, chasten their style with unsparing correction, study deep and long what they propose to imitate, and refuse to be dazzled by puerile graces, then and then only would the grand old type of oratory recover its former authority and stateliness. Nowadays, boys waste their time at school; as youths, they are jeered at in the forum, and what is worse than either, no one will acknowledge as an old man the faultiness of the teaching he received in his younger days.

[ch 5] "But so that you may not imagine I disapprove of satirical impromptus in the Lucilian [10] vein, I will myself throw my notions on this matter into verse:

He that would be an orator, must strive

To follow out the discipline of old,

And heed the laws of stern frugality;

Not his to haunt the court with fawning brow,

Nor sit a flatterer at great folks' boards;

Not his with boon companions over the wine

To overcloud his brain, nor at the play

To sit and clap, agape at actors' tricks.

But whether to Tritonia's famous halls

The Muses lead his steps, or to those walls

That Spartan exiles reared or where

The Sirens' song thrilled the enraptured air

Of all his tasks let poetry be first,

And Homer's verse the fount to quench his thirst.

Soon will be master deep Socratic lore,

And wield the arms Demosthenes erst bore.

Then to new modes must he in turn be led,

And Grecian wit to Roman accents weds

Nor in the forum only will he find

Meet occupation for his busy mind;

On books he'll feast, the poets' words of fire,

Heroic tales of war and Tully's [11] patriot ire,

Such be your studies; then, whatever the theme,

Pour forth your eloquence in copious stream.

[ch 6] Listening attentively to the speaker, I never noticed that Ascyltos had given me the slip; and I was still walking up and down in the gardens full of the burning words I had heard, when a great mob of students rushed into the Portico. Apparently these had just come from hearing an impromptu lecture of some critic or other who had been cutting up Agamemnon's speech. So whilst the lads were making fun of his sentiments and abusing the arrangement of the whole discourse, I seized the opportunity to escape, and started off at a run in pursuit of Ascyltos. But I was heedless about the road I followed, and indeed felt by no means sure of the situation of our inn, the result being that whichever direction I took, I presently found myself back again at my starting point. At last, exhausted with running and dripping with sweat, I came across a little old woman, who was selling herbs.

[ch 7] "Excuse me, good mother," say I, "can you tell me where I live?" — Charmed with the quiet absurdity of my question, "Why certainly!" she replied; and getting up, went on before me. I thought she must be a witch; but presently, when we had arrived at a rather shy neighborhood, the obliging old lady drew back the curtain of a doorway, and said, "Here is where you ought to live." I was just protesting that I did not know the house, when I caught sight of mysterious figures prowling between rows of name-boards, and naked prostitutes. Then when it was too late, I saw I had been brought into a house of ill fame. So cursing the old woman's falseness, I threw my robe over my head and made a dash right through the brothel to the opposite door, when behold! just on the threshold, whom should I meet but Ascyltos, worn out and half dead like myself? You would have thought the very same old hag had been his conductress. I made him a mocking bow, and asked him what he was doing in such a disreputable place.

[ch. 8] Wiping the sweat from his face with both hands, he replied, "If you only knew what happened to me!" "Why! what has happened?" said I. Then in a faint voice he went on, "I was wandering all over the town, without being able to discover where I had left our inn, when a respectable looking man accosted me, and most politely offered to show me the way. Then after traversing some very dark and intricate alleys, he brought me where we are, and producing his affair, began begging me to grant him my

favors. In a flash, the woman had taken the fee for the room, and the man laid hold of me; and if I had not proved the stronger, I should have fared very ill indeed." [....]

[ch. 9] After running about almost over the city, I caught sight of Giton, as it were, in a fog, standing at the corner of an alley close to the door of our inn, and hurried to join him. I asked my favorite whether he had got anything ready for our dinner, whereupon the lad sat down on the bed and began wiping away the tears with his thumb. Much disturbed at my favorite's distress, I demanded what had happened. For a long time I could not drag a word out of him, — not indeed until I had added threats to prayers. Then he reluctantly told me. "That favorite or comrade of yours came into our lodging just now, and set to work to force me. When I screamed he drew a sword and said, 'If you're a Lucretia, you've found a Tarquin!'" [12]

Hearing this, I exclaimed, shaking my two fists in Ascyltos' face. "What have you to say now, you pathetic prostitute, you, whose very breath is abominable?" Ascyltos feigned extreme indignation, and immediately repeated my gesture with greater emphasis, cried in still louder tones, "Will you hold your tongue, you filthy gladiator, who after murdering your host, had luck enough to escape from the criminals' cage at the amphitheater! [13] Will you hold your tongue you midnight cut-throat, who never, when at your bravest, dare face an honest woman? Didn't I serve you for a minion [14] in an orchard, just as this lad does now in an inn?" "Did you or did you not," I interrupted, "sneak off from the master's lecture?"

[ch. 10] "What was I to do, fool, when I was dying of hunger? Stop and listen to a string of phrases no better than the tinkling of broken glass or the nonsensical interpretations in dream books? By great Hercules, you are dead baser than I; to obtain a dinner you have condescended to flatter a Poet!" This ended our unseemly wrangle, and we both burst into a fit of laughter, and proceeded to discuss other matters in a more peaceable tone.

But the recollection of his late violence coming over me afresh, "Ascyltos," I said, "I see we can get on together; so let us divide between us our bits of common funds, and each try to make head against poverty on his own bottom. 'You are a scholar; so am I. I don't wish to spoil your profits, so I'll take up another line. Else shall we find a thousand causes of quarrel every day, and soon make ourselves the talk of the town." Ascyltos raised no objection, merely saying, "For today, as we have accepted, in our quality of men of letters, an invitation to dine out, don't let us lose our evening; but tomorrow, since you wish it, I will look out for a new lodging and another bedfellow." "Poor work," said I, "putting off the execution of a good plan." It was really my naughty passions that urged me to so speedy a parting; indeed I had been long wishing to be rid of his jealous observation, in order to renew my old relations with my sweet Giton. [....]

[ch. 11] After looking through the whole city, I came back to my little room, and now at length claiming my full tale of kisses, I clip my darling lad in the tightest of embraces; my utmost hopes of bliss are fulfilled to the envy of all mankind. The rites were not yet complete, when Ascyltos crept up stealthily to the door, and violently bursting in the bolts, caught me at play with his favorite. His laughter and applause filled the room, and tearing off the mantle that covered us, "Why! What are you after," he cries, "my sainted friend? What? Both tucked cosily under one coverlet?" Nor did he stop at words, but detaching the strap from his wallet, he fell to thrashing me with no perfunctory hand, seasoning his blows with insulting remarks, — "This is the way you divide stock with a comrade, is it? Not so fast, my friend." [....]

There is a major gap in the work here, which would have explained the origins of the stolen goods now encountered in the marketplace.

[ch. 12] On the approach of night we took our way to the market-place, where we saw an abundance of goods for sale, not indeed articles of any great value, but rather such as needed the kindly veil of darkness, considering their rather shady origin. To this place we also conveyed our stolen riding-cloak, and seizing the opportunity, displayed a corner of it in a quiet spot, hoping a buyer might be attracted by the beauty of the garment. It was not long before a countryman, whose face seemed somehow familiar to me, approached in company with a young woman, and began to examine the cloak minutely. On the other part Ascyltos, casting his eye on the rustic customer's shoulders, was instantly struck dumb with surprise. Nor could I myself avoid some perturbation of mind when I saw him; for he appeared to be the identical peasant who had found our old tunic in the loneliness of the wood. Yes! He was the very man. But Ascyltos, afraid to trust his eyes and anxious not to do anything rash, first went up to the fellow as a would-be purchaser, drew the tunic from his shoulders and began to scrutinize it carefully.

[ch. 13] By a wonderful stroke of luck the rustic had not as yet had the curiosity to search the seams, but was offering the thing for sale with an indifferent air as some beggar-man's leavings. When Ascyltos saw our money was intact and that the vendor was a person of no great account, he drew me a little aside from the throng and said, "Do you observe, comrade, our treasure that I was regretting as lost is come back again? That is our tunic and it seems to have the gold pieces in it still: they haven't been touched. But what can we do about it? How are we to prove it is property?" I was greatly cheered not only at beholding our loot once more,

but also because I thus found myself freed from a villainous suspicion, and at once declared against any sort of beating about the bush. I advised we should bring a civil action right out to compel him to give up the property to its rightful owners by law, if he refused to do so otherwise.

[ch. 14] Not so Ascyltos, who had a wholesome fear of the law. “Who knows us,” he said, “in this place, or will believe what we say? My own strong opinion is we should buy the property, our own though it be, now we see it, and rather pay a small sum to recover our treasure than get mixed up in a law-suit, the issue of which is uncertain.”

What worth our laws, when cash alone is king,

When to be poor is to be always wrong?

The Cynic sage [15] himself, stern moralist,

Is not averse to sell his words for gold;

Justice is bought, the highest bidder wins,

A partial judge directs a venal court.

But alas! Except for a brace of copper coins, which we had intended to spend on lupines and peas, we were penniless just then. So, for fear the prey might escape us meanwhile, we resolved to part with the cloak at a lower price, making the profit on the one transaction balance the loss on the other. Accordingly we spread out our merchandise; but the woman who had hitherto been standing beside the countryman closely muffled, now suddenly, after carefully scanning marks on the cloak, laid hold of the hem with both hands, and screamed out “Stop, thieves! Stop, thieves!” at the top of her voice. At this we were not a little disconcerted, but that we might not seem to acquiesce without a protest, we in our turn seized the tattered, filthy tunic, and declared no less spitefully it was our goods they had in their possession. But our case was far from being on all fours with theirs; and the crowd, that had gathered at the outcry, began to make fun of our impertinent claim, and not unnaturally, when on the one side they asserted their right to a most valuable cloak, but we to this old rag hardly worth mending. However Ascyltos adroitly stopped their ridicule by crying out, directly he could get a hearing:

[ch. 15] “Well! look you, every man likes his own property best; let ’em give us up our tunic, and they shall have their cloak.” Both the rustic and the young woman were ready enough to make the exchange; but a couple of attorneys, or to give them their true name night prowlers, who wanted to appropriate the cloak themselves, demanded that both the articles in dispute should be deposited with them, and the judge, look into the case in the morning; for not only must the ownership of these be investigated, but quite another question altogether as well, to wit, a suspicion of theft on the part of both parties. The bystanders were by this time all in favor of sequestration, and an individual in the crowd, a bald man with a very pimply face, who was in the habit of undertaking occasional jobs for the lawyers, impounded the cloak, saying he would produce it on the morrow. But the real object was self-evident, that the knavish crew having once got hold of the article in question, they might smuggle it out of the way, while we should be scared by the fear of a charge of theft from putting in an appearance at the appointed time. This was very much what we wanted ourselves, and luck seconded the wishes of both parties. For the countryman, indignant at our requiring the surrender of an old rag, threw the tunic in Ascyltos’s face, and withdrawing his own claim altogether, merely demanded the sequestration of the cloak as the only object of litigation. Having thus recovered our treasure, as we felt, we rush off full speed for our inn, and bolting the room door, start making merry over the astuteness both of our opponents and of the crowd, who had exercised so much ingenuity in giving us back our money! [...]

Footnotes:

[3] Sophocles and Euripides were well-known writers of Greek tragic plays and were much read by educated Romans.

[4] Pindar was a famous Greek lyric poet. The “nine lyric bards” made up the Greek poetic canon. They were Alcman, Stesichorus, Sappho, Alcaeus, Ibycus, Anacreon, Simonides, Bacchylides, and of course, Pindar.

[5] A famous philosopher from Athens, also known for his prose style.

[6] Considered the greatest orator of 4th century Athens.

[7] Asiatic-style oratory was considered more elaborate and wordy than Greek oratory.

[8] Thucydides was a famous historian from Athens; Hyperides was a famous Attic orator.

[9] Widely considered the greatest Latin orator, he was also famed for his prose style.

[10] A famous Latin poet known for his satirical attacks.

[11] Cicero. See note 9 above.

[12] In a famous foundation myth for Rome, Lucretia is a virtuous married woman violently raped by Sextus Tarquin, son of the king of Rome. Despite her father and husband protesting her blamelessness, she commits suicide. Her husband leads a revolt, resulting in the foundation of the Republic.

[13] This appears to refer to a missing portion of the Satyricon.

[14] That is, as the penetrated rather than penetrating partner in a sexual encounter.

[15] Cynic philosophers rejected and attacked conventional social customs and widely accepted values.

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The Reconstructed Text- Part Two

An Encounter with Quartilla:

There is another major gap in the narrative. It seems that Encolpius and his companions committed some sort of offense against Priapus, angering Quartilla, his priestess.

[ch. 16] Scarcely had we eaten our fill of the dinner Giton had provided us, when the door resounded with a most imperative knocking. Turning pale, we demanded, “Who’s there?” — “Open the door,” was the answer, “and you’ll find out.” We were still arguing when the bolt tumbled off of itself, the door flew open and admitted our visitor. This was a woman with her head muffled, the very same who a little before had been standing by the countryman’s side in the market. “Aha!” she cried, “did you suppose you had really made a fool of me? I am Quartilla’s maid, — Quartilla whose devotions before the grotto you disturbed. She is coming in person to the inn, and begs to speak with you. Do not be afraid; she brings no accusation, and has no wish to punish your fault. She only wonders what god it was who brought such genteel young men into her district.”

[ch. 17] We were still mute, not knowing in the least what kind of response to give, when the mistress herself entered, accompanied only by a young girl, and sitting down on my couch, wept for ever so long. Not even then had we a word to offer, but looked on in amazement at this tearful display of pretended grief. When the enticing shower had exhausted itself, she drew back the hood that concealed her haughty features, and wringing her hands until the finger joints cracked, “What means this recklessness?” she cried; “wherever have you learned these knavish tricks that for audacity outdo the heroes of the story-books. By heaven! I pity you! For to be sure no man ever looked with impunity on forbidden sights. Truly our neighborhood is so well stocked with deities to hand, you will more easily meet with a god than a man. But don’t imagine I’ve come here vindictively; I’m more moved by your youth than angered by the wrong you have done me. It was in sheer ignorance, I still think, you committed your unpardonable act of sacrilege.

“Last night I was grievously tormented, and shaken with such alarming trembling, I dreaded an attack of tertian ague. So in my sleep I prayed for a remedy, and was told to seek you out, that you might assuage the violence of the complaint by means of a cunning contrivance also indicated in my dream. But indeed and indeed it is not so, much this cure I am exercised about; what wrings my heart and drives me almost to despair is the dread that in your youthful levity you may reveal what you saw in the shrine of Priapus, [16] and betray the counsels of the gods to the common herd. This is why I stretch forth suppliant hands to your knees, and beg and pray you not to turn into ribaldry and jest our nocturnal rites, nor willingly divulge the secrets of so many years, — secrets known to barely a thousand persons all told.”

[ch. 18] After this impassioned appeal she again burst into tears, and shaken by mighty sobs, entirely buried her face and bosom in my couch. Meantime, moved at once by pity and apprehension, I bade her keep a good heart, and be quite easy on either head. For, I assured her, not one of us would divulge the mysteries, and moreover, if the god had revealed any extraordinary means of curing her ague, we would second divine providence, even if it involved danger to ourselves. The woman cheered up at this promise, and fell to kissing me thick and fast, and changing from tears to laughter, combed back with her fingers some stray locks that had escaped from behind my ears. “I make truce with you,” she said, “and withdraw my case against you. But if you had not agreed about the remedy I am seeking, I had a posse of men all ready for tomorrow to avenge my wrongs and vindicate my honor."

Contempt is hateful; what I love is power,

To work my will at my own place and hour;

A wise man’s scorn bends the most stubborn will,

The noblest victor he who spares to kill.

Next, clapping her hands together, she suddenly burst into such a fit of laughter as quite alarmed us. The maid who had entered first followed suit, and was followed in turn by the little girl who had come in along with Quartilla.

[ch. 20] The whole place re-echoed with their forced merriment; meantime, seeing no reason for this rapid change of mood, we stand staring now at each other, now at the women. [....]

At length says Quartilla, “I have given express orders that no mortal be admitted into this inn today, that you may, without interruption, apply the remedy for my ague.” At this declaration Ascyltos stood for a time appalled; for myself, I turned colder than

a Gallic winter, and was unable to utter a word. Still our numbers somewhat reassured me against any disaster. After all, they were only three weak women, quite incapable of any serious assault on us, who if we had nothing else manly about us, were at least of the male sex. Anyway we were already prepared for the fray; in fact I had already so arranged the couples, that if it came to a fight, I should myself tackle Quartilla, Ascyltos the waiting-maid, Giton the girl. [....]

At this crisis amazement and consternation quite broke our spirit, certain death seeming to stare us miserably in the face.

[ch. 20] "I beseech you, lady," I cried, "if you have any sinister design, put us out of our misery at once; we have done nothing so heinous as to deserve torturing to death." The maid, whose name was Psyche, now carefully spread a rug on the marble floor, and endeavored to rouse my member into activity, but it lay cold as a thousand deaths could make it. Ascyltos had muffled his head in his mantle, having doubtless learned from experience the peril of meddling with other people's secrets. Meantime Psyche produced two ribbons from her bosom, and proceeded to tie our hands with one and our feet with the other. [....]

Ascyltos, seeing the stream of her eloquence dried up, exclaimed, "Well! and am I not thought worthy to have a drink too?" Betrayed by my laughter, the girl clapped her hands and cried, "Why! I've given it to you already, young man; you've had the whole draft all to yourself." "What!" put in Quartilla, "has Encolpius drunk up all our stock of aphrodisiac?" and her sides shook with pretty merriment. Eventually not even Giton could contain his mirth, particularly when the little girl threw her arms round his neck, and gave the boy, who showed no signs of reluctance, a thousand kisses. [....]

[ch. 21] We should have cried out for help in our unhappy plight, but there was no one to hear us and besides Psyche pricked my cheeks with her hair pin every time I tried to call upon my fellow countrymen for succor, while at the same time the other girl threatened Ascyltos with a brush dipped in aphrodisiac. Finally there entered a catamite, [17] tricked out in a coat of chestnut frieze, and wearing a sash, who would alternately writhe his buttocks and bump against us, and slobber over us with the most evil-smelling kisses, until Quartilla, holding a whalebone wand in her hand and with skirts tucked up, ordered him to give the poor fellows quarter. Then we all three swore the most solemn oaths the horrid secret should die with us.

Next a company of wrestlers appeared, who rubbed us over with the proper gymnastic oil, which was very refreshing. This gradually removed our fatigue and resuming the dinner clothes that we had taken off, we were then conducted into the adjoining room, where the couches were laid and all preparations made for an elegant feast in the most sumptuous style. We were requested to take our places, and the banquet opened with some wonderful hors d'oeuvres, while the Falernian [18] flowed like water. A number of other courses followed, and we were all but falling asleep, when Quartilla cried, "Come, come! can you think of sleep, when you know this livelong night is owed to the service of Priapus?" [...]

[ch. 22] Ascyltos was so worn out with all he had gone through he could not keep his eyes open a moment longer, and the waiting-maid, whom he had scorned and slighted, now proceeded to daub his face all over with streaks of soot, and paint his lips and shoulders, as he lay unconscious. I too, tired with the persecutions I had endured, was just enjoying forty winks, as they say, while all the household, within doors and without, had copied my example. Some lay sprawling about the diners' feet, others propped against the walls, while others snored head to head right on the threshold. The oil in the lamps had burned low, and they shed a feeble, dying light, when two Syrian slaves came into the banquet-room to crib a flagon of wine. As they were greedily fighting for it and scuffling amongst the silver, it parted and broke in two. At the same moment the table with the silver plate collapsed, and a goblet falling from perhaps a greater height than the rest, struck the waiting-maid who was lying exhausted on a couch underneath and cut her head open. She screamed out at the blow, at once discovering the thieves and awakening some of the drunkards. The Syrians, thus caught in the act, threw themselves with one accord onto a couch, and started snoring as if they had been asleep ever so long. By this time the chief butler had woken up and put fresh oil into the expiring lamps, while the other slaves after rubbing their eyes a bit, had resumed their posts, and presently a cymbal-player came in and roused us all up with a clash of her instruments.

[ch. 23] And so the banquet was resumed, and Quartilla challenged us to start a fresh carouse, the tinkle of the cymbals still further stimulating her reckless gaiety. The next to appear is a catamite, the silliest of mankind and quite worthy of the house, who beat his hands together, gave a groan, and then spouted the following delightful effusion:

Who has a pathic lust,

With Delian vice accurst;

Who loves the pliant thigh,

Quick hand and wanton sigh;

Come hither, come hither, come hither,

Here shall he see

Gross beasts as he,

Lechers of every feather!

Then, his poetry exhausted, he spat a most stinking kiss in my face; before long he mounted on the couch where I lay and exposed me by force in spite of my resistance. He labored hard and long to bring up my member, but in vain. Streams of gummy paint and sweat poured from his heated brow, and such a lot of chalk filled the wrinkles of his cheeks, you might have thought his face was an old dilapidated wall with the plaster crumbling away in the rain.

[ch. 24] I could no longer restrain my tears, but driven to the last extremity of disgust, “I ask you, lady,” I cried, “is this the ‘night-cap’ (*ambasicoetas*) you promised me?” At this she clapped her hands daintily, exclaiming, “Oh you clever boy! what a pretty wit you have! Of course you didn’t know ‘night-cap’ is another name for a catamite?” Then, that my comrade might not miss his share too, I asked her, “Now, on your conscience, is Ascyltos to be the only guest in the room to keep holiday!” “So?” she cried, “why! let Ascyltos have his ‘nightcap’ too!” In obedience to her order, the catamite now changed his mount, and transferring his attentions to my friend, set to grinding him under his buttocks and smothering him with lecherous kisses. All this while Giton had been standing by, laughing as if his sides would split. Now Quartilla, catching sight of him, asked with eager curiosity, whose lad he was. When I told her he was my little favorite, “Why hasn’t he kissed me then?” she cried, and calling him to her glued her lips to his. Next minute she slipped her hand under his clothes, and pulling out his unpractised tool, she observed, “This will be a very pretty whet tomorrow to our naughty appetite. For to-day, — ‘After such a dainty dish, I will taste no common fish!’”

[ch. 25] Just as she was saying this, Psyche approached her mistress laughingly and whispered something in her ear. “Yes! Yes!” exclaimed Quartilla, “A capital idea! Why shouldn’t our little Pannychis lose her maiden-head! It is an excellent opportunity.” Immediately they brought in a pretty enough little girl, who did not appear to be more than seven years old, the same child who had accompanied Quartilla on her first visit to our room at the inn. So amid general applause and indeed at the special request of the company, they began the bridal preparations. I was horrified, and declared that, while on the one hand Giton, who was a very modest boy, was quite unequal to such naughtiness, on the other Pannychis was far too young to endure the treatment a woman must expect. “Why!” said Quartilla, “is the girl any younger than I was when I first submitted to a man? May Juno, [19] my patroness, desert me, if I can remember the time when I was a maid. As a child I was naughty with little boys of my own age, and presently as the years rolled by, with bigger lads, till I reached my present time of life. Hence I suppose the proverb that says: ‘Who carried the calf, may well carry the bull.’”

[ch. 26] Fearing my favorite might get into greater troubles if I were not there, I got up too to assist at the wedding ceremony. By this time Psyche had thrown the bridal veil over the child’s head; our pathic friend [20] was marching in front with a torch; a long procession of drunken women followed, clapping their hands, having previously decked the marriage bed with a splendid coverlet. Then Quartilla, fired by the wanton pleasantry, likewise rose from the table, and seizing Giton drew him into the chamber. The lad was not at all loath to go, and even the child manifested very little fear or reluctance at the name of matrimony. In due course when they were in bed and the door shut, we sat down on the threshold of the nuptial chamber, and first of all Quartilla applied an inquisitive eye to a crack in the door contrived for some such naughty purpose, and watched their childish dalliance with lecherous intentness. She drew me gently to her side to enjoy the same spectacle, and our faces being close together as we looked, she would, at every interval in the performance, twist her lips sideways to meet mine, continually pecking at me with a sort of furtive kisses. [....]

Taking advantage of this opening without an instant’s delay, we fly with all speed to our inn and throwing ourselves into bed, spent the rest of the night in security.

Footnotes:

[16] Priapus was a minor fertility god who protected male genitals and watched over orchards and livestock. He was commonly portrayed with a prominent and ridiculously large erection, as in the house of the Vettii in Pompeii.

[17] A term which refers to a male who is penetrated rather than the penetrator.

[18] An expensive type of wine.

[19] Goddess of marriage; Jove's wife.

[20] The catamite referred to above.

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The Reconstructed Text- Part Three

Trimalchio's Banquet:

The third day had now arrived, the date appointed for the free banquet [21] at Trimalchio's; but with so many wounds as we had, we deemed it better policy to fly than to remain where we were. So we made the best of our way to our inn, and our hurts being only skin-deep after all, we lay in bed and dressed them with wine and oil. Still one of the rascals was lying on the ground disabled, and we were afraid we might yet be discovered. Whilst we were still debating sadly with ourselves how we might best escape the storm, a slave of Agamemnon's broke into our trembling assembly, crying, "What! don't you recollect whose entertainment it is this day?-- Trimalchio's, a most elegant personage; he has a time-piece in his dining-room and a trumpeter specially provided for the purpose keeps him constantly informed how much of his lifetime is gone." So, forgetting all our troubles, we proceed to groom and dress ourselves carefully, and bid Giton, who had previously always been very ready to act as servant, to attend us at the bath. [22]

[ch. 27] Meantime in our best clothes, we began to stroll about, or rather to amuse ourselves by approaching the different groups of ball-players. Amongst these we all of a sudden catch sight of a bald-headed old man in a russet tunic, playing ball amid a troupe of long-haired boys. It was not however so much the boys, though these were well worth looking at, that drew us to the spot, as the master himself, who wore sandals and was playing with green balls. He never stooped for a ball that had once touched ground, but an attendant stood by with a sackful, and supplied the players as they required them. We noticed other novelties too. For two eunuchs [23] were stationed at opposite points of the circle, one holding a silver chamber-pot, while the other counted the balls, not those that were in play and flying from hand to hand, but such as fell on the floor.

We were still admiring these refinements of elegance when Menelaus [24] runs up, saying, "See! that's the gentleman you are to dine with; why! this is really nothing else than a prelude to the entertainment." He had not finished speaking when Trimalchio snapped his fingers, and at the signal the eunuch held out the chamber-pot for him, without his ever stopping play. After easing his bladder, he called for water, and having dipped his hands momentarily in the bowl, dried them on one of the lads' hair.

[ch. 28] There was no time to notice every detail; so we entered the bath, and after stewing in the sweating-room, passed instantly into the cold chamber. Trimalchio, after being drenched with unguent, was being rubbed down, not however with ordinary towels but with pieces of blanketing of the softest and finest wool. Meanwhile three bagnio doctors were swilling Falernian under his eyes; and seeing how the fellows were brawling over their liquor and spilling most of it, Trimalchio declared it was a libation [25] they were making in his particular honor.

Presently muffled in a over-garment of scarlet frieze, [26] he was placed in a litter, preceded by four running-footmen in tinseled liveries, and a wheeled chair, in which his favorite rode, a little old young man, sore-eyed and uglier even than his master. As the litter was carried along, a musician took up his place at this head with a pair of miniature flutes, and played softly to him, as if he were whispering secrets in his ear. Full of wonder we follow the procession and arrive at the same moment as Agamemnon at the outer door, on one of the pillars of which was suspended a tablet bearing the words:

ANY SLAVE GOING ABROAD WITHOUT THE MASTER'S PERMISSION SHALL RECEIVE ONE HUNDRED LASHES

Just within the vestibule stood the doorkeeper, dressed in green with a cherry-colored sash, busy picking peas in a silver dish. Over the threshold hung a gold cage with a black and white magpie in it, which greeted visitors on their entrance.

[ch. 29] But as I was staring open-eyed at all these fine sights, I came near tumbling backwards and breaking my legs. For to the left hand as you entered, and not far from the porter's lodge, a huge chained dog was depicted on the wall, and written above in capital letters:

BEWARE THE DOG! BEWARE THE DOG! [27]

Greg Willis, photograph, *Cave canem*, Roman mosaic at the entrance to the House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii, Italy, 2nd century BCE, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

My companions made merry at my expense; but soon regaining confidence, I fell to examining the other paintings on the walls. One of these represented a slave-market, the men standing up with labels round their necks, while in another Trimalchio himself, wearing long hair, holding a caduceus [28] in his hand and led by Minerva, [29] was entering Rome. Further on, the ingenious painter had shown him learning accounts, and presently made steward of the estate, each incident being made clear by explanatory

inscriptions. Lastly, at the extreme end of the portico, Mercury [30] was lifting the hero by the chin and placing him on the highest seat of a tribunal. Fortune stood by with her cornucopia, [31] and the three Fates, spinning his destiny with a golden thread. [32]

Wolfgang Reiger, photograph, Punishment of Ixion: in the center is Mercury holding the caduceus. On the right is Juno on her throne, and behind her Iris stands and gestures. On the left is Vulcanus (blond figure) manning the wheel, with Ixion already tied to the wheel. Nephele sits at Mercury's feet. Roman fresco from the eastern wall of the triclinium in the *Casa dei Vettii* ("House of the Vetii", VI 15, 1), owned by two freedmen, in Pompeii, Fourth Style (60-79 AD). Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

I noticed likewise in the portico a gang of running-footmen exercising under a trainer. Moreover I saw in a corner a vast armory; and in a shrine inside were ranged Lares of silver, [33] and a marble statue of Venus, [34] and a golden casket of ample dimensions, in which they said the great man's first beard was preserved. I now asked the hall-keeper what were the subjects of the frescoes in the atrium itself? "*The Iliad* and *Odyssey*," he replied, "and on your left the combat of gladiators given under Laenas." [35]

Wlfgang Rieger, photograph, scene from the Trojan war: Cassandra clings to the Xoanon, the wooden cult image of Athene, while Ajax the Lesser is about to drag her away in front of her father Priam (standing on the left). Fresco from the atrium of the Casa del Menandro (I 10, 4) in Pompeii, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

[ch. 30] We had no opportunity of examining the numerous paintings more minutely, having by this time reached the banquet-hall, at the outer door of which the house-steward sat receiving accounts. But the thing that surprised me most was to notice on the doorposts of the apartment fasces and axes fixed up, the lower part terminating in an ornament resembling the bronze beak of a ship, on which was inscribed: TO GAIUS POMPEIUS TRIMALCHIO, AUGUSTAL SEVIR, CINNAMUS HIS TREASURER. [36] Underneath this inscription hung a lamp with two lights, depending from the vaulting. Two other tablets were attached to the doorposts. One, if my memory serves me, bore the following inscription: ON DECEMBER THIRTIETH AND THIRTY-FIRST OUR MASTER GAIUS DINES ABROAD. The other showed the phases of the moon and the seven planets, while lucky and unlucky days were marked by distinctive studs. When, sated with all these fine sights, we were just making for the entrance of the banquet-hall, one of the slaves, stationed there for the purpose, called out, “Right foot first!” [37] Not unnaturally there was a moment's hesitation, for fear one of us should break the rule. But this was not all; for just as we stepped out in line right leg foremost, another slave, stripped of his outer garments, threw himself before our feet, beseeching us to save him from punishment. Not indeed that his fault was a very serious one; in point of fact the Intendant’s clothes had been stolen when in his charge at the bath,-- a matter of ten sesterces [37b] or so at the most. So facing about, still right foot in front, we approached the Intendant, who was counting gold in the hall, and asked him to forgive the poor man. He looked up haughtily and said, “It’s not so much the loss that annoys me as the rascal’s carelessness. He has lost my dinner robes, which a client [38] gave me on my birthday, -- genuine Tyrian purple, I assure you, though only once dipped. But there! I will pardon the delinquent at your request.” [39]

[ch. 31] Deeply grateful for so signal a favor, we now returned to the banquet-hall, where we were met by the same slave for whom we had interceded, who to our astonishment overwhelmed us with a perfect storm of kisses, thanking us again and again for our humanity. “Indeed,” he cried, “you shall presently know who it is you have obliged; the master’s wine is the cup-bearer’s thank-offering.” Well! At last we take our places, [40] Alexandrian slave-boys [41] pouring snow water over our hands, and others following them to wash our feet and clean our toe-nails with extreme dexterity. Not even while engaged in this unpleasant office were they silent, but sang away over their work. I had a mind to try whether all the house servants were singers and accordingly asked for a drink of wine. Instantly an attendant was at my side, pouring out the liquor to the accompaniment of the same sort of shrill recitative. Demand what you would, it was the same; you might have supposed yourself among a troupe of pantomime actors rather than at a respectable citizen’s table. Then the preliminary course was served in very elegant style. For all were now at table except Trimalchio, for whom the first place was reserved, by a reversal of ordinary usage. Among the other hors d’oeuvres stood a little donkey of Corinthian bronze with a packsaddle holding olives, green olives on one side, black on the other. The animal was flanked right and left by silver dishes, on the rim of which Trimalchio’s name was engraved and the weight. On arches built up in the form of miniature bridges were dormice seasoned with honey and poppy-seed. [42] There were sausages, too, smoking hot on a silver grill, and underneath (to imitate coals) Syrian plums and pomegranate seeds.

[ch. 32] We were in the middle of these elegant trifles when Trimalchio himself was carried in to the sound of music, and was bolstered up among a host of tiny cushions, a sight that set one or two indiscreet guests laughing. And no wonder; his bald head poked up out of a scarlet mantle, his neck was closely muffled, and over all was laid a napkin with a broad purple stripe or laticlave, and long fringes hanging down either side. Moreover he wore on the little finger of his left hand a massive ring of silver gilt, and on the last joint of the next finger a smaller ring, apparently of solid gold, but starred superficially with little ornaments of steel. No! To show this was not the whole of his magnificence, his left arm was bare, and displayed a gold bracelet and an ivory circlet with a sparkling clasp to put it on. [43]

[ch. 33] After picking his teeth with a silver toothpick, “My friends,” he began, “I was far from desirous of coming to table just yet, but that I might not keep you waiting by my own absence, I have sadly interfered with my own amusement. But will you permit me to finish my game?” A slave followed him, bearing a draughtsboard of terebinth wood and crystal dice. One special bit of refinement I noticed; instead of the ordinary black and white tokens he had medals of gold and silver respectively. Meantime, while he is exhausting the vocabulary of a tinker over the game, and we are still at the hors d’oeuvres, a dish was brought in with a basket on it, in which lay a wooden hen, her wings outspread round her as if she were sitting. Instantly a couple of slaves came up, and to the sound of lively music began to search the straw, and pulling out a lot of peafowls eggs one after the other, handed them round to the company. Trimalchio turns his head at this, saying, “My friends, it was by my orders the hen set on the peafowl’s eggs over

there; but by God! I am very much afraid they are half-hatched. Nevertheless we can test whether they are edible." [44] For our part, we take our spoons, which weighed at least half a pound each, and break the eggs, which were made of paste. I was on the point of throwing mine away, for I thought I discerned a chick inside. But when I overheard a veteran guest saying, "There should be something good here!" I further investigated the shell, and found a very fine fat *beccafico* [45] swimming in yolk of egg flavored with pepper.

[ch. 34] Trimalchio had by this time stopped his game and been helped to all the dishes before us. He had just announced in a loud voice that any of us who wanted a second supply of honeyed wine had only to ask for it, when suddenly at a signal from the band, the hors d'oeuvres are whisked away by a troupe of slaves, all singing too. But in the confusion a silver dish happened to fall and a slave picked it up again from the floor; this Trimalchio noticed, and boxing the fellow's ears, berated him soundly and ordered him to throw it down again. Then a groom came in and began to sweep up the silver along with the other refuse with his broom.

He was succeeded by two long-haired Ethiopians, carrying small leather skins, like the fellows that water the sand in the amphitheater, [46] who poured wine over our hands; for no one thought of offering water.

After being duly complimented on this refinement, our host cried out, "Fair play's a jewel!" and accordingly ordered a separate table to be assigned to each guest. "In this way," he said, "by preventing any crowding, the stinking servants won't make us so hot."

Simultaneously there were brought in a number of wine-jars of glass carefully stoppered with plaster, and having labels attached to their necks reading: FALERNIAN; OPIMIAN VINTAGE ONE HUNDRED YEARS OLD. [47] Whilst we were reading the labels, Trimalchio exclaimed, striking his palms together, "Alas! to think wine is longer lived than poor humanity! Well! Full cups then! There's life in wine. 'Tis the right Opimian, I give you my word. I didn't bring out any so fine yesterday, and much better men than you were dining with me."

So we drank our wine and admired all this luxury in good set terms. Then the slave brought in a silver skeleton, so artfully fitted that its articulations and vertebrae were all movable and would turn and twist in any direction. [48] After he had tossed this once or twice on the table, causing the loosely jointed limbs to take various postures, Trimalchio moralized thus:

Alas! how less than nothing are we;

Fragile life's thread, and brief our day!

What this is now, we all shall be;

Drink and make merry while you may.

[ch. 35] Our applause was interrupted by the second course, which did not by any means come up to our expectations. Still the oddity of the thing drew the eyes of all. An immense circular tray bore the twelve signs of the zodiac displayed round the circumference, on each of which the Arranger had placed a dish of suitable and appropriate viands: on the Ram ram's-head peas, on the Bull a piece of beef, on the Twins fried testicles and kidneys, on the Crab simply a crown, on the Lion African figs, on a Virgin a sow's innards, on Libra a balance with a tart in one scale and a cheesecake in the other, on Scorpio a small sea-fish, on Sagittarius an eye-seeker, [49] on Capricornus a lobster, on Aquarius a wild goose, on Pisces two mullets. [50] In the middle was a sod of green turf, cut to shape and supporting a honey-comb. Meanwhile an Egyptian slave was carrying bread around in a miniature oven of silver, crooning to himself in a horrible voice a song on wine and *laserpitium*.[51] Seeing us look rather blank at the idea of attacking such common fare, Trimalchio cried, "I pray you gentlemen, begin; the best of your dinner is before you."

Mosaic pavement of a 6th century synagogue at Beth Alpha, Jezreel valley, currently northern Israel, discovered in 1928. Signs of the zodiac surround the central chariot of the Sun (a Greek motif), while the corners depict the 4 "turning points" of the year, solstices and equinoxes, each named for the month in which it occurs. Uploaded by Maksim, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

[ch. 36] No sooner had he spoken than four fellows ran prancing in, keeping time to the music, and whipped off the top of the tray. This done, we beheld underneath, on a second tray in fact, stuffed capons, a sow's udders, and as a centerpiece a hare fitted with wings to represent Pegasus. [52] We noticed besides four figures of Marsyas, [53] one at each corner of the tray, spouting out peppered fish-sauce over the fishes swimming in the channel of the dish.

We all join in the applause started by the slaves and laughingly start sampling the choice dishes. Trimalchio, as pleased as anybody with a device of the sort, now called out, "Cut!" Instantly the Carver advanced, and posturing in time to the music, sliced up the joint with such antics you might have thought him a jockey struggling to pull off a chariot-race to the thunder of the organ. Yet all the while Trimalchio kept repeating in a wheedling voice, "Cut! Cut!" For my part, suspecting there was some clever joke connected with this everlasting repetition of the word, I made no bones about asking the question of the guest who sat immediately above me. He had often witnessed similar scenes and told me at once, "You see the man who is carving; well; his name is Cut. The master is calling and commanding him at one and the same time."

[ch. 37] Unable to eat any more, I now turned towards my neighbor in order to gather what information I could, and after indulging in a string of general remarks, presently asked him, "Who is that lady bustling up and down the room yonder?" "Trimalchio's lady," he replied; "her name is Fortunata, [54] and she counts her coin by the bushelful! Before? What was she before? Why! my dear Sir! saving your respect, you would have been mighty sorry to take bread from her hand. Now, by hook or by crook, she's got to heaven, and is Trimalchio's factotum. [55] In fact if she told him it was dark night at high noon, he'd believe her. The man's rolling in riches, and really can't tell what he has and what he hasn't got; still his good lady looks keenly after everything, and is on the spot where you least expect to see her. She's temperate, sober and well advised, but she has a sharp tongue of her own and chatters like a magpie between the bed-curtains. When she likes a man, she likes him; and when she doesn't, well! she doesn't. As for Trimalchio, his lands reach as far as the kites fly, and his money breeds money. I tell you, he has more coin lying idle in his porter's lodge than would make another man's whole fortune. Slaves! why, heaven and earth! I don't believe one in ten knows his own master by sight. For all that, there's never a one of the fine fellows a word of his wouldn't send scuttling into the nearest rat-hole.

[ch. 38] And don't you imagine he ever buys anything; every mortal thing is home grown,-- wool, rosin, pepper; call for hen's milk and he'd supply you! As a matter of fact his wool was not first-rate originally; but he purchased rams at Tarentum and so improved the breed. To get home-made Attic honey he had bees imported directly from Athens, hoping at the same time to benefit the native insects a bit by a cross with the Greek fellows. Why! Only the other day he wrote to India for mushroom spawn. He has not a single

mule but was got by a wild ass. You see all these mattresses; never a one that is not stuffed with the finest wool, purple or scarlet as the case may be. Lucky, lucky dog!

And look here, you, don't you turn up your nose at the other freedmen, his fellows. They're very warm men. You see the one lying last on the last couch yonder? [56] He's worth his eight hundred thousand any of these days. A self-made man; once upon a time he carried wood on his own two shoulders. They do say,-- I don't know how true it may be, but I've been told so,-- he snatched an incubus' hat, [56b] and so discovered a treasure. I grudge no man's good fortune, whatever a god has seen good to give him. He'll still take a box on the ear for all that, and keeps a keen eye on the main chance. Only the other day he placarded his house with this bill: C. POMPEIUS DIOGENES IS PREPARED TO LET HIS GARRET FROM JULY FIRST, HAVING BOUGHT THE HOUSE HIMSELF. "But the other man yonder, occupying a freedman's place, what of him? Was he originally very well to do?" "I have not a word to say against him. He was owner once of a cool million, but he came to sad grief. I don't suppose he has a hair on his head unmortgaged. Not that it was any fault of his; there never was a better man, but his rascally freedmen swindled him out of everything. Let me tell you, when the hospitable pot stops boiling, and fortune has once taken the turn, friends soon make themselves scarce." "What was the honorable calling he followed, that you see him brought to this?" "He was an undertaker. He used to dine like a king,-- boars in pastry, cakes of every sort and game galore, cooks and pastry-cooks without end. More wine was spilt under his table than another man has in his cellar. A dream-- not a life for a mere mortal man! Even when his affairs were getting shaky, for fear his creditors might think he was in difficulties, he posted this notice of sale: C. JULIUS PROCULUS WILL PUT UP TO AUCTION AN ASSORTMENT OF HIS SUPERFLUOUS FURNITURE.

[ch. 39] This agreeable gossip was here interrupted by Trimalchio; for the second course had now been removed, and the company being merry with wine began to engage in general conversation. Our host then, lying back on his elbow and addressing the company, said, "I hope you will all do justice to this wine; you must make the fish swim again. Come, come, do you suppose I was going to rest content with the dinner you saw boxed up under the cover of the tray just now? 'Is Ulysses no better known?' [57] Well, well! Even at table we mustn't forget our scholarship. Peace to my worthy patron's bones, who was pleased to make me a man amongst men. For truly there is nothing can be set before me that will startle me by its novelty. For instance the meaning of that tray just now can be easily enough explained. This heaven in which dwell the twelve gods [58] resolves itself into twelve different configurations, and presently becomes the Ram. So whosoever is born under this sign has many flocks and herds and much wool, a hard head into the bargain, a shameless brow and a sharp horn. Most of your schoolmen and pettifoggers are born under this sign."

We recommended the learned expounder's graceful erudition, and he went on to add: "Next the whole sky becomes Bull; then are born obstinate fellows and cow-herders and such as think of nothing but filling their own bellies. Under the Twins are born horses in a pair, oxen in a yoke, men blessed with a sturdy brace of testicles, all who manage to keep in with both sides. I was born under the Crab myself. Wherefore I stand on many feet, and have many possessions both by sea and land; for the Crab is equally adapted to either element. And this is why I never put anything on that sign, so as not to eclipse my horoscope. Under the Lion are born great eaters and wasters, and all who love to domineer; under the Virgin, women and runaways and jailbirds; under the Scales, butchers and perfumers and all retail traders; under the Scorpion, poisoners and cutthroats; under the Archer, squint-eyed folks, who look at the greens and whip off with the bacon; under Capricorn, the "horny-handed sons of toil"; under Aquarius or the Waterman, innkeepers and pumpkin-heads; under Pisces, or the Fishes, fine cooks and fine talkers. Thus the world goes round like a mill, and is forever at some mischief, whether making men or marring them. But about the sod of turf you see in the middle, and the honeycomb on top of it, I have a good reason to show too. Our mother Earth is in the middle, round-about like an egg, and has all good things in her inside, like a honey-comb!"

[ch. 40] "Clever! clever!" We cry in chorus and with hands uplifted to the ceiling, swear Hipparchus and Aratus [59] were not to be named in the same breath with him. This lasted till fresh servants entered and spread carpets before the couches, embroidered with pictures of fowling nets, prickers with their hunting spears, and sporting gear of all kinds. We were still at a loss what to expect when a tremendous shout was raised outside the doors, and lo and behold! A pack of Laconian dogs came careering round and round the very table. These were soon followed by a huge tray, on which lay a wild boar of the largest size, with a cap on its head, while from the tusks hung two little baskets of woven palm leaves, one full of Syrian dates, the other of Theban. Round it were little piglets of baked sweetmeat, as if at suck, to show it was a sow we had before us; and these were gifts to be taken home with them by the guests. To carve the dish however, it was not this time our friend Cut who appeared, the same who had dismembered the capons, but a great bearded fellow, wearing leggings and a shaggy jerkin. Drawing his hunting knife, he made a furious lunge

and gashed open the boar's flank, from which there flew out a number of fieldfares. Fowlers stood ready with their rods and immediately caught the birds as they fluttered about the table. Then Trimalchio directed each guest to be given his bird, and this done, added “Look what elegant acorns this wildwood pig fed on.” Instantly slaves ran to the baskets that were suspended from the animal's tusks and divided the two kinds of dates in equal proportions among the diners.

[ch. 41] Meantime, sitting as I did a little apart, I was led into a thousand conjectures to account for the boar's being brought in with a cap on. So after exhausting all sorts of absurd guesses, I resolved to ask my former “philosopher and friend” to explain the difficulty that tormented me so. “Why!” said he, “your own servant could tell you that much. Riddle? it’s as plain as daylight. The boar was presented with his freedom at yesterday’s dinner; he appeared at the end of the meal and the company gave him his congé. Therefore today he comes back to table as a freedman.” [60] I cursed my own stupidity, and asked no more questions, for fear of their thinking I had never dined with good company before.

We were still conversing, when a pretty boy entered, his head wreathed with vine-leaves and ivy, announcing himself now as Bromius, then as Lyaeus and Euhius. [61] He proceeded to hand round grapes in a small basket, and recited in the shrillest of voices some verses of his master's composition. Trimalchio turned round at the sound, and, “Dionysus,” said he, “be free (*Liber*)!” The lad snatched the freedman’s cap from the boar’s head and stuck it on his own. Then Trimalchio went on again, “Well! you'll not deny,” he cried, “I have a Father *Liber* (a freeborn father) of my own.” [62] We praised Trimalchio's joke, and heartily kissed the fortunate lad, as he went round to receive our congratulations.

At the end of this course Trimalchio left the table to relieve himself, and so finding ourselves free from the constraint of his overbearing presence, we began to indulge in a little friendly conversation. Accordingly Dama began first, after calling for a cup of wine. “A day! what is a day?” he exclaimed, “before you can turn round, it’s night again! So really you can’t do better than go straight from bed to board. Fine cold weather we’ve been having; why! even my bath has hardly warmed me. But truly hot liquor is a good clothier. I’ve been drinking cups-full, and I'm downright fuddled. The wine has got into my head.”

[ch. 41] Seleucus then struck into the talk: "I don't bathe every day," he said; "your systematic bather's a mere fuller. [63] Water's got teeth, and melts the heart away, a little every day; but there! when I've fortified my belly with a cup of mulled wine, I say 'Go hang!' to the cold. Indeed I couldn't bathe today, for I've been to a funeral. [64] A fine fellow he was too, good old Chrysanthus, but he's given up the ghost now. He was calling me just this moment, only just this moment; I could fancy myself talking to him now. Alas! alas! what are we but blown bladders on two legs? We're not worth as much as flies; they are some use, but we're no better than bubbles. He wasn't careful enough in his diet, you say? I tell you, for five whole days not one drop of water, or one crumb of bread passed his lips. Nevertheless he has joined the majority. The doctors killed him,-- or rather his day was come; the very best of doctors is only a satisfaction to the mind. Anyhow he was handsomely buried, on his own best bed, with good blankets. The wailing was first class,-- he did a trifle of manumission before he died; [65] though no doubt his wife's tears were a bit forced. A pity he always treated her so well. But woman! woman's of the kite kind. No man ought ever to do 'em a good turn; just as well pitch it in the well at once. Old love's an eating sore!"

[ch. 43] He was getting tiresome, and Phileros broke in: "Let's talk of living. He's got his deserts, whatever they were; he lived well and died well, what has he to complain about? He started with next to nothing, and was ready to the last to pick a farthing out of a dunghill with his teeth. So he grew and grew, like a honeycomb. Upon my word I believe he left a round hundred million behind him, and all in ready money. But I'll tell you the actual facts, for I'm the soul of truth, as they say. He had a rough tongue, and a ready one, and was quarrelsomeness personified. Now his brother was a fine fellow and a true friend, with a free hand and keeping a liberal table. Just at the beginning he had a bad bird to pluck, but the very first vintage set him on his legs, for he sold his wine at his own price. But the thing that chiefly made him lift up his head in the world was getting an inheritance, out of which he managed to prig a good deal more than was really left him. And that log Chrysanthus, falling out with his brother, has positively left all his property to I don't know what scum of the earth. He goes too far, say I, who goes outside his own kith and kin. But he had a lot of overwise interfering servants, who proved his ruin. A man will never do well, who believes all he's told too readily, especially a man in business. Yet it's fair to say he did well enough all his life, getting what was never meant for him. Evidently one of Fortune's favorites, in whose hands lead turns to gold. But that's simple enough, when everything runs on wheels exactly as you want it to. How old, think you, was he when he died? Seventy and over. But he was as tough as horn; he carried his age well, and he was still as black as a crow. I knew him when he was a pretty loose fish, and he was lecherous to the last. Upon my soul I don't believe he left a living thing in his house alone, down to the dog. A great lover of lads, indeed a man of universal talents and tastes. Not that I blame him; this was all he got out of life."

[ch. 44] So much for Phileros; then Ganymede began: "Yes! you talk away," he said, "about things that concern neither heaven nor earth, but no one ever thinks of the pinch of famine that's upon us. I swear I couldn't come across a mouthful of bread this day. And how the drought holds! Starvation's been the word for a whole twelvemonth now. Bad cess to the *aediles*, [66] who are in collusion with the bakers-- 'you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours.' And so poor folks suffer; for your rich fellows' jawbones keep feast-day all the year round. Ah! if only we had those lion-hearted chaps I found here, when first I came from Asia. That was something like living. 'Twas like the midlands of Sicily [67] for plenty, and they used to batter those vampires about so that Jupiter [68] positively hated them. Why! I remember Safinius; he used to live at the Old Arch when I was a boy. It was a peppercorn, I tell you, not a man. Wherever he went, he made the ground smoke under him. An upright, downright honest man, and a trusty friend, one you might confidently play *mora* [69] with in the dark. But in court, how he pounded 'em down, one and all; he didn't talk in figures of speech, not he, but straight out. Then when he pleaded in the Forum, his voice would swell out like a trumpet, though he never sweated or spat. I believe myself he had a smack of Asiatic blood in him. And how civil he was to return our bows and give each man his name, just as if he'd been one of ourselves. So in those days provisions were dirt cheap. A halfpenny loaf,-- when you'd bought it, you couldn't have finished it, with another man to help you! Now,-- I've seen a bullock's eye bigger.

Alas! alas! Things get worse and worse every day, and this city of ours is growing like a cow's tail, backwards. Why ever have we an *aedile* not worth three figs, who thinks more of a halfpenny than of all our lives? So he sits at home and rubs his hands, making more coin in a day than another man's whole fortune comes to. I know one transaction brought him in a thousand gold denarii. Why! if we weren't geldings, he wouldn't be so pleased with himself long. Nowadays the folks are lions at home, and foxes abroad. As for me, I've eaten up my duds, and if the scarcity goes on, I shall sell my bits of houses. What is to become of us, if neither gods nor men take pity on this unhappy city? As I hope for happiness, I think it's all the gods' doing. For nobody any more believes heaven to be heaven, nobody keeps fast, nobody cares one straw for Jupiter, but all men shut their eyes and count up their own belongings. In former days the long-robed matrons went barefoot, with unbound hair and a pure heart, up the hill to pray Jupiter for rain; and instantly it started raining bucketfuls,-- then or never,-- and they all came back looking like drowned rats. So the gods come stealthy-footed to our destruction, because we have no piety or reverence. The fields lie idle, and--

[ch. 45] "I beseech you," cried Echion, the old-clothes-man, at this point, "I beseech you, better words! Luck's for ever changing, as the chawbacon said, when he lost his brindled hog. If not today, then tomorrow; that's the way the world wags. My word! you couldn't name a better countryside, if only the inhabitants were to match. True, we are in low water for the moment, but we're not the only ones. We must not be so over particular, the same heaven is over us all. If you lived elsewhere, you'd say pigs ran about here ready roasted. And I tell you, we're going to have a grand show in three days from now at the festival-- none of your common gangs of gladiators, but most of the chaps freedmen. Our good Titus has a heart of gold and a hot head; 'twill be do or die, and no quarter. I'm in his service, he is no shirker! He'll have the best of sharp swords and no backing out; bloody butcher's meat in the middle, for the amphitheater to feast their eyes on. And he's got the wherewithal; he was left thirty million, his father came to a bad end. Suppose he does spend four hundred thousand or so, his property won't feel it, and his name will live forever. He has already got together a lot of ponies and a female chariot fighter, and Glyco's factor [agent], who was caught diverting his mistress. You'll see what a row the people will have between the jealous husbands and the happy lovers. Anyhow Glyco, who's not worth two pence, condemned his factor to the beasts,-- which was simply betraying his own dishonor. How was the servant to blame, who was forced to do what he did? It was she, the pisspot, deserved tossing by the bull far more than he. But there, if a man can't get at the donkey's back, he must thrash the donkey's pack. And how could Glyco ever suppose Hermogenes' girl should come to any good. He could cut a kite's claws flying; a snake doesn't father a rope. Glyco! Glyco! you've paid your price; as long as you live, you're a marked man,-- a brand Hell only can obliterate. A man's mistakes always come home to roost.

Why! I can nose out now what a feast Mammaea is going to give us, two gold denarii each for me and mine. If he does so, I only hope he'll show no favor whatever to Norbanus. You may rest assured he will clap on all sail. And in good sooth what has the other ever done for us? He gave a show of twopenny halfpenny gladiators, such a rickety lot,-- blow on them, they'd have fallen flat; and I've seen better bestiaries. He killed his mounted men by torchlight, you might have taken them for dunghill cocks. One was mule-footed, another bandy-legged, while the third, put up to replace a dead man, was a deadhead himself, for he was hamstrung before beginning. The only one to show any spunk was a Thracian, [70] and he only fought when we tarred him on. In the end they all got a sound thrashing; in fact the crowd had cried 'Trice up!' for every one of them, they were obviously such arrant runaways. 'Anyhow I gave you a show,' said he. 'And I applauded,' said I; 'reckon it up, and I gave you more than I got. One good turn deserves another.'"

[ch. 46] "You look, Agamemnon, as if you were saying to yourself, 'Whatever is that bore driving at?' I talk, because you fellows who can talk, won't talk. You're not of our stuff and so you laugh at poor men's conversation. You're a monument of learning, we all know. But there, let me persuade you one day to come down into the country and see our little place. We'll find something to eat, a pullet and a few eggs; it will be grand, even though the bad weather this year has turned everything upside down. Anyway we shall find enough to fill our bellies. And there's a future pupil growing up for you, my little lad at home. He can repeat four pieces already; if he lives, you will have a little servant at your beck and call. If he has a spare moment, he never lifts his head from his slate. He's a bright lad with good stuff in him, though he is so gone on birds. I've killed three linnets of his, and told him a weasel ate 'em. But he has found other hobbies, and he's devoted to painting. Why! He is already showing his heels to the Greek, and beginning to take capitally to his Latin, [71] though his master is too easy-going and too restless; he knows his work well enough, but won't take proper pains. Then there's another, not a learned man but a very ingenious one, who teaches more than he knows. Accordingly he comes to the house on high days and holidays, and whatever you give him, he looks pleased. So I've just bought the lad some law books, for I want him to have a smack of law for home use. There's bread and butter in that. For as to literature, he has been tarred enough already with that brush. If he kicks, I've made up my mind to teach him a trade,-- a barber, or an auctioneer, or best of all a lawyer,-- which nothing but Hell can rob him of. So I impress on him every day. 'Believe me, my first-born, whatever you learn, you learn for your good. Look at Phileros the advocate; [72] if he hadn't studied, he would be starving today. The other day, just the other day, he was carting things round on his shoulders, now he is a match for Norbanus himself. Learning's a treasure, and a trade never starves.'"

Relief found in Neumagen near Trier, a teacher with three *discipuli*. Around 180–185 CE. Photo by Shakko Kitsune of casting in Pushkin museum, Moscow. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

[ch. 47] Such were the brilliant remarks that were flashing round the board, when Trimalchio re-entered, and after wiping his brow and scenting his hands, "Pardon me, my friends," he said after a brief pause, "but for several days I have been costive. My physicians were nonplused. However, pomegranate rind and an infusion of fir-wood in vinegar has done me good. And now I trust my belly will be better behaved. At times I have such a rumbling about my stomach, you'd think I had a bull bellowing inside me! So if any of you want to relieve yourselves, there's no necessity to be ashamed about it. None of us is born solid. I don't know any torment so bad as holding it in. It's the one thing Jove himself cannot stop. What are you laughing at, Fortunata, you who so often keep me awake o' nights yourself? I never hinder any man at my table from easing himself, and indeed the doctors forbid our balking nature. Even if something more presses, everything's ready outside,-- water, close-stools, and the other little matters needful. Take my word for it, the vapors rise to the brain and may cause a fluxion of the whole constitution. I know many a man that's died of it, because he was too shy to speak out."

We thank our host for his generous indulgence, taking our wine in little sips the while to keep down our laughter. But little we thought we had still another hill to climb, as the saying is, and were only half through the elaborations of the meal. For when the tables had been cleared with a flourish of music, three white hogs were brought in, hung with little bells and muzzled. One, so the nomenclator informed us, was a two-year-old, another three, and the third six. For my part, I thought they were learned pigs, come in to perform some of those marvelous tricks you see in circuses. But Trimalchio put an end to my surmises by saying, "Which of

the three will you have dressed for supper right away? Farmyard cocks and pheasants are for country folks; my cooks are used to serving up calves boiled whole." So saying, he immediately ordered the cook to be summoned, and without waiting for our choice, directed the six-year-old to be killed. Then speaking loud and clear, he asked the man, "What decuria do you belong to?" "To the fortieth," he replied. [73] "Bought," he went on, "or born in my house?" "Neither;" returned the cook, "I was left you by Pansa's will." "Then mind you serve the dish carefully dressed; else I shall order you to be degraded into the decuria of the outdoor slaves." And the cook, thus cogently admonished, then withdrew with his charge into the kitchen.

[ch. 48] But Trimalchio, relaxing his stern aspect, now turned to us and said "If you don't like the wine, I'll have it changed; otherwise please prove its quality by your drinking. Thanks to the gods' goodness, I never buy it; but now I have everything that smacks good growing on a suburban estate of mine. I've not seen it yet, but they tell me it's down Terracina and Tarentum way. I am thinking at the moment of making Sicily one of my little properties, that when I've a mind to visit Africa, I may sail along my own boundaries to get there. "But tell me, Agamemnon, what question formed the subject of your declamation today? Though I don't plead myself, I've studied letters for domestic use. Don't imagine I have despised scholarship; why! I have two libraries, one Greek, the other Latin. If you love me, then, let me know what your discourse was."

Agamemnon had just begun, "A poor man and a rich were at feud . . ." when Trimalchio struck in with the question, "What is a poor man!" "Oh, capital!" cried Agamemnon; and went on to develop some dialectical problem or another. Trimalchio summed up without an instant's hesitation as follows, "If this is so, there's no question about it; if it's not so, why! there's an end of the matter." Whilst we were still acclaiming these and similar remarks with fulsome praise, he resumed, "Pray, my dearest Agamemnon, do you recollect by any chance the twelve labors of Hercules, [74] or the story of Ulysses, how the Cyclops twisted his thumb out of joint, after he was turned into a pig. I used to read these tales in Homer when I was a lad. [75] Then the Sibyl! I saw her at Cumae with my own eyes hanging in a jar; and when the boys cried to her, 'Sibyl, what would you?' she'd answer, 'I would die,'-- both of 'em speaking Greek." [76]

[ch. 49] He was still in the middle of this nonsense when a tray supporting an enormous hog was set on the table. One and all we expressed our admiration at the expedition shown, and swore a mere ordinary fowl could not have been cooked in the time, the more so as the hog appeared to be a much larger animal than the wild boar just before. Presently Trimalchio, staring harder and harder, exclaimed, "What! what! isn't he gutted? No! by heaven! he's not. Call the cook in!"

The cook came and stood by the table, looking sadly crestfallen and saying he had clean forgotten. "What! forgotten!" cried Trimalchio; "to hear him, you would suppose he'd just omitted a pinch of pepper or a bit of cumin. Strip him!"

Instantly the cook was stripped, and standing between two tormentors, the picture of misery. But we all began to intercede for him, saying, "Accidents will happen; do forgive him this once. If ever he does it again, not one of us will say a word in his favor." For my own part I felt mercilessly indignant, and could not hold myself, but bending over to Agamemnon's ear, I whispered, "Evidently he must be a villainous bad servant. To think of anybody forgetting to bowel a hog; by Gad! I would not let the fellow off, if he'd shown such carelessness about a fish."

Not so Trimalchio, for with a smile breaking over his face, "Well! well!" said he, "as you have such a bad memory, bowel him now, where we can all see."

Thereupon the cook resumed his tunic, seized his knife and with a trembling hand slashed open the animal's belly. In a moment, the apertures widening under the weight behind, out tumbled a lot of sausages and black-puddings.

[ch. 50] At this all the servants applauded like one man, and chorused, "Gaius forever!" Moreover the cook was gratified with a goblet of wine and a silver wreath, and received a drinking cup on a salver of Corinthian metal. This Agamemnon scanned with some attention, and Trimalchio observed, "I am the only man possessing the genuine Corinthian plate."

I fully expected him to match his usual effrontery by declaring he had himself imported the articles from Corinth; but he had a better account to give of the matter. "You may wonder perhaps," he said, "why I alone have the true Corinthian. The fact is, the smith I buy them from is called Corinth, and what can be more Corinthian than to have Corinth at one's orders? But you must not set me down for a dunce; I know perfectly well how Corinthian plate first originated. On the capture of Troy, Hannibal, [77] an astute fellow and a consummate knave, collected together all the statues of bronze and gold and silver into one great heap, and firing the pile, melted down the different metals into one alloy. This mass of metal the smiths utilized to make into platters and dishes and statuettes. Such was the origin of Corinthian metal, neither one thing nor the other, but an amalgam of all.

[ch. 51] "But you must allow me to say this, I prefer glass ones myself; they are quite free from smell at any rate. And if they didn't break, I would rather have them than gold itself; but they've got cheap and common now. However there was an artificer once who made a glass goblet that would not break. So he was admitted to Caesar's presence to offer him his invention; then,on receiving the cup back from Caesar's hands, he dashed it down on the floor. Who so startled as Caesar? but the man quietly picked up the goblet again, which was dented as a vessel of bronze might be. Then taking a little hammer from his pocket, he easily and neatly knocked the goblet into shape again. This done, the fellow thought he was as good as in heaven already, especially when Caesar said to him, 'Does anybody else besides yourself understand the manufacture of this glass?' But lo! on his replying in the negative, Caesar ordered him to be beheaded, because if once the secret became known, we should think no more of gold than of so much dirt.

[ch. 52] "I'm quite a connoisseur in plate. I've got cups as big as waterpots, a hundred of them more or less, representing how Cassandra slew her sons, and there lie the lads dead, as natural as life! I've got a thousand bowls Mummius bequeathed to my patron, on which Daedalus is shown shutting Niobe up in the Trojan horse. [78] Why! I've got the fights of Hermeros and Petraites on a series of cups all of massive metal. [79] I wouldn't sell my savvy in these things for any money."

A Roman silver plate with a Nereid, perhaps second to fourth century CE, found in Azerbaijan in October, 1894. Hermitage Museum, Russia. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

In the middle of these remarks a slave dropped a cup. Trimalchio looked at him and said, "Go at once and kill yourself; you are a careless fellow." The slave immediately dropped his lip and began to beg for mercy. "Why worry me," cried Trimalchio, "as if I were being harsh upon you. I merely urge you to secure yourself from being so heedless again." At length, on our entreaty, he pardoned the man. The latter, to celebrate the event, began running round and round the table, crying, "Out water, in wine!" We were all ready to take the merry rascal's kind suggestion, and particularly Agamemnon, who knew very well how to earn another invitation. But Trimalchio under the stimulus of our flattery drank away more gayly than ever, and being close on the verge of intoxication, "Won't any of you," he cried, "ask my wife Fortunata to dance? Believe me, there's no one foots the cancan better." Then putting up his two hands himself above his brow, he began imitating Syrus the comedian, the whole household singing out, "Bravo! Oh, bravissimo!" in chorus; and he would have made a public exhibition of himself, had not Fortunata whispered in his ear

and told him, I suppose, that such buffooneries were beneath his dignity. But nothing could well be more uncertain than his humor; one moment he would listen respectfully to Fortunata, the next hark back to his natural propensities.

[ch. 53] However his dancing fit was cut short by the entrance of the historiographer, who read out solemnly, as if he were reciting the public records: "Seventh of Kalends of July (June 25th): On the manor of Cumae, Trimalchio's property, were born this day thirty boys, forty girls; were carried from threshing-floor to granary 500,000 bushels of wheat; were put to the yoke 500 oxen. Same day: Mithridates, a slave, was crucified for blaspheming our master Gaius' tutelary genius. [80]

Same day: returned to treasury ten million sesterces, no investment being forthcoming for the sum. Same day: a fire occurred in Pompey's garden, originating at the house of Nasta, the Bailiff."

"Eh?" interrupted Trimalchio, "when were Pompey's gardens [81] bought for me?"

"Last year," answer the historiographer; "therefore they have not been brought into account yet."

Trimalchio blazed up at this and shouted, "Any estates bought in my name, if I hear nothing of them within six months, I forbid their being carried to my account at all."

Next were read his *aediles*' edicts [82] and foresters' wills, in which Trimalchio was excluded from inheritance, but mentioned with the highest encomiums. Then the names of his bailiffs were recited; how the chief inspector had repudiated his mistress, a freedwoman, having detected her in an intrigue with the bath superintendent; how the chamberlain had been removed to Baiae: [83] the steward convicted of embezzlement; and a dispute between the grooms of the chamber adjudicated upon.

But now the acrobats entered at last. A most tiresome, dull fellow stood supporting a ladder, up the rungs of which he ordered a lad to climb and dance and sing on the top, and then leap down through blazing hoops holding a wine-jar in his teeth. Trimalchio was the only person present who admired this performance, saying it was a hard life truly. There were but two things, he went on, in all the world he really enjoyed seeing-- acrobats and horn-blowers; all other shows were mere trash. "Yes! I bought a company of comedians too," he said, "but I insisted on their playing Atellanes, and I ordered my conductor to play Latin airs and Latin airs only." [84]

[ch. 54] In the middle of these fine remarks of the great Gaius, the boy suddenly tumbled down on top of our host. The domestics all raised a shriek, and the guests as well, not for any love they bore the disgusting creature, whose neck they would have gladly seen broken, but for fear of a bad end to the feast and the necessity of lamenting the man's death. Trimalchio himself gave a deep groan and bent over one arm, as if it were injured. His physicians flocked round him, and amongst the foremost Fortunata with streaming hair and a cup in her hand, solemnly swearing she was a most miserable, unhappy woman. For his part, the boy who had fallen was already creeping round at our knees, beseeching us to intercede for him.

I was tormented with the idea that these prayers were only intended to lead up by some ridiculous turn to another theatrical denouement. For the cook who had forgotten to bowel the hog still stuck in my memory. So I began to carry my eyes all about the room, to see if the wall would not open to admit some stage-machine or other, especially after observing how a slave was thrashed, who had bandaged his master's bruised arm with white instead of purple wool. Nor was I far out in my suspicions, for in lieu of punishment being inflicted, Trimalchio now ruled that the lad must be made free, that none might be able to say so noble a gentleman had been injured by a slave.

[ch. 55] We acclaim the generous act, and indulge in a string of platitudes on the precariousness of human affairs. "Well, then!" interposed Trimalchio, "an accident like this must not be allowed to pass without an impromptu," and instantly calling for his tablets, [85] and without much racking of brains, he read out the following lines:

When least we think, things go astray,

Dame Fortune o'er our life holds sway;

Then drink, make merry, whilst ye may!

This epigram led the way to a discussion of poets and poetry, and for some time the palm of song was awarded to Mopsus the Thracian, [86] until Trimalchio remarked to Agamemnon, "Pray, master, what do you consider the difference to be between Cicero and Publilius? [87] For my own part, I consider the former the more eloquent author, the latter the more genteel. What for instance can be better put than this:

It is arrant luxury undoes the state;

To please your palate pampered peacocks die,

That flaunt their plumed Assyrian gold abroad

For you Numidian fowl and capon fat.

Even the kindly stork is sacrificed,

Our graceful, noisy, long-legged friend,

Fearful of winter's cold and harbinger of Spring,

And finds the cruel cooking-pot its nest.

Why are the Indian pearls so dear to you,--

If not to deck with sea-sought gems the wife

That lifts a wanton leg adulterously?

Why love you so the emerald's greeny gleam,

And flashing fires of Punic carbuncles?

Honor and virtue are the truest gems.

Is it right the bride should wear the woven wind,

And stand exposed in garments thin as air?

[ch. 56] "Now what do you hold to be the most difficult calling," he went on, "after literature? I think the doctor's and the money-changer's; the doctor, because he's got to know what chaps have in their insides, and when the fever's coming,-- though truly I hate 'em like fury, for they're for ever ordering me duck-broth; the money-changer, who detects the bronze underneath the surface plating of silver. Of beasts the most hard-working are oxen and sheep; to the former we owe the bread we eat, while 'tis the latter make us so fine with their wool. What a brutal shame it is when a man eats mutton and wears a woolen coat! Now bees,-- I do think they are the god's own creatures, for they vomit honey, though some say they bring it down from Jupiter. And that's why they sting, for you'll never find sweet without sour."

He was still cutting out the philosophers in this fashion, when lottery tickets were passed round in a cup, and a slave, whose special duty this was, read out the presents to be distributed in the tombola:

"Humbug Silver; a gammon of bacon was shown, with cruets of that metal standing on it. A Neck-Pillow; and a neck of mutton was produced. Forbidden Fruits and Contumely; pommeloes were brought in, and a punt-pole with an apple. Leeks and Peaches; the drawer received a whip and a knife. Dress Clothes and Morning Coat; a piece of meat and a memorandum book. Canal and Foot Measure; a hare and a slipper. Lamprey and Letter; a mouse and a frog tied together, and a bundle of beetroot." We laughed loud and long; and there were a hundred and fifty other conceits of the same sort that have escaped my memory.

[ch. 57] But Ascyltos, lost to all self-control, threw his arms up in the air, and turning the whole proceedings into ridicule, laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. At this once of the freedmen among the guests, the same who occupied the place next above me, lost his temper and shouted:

"What are you laughing at, muttonhead? Isn't my master's elegant hospitality to your taste? You're a mighty fine gentleman, I suppose, and used to better entertainment. So help me the guardian spirits of this house, but I would have made him baa to some purpose, had I been next him. A pretty sprig indeed, to laugh at other people! A vagabond from who knows where, a night-raker, that's not worth his own piddle! Just let me piss round him, and he would not know how to save his life! By the powers, I'm not as a rule quick to take offense, but there! worms are bred in soft flesh. He's laughing; what's he got to laugh at? Did his father buy the brat for money? You're a Roman equestrian: and I'm a king's son. [88] 'Why did you serve as a slave then?' Why! because I chose to, and thought it better to be a Roman citizen than a tributary king. And henceforth I hope to live a life beyond the reach of any one's ridicule. I am a man now among men; I can walk about with my nose in the air. I owe nobody a brass farthing; I've never made composition; no one ever stopped me in the forum with a 'Pay me what you owe!' I've bought some bits of land, put by a trifle of tin; I keep twenty folks in victuals, to say nothing of the dog; I've purchased my bedfellow's freedom, that no man should

wipe his hands on her bosom; I paid a thousand denarii to redeem her; I was made a *sevir*, free gratis for nothing; I trust I may die and have no cause to blush in my grave.

"But you, are you so busy you can't so much as look behind you? You can spy a louse on a neighbor's back, and never see the great tick on your own. You're the only man to find us ridiculous; there's your master and your elder, he likes us well enough, I warrant. You! with your mammy's milk scarce dry on your lips, you can't say boo! to a goose; you crock, you limp scrap of soaked leather, you may be supple, but you're no good. Are you richer than other folk? Then dine twice over, and sup twice! For myself I value my credit far above millions. Did any man ever dun me twice? I served forty years, but nobody knows whether I was slave or free. I was a long-haired lad when first I came to this town; the basilica was not built yet. But I took pains to please my master, a great, grand gentleman and a dignified, whose nail-parings were worth more than your whole body. And I had enemies in the house, let me tell you, quite ready to trip me up on occasion; but-- thanks to his kind nature-- I swam the rapids. That's the real struggle; for to be born a gentleman is as easy as 'Come here.' Whatever are you gaping at now, like a buck-goat in a field of bitter vetch?"

[ch 58] At this harangue Giton, who was standing at my feet, could no longer contain himself, but burst into a most indecorous peal of merriment. When Ascyltos' adversary noticed the fact, he turned his abuse upon the lad, screaming, "You're laughing too, are you, you curled onion? Ho! For the Saturnalia, is it December, pray? [89] When did you stump up your twentieth? [90] What's he at now, the crow's meat gallows-bird? [91] I'll take care the gods' anger falls on you, you and your master who does not keep you in better order. As I hope to live by bread, I only keep my hands off you out of respect for my fellow freedmen, or else would I have paid you off this instant minute. We're right enough, but your folks are good for nothing, who don't keep you to heel. Truly, like master, like man. I can scarce hold myself, and I'm not a hot-headed man naturally; but if I once begin, I don't care two pence for my own mother. All right, I shall come across you yet in the open street, you rat, you mushroom, you! I'll never stir up nor down, if I don't drive your master into a wretched hole, and show you what's what, though you call upon Olympian Jove himself to help you! I'll be the ruin of your rubbishy ringlets and your twopenny master into the bargain. All right, see if I don't get my teeth into you; either I don't know myself, or you shall laugh on the wrong side of your face, even if you have a beard of gold. I'll see that Minerva's down on you, and the man that first trained you to be what you are. I never learned Geometry and Criticism and such like nonsensical screeds, but I do understand the lapidaries' marks, and I can subdivide to the hundredth part when it comes to questions of mass, and weight and mintage. Well and good! if you have a mind, we'll have a little wager, you and I; come now, here I clap down the tin. You'll soon see your father wasted his money on you, though you do know Rhetoric. Now: 'Which of us?-- I come long, I come wide: now guess me.'"

"I'll tell you which of us runs, yet never stirs from the spot; which of us grows, and gets less all the while. [92] How you skip and fidget and fuss, like a mouse in a chamber-pot! So either hold your tongue altogether, or don't attack a better man than yourself, who hardly knows of your existence,-- unless perhaps you think I'm troubled by your yellow ringlets, that you stole from your doxy. God helps the man that helps himself! Let's go to the forum to borrow money; you'll soon see this bit of iron commands some credit. Aha! a fine sight, a fox in a sweat! As I hope to thrive and make such a good end that the people will all be swearing at my death, hang me if I don't chivvy you up hill and down dale till you drop! A fine sight too, the fellow that taught you so,-- a muff I call him, not a master! We learned something else in my time; the master used to say, 'Are your things safe? go straight home; don't stop staring about, and don't be impertinent to your elders.' Now it's all trash; they turn out nobody worth two pence. That I am what I am, I owe to my own wits, and I thank God for it!"

[ch. 59] Ascyltos was just beginning to answer his abuse; but Trimalchio, charmed with his fellow-freedman's eloquence, stopped him, saying, "Come, come! leave your bickerings on one side. Better be good-natured; and do you Hermeros, spare the young man. His blood is up; so be reasonable. To yield is always to win in these matters. You were a young cockerel yourself once, and then cockadoodledoo you went, and never a grain of sense in you! So take my advice, let's start afresh and be jolly, while we enjoy the Homerists."

Immediately there filed in an armed band, and clashed spears on shields. Trimalchio himself sat in state on his cushion, and when the Homerists began a dialogue in Greek verse, as is their unmannerly manner, read out a Latin text in a clear, loud voice. Presently in an interval of silence, "You know," says he, "what the tale is they are giving us? Diomed and Ganymede were two brothers. Their sister was Helen of Troy. Agamemnon carried her off and palmed a doe on Diana in her stead. So Homer relates how the Trojans and Parentines fought each other. He got the best of it, it seems, and gave his daughter Iphigenia in marriage to Achilles. This drove Ajax mad, who will presently make it all plain to you." [93] No sooner had Trimalchio finished speaking than the Homerists raised a shout, and with the servants bustling in all directions, a boiled calf was borne in on a silver dish weighing two

hundred pounds, and actually wearing a helmet. Then came Ajax, and rushing at it like a madman slashed it to bits with his naked sword, and making passes now up and down, collected the pieces on his point and so distributed the flesh among the astonished guests.

[ch. 60] We had little time however to admire these elegant surprises; for all of a sudden the ceiling began to rattle and the whole room trembled. I sprang up in consternation, fearing some tumbler was going to fall through the roof. The other guests were no less astounded, and gazed aloft, wondering what new prodigy they were to expect now from the skies. Then lo and behold! the ceiling opened and a huge hoop, evidently stripped from an enormous cask, was let down, all round which hung suspended golden wreaths and caskets containing precious ungents. These we were invited to take home with us as mementos.

Then looking again at the table, I saw that a tray of cakes had been placed on it, with a figure of Priapus, [94] the handiwork of the pastry-cook, standing in the middle, represented in the conventional way as carrying in his capacious bosom grapes and all sorts of fruits. Eagerly we reached out after these dainties, when instantly a new trick set us laughing afresh. For each cake and each fruit was full of saffron, which spurted out into our faces at the slightest touch, giving us an unpleasant drenching. So conceiving there must be something specially holy about this dish, scented as it was in this ceremonial fashion, we rose to our feet, crying, "All hail, Augustus, father of his country!" [95] But seeing the others still helping themselves to the dessert, even after this act of piety, we also filled our napkins,-- myself among the foremost, as I thought no gift good enough to pour into my beloved Giton's bosom. Meantime three slaves entered wearing short white jackets. Two of them set on the table images of the Lares [96] with amulets round their necks, while the third carried round a goblet of wine, crying, "The gods be favorable! The gods be favorable!" [....] Trimalchio told us they were named respectively Cerdo, Felicio and Lucrio. [97] Then came a faithful likeness of Trimalchio in marble, and as everybody else kissed it, we were ashamed not to do likewise.

[ch. 61] Then after we had all wished one another good health of mind and body, Trimalchio turned to Niceros and said, "You used to be better company; what makes you so dull and silent today? I beg you, if you wish to oblige me, tell us that adventure of yours." Niceros, delighted at his friend's affability, replied, "May I never make profit more, if I'm not ready to burst with satisfaction to see you so well disposed, Trimalchio. So ho! for a pleasant hour,-- though I very much fear these learned chaps will laugh at me. Well! let 'em. I'll say my say for all that! What does it hurt me, if a man does grin? Better they should laugh with me than at me." "These words the hero spake," and so began the following strange story: "When I was still a slave, we lived in a narrow street; the house is Gavilla's now. There, as the gods would have it, I fell in love with Terentius, the tavern-keeper's wife; you all knew Melissa from Tarentum, the prettiest of pretty wenches! Not that I courted her carnally or for venery, but more because she was such a good sort. Nothing I asked did she ever refuse; if she made a penny, I got a halfpenny; whatever I saved, I put in her purse, and she never cheated me. Well! her husband died when they were at a country house. So I moved heaven and earth to get to her; true friends, you know, are proved in adversity."

[ch. 62] “It so happened my master had gone to Capua, to attend to various trifles of business. So seizing the opportunity, I persuade our lodger to accompany me as far as the fifth milestone. He was a soldier, as bold as Hell. We got under way about first cockcrow, with the moon shining as bright as day. We arrive at the tombs; my man lingers behind among the gravestones, whilst I sit down singing, and start counting the gravestones. Presently I looked back for my comrade; he had stripped off all his clothes and laid them down by the wayside. My heart was in my mouth; and there I stood feeling like a dead man. Then he urinated all round the clothes, and in an instant changed into a wolf. Don’t imagine I’m joking; I would not tell a lie for the finest fortune ever man had. However, as I was telling you, directly he was turned into a wolf, he set up a howl, and away to the woods. At first I didn’t know where I was, but presently I went forward to gather up his clothes; but lo and behold! they were turned into stone. If ever a man was like to die of terror, I was that man! Still I drew my sword and let out at every shadow on the road till I arrived at my sweetheart’s house. I rushed in looking like a ghost, soul and body barely sticking together. The sweat was pouring down between my legs, my eyes were set, my wits gone almost past recovery. Melissa was astounded at my plight, wondering why ever I was abroad so late. ‘Had you come a little sooner,’ she said, ‘you might have given us a hand; a wolf broke into the farm and has slaughtered all the cattle, just as if a butcher had bled them. Still he didn’t altogether have the laugh on us, though he did escape; for one of the laborers ran him through the neck with a pike.’ After hearing this, I could not close an eye, but directly it was broad daylight, I started off for our good Gaius’s house, like a peddler whose pack’s been stolen; and coming to the spot where the clothes had been turned into stone, I found nothing whatever but a pool of blood. When eventually I got home, there lay my soldier a-bed like a great ox, while a surgeon was dressing his neck. I saw at once he was a werewolf and I could never afterwards eat bread with

him, no! not if you'd killed me. Other people may think what they please; but as for me, if I'm telling you a lie, may your guardian spirits confound me!"

[ch. 63] We were all struck dumb with amazement, till Trimalchio broke the silence, saying, "Far be it from me to doubt your story; if you'll believe me, my hair stood on end, for I know Niceros is not the man to repeat idle fables; he's perfectly trustworthy and anything but a babbler. Now! I'll tell you a horrible tale myself, as much out of the common as an ass on the tiles!"

"I was still but a long-haired lad (for I led a Chian life [98] from a boy) when our master's minion died, [99]-- a pearl, by heaven! a paragon of perfection at all points. Well! As his poor mother was mourning him, and several of us besides condoling with her, all of a sudden the witches set up their hullabaloo, for all the world like a hound in full cry after a hare. At that time we had a Cappadocian in the household, a tall fellow, and a high-spirited, and strong enough to lift a mad bull off its feet. This man gallantly drawing his sword, dashed out in front of the house door, first winding his cloak carefully round his left arm, and lunging out, as it might be there--no harm to what I touch-- ran a woman clean through. We heard a groan, but the actual witches (I'm very particular to tell the exact truth) we did not see. Coming in again, our champion threw himself down on a bed and his body was black and blue all over, just as if he had been scourged with whips, for it seems an evil hand had touched him. We barred the door and turned back afresh to our lamentations, but when his mother threw her arms round her boy and touched his dead body, she found nothing but a wisp of straw. It had neither heart, nor entrails, nor anything else; for the witches had whipped away the lad and left a changeling of straw in his place. Now I ask you, can you help after this believing there are wise women, and hags that fly by night. [100] But our tall bully, after what happened, never got back his color, in fact a few days afterward he died raving mad!"

[ch. 64] We listened with wonder and credulity in equal proportions, and kissing the table, besought the night-hags to keep in quarters, while we were returning home. And indeed by this time the lights seemed to burn double and I thought the whole room looked changed, when Trimalchio exclaimed, "I call on you, Plocamus; have you nothing to tell us? no diversion for us? And you used to be such good company, with your amusing dialogues and the comic songs you interspersed. Heigho! all gone, ye toothsome tidbits, all gone?" "Alas! my racing days are over, since I got the gout," replied the other; "but when I was a young man, I very nearly sang myself into a consumption. Dancing? dialogues? buffoonery? when did I ever find my match, eh?-- always excepting Appelles." [101] And clapping his hand to his mouth, he spit out some horrid stuff that sounded like whistling, and which he told us afterwards was Greek.

Moreover Trimalchio himself gave an imitation of a horn-blower, and presently turned to his minion whom he called Croesus. [102] This was a lad with sore eyes and filthy teeth: he was playing with a little black bitch, disgustingly fat, twisting a green scarf round her, putting half a loaf of bread on the couch, and on the animal's refusing to eat it, being already overfed, cramming it down her throat. This reminding Trimalchio of a duty omitted, he ordered Scylax [103] to be brought in, "the guardian of my house and home." Next moment a huge watchdog was led in on a large chain and took up a position in front of the table. Then Trimalchio tossed him a lump of white bread, observing, "There's no one in the house loves me better." The boy was enraged at hearing Scylax so lavishly praised, and setting his bitch down on the floor, cheered her on to attack the monster. Scylax, as was his nature to, filled the room with savage barking, and almost tore Croesus's little "Pearl" into bits. Nor did this fight end the trouble; but a chandelier was upset over the table, smashing all the crystal, and scalding some of the guests with oil.

Trimalchio, not to appear disconcerted at the damage done, kissed the lad and told him to get up on his back. The latter mounted a-cockhorse without a moment's hesitation, and repeatedly slapping him on the shoulders with his open hand, laughingly shouted, "Buck! buck! how many fingers do I hold up?" After thus submitting for a while to be made a horse of, Trimalchio ordered them to prepare a capacious bowl of wine for all the slaves sitting at our feet, but on this condition, he added, "If any one won't take his whack, souse it over his head! Business in the daytime, now for jollity!"

[ch. 65] After this display of good nature, there followed a course of delicacies, only to think of which, if you'll believe me, makes me feel ill. For instead of thrushes, a fatted hen was set before each guest and chaperoned goose-eggs which Trimalchio urged us most pressingly to partake of, assuring us the hens were boned.

At this moment a *lictor* knocked at the folding doors of the dining-hall, and dressed out in a white robe, a fresh boon-companion now entered, with a large train in attendance. As for me, I was so much impressed by all this state and ceremony, I thought it was the *praetor*. [104] So I made as if to rise and set my naked feet to the floor. Agamemnon laughed at my trepidation. "Sit still, you silly fellow," said he, "it's Habinnas the *sevir*, he's a marble-mason, and it seems makes capital good monuments." Reassured by what he said, I lay back again in my place, and watched Habinnas' entry with the greatest admiration. He was already tipsy, and

leant for support on his wife's shoulder; wearing several heavy wreaths round his brow, which was so reeking with perfume it kept trickling into his eyes, he took the *praetor*'s place, and at once called for wine and hot water.

Delighted at his joviality, Trimalchio himself called for a large goblet, and asked him how he had been entertained. "We had everything in the world," he replied, "except the pleasure of your company; for indeed my inclinations were here. But upon my word, it was very fine. Scissa was giving a very elegant memorial service in memory of her poor old slave, whom she had enfranchised after his death. And I suppose she will have a good round sum to pay to the tax-collectors, for they do tell me the dead man's fortune came to fifty thousand. I assure you it was all very pleasant, though we did have to pour half our liquor over his old bones."

[ch. 66] "But what did you have for dinner?" Trimalchio asked. "I'll tell you, if I can," was the answer, "but there, I have such a first-class memory, I often forget my own name. However, for first course we had a pig topped with a black-pudding and garnished with fritters and giblets, capitally dressed, and beetroot of course, and whole-meal brown bread, which I prefer myself to white; it makes muscle, and when I do my does, I don't have to yell. The next course was cold tarts, and to drink, excellent Spanish wine poured over warm honey. So I ate a fine helping of tart, and smeared myself well with the honey. As accessories, were chick-peas and lupines, nuts at discretion, and an apple apiece. But I took two, and look you! I've got them here tied up in a napkin; for if I don't take some present back for my little slave lad at home, there'll be a row. Right! my wife reminds me, we had also, on the sideboard a joint of bear's meat. Scintilla [105] took some inadvertently, and very nearly threw up her guts. I on the contrary ate nearly a pound of it; indeed it tasted quite like boar's flesh. And what I say is, if bear eats man, why should not man, with a far better reason, eat bear? To end up with, we had cream cheese flavored with wine jelly, snails, one apiece, chitterlings, scalloped liver and chaperoned eggs, turnips, mustard and (by your leave, Palamedes!) [106] a dish of mixed siftings; pickled olives also were handed round in a bowl, from which some of the party were mean enough to help themselves to three handfuls each; the ham we declined altogether.

[ch. 67] "But pray, Gaius, why is not Fortunata at table?" "Don't you know her better than that?" answered Trimalchio. "Not until she has counted the plate, and divided the leavings among the slaves, will she let so much as a drop of water pass her lips."

"Well!" returned Habinnas, "if she does not join us, I'm off for one," and made as though to get up, when at a signal from their master the whole houseful of slaves called out, four times over and more, "Fortunata! Fortunata!" At this she entered at last, her frock kilted up with a yellow girdle, so as to show a cherry-colored tunic underneath, and corded anklets and gold-embroidered slippers. Then wiping her hands on a handkerchief she wore at her neck, she placed herself on the same couch beside Habinnas' wife, Scintilla, kissing her while the other claps her hands, and exclaiming, "Have I really the pleasure of seeing you?"

Before long it came to Fortunata's taking off the bracelets from her great fat arms to show them to her admiring companion. Finally she even undid her anklets and her hairnet, which she assured Scintilla was of the very finest gold. Trimalchio observing this, ordered all the things to be brought to him. "You see this woman's fetters," he cried; "that's the way we poor devils are robbed! Six pound and a half, if it's an ounce; and yet I've got one myself of ten pound weight, all made out of Mercury's thousandths." Eventually to prove he was not telling a lie, he ordered a pair of scales to be brought, and had the articles carried round and the weight tested by each in turn. And Scintilla was just as bad, for she drew from her bosom a little gold casket she called her “lucky box.” From it she produced a pair of ear-pendants and handed them one after the other to Fortunata to admire, saying, "Thanks to my husband's goodness, no wife has finer."

A pair of golden Gallo-Roman earrings in the shape of a lion's head, Musée d'art et d'archéologie de Laon, photograph by Vassil, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

"Why truly!" remarked Habinnas, "you gave me no peace till I bought you the glass bean. I tell you straight, if I had a daughter, I should cut off her ears. If there were no women in the world, we should have everything in the world dirt cheap; as it is, we've just got to piss hot and drink cold."

Meanwhile the two women, though a trifle piqued, laughed good-humoredly together and interchanged some tipsy kisses, the one praising the thrifty management of the lady of the house, the other enlarging on the minions her husband kept and his unthrifty ways. While they were thus engaged in close confabulation, Habinnas got up stealthily and catching hold of

Fortunata's legs, upset her on the couch. "Ah! ah!" she screeched, as her tunic slipped up above her knees. Then falling on Scintilla's bosom, she hid in her handkerchief a face all afire with blushes.

[ch. 68] After a short interval Trimalchio next ordered the dessert to be served; hereupon the servants removed all the tables and brought in fresh ones, and strewed the floor with saffron and vermilion colored sawdust [107] and,-- a refinement I had not seen before,-- with specular stone reduced to powder. The moment the tables were changed, Trimalchio remarked, "I could really be quite content with what we have; for you see your 'second tables' before you. However, if there is anything spicy for dessert, let's have it in."

Meantime an Alexandrian lad, who served round the hot water, began imitating a nightingale, his master from time to time calling out, "Change!" Another form of entertainment followed. A slave who was sitting at Habinnas' feet, at his master's bidding, as I imagine, suddenly sang out in a loud voice: "Meantime Aeneas cuts his watery way. . . ." [108]

Nothing harsher ever shocked my ears, for to say nothing of the false inflections, now high now low, of his voice and his barbarous pronunciation, he kept sticking in tags from Atellane farces, [109] so that for the first time in my life I found Virgil intolerable. Yet

no sooner did he pause for an instant than Habinnas loudly applauded the performance, adding, "The man has had no regular training; I merely sent him to see some mountebanks, and that's how he learned.

The result is, he has not his match, whether it's muleteers or mountebanks he wants to mimic. He's just desperate clever; he's cobbler, cook, confectioner, a compendium of all the talents. Still he has two faults, but for which he would be a perfect paragon: he is circumcised and he snores. For his squinting, I don't mind that; Venus has the same little defect. That's why his tongue is never still, because one eye is pretty much always on the alert. I gave three hundred denarii for him."

[ch. 69] Here Scintilla interrupted the speaker; "You take good care," she said, "not to mention all the scamp's qualifications. I'm sure he must be an arrant go-between; but I'll see to it that he has his brand before long."

Trimalchio only laughed and said, "I see he's a true Cappadocian; always looks out for number one. And, my word! I don't blame him; for indeed, once dead, this is a thing nobody can secure us. And you, Scintilla, don't be so jealous! Believe me, we understand you women. As I hope to be safe and sound, I used myself to poke her ladyship, so that even my master got suspicious; and that's why he sent me off to be a factor [agent] in the country. But hush! tongue, and I'll give you a cake."

Taking everything that was said for high praise, the foul slave now drew an earthenware lamp from his bosom, and for more than half an hour mimicked a trumpeter, while Habinnas accompanied him, squeezing his lip down with his fingers. Finally he actually stepped out into the middle of the room, and first imitated a flute player by means of broken reeds; then with riding-cloak and whip, acted the muleteer, until Habinnas called him to his side and kissed him, gave him a drink and cried, "Bravo! Massa, bravo! I'll give you a pair of boots."

We should never have seen the end of these tiresome inflictions but for the extra course now coming in,-- thrushes of pastry, stuffed with raisins and walnuts, followed by quinces stuck over with thorns, to represent sea-urchins. This would have been intolerable enough, had it not been for a still more outlandish dish, such a horrible concoction, we would rather have died than touch it. Directly it was on the table,-- to all appearance a fatted goose, with fish and fowl of all kinds round it. "Friends," cried Trimalchio, "every single thing you see on that dish is made out of one substance." With my accustomed perspicacity, I instantly guessed its nature, and said, giving Agamemnon a look, "For my own part, I shall be greatly surprised, if it is not all made of filth, or at any rate mud. When I was in Rome at the Saturnalia, [110] I saw some sham eatables of the same sort."

[ch. 70] I had not done speaking when Trimalchio explained, "As I hope to grow a bigger man,-- in fortune I mean, not fat,-- I declare my cook made it every bit out of a pig. Never was a more invaluable fellow! Give the word, he'll make you a fish of the paunch, a wood-pigeon of the lard, a turtle-dove of the forehand, and a hen of the hind leg! And that's why I very cleverly gave him such a fine and fitting name as Daedalus. [111] And because he's such a good servant, I brought him a present from Rome, a set of knives of Noric steel." [112] These he immediately ordered to be brought, and examined and admired them, even allowing us to try their edge on our cheeks.

All of a sudden in rushed two slaves, as if fresh from a quarrel at the fountain; at any rate they still had their water-pots hanging from the shoulder-yokes. Then when Trimalchio gave judgment upon their difference, they would neither of them accept his decision, but each smashed the other's pot with a stick. We were horror-struck at the drunken scoundrels' insolence, and looking hard at the combatants, we noticed oysters and scallops tumbling out of the broken pitchers, which another slave gathered up and handed round on a platter. This refinement was matched by the ingenious cook, who now brought in snails on a little silver gridiron, singing the while in a quavering, horribly rasping voice.

I am really ashamed to relate what followed, it was so unheard-of a piece of luxury. Long-haired slave boys brought in an unguent in a silver basin, and anointed our feet with it as we lay at table, after first wreathing our legs and ankles with garlands. Afterwards a small quantity of the same perfume was poured into the wine-jars and the lamps.

By this time a strong wish to dance had seized upon Fortunata, while Scintilla's hands were going quicker in applause even than her tongue in chatter, when Trimalchio said, "I give you my permission, Philargyrus, and you, Cario, notorious champion though you are of the green, [113] to take your places at table; also bid Menophila, your bedfellow, to do the same." To make a long story short, we were all but thrust off our couches, such a throng of domestics now invaded the dinner- table. I actually noticed occupying a place above my own the cook who had made a goose out of a pig, reeking as he was with fish-pickle and sauces. Indeed he was not satisfied with merely being present, but immediately began an imitation of Ephesus the Tragedian, after which he offered his master a bet that at the next races the green would score first prize.

[ch. 71] Delighted at the challenge, Trimalchio cried, "Yes! my friends, slaves are human beings too, and have sucked mother's milk as well as we, though untoward circumstance has borne them down. Nevertheless, without prejudicing me, they shall some day soon drink the water of the free. In a word, I enfranchise them all in my will. I bequeath into the bargain a farm and his bedfellow to Philargyrus, a street block to Cario, besides a twentieth and a bed and bedding. I name Fortunata my heir, and commend her to all my friends' kindness. And all this I make public, to the end my whole household may love me now as well as if I were dead already."

All began to express their gratitude to so kind a master, when Trimalchio, quite dropping his trifling vein, ordered a copy of his will to be fetched, and read it through from beginning to end amid the groans of all members of the household. Then turning to Habinnas, he asked him, "What say you, dear friend? Are you building my monument according to my directions? I ask you particularly that at the feet of my effigy you have my little bitch put, and garlands and perfume caskets and all Petraites' fights, [114] that by your good help I may live on even after death. The frontage is to be a hundred feet long, and it must reach back two hundred. For I wish to have all kinds of fruit trees growing around my ashes and plenty of vines. Surely it's a great mistake to make houses so fine for the living, yet to give never a thought to these where we have to dwell far, far longer. And that's why I especially insist on the notice: THIS MONUMENT DOES NOT DESCEND TO THE HEIR.

But I shall take good care to provide in my will against my remains being insulted. For I intend to put one of my freedmen in charge of my burial place, to see that the rabble don't come running and dirtying up my monument. I beg you to have ships under full sail carved on it, and me sitting on the tribunal, in my Senator's robes, with five gold rings on my fingers, [115] and showering money from a bag among the public; [116] for you remember I gave a public banquet once, two denarii a head. Also there should be shown, if you approve, a banqueting-hall, and all the people enjoying themselves pleasantly. On my right hand put a figure of my wife, Fortunata, holding a dove and leading a little bitch on a leash, also my little lad, and some good capacious wine-jars, stoppered so that the wine may not escape. Also you may carve a broken urn, and a boy weeping over it. Also a sundial in the center, so that anyone looking to see the time must willy-nilly read my name. As for the lettering, look this over carefully and see if you think it is good enough: HERE LIES C. POMPEIUS TRIMALCHIO, A SECOND MAECENAS. [117] HE WAS NOMINATED SEVIR IN HIS ABSENCE. HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN A MEMBER OF EVERY DECURIA IN ROME, BUT DECLINED. PIOUS, BRAVE, HONORABLE, HE ROSE FROM THE RANKS WITHOUT LEARNING OR EDUCATION, HE LEFT A MILLION OF MONEY BEHIND HIM. FAREWELL; GO AND DO THOU LIKEWISE!"

[ch. 72] When he had finished reading this document, Trimalchio fell to weeping copiously. Fortunata wept too; so did Habinnas; so did the servants; in fact, the whole household filled the room with lamentations, for all the world like guests at a funeral. Indeed I was beginning to weep myself, when Trimalchio resumed. "Well!" said he, "as we know we've got to die, why not make the most of life? As I should like to see you all happy, let's jump into the bath. I guarantee you'll be none the worse; it's as hot as an oven."

"Right! right!" cried Habinnas, "to make two days out of one; nothing I should like better," and springing up barefoot as he was, he followed Trimalchio, who led the way, clapping his hands.

For myself I said, turning to Ascyltos, "What think you, Ascyltos? as for me, to look at a bath now would kill me." [118]

"Let's consent," he replied; "and then, as they are making for the bathroom, escape in the confusion."

This being agreed upon, Giton led the way through the colonnade, and we reached the house-door, where the watchdog greeted us with such furious barking that Ascyltos tumbled into the tank in sheer terror. I too, tipsy as I was, and having been once already scared at a painted dog, got dragged in myself in helping him out of the water. However the hall-keeper rescued us, who interfered and quieted the dog, and pulled us out shivering onto terra firma. Giton had already discovered an ingenious way of disarming the animal; anything we had given him from our dinner, he threw to the barking brute, whose temper was appeased and his attention diverted by the food. But when, cold and wet, we asked the hall-keeper to let us out, "You're much mistaken," said he, "if you think you can go out the same way you came in. No guest is ever dismissed by the same door; they enter one, go out by another."

[ch. 73] So what were we poor unfortunates to do now, prisoners in this new kind of labyrinth, [119] and reduced to choose the bath as the only alternative? We took the bull by the horns therefore, and asked the hall-keeper to show us the way there; then throwing off our clothes, which Giton proceeded to dry in the porch, we entered the bath, which we found to be a narrow chamber, more like a cooling cistern than anything else, with Trimalchio standing upright in it. Not even under these circumstances could he refrain from his loathsome trick of boasting, declaring there was nothing more agreeable than to be free of a crowd in bathing, and that his bath-house occupied the exact site of a former bakery. Presently, feeling tired, he sat down, and tempted by his resonance of the

bathroom, turned up his tipsy face and open mouth to the vault, and began murdering some of Menecrates' songs, [120] as we were told by those who could make out the words.

The remainder of the company were running hand in hand round the edge of the bath, laughing and shouting at the top of their voices. Others with their hands tied behind their backs, were trying to pick up rings from the pavement in their mouths, or kneeling down, to bend back and kiss the points of their toes. Whilst the others were engaged in these amusements, we got down into the bath, that was being heated for Trimalchio.

After dissipating the fumes of wine by these means, we were next conducted to another dinner-hall, where Fortunata had laid out a dainty banquet of her own. I noticed especially lamps suspended over the table with miniature figures of fishermen in bronze, tables of solid silver, cups of gilt pottery ware round the board, and wine pouring from a wine skin before our eyes.

[ch. 74] No sooner said than done; a rooster was instantly produced from somewhere near, which Trimalchio ordered to be killed and put in the pot to boil. He was cut up accordingly by the same clever cook who a while before had manufactured game and fish out of a pig, and thrown into a stew-pan. Then whilst Daedalus kept the pot boiling, Fortunata ground pepper in a box-wood mill.

These dainties being dispatched, Trimalchio turned to the servants, saying, "What! haven't you had your dinners yet? be off now, and let the relay take your places." Hereupon a second set of attendants came in, the outgoing slaves crying, "Farewell, Gaius!" and the incoming, "Hail, Gaius!" At this point our mirth was disturbed for the first time; for a rather good-looking slave boy having entered along with the new lot of domestics, Trimalchio laid hold of him and started kissing him over and over again. At this Fortunata, to assert "her lawful and equitable rights" (as she put it), began abusing her husband, calling him an abomination and a disgrace, that he could not restrain his filthy passions, ending up with the epithet "dog!" Trimalchio for his part was so enraged at her railing that he hurled a wine-cup in his wife's face. Fortunata screamed out, as if she had lost an eye, and clapped her trembling hands to her face. Scintilla was equally alarmed, and sheltered her shuddering friend in her bosom. At the same time an officious attendant applied a pitcher of cold water to her cheek, over which the poor lady drooped and fell a-sighing and a-sobbing.

But Trimalchio went on. "What! what!" he stormed, "has the trollop no memory? didn't I take her from the stand in the slave-market, and make her a free woman among her equals? But there, she puffs herself out, like the frog in the fable; she's too proud to spit in her own bosom, the blockhead. If you are born in a hovel, you shouldn't dream of a palace. As I hope to prosper, I'll see to it this Cassandra of the camp is brought to reason. [122] Why! when I was only worth two pennies, I might have married ten millions of money. You know I might. Agatho, perfumer to the lady next door, drew me aside, and 'I'll give you a hint,' said he; 'don't let your race die out.' But I, with my silly good nature, and not wanting to seem fickle-minded, I've driven my ax into my own leg. All right! I'll make you long yet to dig me up again with your fingernails! And to show this minute the harm you've done yourself, I forbid you, Habinnas, to put her statue on my tomb at all, that I may not have any scolding when I'm gone. I'll teach her I can do her a mischief; I won't have her so much as kiss my dead body!"

[ch. 75] After this thunderclap, Habinnas began to entreat him to forget and forgive. "Nobody," he urged, "but goes wrong sometimes; we're men after all, not gods." Scintilla spoke to the same purpose with tears in her eyes, and besought him in the name of his good Genius [122b] and addressing him as Gaius, to be pacified. Trimalchio could restrain his tears no longer, but cried, "As you hope, Habinnas, to enjoy your little fortune,-- if I've done anything wrong, spit in my face. I kissed the good, careful lad, not because he's a pretty boy, but because he's so thrifty and clever. I tell you he can recite ten pieces, reads his book at sight, has bought himself a Thracian costume out of his daily rations, besides an armchair and a pair of cups. Does he not deserve to be the apple of my eye? But Fortunata won't have it. That's your pleasure, is it, you tipsy wench? I warn you, make the most of what you've got, you cormorant; and don't make me nasty, sweetheart, else you'll get a taste of my temper. You know me; once I've made up my mind, I'm just as hard as nails!"

"However, not to forget the living, pray, my good friends, enjoy yourselves. I was once what you are now, but my own merits have made me what you see. It's gumption makes a man, all the rest's trash. 'Buy cheap, and sell dear,' that's me; one man will tell you one thing, another another, but I'm just bursting with success. What! Crying still, grunty pig? Mark me, I'll give you something worth crying about. But as I was saying, it was my thriftiness that raised me to my present position. When first I came from Asia, I was no higher than this candle-stick. I tell you, I used to measure myself by it every day; and the sooner to get a beard under my nose, I would smear my lips with the lamp oil. But I was my master's joy for fourteen years; there's nothing disgraceful in doing your master's bidding. And I satisfied my mistress in the bargain. You know what I mean; I say no more, for I'm none of your boasters."

[ch. 76] "Eventually, it so pleased the gods, I found myself king of the castle, and behold! I could twist my master round my finger. To make a long story short, he made me his co-heir with the Emperor, and I came into a senatorial fortune. [123] Still no one is ever satisfied. I longed to be a merchant prince. So, not to be tedious, I built five ships, loaded up with wine,-- it was worth its weight in gold just then,-- and sent them off to Rome. You might have supposed I'd ordered it so! If you'll believe me, every one of the ships foundered, and that's a fact. In one day Neptune [124] swallowed me up thirty millions. Do you imagine I gave in? Not I, by my faith! the loss only whetted my appetite, as if it were a mere nothing. I built more ships, bigger and better found and luckier, until everyone allowed I was a well-plucked one. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, you know; and a big ship's a big venture. I loaded up again with wine, bacon, beans, perfumery and slaves. Fortunata was a real good wife to me that time; she sold all her jewelry and all her clothes, and laid a hundred gold pieces in my hand; and it proved the leaven of my little property. A thing's soon done, when the gods will it. One voyage I cleared a round ten millions. Instantly I bought back all the farms that had been my late master's; I build a house; I buy up cattle to sell again. Whatever I touched, grew like a honeycomb. When I discovered I had as large an income as the whole revenue of my native land amounted to, off hands; I withdrew from commerce, and started lending money among freedmen. Moreover, just when I'd quite made up my mind to have no more to do with trade, an astrologer advised me to the same course, a little Greek fellow, that happened to come to our own town. Serapa he was called, up to all the secrets of the gods. He told me things I had clean forgotten, explaining it all as pat as needle and thread; he knew my inside, he could all but tell me what I'd had for dinner the day before. You would have thought he had lived with me all my life."

[ch. 77] "Now tell me, Habinnas,-- you were there at the time, I think-- didn't he say: 'You have used your wealth to set a mistress over you. You are not very lucky in your friends. No one is ever properly grateful to you. You have enormous estates. You are nourishing a viper beneath your wing,' and-- why should I not tell you?-- that I have now left me to live thirty years, four months and two days. Also I am soon to come in for another fortune. This is what my Fate has in store for me. And if I have the luck to extend my lands to Apulia, I shall have done pretty well in my day. Meantime by Mercury's good help, [125] I have built this house. You remember it as a cottage; it's as big as a temple now. It has four dining-rooms, twenty bedrooms, two marble porticos, a series of storerooms up stairs, the chamber where I sleep myself, this viper's sitting-room, an excellent porter's lodge; while the guest chambers afford ample accommodations. In fact, when Scaurus comes this way, there's nowhere he better likes to stop at, and he has an ancestral mansion of his own by the seaside. Yes! and there are plenty more fine things I'll show you directly. Take my word for it,-- Have a penny, good for a penny; have something, and you're thought something. So your humble servant, who was a toad once upon a time, is a king now. Meantime, Stichus, just bring out the graveclothes I propose to be buried in; also the unguent, and a taste of the wine I wish to have my bones washed with."

[ch. 78] Without a moment's delay, Stichus produced a white shroud and a magistrate's gown into the dining-hall, and asked us to feel if they were made of good wool. Then his master added with a laugh, "Mind, Stichus, mice and moth don't get at them; else I'll have you burned alive. I wish to be buried in all my bravery, that the whole people may call down the blessings on my head." Immediately afterwards he opened a pot of spikenard, [126] and after rubbing us all with the ointment, "I only hope," said he, "it will give me as much pleasure when I'm dead as it does now when I'm alive." Further he ordered the wine vessels to be filled up, telling us to "imagine you are invited guests at my funeral feast."

The thing was getting positively sickening, when Trimalchio, now in a state of disgusting intoxication, commanded a new diversion, a company of horn-blowers, to be introduced; and then stretching himself out along the edge of a couch on a pile of pillows, "Make believe I am dead," he ordered. "Play something fine." Then the horn-blowers struck up a loud funeral dirge. In particular one of these undertaker's men, the most conscientious of the lot, blew so tremendous a fanfare he roused the whole neighborhood. Hereupon the watchman in charge of the surrounding district, thinking Trimalchio's house was on fire, suddenly burst open the door, and rushing in with water and axes, started the much admired confusion usual under such circumstances. For our part, we seized the excellent opportunity thus offered, snapped our fingers in Agamemnon's face, and rushed away helter-skelter just as if we were escaping from a real conflagration.

Footnotes:

[21] A last supper granted to gladiators headed for the arena, presumably referring to their encounter with Quartilla and company.

[22] Romans often headed to the public baths for exercise, bathing, and socializing. The public baths fulfilled many of the functions of modern health clubs or gyms.

[23] Eunuchs were men who had been castrated. In this case, they are probably slaves as well.

[24] Agamemnon and his younger brother Menelaus (Helen's husband) were the two Spartan kings responsible for instigating the Trojan war. Spartans were famously laconic, so it is a joke to make a teacher of rhetoric have Agamemnon as a name.

[25] A libation was a drink offering to the gods.

[26] A rough woolen cloth left with a ragged finish on one side. He would have looked a bit shaggy.

[27] Although the author refers to a wall painting, there is a famous entry mosaic in Pompeii depicting a snarling dog with “Beware the Dog!” (*Cave canem*) written prominently in black tiles.

[28] A *caduceus* was a staff with entwined snakes, the symbol of Mercury, god of trickery and commerce.

[29] To the Greeks, Athena. Also associated with cunning and cleverness, weaving, and warfare. Odysseus’s patron.

[30] For Mercury, see note 28 above.

[31] Good fortune was depicted as a goddess. Our Thanksgiving cornucopia comes from her cornucopia.

[32] Three sister goddesses traditionally depicted as women who spun, measured and cut the thread of each mortal’s existence.

[33] These objects were typical for upper class patrician household shrines, but not for those of a freedman. For the role of the Lares, see: http://www.classics.upenn.edu/myth/php/tools/dictionary.php?regexp=LARES&method=standard

[34] Also known as Aphrodite, goddess of sensual love.

[35] These Greek epic poems were considered classic works of literature by both the Greeks and the Romans. Roman frescoes featuring scenes from these two Greek works were very popular. They indicated you had “class” enough to read Greek (or have it read to you by an educated slave). A rather graphic fresco was recently unearthed in Pompeii and featured a wounded gladiator: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/bloody-gladiator-fresco-unearthed-pompeii-180973349/

[36] More instances of pretensions to higher status than that of a freedman -- Trimalchio is fusing symbols of various offices higher than he ever occupied as a sevir or participant in a committee (the Board of Six) founded to enable freedmen's entree into public office and foster local observance of emperor-worship. Fasces (rods bundled around an axe) were symbols carried by magistrates' attendants, while ship's beaks (or rams) were often seized and displayed in victory monuments, such as that constructed by Octavian after the battle of Actium. Multiple names also indicated free status (most Roman names had three components).

[37] The left or "sinister" side was considered unlucky.

[37b] The equivalent of about three days’ wages for a common legionary.

[38] Slaves could not by definition have clients. The Roman patron-client relationship was complicated. Normally a client sought out a more powerful patron for protection and favors while the patron received paybacks and support from his clients. Think *The Godfather*, but legitimate and mainstream.

[39] Tyrian purple was most expensive dye in the Roman world, derived from shellfish. One-dipped was good, twice-dyed better.

[40] For the social hierarchy built into seating arrangements at Roman dinner parties, see: https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/reclining-and-dining-and-drinking-in-ancient-rome/

[41] From Alexandria in Egypt, a major trading port. The slaves may or may not have been Egyptians or Nubians.

[42] Dormice and some of the other foods served were considered delicacies. But the sheer amount and exotic nature of the food served is meant to reflect on Trimalchio's crass nature.

[43] Trimalchio is very nearly breaking several laws here restricting the use of purple-bordered garments to high officials, while gold rings were restricted to the patrician classes (senators and equestrians).

[44] In some cultures, embryonic chicks are a delicacy, but not for the narrator.

[45] A warbler-type bird considered a delicacy, a bit like ortolans in France.

[46] Ethiopians appear often in Roman art. See, for example, this mosaic floor from Turkey. Like the Alexandrians, these are slaves from far away and so expensive and “exotic.”

[47] The most expensive vintage, like cracking open a bottle of Rothschild.

[48] Jointed skeletons have been found in excavations of Roman settlements. See this article on JSTOR.

[49] Perhaps a crow or raven.

[50] Each food is meant to be a visual pun on the zodiac sign in which it was placed.

[51] A type of wild plant still gathered in the Mediterranean region for food.

[52] A famous mythical winged horse.

[53] Marsyas was a satyr who challenged Apollo to a music-contest, lost, was flayed alive and transformed into a river, here a river of fish sauce (*garum*).

[54] Her name means "she of good fortune," but the insinuation is that she was formerly a prostitute and so ritually unclean.

[55] Factotum = jack of all trades = someone who is entrusted with every kind of task.

[56] See note 40 above.

[56b] A bit like tricking a leprechaun to find his pot of gold.

[57] Trimalchio is citing the *Aeneid* (bk. 2, line 44) referring to Ulysses' reputation for deception.

[58] The twelve main gods who lived on Mount Olympus: Jupiter and Juno, Vesta and Ceres, Minerva and Diana, Neptune and Mars, Mercury, Apollo, Venus, and Vulcan.

[59] Hipparchus was a Greek astronomer, geographer, and mathematician. Aratus was a Greek poet whose most famous work, *Phaenomena*, was on astronomy.

[60] An elaborate joke along the lines of the American tradition of the presidential pardoning of the White House Thanksgiving turkey.

[61] These were all alternative names for Bacchus (Liber), god of drink.

[62] An elaborate pun on "liber pater," or "free father," which a slave or freedman could not by definition possess. “Liber” was another of Bacchus’ titles, but also means “Free.” For the freedman's cap (*pileus*), see the description of the manumission ritual in the introduction.

[63] Fulling was a process used to cleanse and shrink woolen cloth. In Roman times, urine was collected as a source of ammonium salts and the cloth was allowed to soak in this mixture and was agitated by slaves treading the vats. It was a smelly process frequently confined to specific areas of the city.

[64] As Sarah Ruden notes, ceasing to bathe as part of mourning was a Semitic custom, not a Roman one (*Satyricon*, 29 n. 90).

[65] See the section in the introduction on the manumission of slaves in wills and the place of freed persons in funeral processions.

[66] Government officials responsible for public works, spectacles, and free grain distributions (the “dole”).

[67] Sicily was a major wheat-growing region.

[68] God of the skies and rain.

[69] *Mora* was a game a bit like rock, paper, scissors (which depended on seeing the hand gestures of the players)

[70] Thracians were highly esteemed as soldiers and gladiators. A category of gladiatorial fighters were also called "Thracians" after their armor and fighting style.

[71] Romans began their studies on Greek literature, then progressed to Latin.

[72] Advocates made speeches on their clients’ behalf in court and were trained typically in rhetoric and law.

[73] A *decuria* was a group of ten. Trimalchio owns hundreds of slaves.

[74] Trimalchio refers here to the famous labors or tasks assigned to the hero Hercules.

[75] Trimalchio, of course, gets these stories all wrong. Odysseus put out the Cyclop Polyphemus' eye with a stake.

[76] The Cumaean Sibyl was a priestess of the shrine to Apollo at the Greek colony of Cumae, near modern day Naples, Italy. She forgot to qualify her wish to live forever and so aged as she lived until she withered into a living mummy.

[77] A famous Carthiginian general who never came near Troy.

[78] Again, either the legends are misremembered or the workmanship shoddy. They are probably meant to show Medea slaying her children and Pasiphae shut up in the hollow cow.

[79] Two contemporary gladiators -- a crass choice for silverware.

[80] A genius was one's guardian spirit.

[81] Pompey the Great was notoriously rich.

[82] *Aediles* were public officials, but Trimalchio's estates seem to have their own governmental system, they are so vast.

[83] Baiae was a resort town.

[84] Atellan farce was a type of Roman comedic play.

[85] Writing tablets were made of boards coated with wax.

[86] Perhaps a fictional writer.

[87] A ridiculous comparison. Cicero was a famous orator of high Latin style, while Publilius wrote mimes.

[88] Trimalchio means "prince." The equestrian class was originally a group wealthy enough to serve as cavalry in the Roman army, but eventually served in various government offices and became nearly indistinguishable from the senatorial class.

[89] During the feast of Saturnalia, slaves were allowed to temporarily reverse roles with their owners.

[90] The twentieth was a tax of five percent of their current value paid by freed slaves.

[91] The gallows here probably refers to crucifixion, not hanging.

[92] A Roman riddle.

[93] Trimalchio makes a hash of famous legends. Ganymede was a mortal youth kidnapped by Jove to be his cupbearer; Diomedes was one of the leaders of the Hellenes during the Trojan War. Trimalchio confuses them with Castor and Pollux, brothers of Helen, famous fraternal twins and heroes. Paris carried off Helen, who was married to Menelaus, Agamemnon’s brother. Iphigenia was sacrificed, not married to Achilles. Ajax was driven mad by Athena, but it was the result of a contest over the deceased Achilles’ armor. Ajax was driven mad by Athena and slaughtered herds of sheep and cows in his rage, before coming to his senses. He committed suicide for shame.

[94] Priapus was a god of fertility and fecundity, often depicted with an oversize and erect penis and surrounded by an abundance of fruits.

[95] Both Julius Caesar and his adoptive son and heir, Octavian, were deified after their deaths, but this appears to refer to a living emperor.

[96] Each household had its guardian gods (Lares), who had their own shrine and were given daily offerings.

[97] Their names mean “Pork,” “Happiness,” “Profit."

[98] Relating to the island of Chios. Perhaps insinuating that Trimalchio was "effeminate" from an early age.

[99] Some Roman men preyed on pretty slave boys. Trimalchio seems to have been one of these victims in his youth, but also had a "favorite" slave boy of his own once he was emancipated.

[100] Night-hag referred to the belief that malevolent beings could cause nightmares or sleep paralysis.

[101]Appelles was the name of a famous Greek actor in the emperor Caligula's entourage.

[102] Croesus was the name of a fabulously wealthy mythical king.

[103] Perhaps named after Scylax of Caryanda, a Carian sailor in Persian service, who explored the shores of the Indian Ocean.

[104] Encolpius was on the run from the law, which praetors enforced. Lictors were officers who attended the consul or other magistrates and enacted sentences passed on offenders.

[105] "Sparky."

[106] Palamedes was a hero among the Greek forces besieging Troy.

[107] Both were hideously expensive naturally derived dies: vermilion from crushed beetles, saffron from crocus stamens.

[108] *Aeneid*, bk. 5, line 1.

[109] A kind of low-brow comedic skit.

[110] A carnivalesque festival where fake food would have been appropriate.

[111] Daedalus was a famous inventor who created the labyrinth and wings for humans, among other things.

[112] The town of Noricum was apparently known for producing fine steel.

[113] That is, a chariot-racing team named the “Greens.” A bit like a follower of the Cubs in Chicago inviting a Sox supporter to dine.

[114] Evidently a famous gladiator.

[115] Gold rings were reserved for the senatorial class. Freedman could not belong to this social group.

[116] See this freedman's tomb which commemorates his gifts of grain to the poor.

[117] Maecenas was an ally of Augustus well known for his debauchery.

[118] Taking a hot bath after a large meal was considered hazardous to one's health.

[119] A reference to the famous Labyrinth said to have been constructed by Daedalus to house the man-eating minotaur.

[120] A famous musician during Nero’s reign.

[121] Hearing a rooster crow was evidently considered unlucky.

[122] Cassandra was a famously mad Trojan prophetess whose foretellings were never believed.

[122b] A genius was one's own personal guardian deity.

[123] Sarah Ruden notes that some families made the emperor a co-heir with their children in order to avoid imperial confiscation of their estates. senators were required to have personal resources of a least one million sesterces (*Satyricon*, 38 n112, 59 n165).

[124] Neptune was god of the sea.

[125] Mercury was patron of merchants and thieves.

[126] A very expensive perfume.

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The Reconstructed Text- Part Four

Eumolpus' Tale:

[ch. 79] We had never a torch to guide our wandering steps, while the silent hour of midnight gave small hope of procuring light from chance wayfarers. Added to this was our own intoxication and ignorance of the locality, baffling even by daylight. After dragging our bleeding feet for the best part of an hour over all sorts of stumbling-blocks and fragments of projecting paving-stones, we were finally saved by Giton's ingenuity. For being afraid even by daylight of missing his way, he had taken the precaution the day before to make every post and pillar on the road with chalk. The strokes he had drawn were visible on the darkest night, their conspicuous whiteness showing wanderers the way. Though truly we were in no less of a fix, even when we did get to our inn. For the old woman had been swilling so long with her customers, you might have set her afire without her knowing anything about it. And we might very likely have passed the night on the doorstep, had not one of Trimalchio's carriers come up, in charge of ten wagons. Accordingly, without stopping to make any more ado, he burst in the door, and let us in by the same road.

Going to my chamber, I went to bed with my dear lad, and burning with amorous ardor as I was after my sumptuous meal, gave myself up heart and soul to all the delights of love.

Oh! what a night was that! how soft

The couch, ye gods! as many a time and oft

Our lips met burning in overmastering bliss,

And interchanged our souls in every kiss.

To mortal cares I bid farewell for aye--

So sweet I find it in thine arms to die!

But my self-congratulations were premature. For no sooner had my enfeebled hands relaxed their tipsy hold than Ascyltos, that everlasting contriver of mischief, drew the boy away from me in the dark and carried him off to his own bed; and there rolling about in wanton excess with another man's minion, the latter either not noticing the fraud or pretending not to, he went off to sleep, enfolded in an embrace he had no sort of right to, utterly regardless of all human justice. So when I awoke, and feeling the bed over, found it robbed of delight, I declare, by all that lovers hold sacred, I had half a mind to run them both through with my sword where they lay, and make their sleep eternal. But presently adopting safer counsels, I thumped Giton awake, and turning a stern countenance on Ascyltos, said severely, "You have broken faith by your dastardly conduct and sinned against our mutual friendship; remove your things as quick as may be, and go seek another place to be the scene of your abominations." He made no objection to this, but after we had divided our loot with scrupulous exactness, "Come now," said he, "let's divide the boy."

[ch. 80] I thought this was merely a parting jest. But murderously drawing a sword, "Never," he cried, "shall you enjoy this prey you gloat over so selfishly. I've been slighted, and I must have my share, even if I have to cut it off with this sword." I followed suit on my side, and wrapping my cloak round my arm, took up a fighting posture.

In wretched trepidation at our unhappy fury the boy fell at our knees in tears and begged and besought us not to repeat in a miserable tavern the tragedy of the two Theban brothers, [127] nor pollute with each other's blood the sanctity of so noble a friendship. "But if murder must be done," he declared, "look! Here I lay bare my throat; here strike, here bury your points. 'It is I should die; I have violated the sacred bond of friendship."

At these entreaties we put up our swords. Then Ascyltos, taking the initiative, said, "I will end this difference. Let the lad himself follow whom he will, so that he may be perfectly free to choose his friend and favorite."

For my part, supposing my long, long intimacy had bound the boy to me in ties as strong as those of blood, I felt not the slightest fear, but gladly and eagerly accepted the proposal to submit the question to this arbitration. Yet the instant the words were out of my mouth, without a moment's hesitation or one look of uncertainty, he sprang up and declared Ascyltos to be his choice.

Thunderstruck at this decision, I threw myself just as I was and unarmed on my bed, and in my despair would certainly have laid violent hands on myself, had I not grudged such a victory to my adversary. Off goes Ascyltos in triumph with his prize, leaving me forlorn in a strange place-- me who so short a while before had been his dearest comrade and the partner in all his escapades.

Friendship's a name, expediency's mate,

The shifting symbol of the changing slate.

While Fortune's on our side, our friends stay true;

Let her once change, farewell the recreant crew!

So on the stage, one plays a father's part,

A son's, a rich man's, each with pliant art;

But when the play is ended, grave or gay,

Dropped is the mask, and truth resumes her sway.

[ch. 81] However, I had no time to indulge my grief, but dreading lest, to complete my misfortunes, Menelaus, the under-professor, [128] should find me alone at the inn, I collected my traps together, and with a sad heart went off to hire a solitary lodging near the seashore. Shutting myself up for three days there, my loneliness and humiliation forever haunting my mind, I spent my time in beating my poor breast, and with many a deep-drawn groan, crying again and again, "Oh why has not the earth swallowed me? Why has the sea, that drowns the guiltless mariner, spared me? Have I escaped the law, cheated the gallows, slain my host, that after so many proofs of spirit, I should be lying here a beggar and a vagabond, alone and forlorn in the inn of a paltry Greek city? [129] And who is it that has brought me to this desolation? A stripling defiled with every lust, who on his own freedom and enfranchisement by the prostitution of his body, whose youthful favors were sold to the highest bidder, who was hired out as a girl, when known to be a boy all the while. And what was the other? One who donned on the day of puberty the woman's frock in lieu of the manly gown, who was bent from his mother's womb on changing sex, who was whore to a barracks-full of slaves, who after playing me false and exchanging the instrument of his lust, abandoned his old friend and, oh! the infamy of it! like a common strumpet sold everything in one night's vile work. Now the lovers lie twined in each other's arms whole nights together, and it may be, as they rest exhausted after mutual excesses, mock my loneliness. But they shall not go unpunished. As I am a man, and a Roman citizen, I will avenge the wrong they have done me in their guilty blood!"

[ch. 82] So saying, I gird on a sword, and that bodily weakness might not hinder my warlike intentions, recruit my strength with a copious meal. Presently I sally forth, and stalk like a madman through all the public colonnades. As I was prowling thus, with haggard, ferocious looks that threatened sheer blood and slaughter, now and then clapping my hand to the hilt of the weapon I had devoted to my vengeance, a soldier observed me-- if a simple soldier indeed he was, and not some nocturnal footpad. "Ho, there! comrade," he cried, "what's your legion, and who's your centurion?" [130] I named both legion and centurion with confident mendacity. "Come, come," he retorted, "do the men of your division go about the streets in Greek pumps?" Then, my face and my agitation sufficiently betraying the imposture, he ordered me to drop my weapon and have a care I did not get into trouble. So despoiled and deprived of my means of vengeance, I retrace my steps to the inn, and my resolution gradually slipping away, I begin to feel nothing but gratitude to the footpad for his bold interference.

Wretched Tantalus [131] may not eat nor drink

Despite the rippling spring where fruit hangs low.

Like a wealthy man, he is tormented by longing,

A banquet surrounds him yet he remains parched and starving [....]

It never does to trust too much to foresight, for Fortune has her own way of doing things.

[ch. 83] In hopes, however, of beguiling my melancholy and forgetting my wrongs, I rose at dawn and visited all the different colonnades, finally entering a picture gallery, containing admirable paintings in various styles. There I beheld Zeuxis' handiwork, still unimpaired by the lapse of years, and scanned, not without a certain awe, some sketches of Protogenes', that vied with Nature herself in their truth of presentment. Then I reverently admired the work of Apelles, of the kind the Greeks call "monochromatic"; for such was the exquisite delicacy and precision with which the figures were outlined, you seemed to see the very soul portrayed. [132] Here was the eagle towering to the sky and bearing Ganymede in its talons. [133] There the fair Hylas, struggling in the embraces of the amorous Naiad. [134] Another work showed Apollo cursing his murderous hand, and bedecking his unstrung lyre with blossoms of the new-sprung hyacinth. [135]

Ad Meskens, photograph, of a mosaic of Ganymede abducted by Zeus, disguised as an eagle, mid 2nd century CE, Archaeological Museum of Sousse, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Standing surrounded by these painted images of famous lovers, I exclaimed as if in solitary self-communion, "Love, so it seems, troubles even the gods. Jupiter could discover no fitting object of his passion in heaven, his own domain; but though condescending to earthly amours, yet he wronged no trusting heart. Hylas' nymph that ravished him would have checked her ardor, had she known Hercules would come to chide her passion. Apollo renewed the memory of his favorite in a flower; and all these fabled lovers had their way without a rival's interference. But I have taken to my bosom a false-hearted friend more cruel than Lycurgus." [136]

But look! While I am complaining in this way to the winds of heaven, there entered the colonnade an old white-headed man, with a thought-worn face, that seemed to promise something mysterious and out of the common. Yet his dress was far from imposing, making it evident he belonged to the class of men of letters, so ill-looked upon by the rich. This man now came up to me, saying, "Sir! I am a poet, and I trust, of no small genius, if these crowns mean anything, which I admit unfair partiality often confers on unworthy recipients. 'Why then,' you will ask, 'are you so poorly dressed?' Just because I am a genius; when did love of art ever make a man wealthy?

The sea-borne trafficker gains cash untold;

The hardy soldier wins his spoil of gold;

The sycophant on Tyrian purple lies;

The base adulterer with Croesus vies. [137]

Learning alone, in shuddering rags arrayed,

Vainly invokes the indifferent Muses' aid!

[ch. 84] "No doubt about it; if any man declares himself the foe of every vice, and starts boldly on the path of rectitude, in the first place the singularity of his principles makes him odious, for who can approve habits so different from his own? Secondly, men whose one idea is to pile up the dollars cannot bear that others should have a nobler creed than they live by themselves. So they spite all lovers of literature in every possible way, to put them into their proper place-- below the money-bags."

"I cannot understand why poverty is always talent's sister," I said, and heaved a sigh.

"You do well," returned the old man, "to deplore the lot of men of letters."

"Nay!" I replied, "that was not why I sighed; I have another and a far heavier reason for my sorrow!"-- and immediately, following the common propensity of mankind to pour one's private griefs into another's ear, I told him all my misfortunes, inveighing particularly against Ascyltos' perfidy, and exclaiming with many a groan, "Would to heaven my enemy, the cause of my present enforced continence, had any vestige of good feeling left to work upon; but 'tis a hardened sinner, more cunning and astute than the basest pander." [....]

[ch. 85] "When I went to Asia," he began, "as a paid officer in the *quaestor*'s staff, [138] I lodged with a family at Pergamus. [139] I found my quarters very pleasant, first on account of the convenience and elegance of the apartments, and still more so because of the beauty of my host's son. I devised the following method to prevent the master of the house entertaining any suspicions of me as a seducer. Whenever the conversation at table turned on the abuse of handsome boys, I showed such extreme indignation and protested with such an air of austerity and offended dignity against the violence done to my ears by filthy talk of the sort, that I came to be regarded, especially by the mother, as one of the greatest of moralists and philosophers. Before long I was allowed to take the lad to the gymnasium; it was I that directed his studies, I that guided his conduct, and guarded against any possible debaucher of his person being admitted to the house. [140]

"It happened on one occasion that we were sleeping in the dining-hall, the school having closed early as it was a holiday, and our amusements having rendered us too lazy to retire to our sleeping-chambers. Somewhere about midnight I noticed that the lad was awake; so whispering soft and low, I murmured a timid prayer in these words, 'Lady Venus, if I may kiss this boy, so that he know it not, tomorrow I will present him with a pair of doves.' [141] Hearing the price offered for the gratification, the boy set up a snore. So approaching him, where he lay still making pretense to be asleep, I stole two or three flying kisses. Satisfied with this beginning, I rose betimes next morning, and discharged my vow by bringing the eager lad a choice and costly pair of doves.

[ch. 86] "The following night, the same opportunity occurring, I changed my petition, 'If I may pass a naughty hand over this boy, and he not feel it, I will present him for his complaisance with a brace of the best fighting roosters ever seen.' At this promise the child came nestling up to me of his own accord and was actually afraid, I think, lest I might drop asleep again. I soon quieted his uneasiness on this point, and amply satisfied my longings, short of the supreme bliss, on every part of his beautiful body. Then when daylight came, I made him happy with the gift I had promised him.

"As soon as the third night left me free to try again, I rose as before, and creeping up to the rascal, who was lying awake expecting me, whispered at his ear, 'Oh, if only, you immortal gods, I may win of this sleeping darling full and happy satisfaction of my love, for such bliss I will tomorrow present the lad with an Asturian horse of the Macedonian strain, [142] the best to be had for money, but always on the condition he shall not feel my violence.' Never did the stripling sleep more sound. So first I handled his plump and snowy bosoms, then kissed him on the mouth, and finally concentrated all my ardors in one supreme delight. Next morning he sat still in his room, expecting my present as usual. Well! you know as well as I do, it is a much easier matter to buy doves and fighting roosters than an Asturian; besides which, I was afraid so valuable a present might rouse suspicion as to the real motives of my generosity. After walking about for an hour or so, I returned to the house, and gave the boy a kiss-- and nothing else. He looked about inquiringly, then threw his arms round my neck, and 'Please, sir!' he said, 'where is my Asturian?'

"'It is hard,' I replied, 'to get one fine enough. You will have to wait a few days for me to fulfill my vow.' The boy had wits enough to see through my answer, and his resentment was betrayed by the angry look that crossed his face."

[ch. 87] "Although by this breach of faith I had closed against myself the door of access so carefully contrived, I returned once more to the attack. For, after allowing a few days to elapse, one night when similar circumstances had created just another opportunity for us as before, I began, the moment I heard the father snoring, to beg and pray the boy to be friends with me again,-- that is, to let me give him pleasure for pleasure, adding all the arguments my burning desire could suggest. But he was positively angry and refused to say one word beyond, 'Go to sleep, or I will tell my father.' But there is never an obstacle so difficult audacity will not vanquish it. He was still repeating, 'I will wake my father,' when I slipped into his bed and took my pleasure of him in spite of his half-hearted resistance. However, he found a certain pleasure in my naughty ways, for after a long string of complaints about my having cheated and cajoled him and made him the laughing-stock of his school-fellows, to whom he had boasted of his rich friend, he whispered, 'Still I won't be so unkind as you; if you like, do it again.'

"So forgetting all our differences, I was reconciled to the dear lad once more, and after utilizing his kind permission, I slipped off to sleep in his arms. But the stripling was not satisfied with only one repetition, all ripe for love as he was and just at the time of life for passive enjoyment. So he woke me up from my slumbers, and, 'Anything you'd like, eh?' said he. Nor was I, so far, indisposed to accept his offer. So working him the best ever I could, to the accompaniment of much panting and perspiration, I gave him what he wanted, and then dropped asleep again, worn out with pleasure. Less than an hour had passed before he started pinching me and asking, 'Eh! why are we not at work?' Hereupon, sick to death of being so often disturbed, I flew into a regular rage, and retorted his own words upon him; 'Go to sleep,' I cried, 'or I'll tell your father!'" [....]

[ch. 88] Enlivened by this discourse, I now began to question my companion, who was better informed on these points than myself, as to the dates of the different pictures and the subjects of some that baffled me. At the same time I asked him the reason for the supineness of the present day and the utter decay of the highest branches of art, and amongst the rest of painting, which now showed not the smallest vestige of its former excellence.

"It is greed of money," he replied, "has wrought the change. In early days, when plain worth was still esteemed, the liberal arts flourished, and the chief object of men's emulation was to ensure no discovery likely to benefit future ages long remaining undeveloped. To this end Democritus extracted the juices of every herb, and spent his life in experimenting, that no virtue of mineral or plant might escape detection. In a similar way Eudoxus grew gray on the summit of a lofty mountain, observing the motions of the stars and firmament, while three times Chrysippus purged his brain with hellebore, to stimulate its capacity and inventiveness. But to consider the sculptors only,-- Lysippus was so absorbed in the modeling of a single figure that he actually perished from lack of food, and Myron, who came near embodying the very souls of men and beasts in bronze, died too poor to find an heir. [143]

"But we, engrossed with wine and women, have not the spirit to appreciate the arts already discovered; we can only criticize antiquity, and devote all our energies, in precept and practice, to the faults of the old masters. What has become of dialectic? of astronomy? of philosophy, that richly cultivated domain? Who nowadays has ever been known to enter a temple and engage to pay a vow, if only he may attain unto eloquence, or find the fountain of wisdom? Not even do sound intellect and sound health any longer form the objects of men's prayers, but before ever they set food on the threshold of the Capitoline hill [in Rome], they promise lavish offerings, one if he may bury a wealthy relative, another if he may unearth a treasure, another if only he may live to reach his thirty million. The very Senate, the example of all that is right and good, is in the habit of promising a thousand pounds of gold to Capitoline Jove, [144] and that no man may be ashamed of the lust of ill-gotten profit, bribes the very god of heaven. What wonder then if painting is in decay, when all, gods and men alike, find a big lump of gold a fairer sight than anything those crack-brained Greek fellows, Apelles and Phidias, ever wrought. [145]

[ch 89] “But there! I see your attention is riveted on that picture representing the capture of Troy; so I will endeavor to expound the theme in a copy of verses: [146]

Still the tenth summer saw the Phrygian host [147]

A prey to doubt and fear, and Calchas’ faith [148]

Wavering and weak in spite of oracles,

When at Apollo’s word, [149] the wooded heights

Of topmost Ida lent their tallest trees
To shape the framework of a monstrous horse. [150]
Within, a vasty cave and secret halls,
Capacious of an army, hold the flower
Of all the Greeks, by ten years' strife enraged;
Their own thank-offering hides the avenging crew!
Oh! my unhappy country! now we dreamed
A thousand ships were scattered, and our land
Freed from the foe. So ran the lying words
Writ on the horse's flank, and so the tale
Of Sinon's wheedling tongue and traitor's heart. [151]
Now through the gates, glad to be free at last,
The shouting Trojans hailed the pledge of peace,
While tears relieve the tension of their joy.
But terror checked their triumph; Behold! The priest
Of Neptune, wise Laocoon, his locks unbound, [152]
With cries of warning stays the eager crowd!
His brandished spear he hurled, but foiled by fate,
The blow falls harmless, and the sight renews
Their ill-starred confidence in Grecian guile.
Yet once again he summons all his strength,
And drives his ax deep in the monster's side.
The imprisoned warriors' groan resounds, and fills
The wooden hull with terror not its own.
In vain! The captives ride to capture Troy,
And end the tedious war by fraud, not force.
Another marvel! where above the deep
Tower the sheer cliffs of Tenedos, the surge [153]
Is lashed to foam, and a fierce roaring breaks
The silence of the seas, as on a quiet night
The sound of pulsing oars is borne to land,
When fleets are passing on the distant main.
We turn our gaze; and there with rolling coils
Two water-snakes are sweeping toward the shore;
Their flanks, like lofty ships, throw back the foam,
They lash the main, their crests that ride the waves
Gleam fiery like their eyes, whose lightning flash

Kindles the deep, the billows hiss and roar.
All stare aghast. Behold, like priests attired
In Phrygian robes, there stand Laocoon's sons,
Twin pledges of his love, whom in their folds
The fiery snakes entwine. Each lifts his hands,
His childish hands, to guard,—alas! in vain,—
His brother's head; from love's unselfishness
Remorseless death a sharper anguish wins.
Their sire, too weak to save them, shares their fate.
Gorged with fresh blood, monsters drag him down;
Weltering in gore at his own altar's side
The priest a victim dies, in agony
Beating the ground. Thus from polluted shrines
The gods of fated Troy were driven away.
The rising Moon her beam had just displayed,
Kindling her radiant torch amid the stars,
When the impatient Greeks unbar the doors;
And forth on Troy, by sleep and wine betrayed,
The steel-clad warriors rush, as from the yoke
Just loosed, a gallant steed of Thessaly
Darts over the course tossing his eager mane.
They draw their flashing blades and wave shields
And 'havoc!' cry. One stabs the sleeping sot
With wine oppressed, one from the altar flames
Snatches a burning brand and fires the town,—
And Troy's own temples arm her enemies' hands.

Livio Andronico, photograph of *Laocoön and his sons*, also known as the *Laocoön Group*. Marble copy (early first century BCE) of an Hellenistic original attributed to Hagesandros, Athenedoros, and Polydoros, from ca. 200 BC. Found in the Baths of Trajan, 1506, on display at the Vatican Museum.

[ch. 90] Sundry of the public who were strolling in the colonnades now proceeded to pelt the aged poet with stones. But Eumolpus, [154] who was familiar with the sort of applause his talents usually met with, merely covered up his head and bolted from the temple. I was afraid he would claim me as a poet. So I started off in pursuit of the fugitive, and came up with him on the seashore. There we halted, directly we were out of range of the missiles, and I asked him, “Now what do you mean by this confounded malady of yours? I have not been a couple of hours in your company, and you've often talked more like a mad poet than a sensible man. I am not surprised that the populace pelts you. I am going to fill my pockets with rocks, and every time I see your wits going, I will bleed you in the head.”

At this he changed his expression, and “Oh! my young friend,” he said, “today is by no means my first attempt; every time I’ve entered a theater to recite some trifle, the audience invariably welcomes me with this kind of treat. However as I am far from wishing to quarrel with you, I undertake a whole day’s fast from poetry.”

“Very well, then,” said I; “if you’ll swear off your crankiness for today, we’ll dine together.” [...]

So saying, I commissioned the housekeeper at my humble rooms to make preparations for our humble meal [....]

[ch. 91] I catch sight of Giton laden with towels and scrapers, [155] leaning against a wall and wearing a look of melancholy embarrassment on his face. You could easily see he was an unwilling servant; and indeed, to show my eyes had not deceived me, he now turned upon me a countenance beaming with pleasure, saying, “Oh! have pity on me, brother! there are no weapons to fear here, so I can speak freely. Save me, save me, from the murderous ruffian; and then lay upon your judge, now your penitent, any punishment you please, no matter how severe. It will be comfort enough for me, in my misery, to have perished by your good pleasure.”

I bad him hush his complaints, so that no one might surprise our plans, and leaving Eumolpus to his own devices,—he was engaged reciting a poem to his fellow bathers—I dragged Giton down a dark and dirty passage, and so hurried him away to my lodging. Then after bolting the door, I threw my arms around his neck, pressing my lips convulsively to his tear-stained face. It was long before either of us could find his voice; for my darling’s bosom was quivering like my own with quick-coming sobs. “I am ashamed of my criminal weakness,” I cried, “but I love you still, though you did forsake me, and the wound that pierced my heart has left not a scar behind. What can you say to excuse your surrender to another? Did I deserve so base a wrong?” Seeing he was still loved, he put on a less downcast look:

“Yet,” I could not help adding, “I never meant to refer the choice of whom you should love to any third person; but there! all is forgiven and forgotten, if only you show yourself sincerely penitent.” My words were interspersed with groans and tears; when I had done, the dear boy dried my cheeks with his mantle, saying, “I beg you, Encolpius, let me appeal to your own recollection of the circumstances. Did I desert you, or did you throw me over? I am ready to confess, and it is my best excuse, when I saw you both with sword in hand, I fled for safety to the stronger fighter.” Kissing the bosom so full of wise prudence, I threw my arms around his neck, and to let him see he was restored to favor once more, and that my affection and confidence were as strong as ever, I pressed him closely to my heart.

[ch. 92] It was quite dark and the woman had completed my orders for dinner when Eumolpus knocked at the door. I called out “How many of you are there?” and immediately proceeded to spy through a chink in the door to see whether Ascyltos had not come too. But seeing my guest was alone, I at once hastened to let him in. He threw himself on my pallet, and directly he observed Giton moving about in attendance he wagged his head and remarked, “I like your Ganymede; [156] we shall have a good time today.” I was anything but pleased with this indiscreet beginning, and began to fear I had opened my doors to another Ascyltos. Eumolpus grew more and more pressing, and on the lad’s serving him with wine, “I like you better,” he said, “than any of them at the baths;” and draining his cup thirstily, added he had never been more vexed in his life.

“I tell you, at the baths just now, I came very near getting a beating, merely because I tried to repeat a copy of verses to the bathers sitting around the basin. It was just like the Theater—I was turned out of the place. Then I started to look for you in every corner of the building, shouting Encolpius! Encolpius! at the top of my voice. Not far off was a naked youth, who had lost his clothes, and roaring with just the same clamorous indignation after Giton. For me, I was treated like a madman by the very slave lads, who mocked and mimicked me most insolently; he on the contrary was soon surrounded by a thronging multitude, clapping their hands and showing the most awe-struck admiration. The fact is, he possessed virile parts of such enormous mass and weight, the man really seemed only an appendage of his own member. Oh! an indefatigable worker! I warrant, he’s the sort to begin yesterday, and finish tomorrow! Accordingly he soon found a way out of his difficulties; a bystander, a Roman equestrian, [157] they said, of notorious character, wrapped his own cloak round the poor wanderer, and took him home with him, in order, I imagine, to have the sole enjoyment of so rich a windfall. But I should never have recovered so much as my own clothes from the bath-keeper, [158] had I not produced someone to vouch for me. So much better does it profit a man to train his member than his mind!”

During Eumolpus’s narrative I changed countenance repeatedly, now jubilant at my hated rival’s misfortunes, now saddened by his success. I held my tongue, however, pretending to know nothing of the matter, and set to work arranging the dinner table [...]

[ch. 93] To their perverted taste anything that is allowable is held cheap, while they display a morbid predilection for forbidden luxuries.

Facile success, a rose without a thorn,

An instant victory, are things I scorn.

The Phasian bird from distant Colchis brought [159]

And African fowl! are dainties ever sought,

For these are rarities; not so the goose

And bright-plumed duck, fit but for vulgar use.

The costly scar, choice fish from Syrtes' shore, [160]

That cost poor fishers' lives, these all adore;

The mullet's out of date. The modern man

Deserts his wife to woo the courtesan;

The rose yields place to cinnamon. For naught

Is held of worth that is not dearly bought.

"Is this the way," I cried, "you keep your promise of making no more poetry today? On your conscience, spare us at least, who have never thrown a stone at you. Once let any one of the company drinking under the same roof with us scent out your poetness, he will rouse the whole neighborhood and overwhelm us all in the same ruin. Have some pity on your friends, and remember the picture gallery and the baths." But Giton, who was all gentleness, remonstrated with me for speaking so, and declared I was doing ill thus to jeer at my elders. He said I was forgetting my duty as a host, and after inviting a man to my table out of compassion, was nullifying the obligation by then insulting him. Other remarks follow, all equally imbued with moderation and good sense, and coming with added grace from so beautiful a mouth.

[ch. 94] "Happy the mother of such a son!" exclaimed Eumolpus. "Go on, good youth, and prosper! Rare indeed is such a combination of wisdom and beauty. Never think all your words have been wasted; you have won a lover! I, I will extol your praises in my verse. I will be your preceptor and your guardian, your companion everywhere, even when unbidden. Nor has Encolpius anything to complain of, who loves another." The speaker had much to be thankful for to the soldier who had taken away my sword; otherwise the wrath I had conceived against Ascyltos would surely have been taken out on Eumolpus's head. Giton saw what was about to happen, and slipped out of the room, as if to fetch water; and his judicious departure abated the extreme heat of my indignation. My anger cooled a little, and I told Eumolpus, "Sir! I would rather have you talking poetry than entertaining such hopes as these. I am a passionate man, and you a lecherous one; our characters, look you, can never be compatible. Suppose me stark mad; humor my frenzy,—in other words, leave the house without a moment's delay."

Confounded at this outburst, Eumolpus never stopped to ask my reasons, but instantly left the room, closed the door shut after him, and locked me in, to my intense surprise. He carried off the key with him, and hurried away at a run in search of Giton.

Finding myself a prisoner, I resolved to hang myself and so end my miseries. I had already attached my belt to the framework of a bed which stood against the wall, and was just fitting the noose around my neck, when the doors were flung open again, and Eumolpus coming in with Giton recalled me to the light of life from the fatal course I had so nearly passed. Giton especially, his agony turning to rage and fury, uttered a piercing shriek, and pushing me down headlong on the bed with both hands, "You deceive yourself, Encolpius," he cried, "if you think you can contrive to die before me. I was first; I have already been to Ascyltos's lodging to look for a sword. Had I not found you, I was going to hurl myself over a precipice. Now, to show you Death is never far from those who seek him, behold in your turn the sight you intended me to witness."

With these words he snatches a razor [161] from Eumolpus's hired servant, and drawing it once and again across his throat, tumbles down at our feet. Uttering a cry of horror, I fall on the floor beside him, and seek to take my own life with the same weapon. But neither did Giton exhibit the smallest sign of a wound, nor did I myself feel any pain. The fact is, the razor had no edge, coming from a case of razors purposely blunted, with the object of training barbers' apprentices to a proper confidence in the exercise of their craft; and that was why the servant from whom he snatched the instrument had expressed no sort of consternation, nor had Eumolpus made an effort to hinder the mimic tragedy.

[ch. 95] In the midst of this lovers' fooling, the landlord enters with another course of the dinner, and staring hard at us where we lay sprawling disgracefully on the floor, "Are you all drunk," he asked, "or runaways, or both? Now who put up that bed against the wall like that? And what do all these underhanded proceedings mean? By great Hercules, you intended, you scamps, to take flight in the night, and get out of paying the rent for your room. Not so fast, I say. I'll let you know it's no poor widow woman's the owner of the block, but Marcus Mannicius." "You threaten, do you," shouts Eumolpus, and fetches the man a good sharp slap in the

face. The latter hurled at his head an earthenware jar, emptied by a succession of thirsty guests, cut open his noisy adversary's forehead, and darted out of the room. Furious at the indignity, Eumolpus snatches up a wooden candlestick, pursues the fugitive, and revenges his injury with a shower of blows. The whole household comes crowding to the scene of action, together with a mob of drunken customers. Now was my opportunity for retaliation; so I turn the tables on Eumolpus by shutting the blackguard out, and find myself without a rival and free to do as I please with my room and my night.

Meanwhile the unfortunate Eumolpus, being locked out, is assaulted by the scullions and miscellaneous tenants of the block. [162] One threatens his eyes with a spit loaded with hissing-hot guts; another snatches a flesh-hook from the kitchen hearth and assumes a fighting attitude. First and foremost, an old hag with sore eyes and a most filthy apron, and mounted on wooden clogs (an odd pair) hauls in a huge dog on a chain, and sets him at Eumolpus, who however made a gallant defense against all assailants with his candlestick.

[ch. 96] All this we saw through a hole in the door, just made by the wrenching off of the handle of the wicket, and for my own part I wished him joy of his beating.

Giton on the contrary, with his usual tender-heartedness, was for opening the door and rescuing him from his perilous position. My resentment being still hot within me, I could not hold my hand, but favored the poet's sympathizer with a good smart box on the side of the head, at which he went and sat down crying on the bed. For myself, I put first one eye, then the other, to the opening, and was regaling myself with the sight of Eumolpus's sorry plight and mentally patting his assailants on the back, when Bargates, the agent of the block, who had been called away from his dinner, was borne into the heart of the skirmish by a couple of chairmen, for he was disabled by the gout. After a long harangue against drunkards and runaways, uttered in a savage tone and barbarous accent, he said, turning upon Eumolpus, "My prince of poets, you here? And these ruffian slaves don't fly at once and stop their brawling!" Then putting his lips to Eumolpus's ear, "My bedfellow," he went on, in a more subdued tone, "is a scornful jade; so if you love me, blackguard her in verse, will you, to make her feel ashamed of herself."

[ch. 97] Whilst Eumolpus was talking apart with Bargates, a crier attended by a public slave and a small crowd of curious persons besides, entered the inn, and brandishing a torch that gave more smoke than light, read out the follow public notice:

"Lost or strayed lately in the public baths, a boy,—aged sixteen, curly-headed, a minion by trade, good-looking, Giton by name. Whoever will bring back the same or give information of his present whereabouts, will receive a thousand sesterces reward." [163]

Not far from the herald stood Ascyltos in a particolored robe, exhibiting description, and voucher for the sum promised, on a silver platter. I told Giton to dash under the bed and twist his hands and feet into the cords by which the mattress was supported on the framework, so that stretched full length underneath, like Ulysses of old clinging under the ram's belly, [164] he might escape any prying hands. Giton promptly obeyed, and in another instant had cleverly twisted his fingers in the attachments, and beaten the wily Ulysses at his own game. For my part, so as to leave no room for suspicion, I heaped the pallet with clothes and shaped an impression amongst them of a single sleeper, and that a man of my own size.

Photograph by Zde of Odysseus under the belly of a ram, small bronze apliqué, 550-500 BCE, Archaeological Museum of Delphi, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

Meantime Ascyltos, visiting each room in succession with the court-officer, arrived at mine, where his hopes of success rose the higher on finding the door so carefully barred. But the public slave, inserting his ax in the crack of the door, broke the hold of the fastenings. Thereupon I threw myself at Ascyltos' feet and implored him by the memory of our former friendship and our companionship in misfortune at any rate to let me see Giton. And, in addition, to give color to my pretended supplication, "I am well aware, Ascyltos," I cried, "that you have come to murder me; why else have you brought these axes with you? Take your revenge then; see, I offer my neck, so shed my life's blood, which you are seeking under pretense of searching my room."

Ascyltos protested indignantly against the imputation, swearing he was there only to look for his runaway favorite; he desired, he said, no man's, certainly no suppliant's death, and least of all that of a man whom, even after our fatal quarrel, he still thought of as his dearest friend.

[ch. 98] Nor was the public slave idle meanwhile, but snatching a cane from the innkeeper, he thrusts it under the bed, and even investigates every cranny in the walls. Giton kept shrinking away from the stick, and holding his breath in abject terror, squeezed closer and closer, till the bugs were tickling his very nose.

Scarcely had the men left the room when Eumolpus, for the shattered door could keep no one out, dashes in in great excitement, shouting, "The thousand sesterces are mine; I shall now run after the officer and denounce you, as you richly deserve, and inform him Giton is in your hands at the present moment." I embrace the poet's knees but he remains obdurate; I beseech him not to kill the dying; I tell him, "Your resolution would have some sense in it, if you could produce the missing boy, but he has disappeared in the crowd, and I cannot so much as guess where he is gone to. In heaven's name, Eumolpus, bring the lad back and restore him to his friends,—to Ascyltos, if it must be so."

He was just beginning to credit my plausible story when Giton, all but smothered and choking for breath, gave three loud sneezes one after the other, so that the bed positively shook. Eumolpus wheeled round at the commotion, exclaiming, "Giton, a god bless

you!" Then lifting the mattress away, he reveals Ulysses in such a plight even a half-starving cyclops might well have spared him! Next turning to me, "What is the meaning of all this, you thief?" he said. "What! even when found out, you had not spirit enough to tell the truth. In fact, if some god that governs human affairs had not made the boy betray where he hung concealed, I should have been sent wandering from tavern to tavern on a wild goose chase."

Giton, a far better wheedler than myself, first stanched the wound in the poor man's forehead with some cobwebs dipped in oil; [165] then exchanged his own little cloak for the other's torn robe, and seeing him somewhat mollified, kissed his bruises to make them well, crying, "We are in your keeping, in your hands, dearest father! If you love your Giton, try, oh! try to save him. I would the consuming fire might scorch me to ashes, the raging waters overwhelm me, and me alone! For it is I who am the subject, I the cause, of all these wicked doings! My death would reconcile two enemies." [...]

[ch. 99] Eumolpus exclaimed, "My plan of life has always been, so to spend each day as if it were my last, that is in peace and quietness." [...]

With floods of tears I begged and prayed him to include me too in his forgiveness, pointing out that it was beyond the power of lovers to control their frenzies of jealousy. I pledged myself for the future to do or say nothing whatever that could give him offense, and urged him to banish all irritation from his mind, as a learned and educated man should, so that not a trace of injury should remain. "On rugged and uncultivated ground," I went on, "the snow lies long, but where the soil has been disciplined and improved by the plow, the light snowfall melts away before you can say it has fallen. It is the same with resentment in men's hearts; it abides long in uncultured minds, but melts quickly from the surface of those who have been trained and educated." "To prove the truth of what you say," returned Eumolpus, "I hereby end my anger with this kiss. So in luck's name, pack up your traps and follow me, or if you so prefer, lead the way yourselves."

The words were still on his lips when the door flew open with a crash, and a rough-bearded sailor appeared on the threshold, who shouted, "You're all behind, Eumolpus; don't you know we have to hurry?"

In an instant we were all afoot. Eumolpus wakes his servant, who had long ago dropped asleep, and orders him off with his baggage. Giton and I pack up all our belongings for the journey, and after a prayer to the stars, make our way on board.

Footnotes:

[127] In the myth of the Seven Against Thebes, Eteocles and Polynices, Oedipus' two sons, kill each other.

[128] Menelaus appears earlier in the section on Trimalchio's banquet.

[129] The Greeks had colonies in southern Italy and elsewhere long before the Romans colonized that and other regions.

[130] A centurion was the commander of one hundred men in the army. Asking what legion and centurion Encolpius was in was like asking what company and battalion he belonged to.

[131] Tantalus was punished for the crime of cannibalism by being tormented by hunger and thirst in Hades.

[132] These men are all famous Greek artists. The Romans collected and were inspired by the art of Greek and other cultures.

[133] Zeus/Jupiter/Jove sent an eagle to carry Ganymede off to Olympus to serve as Jove's lover and cupbearer to the gods.

[134] Hylas was Hercules' younger companion and lover until he was pulled underwater and drowned by some water nymphs or Naiads who were smitten by his good looks.

[135] Apollo accidentally killed his human lover, Hyacinth, with an ill-aimed discus throw. A flower, the hyacinth, sprang up from Hyacinth's blood.

[136] Lycurgus was Spartan king known for his strict laws and harsh treatment of the helots, slaves bound to the land.

[137] Croesus was a fabulously rich king.

[138] A *quaestor* was a Roman official largely responsible for taxes and the local treasury.

[139] Also known as Pergamon, a wealthy town in Asia minor.

[140] The poet appears to be fulfilling the function of a *paedagogus*, a slave or freedman who taught Greek to the sons of wealthy Romans and served as a combination of chaperone, moral guide, and teacher. Needless to say, Eumolpus betrayed his employers

and his student.

[141] Doves were considered the sacred bird of Venus, goddess of sensual love.

[142] A type of very expensive horse. Eumolpus posits a transactional view of sex, a bit like promising one's lover a Mercedes.

[143] The men named were all famous Greek philosophers, scientists, and artists.

[144] The Roman senate's function was to legislate or propose laws. The temple of Capitoline Jove or "Temple of Jupiter Best and Greatest on the Capitoline" was central to state worship of the Jupiter in Rome.

[145] Apelles and Phidias were famous Greek artists.

[146] Eumolpus gives here a rather turgid and stiff declamation of a story in the *Aeneid* (bk. 2).

[147] The Phyrigians were the Trojans.

[148] A seer who foretold the fall of Troy.

[149] Apollo was god of prophecy.

[150] This refers to the famous Trojan horse, a hollow horse constructed of wood left by the Greeks before the gates of Troy. After the Greeks pretended to retreat, the Trojans dragged the horse into their city. Hardened Greek warriors emerged from the horse at night and the city of Troy fell to the Greeks.

[151] Sinon betrayed Troy to the Greeks.

[152] Laocoon tried to warn the Trojans; he and his sons were devoured by a sea serpent.

[153] Tenedos was an island near the city of Troy.

[154] Eumolpus' name means "trained singer."

[155] This scene appears to take place in the public baths. Romans soaped up with olive oil, then scraped the dirt and excess oil off their skin with a scraper.

[156] Ganymede was a beautiful youth who became Jove’s lover and was taken up to Olympus and made immortal. He served as cupbearer to the gods.

[157] That is, a member of the equestrian class. The *equites* came in second place in the property-based class system of ancient Rome, ranking below the senatorial class. Many were involved in business.

[158] This worked a bit like a coat-check in a restaurant. You checked in your clothes when entering the baths (where everyone was naked, like a locker-room), and got them back to get dressed before leaving.

[159] A region near the Black Sea, said to be Medea’s home.

[160] Syrtes was on the coast of North Africa. The complaint is similar to that made against the consumption of exotic or out-of-season foods as a marker of status rather than eating what was locally available.

[161] Romans used straight-edged razors like this one.

[162] Roman apartment blocks or *insulae* could be well-managed or could bear remarkable similarities to tenement housing in their lack of sanitation and overcrowding.

[163] This was common procedure for attempting to recover runaway slaves.

[164] In a famous episode from *The Odyssey*, Odysseus escapes the cyclops’ cave by hanging on to the under-fleece of a ram.

[165] Cobwebs were often used as bandages in many cultures.

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The Reconstructed Text- Part Five

On Lichas' Ship:

Encolpius and Giton are reunited, and the two take ship with Eumolpus. Various now lost episodes take place. Encolpius somehow deeply offends Lichas, perhaps by seducing Lichas' wife. The following scenes were meant to be deeply funny for Roman readers.

[ch. 100] We chose out a retired spot on the stern-deck, and as it was not even yet daylight, Eumolpus dozed off; but neither Giton nor myself could get a single wink of sleep. I reflected with anxiety on the fact that I had made a companion of Eumolpus, a still more formidable rival than Ascyltos, and the thought gave me no peace. But reason presently got the better of my chagrin. "It is certainly unfortunate," I said to myself, "that our friend finds the boy so much to his liking; but then are not all Nature's finest productions common to all mankind? The sun shines on the just and on the unjust. The moon, with her countless train of attendant stars, lights the very beasts of the wilderness to their prey. What can be more beautiful than water? Yet it flows freely for all and sundry. Is Love alone to be furtively snatched and not won in the open field? No! For my own part, I would rather not have any good thing that all the world may not covet. One rival, and an old man at that, will hardly do me much harm; even should he wish to presume, he will only lose his labor, for want of breath."

Reassured by the unlikelihood of his success, I calmed my anxieties, and wrapping my head in my cloak, tried to persuade myself I was asleep. But all of a sudden, as if Fortune were resolved to destroy my composure, a lamentable voice sounded on the poop-deck, crying, "What! has he fooled me then?" It was a man's voice, and one not unfamiliar to my ears, and my heart began to beat wildly. Nor was this all; for now a woman, equally indignant, blazed out in an even fiercer tone, "If only some god would put Giton in my power, what a welcome I would give the vagabond!" Stunned by the unexpectedness of the words, we both turned pale as death. I was particularly terrified, and felt as if I were being tortured by a horrible nightmare. When I found my voice at last, I asked Eumolpus, who was just dropping off to sleep, plucking at the skirt of his tunic with trembling hands, "By all you deem holy, father, whose ship is this? And who is aboard her? Tell me that."

He was furious at being disturbed. "So this was the reason," he grumbled, "you chose out the quietest nook on the deck for us to occupy, that you might not allow us one moment's rest? What the better are you, when I've told you Lichas a Tarentine commands the ship, and that Tryphaena is his passenger to Tarentum?"

[ch. 101] I shuddered horror-struck at this thunderclap, and baring my throat, "Oh! Destiny," I exclaimed, "now truly is your triumph complete!" Giton for his part fell in a dead faint on my chest. Presently, when a copious sweat had relieved the tension of our spirits, I grasped Eumolpus round the knees, and cried, "Have pity on two dying wretches, and in the name of what we both hold dear, end our life; death draws nigh, and unless you refuse to deal it, will haply be a boon."

Overwhelmed by my odious suspicion, Eumolpus swore by gods and goddesses he knew nothing whatever of what had happened, and had never entertained a thought of treachery; but that in absolute innocence of heart and simple good faith he had led his comrades aboard the ship he had long ago chosen for his own conveyance overseas. "Come now, what plot is there afoot?" he demanded; "what Hannibal have we on board with us? [166] Lichas of Tarentum, a most respectable man, and not merely owner of this vessel, which he commands himself, but of various landed estates besides and a house of commerce, is carrying a cargo to sell in the way of business. So this is the Cyclops, the pirate king, we owe our passage-money to; then besides him, there is Tryphaena, the fairest of fair women, who is sailing from port to port on pleasure bent."

"Why! These," retorted Giton, "are the very persons we wish to avoid," and gave the amazed Eumolpus a short account of the reasons for their hostility and the extremity of the risk we ran. So amazed was he at the news, he knew not what advice to offer, but besought each of us to say what he thought. "Imagine us entrapped," he went on, "in the Cyclops' cave; some means or other of escape must be discovered, unless we prefer a leap overboard and a sudden end to all our troubles." [167]

"Better," interposed Giton, "to persuade the pilot to steer the ship into some harbor, of course making it worth his while, and tell him your brother is so subject to seasickness he is at death's door. You can easily color this excuse with woebegone looks and streaming tears, so that the officer may grant you the favor out of sheer compassion." But Eumolpus at once declared this scheme to be impracticable; "for big ships," he pointed out, "require to be laboriously warped into landlocked harbors; besides, how utterly improbable it will sound that the boy should have come to such a desperate pass so quickly as all this. Another point. Most likely Lichas will want to visit a sick passenger as a mark of civility. How singularly pleasant for us, look you, to have the captain, whom

we particularly wish to avoid, coming to see us of his own motion! But again, granted the vessel could be turned from her main course, and that Lichas should never think of inspecting the sick boy, how are we to get off the ship without every soul on board seeing us? With faces muffled, or faces bare? If muffled, who but will spring forward to help the poor patients ashore? If bare, what does this amount to but simply giving ourselves away?"

[ch. 102] "No! Why not," I interposed, "make a bold stroke, slip down a rope into the ship's boat, and, cutting the painter, leave the rest to Fortune? Not that I expect Eumolpus to join in the venture; why should we involve an innocent man in troubles that in no way concern him? Enough for me if good luck attend us two on our descent into the boat." "Not at all a bad idea," said Eumolpus, "if only it were feasible; but who could help noticing your attempt,—first and foremost the pilot, who is on watch all night, observing every motion of the stars? Possibly you might elude his vigilance during an instant's sleepiness, if escape were practicable by any other part of the vessel; but as things are, you are bound to escape by the stern, past the very helm, for that is where the rope is made fast that secures the boat. Besides, I wonder this never occurred to you, Encolpius, that one of the crew is on watch in the boat night and day, a sentinel you cannot get rid of, except by killing the man or pitching him neck and crop overboard. As to the feasibility of this, well! consult your own courage. About my accompanying you myself, I shirk no danger that gives the faintest hope of success. But to throw away one's life as a thing of no importance is, I am sure, what you do not approve of.

"Now consider how you like this plan; I will clap you in a couple of hides, cording you up among my clothes as part of my luggage, of course leaving sufficient openings for you to breathe and eat through. Then I will raise an outcry to the effect that my slaves have both jumped overboard, because they were afraid of a more terrible punishment. So when we get into port, I will convey you ashore as baggage without exciting any suspicion whatsoever."

"Oh! you would pack us up in bales, as if we were solid inside, eh?—and not liable to evacuations at all? as if we never sneezed or snored? The same sort of trick turned out such a success once before, didn't it? Granted we could endure the bondage for a day, what if a calm or a contrary gale prolonged the time further? What would become of us then? Why! Even clothes, if kept too long tightly packed, cut at the folds, and papers grow illegible, when tied up in bundles. Young and unused to hardship, how shall we endure swathing bands and ligaments, like graven images? We must find some better way of escape than this. Listen to what I have hit on. Eumolpus, as a man of letters, of course carries ink about him; let us black ourselves with it from head to foot. Then as Ethiopian slaves we shall be at your service, light-hearted and free from fear of consequences, besting our enemies by this change of complexion." [168]

"Why certainly," cried Giton, "circumcise us too, that we may pass for Jews, [169] and bore our ears to imitate Arabs, [170] and chalk our faces that Gaul may claim us as her sons! [171] As if a change of color could modify the whole appearance; why! a host of alterations must be united to make the illusion convincing. Grant our dyed faces would keep their black; suppose no touch of water to make the color run, no blot of ink to stick to our clothes, an accident that will often happen even when no mucilage is added; pray, can we give ourselves the hideous swollen lips of the African? Can we transform our hair to wool with curling-tongs? Can we scar our brows with rows of ugly wrinkles? Render ourselves bow-legged and flat-footed? Give our beards that outlandish look? A dye may disfigure the person, it cannot change it. Now hear a desperate man's remedy; let us wind our clothes around our heads, and plunge into the deep."

[ch. 103] "Gods and men forbid," cried Eumolpus, "you should end your days in so base a fashion. Better, far better, do as I advise. My servant, as the razor incident showed you, is a barber; let him instantly shave you both,—not heads only but eyebrows as well. I will second his efforts, marking your foreheads with writing, so cleverly executed you will have all the look of a pair of branded slaves. [172] My lettering will at one and the same time divert the suspicions of your pursuers, and under the guise of a degrading punishment, conceal your real features."

This plan was approved, and our metamorphosis effected without delay. We stole to the side of the ship, and submitted our heads and eyebrows too to the barber's tender mercies. Eumolpus then proceeded to cover both our foreheads with enormous capital letters, and with a liberal hand sprawl the well-known sign of runaways all over our faces. It so happened that one of the passengers, who was leaning over the side unburdening his seasick stomach, privately noted the barber busied with this unseasonable moonlight work, and with a curse at the sinister omen of an act so nearly resembling the last despairing vow of shipwrecked mariners, hurried back to his berth. Feigning indifference to the sufferer's imprecation, we fell into the same melancholy train of thought as before, and settling down in silence, spent the remaining hours of darkness in an uneasy doze [...]

[ch. 104] Lichas remarked, “Priapus appeared to me in a dream last night, and said, ‘Encolpius, the man you are in search of, I hereby tell you, has by me been brought on board your ship.’” Tryphaena started violently; “You might think we had slept together,” she exclaimed; “for I too saw a vision, that image of Neptune I noticed in the Temple Court at Baiae, telling me, ‘You will find Giton on Lichas’s ship.’”

“This will show you plainly,” interrupted Eumolpus, “that Epicurus was a man inspired, who most elegantly expresses his opinion of these figments of the imagination.” [173] Lichas, however, after duly expiating Tryphaena’s dream, said, “Who is to hinder us searching the ship anyway, that we may not appear to scorn the revelation the gods vouchsafe?”

The passenger who had so unfortunately surprised our furtive maneuvers during the night, Hesus he was called, now suddenly broke in with the question, “Who were the fellows then that were shaved by moonlight last night, an abominable thing to do, upon my word! For they tell me it’s wicked for any man alive, when aboard ship, to cut either nails or hair, except when the wind is at odds with the waves.” [174]

[ch. 105] Lichas flew into a passion of anger and consternation at the words, blustering, “Has anyone dared to cut his hair on my ship, and at dead of night too? Produce the culprits instantly, that I may know whose head must fall to purify my vessel from the taint.”

“It was I,” Eumolpus confessed, “ordered it. If I have brought down ill luck, I shall not escape my share, for am I not to travel in the same ship? But the fact is the offenders had such monstrously long and shaggy hair I ordered the wretches’ unkempt locks to be shorn, that I might not seem to be turning our good ship into a jail, as also that the letters branded on their brows might be legible to all men’s eyes, being no longer overshadowed and hidden by the hair. Amongst other knavish tricks, they have been spending my money on a light-o’-love they kept between them, from whose side I dragged them away only last night reeking with wine and filthy perfumes. Indeed at this very minute they stink of the relics of their debauch—and it is all at my expense!” [....]

Accordingly, by way of expiation to the tutelary spirit of the ship, it was decreed we should each of us receive forty stripes. Without further delay the savage sailors fall upon us, anxious to appease the deity with our wretched blood. For myself, I digested three lashes with Spartan fortitude; [175] but Giton, at the very first blow, set up such a yell his well remembered voice penetrated straight to Tryphaena’s ears.

Nor was the mistress the only one startled by his cries; all her maids as well, attracted by the familiar tones, gather round the triangles. Already had his wondrous beauty begun to disarm the sailors and deprecate their rage with its mute appeal, when Tryphaena’s women all chime in with the cry, “Giton! it’s Giton! Stay, oh, stay your savage hands! Help, help, mistress! it’s Giton!” Tryphaena turns only too ready an ear to their words, and flies headlong to his side. Lichas, who knew me perfectly, just as well as if he had heard my voice too, now runs up, and looking neither at hands nor face, but instantly lowering his eyes to my middle, politely laid his hands on those parts, and greeted me by my name. Why wonder any longer at Ulysses’ nurse, after twenty years, identifying the scar that proved his birth, [176] when this most observing master mariner, despite every lineament of face and form being disguised, yet pounced shrewdly on the sole and only attribute that betrayed the fugitive. Tryphaena burst into tears, supposing our disfigurement real and that we had been branded on the brow as slaves and inquired in soft tones of pity, what dungeon we had fallen into on our wanderings, or whose hands had been barbarous enough to inflict so terrible a punishment. Doubtless they had merited some mark of ignominy, the runaways, whom her favors had only turned into enemies—but not such a one as this!

[ch. 106] Frenzied with indignation, Lichas sprang forward, crying, “Oh! the simplicity of the woman! to actually believe these scars were made and the letters really imprinted, with the branding-iron! I only wish the marks they have disfigured their faces with were permanent! This would be some satisfaction to us at any rate. As a matter of fact, the whole thing’s a farce, and the lettering a delusion and a snare!”

Tryphaena was by way of showing some compassion, inasmuch as all was not lost for her pleasures; but Lichas, remembering his wife’s seduction and the insults he had received in the portico of the temple of Hercules, [177] and showing a countenance fiercely contorted with passion, cries, “This will show you, I imagine, Tryphaena, the immortal gods do govern human lives. Have they not brought the culprits all unwitting on board our ship, yes! and warned us of the fact by dreams coinciding in every particular with the truth? Look now, how can we pardon offenders whom the god himself puts into our hands for chastisement? For my part, I’m not a cruel man; but I dare not spare them, lest I suffer for it myself.”

Impressed by these superstitious arguments, Tryphaena changed her mind, and declared she would make no further objection to our punishment, but would gladly second so just a piece of retribution. She had received, she added, as cruel a wrong as Lichas himself; for had not her good name been publicly besmirched before a vulgar mob? [...]

[ch. 107] On hearing this Eumolpus endeavored to mitigate his anger by the following speech: “The unhappy beings whose destruction your vengeance claims, imploring your compassion, Lichas, they have chosen me, as one not unknown to you, to the office of mediator, [178] to reconcile them once more to those they formerly held so dear. You cannot really suppose the young men fell into this trap by mere chance; for surely the very first thing an intending passenger asks, is the name of the person he is to entrust his safety to. Relent then; be satisfied with the penalties already exacted and suffer free men to proceed to their destination without further injury. The harshest and most unforgiving of masters stay their cruelty, when slaves return home penitent; and do we not all of us spare enemies who surrender? What more do you want or desire? Prostrate before you lie these youths, men of birth and breeding though they be, and what is more than this, friends once bound to you in the ties of closest intimacy. Had they embezzled your money, had they betrayed your trust, by great Hercules! even then your resentment might be satisfied with the pains and penalties you behold. Look! The marks of servitude upon their brows, and their faces—free men’s faces—wearing voluntarily the degrading badge of punishment!”

But Lichas cut short the plea of mercy. [179] “No! You confuse the issue,” he interrupted; “you should keep each point separate and distinct. First of all, if they came here of their own free will, why did they shave their heads? The man who adopts a disguise is after no good, but is trying to deceive. Secondly, if they were seeking forgiveness and reconciliation through your good offices, why did you make every possible effort to keep your clients concealed? [180] It is plain enough the culprits did fall into the trap accidentally, and that you are merely trying on an artful subterfuge to slip out of reach of our resentment. Then for your special pleading, your noisy claim about their being men of birth and breeding, have a care you don’t injure your case by over-confidence. Whatever is the injured party to do, when the guilty run blindly to their own punishment? But, you urge, they were our friends; the more thoroughly, I say, have they earned their chastisement. The man who wrongs mere strangers, is called a robber; he who betrays his friends, is little better than a murderer.” [181]

Eumolpus, to rebut this damaging reasoning, replies, “There is nothing, I gather, tells more heavily against the unfortunate young men than the fact of their having cut off their hair by night; this is taken to prove they did not come on board voluntarily, but by mischance. I only trust my explanation may seem as simple and straightforward as the act itself was simply and innocently done. They purposed, before ever they embarked, to have eased their heads of an annoying and needless burden, but the wind springing up sooner than was expected forced them to put off their visit to the barber; nor did they for an instant imagine it mattered where they carried out the intention they had formed, knowing nothing of the omen involved or the rules aboard ship.”

“What made them take the guise of suppliants and shave their heads,” was Lichas’s only answer, “unless possibly because bald heads are more likely to win compassion? But there, what use is there trying to get at the truth through an interpreter? What have you to say for yourself, you thief? What salamander has burnt off your eyebrows? [182] What god have you vowed your locks of hair to? [183] Answer me, villain.”

[ch. 108] As for me, I stood dumbfounded, silenced by my terror of punishment, unable in my confusion to find a word, so plain was the case against me [...]

Besides, I was so disfigured, what with my cropped head and my eyebrows as bare as my forehead, I could do nothing and say nothing becomingly. But when presently my tearful face was wiped with a wet sponge, and the ink being thus moistened and smeared all over my countenance, my features were all confounded together in one sooty cloud, his anger turned into disgust. Eumolpus stoutly declared he would not stand by and see freeborn men degraded against all right and justice, and protested against our savage foe’s threats not only in word but in act. His protests were seconded by his hired servant and by one or two passengers very much exhausted by seasickness, and whose interference was more of an inducement to further violence than an accession of strength. I asked for no mercy for myself, but shaking my fists in Tryphaena’s face, I cried out in a bold, loud voice, I would use all my strength upon her, if she laid a finger on Giton, cursed woman that she was, the only person on the ship that really deserved flogging.

This insolence made Lichas still more angry, for he was furious at seeing me thus abandon my own cause to protest on Giton’s behalf. Nor was Tryphaena less enraged at the affront, and the whole ship’s company was split into two opposing factions. On the one side the barber servant is busied distributing his razors amongst us, after first arming himself with one of them, on the other

Tryphaena's slaves are tucking up their sleeves the better to use their fists. Even the maids did their part, encouraging the combatants with their cries, the pilot alone protesting and declaring he would leave the helm, if they did not make an end of this frantic uproar all about a couple of lecherous blackguards.

Even this threat failed to mitigate the fury of the disputants, our adversaries fighting for revenge, and ourselves for dear life. Numbers fall on either side, though no one is actually killed; still more retire wounded and bleeding, like soldiers after a pitched battle, without anyone showing the smallest loss of determination.

At this crisis the gallant Giton suddenly clapped his razor menacingly to his virile parts, threatening to amputate the cause of so many calamities; but Tryphaena forbade the perpetration of the horrid deed, readily granting him quarter. I myself repeatedly laid a similar weapon to my throat, though without any more intention of really killing myself than Giton had of carrying out his threat. At the same time he was able to enact the comedy with the more reckless realism, knowing as he did that the razor in his hand was the identical one he had once already cut his throat with.

Both sides kept the field with equal resolution, till the pilot, seeing it was likely to be no everyday fight, arranged after no little difficulty that Tryphaena should act as peacemaker and effect a truce. So after mutual pledges had been exchanged in the time-honored fashion, holding forth an olive branch she had hastily snatched from the image of the tutelary deity of the vessel, she advanced boldly to the parley.

What direful rage," she cries, "turns peace to war?

What crime is ours? No faithless Paris here

Rides in our ship, nor Menelaus' bride, [184]

Nor with a brother's gore Medea dyed. [185]

It is slighted love that inspires the feud, and craves

For blood and murderous deeds amidst these waves;

Why die before our time? Your wrath forbear,

Nor make the harmless sea your passions share!

[ch. 109] This effusion, pronounced by Tryphaena in a broken voice, did something to stop the fray, the combatants at length turning their thoughts to a peaceful solution and ceasing from active hostilities. Eumolpus, the leader on our side, at once seized the opportunity for reconciliation thus offered, and after first indulging in a fierce invective against Lichas and all his doings, put his seal to a treaty of peace, which ran as follows:

"From the bottom of your heart, you, Tryphaena, do promise and undertake to forgo all complaint of the wrong done to you by Giton; and never, by reason of any act of his committed aforetime, to upbraid, or punish, or in any wise molest him. Furthermore, that you will do nothing to the boy against his free will and pleasure, neither embracing, nor kissing, the said Giton, nor fornicating with him, except under forfeiture of one hundred denarii for such offense.

"Item: from the bottom of your heart, you, Lichas, do promise that you will in no wise annoy Encolpius with word or look of accusation, nor inquire where he may sleep at night; or if you so do, that you will incontinently count down two hundred denarii for each offense."

A truce being agreed to on these terms, we laid down our arms, and in order that no vestige of rancor might be left, once the oath was taken, it was resolved we should kiss away all memory of past injuries. All being unanimous for peace, our swelling passions soon subside, and a banquet served with emulous alacrity crowns our reconciliation with the pledge of good fellowship. The whole ship resounds with singing, and a sudden calm having arrested her progress, one might be seen harpooning the fish that lept above the waves, while another would be hauling in the struggling prey enticed by his cunningly baited hooks. Sea-birds too came and settled on the main yard; these a practiced sportsman touched with his jointed fowling-rods, and conveyed them glued to the limed tackle into our very hands. The down flew dancing in the air, while the larger feathers fell into the sea and tossed lightly to and fro on the foam-capped waves.

Lichas seemed already on the point of making it up with me, and Tryphaena was throwing the last drops of her wine amorously over Giton, when Eumolpus, who was as drunk as anybody, took it into his head to start jeering at people who were bald-headed

and branded. Eventually coming to the end of his exceedingly pointless witticisms, he once more dropped into poetry, and treated us to the following little “Lament for Vanished Locks”:

Beauty is fallen! Thy hair’s soft vernal grace

To wintry baldness gives untimely place.

Thy injured temples mourn their ravished shade;

Waste, like a stubble field, thy brow is laid.

Fallacious gods! Your treacherous gifts how vain!

You only give us joy, to give us pain [...]

Unhappy youth! But late thy curling gold

Even Phoebus himself might envy to behold; [186]

But now for smoothness, nor the liquid air,

Nor watered pumpkin can with thee compare.

The laughter-loving maids you fly, and fear;

And death with hasty steps will soon be here.

His fatal night already clouds thy morn,

Beauty is fallen! and thy gay locks are shorn.

[ch. 110] He was still longing, I verily believe, to give us more of this stuff or perhaps something worse, when Tryphaena’s maid led Giton away below and dressed the lad up in one of her mistress’s heads of hair. [187] She next produced eyebrows out of a make-up box, and cleverly following the lines of the lost features, soon restored him to all his pristine comeliness. Tryphaena saw Giton once more under his true colors, and bursting into tears, gave the boy the first genuine and heartfelt kiss she had bestowed on him since his misfortunes. Happy as I was to see the lad restored to his former beauty, I could not help continually hiding my own face, feeling how extraordinarily I must be disfigured, since Lichas did not deign to give me so much as a word. However I was rescued before long from these sad thoughts by the kind offices of the same maid servant, who now called me aside and decked me out with an equally elegant substitute for my lost ringlets. Indeed my face looked prettier than ever, as it happened to be a flaxen wig [...]

But Eumolpus, champion of the distressed and author of the existing harmony, fearing that our cheerfulness should flag for lack of amusing anecdotes, commenced a series of gibes at women’s frailty,—how lightly they fell in love, how quickly they forgot even their own sons for a lover’s sake, asserting there was never yet a woman so chaste she might not be wrought to the wildest excesses by a lawless passion. Without alluding to the old plays and world-renowned examples of women’s folly, he need only cite a case that had occurred, he said, within his own memory, which if we pleased he would now relate. This offer concentrated the attention of all on the speaker, who began as follows:

[ch. 111] “There was once upon a time at Ephesus [188] a lady of so high repute for chastity that women would actually come to that city from neighboring lands to see and admire her. This fair lady, having lost her husband, was not content with the ordinary signs of mourning, such as walking with hair disheveled behind the funeral car and beating her naked bosom in presence of the assembled crowd; she was determined, moreover, to accompany her lost one to his final resting-place, watch over his corpse in the vault where it was laid according to the Greek mode of burial, and weep day and night beside it. [189] So deep was her affliction, neither family nor friends could dissuade her from these austerities and the purpose she had formed of perishing of hunger. Even the magistrates had to retire, beaten, after a last but fruitless effort. All mourned as virtually dead already a woman of such singular determination, who had already gone five days without food. A trusty handmaid sat by her mistress’s side, mingling her tears with those of the unhappy woman, and trimming the lamp which stood in the tomb as often as it burned low. Nothing else was talked of throughout the city but her sublime devotion, and men of every station quoted her as a shining example of virtue and married affection.

Meantime, as it fell out, the governor of the province ordered certain robbers to be crucified in close proximity to the vault where the matron sat bewailing the recent loss of her mate. Next night the soldier who was set to guard the crosses to prevent anyone coming and removing the robbers' bodies to give them burial, saw a light shining among the tombs and heard the widow's groans. Yielding to curiosity, a failing common to all mankind, he was eager to discover who it was, and what was afoot. Accordingly he descended into the tomb, where beholding a lovely woman, he was at first confounded, thinking he saw a ghost or some supernatural vision. But presently the spectacle of the husband's dead body lying there, and the woman's tear-stained and nail-torn face, everything went to show him the reality, how it was a disconsolate widow unable to resign herself to the death of her helpmate. He proceeded therefore to carry his humble meal into the tomb, and to urge the fair mourner to cease her indulgence in grief so excessive, and to leave off torturing her bosom with unavailing sobs. Death, he declared, was the common end and last home of all men, enlarging on this and the other commonplaces generally employed to console a wounded spirit. But the lady, only shocked by this offer of sympathy from a stranger's lips, began to tear her breast with redoubled vehemence, and dragging out handfuls of her hair, she laid them on her husband's corpse.

The soldier, however, refusing to be rebuffed, renewed his adjuration to the unhappy lady to eat. Eventually the maid, seduced doubtless by the scent of the wine, found herself unable to resist any longer, and extended her hand for the refreshment offered; then with energies restored by food and drink, she set herself to the task of breaking down her mistress's resolution. 'What good will it do you,' she urged, 'to die of famine, to bury yourself alive in the tomb, to yield your life to destiny before the Fates demand it?

Think you to pleasure thus the dead and gone? [190]

'Nay! rather return to life, and shaking off this womanly weakness, enjoy the good things of this world as long as you may. The very corpse that lies here before your eyes should be a warning to make the most of existence.'

No one is really loath to consent, when pressed to eat or live. The widow therefore, worn as she was with several days' fasting, suffered her resolution to be broken, and took her fill of nourishment with no less avidity than her maid had done, who had been the first to give way."

[ch. 112] "Now you all know what temptations assail poor human nature after a hearty meal. The soldier resorted to the same persuasions which had already been successful in inducing the lady to eat, in order to overcome her virtue. The modest widow found the young soldier neither ill-looking nor wanting in address, while the maid was strong indeed in his favor and kept repeating:

Why thus unmindful of your past delight,

Against a pleasing passion will you fight? [191]

But why make a long story? The lady showed herself equally complaisant in this respect also, and the victorious soldier gained both his ends. So they lay together not only that first night of their nuptials, but a second likewise, and a third, the door of the vault being of course kept shut, so that anyone, friend or stranger, that might come to the tomb, should suppose this most chaste of wives had expired by now on her husband's corpse. Meantime the soldier, entranced with the woman's beauty and the mystery of the thing, purchased day by day the best his means allowed him, and as soon as ever night was come, conveyed the provisions to the tomb.

Thus it came about that the relatives of one of the malefactors, observing this relaxation of vigilance, removed his body from the cross during the night and gave it proper burial. But what of the unfortunate soldier, whose self-indulgence had thus been taken advantage of, when next morning he saw one of the crosses under his charge without its body! Dreading instant punishment, he acquaints his mistress with what had occurred, assuring her he would not await the judge's sentence, but with his own sword exact the penalty of his negligence. He must die therefore; would she give him sepulture, and join the friend to the husband in that fatal spot?

But the lady was no less tender-hearted than virtuous. 'The Gods forbid,' she cried, 'I should at one and the same time look on the corpses of two men, both most dear to me. I had rather hang a dead man on the cross than kill a living.' So said, so done; she orders her husband's body to be taken from its coffin and fixed upon the vacant cross. The soldier availed himself of the ready-witted lady's expedient, and next day all men marveled how in the world a dead man had found his own way to the cross."

[ch. 113] This story set the sailors all laughing, while it made Tryphaena blush not a little and lay her face amorously against Giton's bosom. Lichas on the other hand was far from laughing, and shaking his head indignantly, "If the Governor of Ephesus had been a just man," he declared, "he should have returned the good husband's body to the tomb and hung the woman on the cross." Doubtless he was thinking of the injury done to his own bed, and the pillage of his ship by the roving band of wantons. But not only did the terms of our treaty forbid his bearing rancor, but the mirth that filled all hearts left no room for resentment. Meantime Tryphaena, sitting on Giton's lap, was now covering his breast with kisses, now adjusting his wig so as to set off his face in spite of the loss of his ringlets.

For myself, so chagrined and impatient was I at this new and unexpected reconciliation I could neither eat nor drink, but sat looking grimly askance at the pair. Every kiss they exchanged wounded me, and every artful blandishment the wanton employed. I knew not whether I was the more incensed with the boy for having robbed me of my mistress, or with my mistress for debauching the boy. Both sights cut me to the quick, and were far more painful than my late captivity. To make things worse, Tryphaena never vouchsafed me a word, as she surely might have to a friend and a once favored lover, nor did Giton deign so much as to do me the common courtesy of drinking my health, or at the very least speaking to me in the course of general conversation. I suppose he was afraid, just at the commencement of renewed favors on the lady's part, of reopening a scarcely healed wound. Tears of vexation wetted my bosom, and the groans I stifled under the guise of a sigh all but choked me [...]

Lichas began to solicit my favors, adopting more the tone of a friend than of a supercilious master who commands [...]

[Trypaena's maid] "If you have one drop of good blood in your veins, you will treat her as no better than a strumpet; as you are a man, don't go with that female catamite." [...]

What I feared more than anything else was that Eumolpus might get wind of the circumstances, such as they were, and being a most sarcastic person might compose a versified lampoon to avenge my supposed wrongs [...]

After listening to my tale, Eumolpus swore in good set terms [...]

[ch. 114] Whilst we were still engaged in talk of this and the like sort, the sea rose and heavy clouds gathering from all quarters plunged the scene in darkness. The sailors run to their posts in panic haste, and take in sail to ease the ship. But the wind, continually changing, had raised a cross-sea, and the helmsman was uncertain what course to steer. At one moment the storm would be driving us towards Sicily, while at others the North Wind, that tyrant of the Italian coast, would repeatedly whirl our helpless ship hither and thither at its mercy; and what was more dangerous than all the squalls, a sudden darkness had fallen, so thick the helmsman could not see even to the ship's bows. So the tempest being, God knows, utterly overpowering, Lichas stretches forth his hands towards me in terror and supplication, crying, "Help us, Encolpius, help us in our peril; restore that sacred robe and the sistrum you robbed the ship of. [192] By all you hold sacred, have pity, you who are so tender-hearted usually." As he was vociferating thus, the gale swept him overboard; he rose once and again from the raging whirlpool, then the waters whirled him round and sucked him under.

Tryphaena on the contrary was saved by the fidelity of her slaves, who seized her, put her in the ship's boat along with the greater part of her baggage, and so rescued her from certain death. Clinging to Giton, I lamented, "Is this all the Gods give us, to unite us only in death? No! Cruel Fortune grudges even this. Look! In an instant the waves will overset the ship! Look! The angry sea will in an instant sever the embraces of two lovers. If ever you truly loved Encolpius, kiss me, while you may, and snatch this last delight from swift impending doom."

As I said the words, Giton threw off his robe, and creeping inside my tunic, protruded his head to be kissed. Moreover, that the cruel waves might not tear our embrace asunder, he girt us both together with a girdle round our waists, crying, "If nothing else, at least we shall thus float longer united; or if the ocean be so merciful as to cast up our dead bodies on the same shore, either some passer-by will have the common humanity to heap a cairn over us, or else the unconscious sand will give us a burial even the angry waves cannot dispute." I submit to this last and final bond, and calm as if composed on my funeral couch, await a death I no longer dread.

The tempest meantime carries out the decrees of Fate, and beats down the last defenses of the ship. Mast and rudder are carried away, and not a rope or an oar left; like a mere shapeless mass of logs she goes drifting with the billows [...]

Some fishermen now put out hastily in their small craft to loot the vessel; but when they saw men were still on board ready to defend their property, they changed from wreckers into rescuers [...]

Footnotes:

[166] Hannibal was a famous Carthiginian general and enemy of the Romans during the Punic Wars.

[167] There is a famous episode in the Odyssey where Odysseus and his men are trapped in the Cyclops Polyphemus' cave as the Cyclops eats them in pairs.

[168] Ethiopians were highly valued as slaves because they came from relatively far away.

[169] Most male Jews were circumcised for religious reasons while most Romans were not.

[170] Arabs appear to have worn ear ornaments while Romans considered this reserved for women.

[171] Gauls and some other cultures labeled as "barbarian" were paler than the typical Mediterranean complexion and also sometimes used chalk or lime or other pigments to paint their bodies.

[172] Branding on the forehead was one punishment meted out on runaway slaves who were caught.

[173] Epicurus was a famous philosopher who argued that the gods did not influence humans' lives.

[174] Many sailors avoided specific actions aboard ship in the belief that they were unlucky and the Romans advised cutting one's hair on auspicious days of the month.

[175] Spartan society was highly militarized and boys were subjected to severe training regimens to make them better able to endure pain.

[176] A disguised and aged Odysseus was famously recognized by his nurse by a scar on his thigh sustained during a hunting accident.

[177] This refers to an episode of the *Satyricon* now lost.

[178] We have here a mock courtroom scene or trial. Eumolpus, as a trained rhetorician, is presenting his clients' case for mediation.

[179] Hired advocates would present speeches to courts in Rome (and Greece) on behalf of their clients.

[180] Client here is a loaded term. Is Encolpius accepting Eumolpus as a patron? Each position carried implied duties in Roman customary law.

[181] Literally, a parricide or killer of one's father, a heinous offense in Roman law.

[182] Salamanders were believed to live in flames.

[183] Many individuals would vow to consecrate their shaved or cut hair to a deity as a sacrifice or offering in return for a petition granted.

[184] Paris either stole or eloped with Helen, wife of Menelaus, thereby initiating the Trojan war.

[185] Medea famously hacked her brother to pieces and threw him overboard while eloping with Jason (and the golden fleece).

[186] Phoebus was another name for the god Apollo, typically depicted as a handsome young man with full head of hair.

[187] Romen women famously utilized wigs and hairpieces, which were often the subject of satire.

[188] Ephesus was a prosperous city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey).

[189] As the play *Antigone* and other Greek and Roman works of literature attest, burial of the body was critical to veneration of the dead and enabled the soul of the departed to enter the underworld. Otherwise, their dissatisfied shade was doomed to haunt the living. See this depiction of a funeral procession in a Roman sarcophagus (stone tomb).

[190] *Aeneid*, bk. 4, line 34.

[191] *Aeneid*, bk. 4, line 38.

[192] These appear to have been stolen from a shrine to or devotee of a particular god(dess) on board, perhaps the Egyptian goddess Isis. A *sistrum* was a rattle or tambourine used in religious ceremonies, including the popular cult of Isis.

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The Reconstructed Text- Part Six

The City of Croton:

The survivors wash up near the Italian city of Croton, where marrying for money is the primary occupation. Eumolpus enters the city, with Encolpius and Giton claiming to be his slaves.

[ch. 115] Suddenly we hear an extraordinary noise, like the howling of a wild beast trying to get out, coming from underneath the master's cabin. Following up the sound, we discover Eumolpus seated, dashing down verses on a huge sheet of parchment. Marveling how the man could find leisure in the very face of death to be writing poetry, we haul him out in spite of his clamorous protests, telling him to have some common sense for once. But he was furious at the interruption, and shouted, "Let me finish my phrase; my poem's just in the throes of completion!" I laid violent hands on the maniac, calling on Giton to help me drag the bellowing poet ashore [...]

After accomplishing our purpose with much difficulty, we found dismal shelter in a fisherman's hut, where having refreshed ourselves as best we might with provisions damaged by sea-water, we passed a most wretched night.

Next day, as we were debating what district we might most safely make for, I suddenly caught sight of a human body that was driving ashore, tossing lightly up and down on the waves. I stood sadly waiting, gazing with wet eyes on the work of the faithless element, and thus soliloquized, "Somewhere or another, mayhap, a wife is looking in blissful security for this poor fellow's return, or a son perhaps, or a father, all unsuspicious of storm and wreck; be sure, he has left someone behind, whom he kissed fondly at parting. This then is the end of human projects, this the accomplishment of men's mighty schemes. Look! How now he rides the waves."

I was still deploring the stranger's fate, as I supposed him to be, when the swell heaved the face, still quite undisfigured, towards the beach, and I recognized the features of Lichas, my erstwhile enemy, so formidable and implacable a foe, now cast helpless almost at my feet. I could restrain my tears no longer, but smiting my breast again and again, "Where is your anger now," I exclaimed, "and all your domineering ways? There you lie, a prey to the fishes and monsters of the deep; you who so short a while ago proudly boasted your despotic powers, have never a plank left of your great ship. Go to, mortals; swell your hearts with high-flown anticipations. Go to, you men of craft; arrange the disposal for a thousand years to come of the wealth you have got by fraud. Why, only yesterday this dead man here cast up the accounts of his fortune, and actually fixed in his own mind the day, when he should return to his native shore. Ye Gods! How far away he lies from the point he hoped to reach. Nor is it the sea alone that disappoints men's hopes like this. The warrior is betrayed by his arms; the householder in the act of paying his offerings to heaven is overwhelmed in the ruin of his own *penates*. [193] One is thrown from his car, and breathes his last hurried breath; the glutton dies of an over-hearty meal, the frugal man of fasting. Reckon it rightly, and there is shipwreck everywhere. But then a drowned man misses burial, you object. As if it made one scrap of difference how the perishable body is consumed,—by fire, by water, or by time. Do what you will, these all end in the same result. Ah! but wild beasts will mangle his corpse. As if fire would treat it any kindlier; why fire is the very penalty we deem the most appalling, when we are savage with our slaves. What folly then to make such effort to ensure that no part of us remains unburied, when the Fates arrange this matter at their pleasure, whether we wish it or not." […][194]

Lichas, borne by the hands of his ill-wishers to the pile, is consumed to ashes. Eumolpus meantime is busy composing an epitaph for the departed, after rolling his eyes about for a while, in search of inspiration [.…]

[ch. 116] This office duly and willingly performed, we pursue our interrupted journey, and in a very brief space of time arrive sweating at the top of a steep hill, whence we spy at no great distance a city occupying the summit of a lofty crag. We did not know its name, being mere wanderers, until a peasant informed us it was Croton, a very ancient place and once upon a time the first town of all Italy. We next inquired anxiously what sort were the people inhabiting this famous site, and what commerce they mostly carried on since the ruin of their former prosperity by constantly recurring wars.

"Good strangers," the fellow replied, "if you happen to be merchants, change your trade and seek some other means of livelihood. But if you are of a more genteel stamp, and can tell lies without end and stick to them, you're in the straight road to fortune. In this city literature is not cultivated, nor does eloquence find favor; sobriety and morality meet with neither commendation nor success; its inhabitants each and all, you must know, belong to one or other of two classes, that is, legacy hunters and their prey. In this city

no man rears children, for whoever has natural heirs of his own, is admitted to no entertainment, no public show; excluded from every privilege of citizenship, he is condemned to a life of furtive obscurity among the lowest of the low. The unmarried on the contrary and all who have no near kindred, attain the highest honors; they alone are brave, and capable, and respectable. You will find the town," he concluded, "like a pestfield, where there are but two things to be seen—corpses being torn, and crows tearing them." […]

[ch. 117] Eumolpus, more far-seeing than the rest of us, pondered over these novel arrangements and admitted he was attracted to the method indicated of making a fortune. For my part, I supposed the old poet was joking in his fantastic way, but he went on quite seriously, "I only wish I had a more adequate stock in trade, I mean a more fashionable robe and more elegant outfit generally, to make the imposture more convincing. Great Hercules; I would get done with my wallet for good and all, and lead you all straight to wealth." […]

On this I promised him whatever he required, provided the dress we used for our light-fingered work would satisfy him; together with anything we had appropriated from Lycurgus's place. As for ready money, this we might safely trust the mother of gods [195] to provide […]

"What hinders us then," cried Eumolpus, "to arrange our little comedy? Make me master, if you like my plan." None of us ventured to disapprove of a project where we had nothing to lose. Accordingly, to ensure the deception being faithfully kept up by all concerned, we swore an oath in terms dictated by Eumolpus, to endure fire, imprisonment, stripes, cold steel, and whatsoever else he might command us, in his behalf. Like regular gladiators we vowed ourselves most solemnly to our master, body and soul.

After completing the oath-taking, we salute our master with pretended servility, and are instructed all to tell the same tale,—how Eumolpus had lost a son, a young man of prodigious eloquence and high promise; how consequently the poor old father had quitted his native city, that the sight of his boy's clients and companions and the vicinity of his tomb might not be continually renewing his grief. This sad event, we were to add, had been followed by a recent shipwreck, which had cost him two million sesterces; that it was not however so much the loss of the money which annoyed him as the fact that for want of a proper retinue he could not fittingly keep up his rank. Further, that he had thirty millions in Africa invested in landed estates and securities, and such a host of slaves scattered over the length and breadth of Numidia that they could storm Carthage at a pinch. [196]

In accordance with this scheme, we direct Eumolpus to cough a great deal, to have a weak digestion at any rate, and in company to grumble at every dish set before him; to be for ever talking about gold and silver, and unproductive farms, and how terrible barren land always was; also every day to sit over accounts, and regularly once a month to add new codicils to his will. And to make the farce quite complete, whenever he wished to call one of us, he was to use the wrong name, plainly showing the master was thinking of other servants no longer with him.

Matters being thus arranged, after praying to the gods for "good success and happy issue," as the phrase runs, we set forward. But poor Giton could not stand his unusual load; while Corax, Eumolpus's hired man, objecting strongly to his job, kept everlastingly dropping his pack and cursing us for going too fast; he swore he would either throw away his traps, or else make off with the swag altogether. "Do you take me for a beast of burden," he grumbled, "or a stone-ship? I contracted for a man's work, not a dray-horse's! I'm as much a freeman as you are, though my father did leave me a poor man." Not content with bad language, he kept lifting up his leg again and again, and filling the road with a filthy noise and a filthy stench. Giton only laughed at his impudence, and after each explosion gave a loud imitation of the noise with his mouth […]

[118] "Many are the victims, my young friends," Eumolpus began, "poetry has seduced! The instant a man has got a verse to stand on its feet and clothed a tender thought in appropriate language, he thinks he has scaled Helicon [197] right off. Many others, after long practice of forensic talents, finally retreat to the tranquil calm of verse-making as to a blessed harbor of refuge, imagining a poem is easier put together than an argument all embroidered with scintillating conceits. But a mind of nobler inspiration is revolted by this flippancy; and no intellect that is not flooded with a mighty tide of learning, can either conceive or bring to birth a worthy poetic child. In diction, anything approaching commonness, if I may use the word, is to be avoided; a poet must choose words devoid of base associations, and hold to Horace's, "I hate and bid avaunt the vulgar herd." [198]

"Again, care should be exercised to avoid sentiments that stand out as mere excrescences on the framework of the main conception; let the fabric be as brilliant as it may, its colors must be ingrained in the stuff. I may instance Homer, and the Lyric poets, and our Roman Virgil, and Horace with his happy preciosity. The rest, one and all, were blind to the true path to Parnassus, or if they did see it, were afraid to tread it. Look at that mighty subject, the Civil Wars; [199] anyone attempting it, if not a man of the ripest

scholarship, will sink under the burden. It is no question of a string of facts to be cataloged in verse, a task the historian will perform far better; nay! rather must the untrammeled spirit be hurried along through a series of digressions and divine interventions and all the intricacies of myth and fable. The inspired frenzy of the bard should be more apparent than the tested pedantry of scrupulous precision. For example, see how you like this rapid sketch, though indeed it has not yet received the final touches:

[chs. 119-124 follow in the form of an epic poem fragment]

Now haughty Rome reigned mistress of the Globe,

Wherever the Ether shines with heavenly fires,

Or Earth extends, or circling Ocean rolls.

Yet still insatiate, her winged navies plowed

The burdened main, to each unplundered shore;

For to the rich she bore immortal hate,

And her own avarice still prepared her fall.

Even former pleasures were beheld with scorn,

As joys grown threadbare by too vulgar use.

The soldier now admired the Assyrian dye,

And now the western charmed his fickle pride.

Numidia here the lofty roof sustained;

There shone the honors of Chinese looms; [200]

Arabia of her balmy sweets was spoiled;

Yet still unquenched, the lust of ravage burned.

In Maurian wilds, and Ammon's distant reign, [201]

Monsters were captured for our cruel sports.

The stranger tiger in his golden cage

Now crossed the main to press our friendly shore;

Whilst joyful Rome her monster entertained

With purple streams of her own kindred blood.

I blush to speak, I tremble to recite

Our Persian manners, [202] and our curse of Fate!

From youth they snatched the man with cruel art,

Whilst Venus [203] frowned over the retreating tide;

As if they thought to favor the deceit,

Even age itself would, like that tide, retire!

Nature was lost, and sought herself in vain.

Hence naught but lewd effeminacies please,

Soft curling hair, and wantonness of dress,

And all that can disgrace man's godlike form.

From Africa slaves and purple carpets come,

With citron tables, rich in golden stains,

Around whose costly, but dishonored pride,
Buried in wine, the giddy drunkards lie.
Nothing escapes our raging lust of taste;
The soldier draws his sword in rapine's cause;
And from Sicilia's distant main the scar
Is brought alive to our luxurious board;
The Lucrine shore is of its oysters spoiled, [204]
And hunger purchased with the expensive sauce;
Phasis [205] is widowed of its feathered race,
And nothing heard over all the desert strand
But trees remurmuring to the passing gales.
Nor less in Mars's Field [206] corruption swayed,
Where every vote was prostitute to gain;
The people and the Senate both were sold. [207]
Even age itself was deaf to virtue's voice,
And all its court to sordid interest paid,
Beneath whose feet lay trampled majesty.
Even Cato's self [208] was by the crowd exiled,
Whilst he who won suffused with blushes stood,
Ashamed to snatch the power from worthier hands.
Oh! Shame to Rome and to the Roman name!
It was not one man alone whom they exiled,
But banished virtue, fame and freedom too.
Thus wretched Rome her own destruction bought,
Herself the merchant, and herself the ware.
Besides, in debt was the whole empire bound,
A prey to usury's insatiate jaws;
Not one could call his house, or self, his own;
But debts on debts like silent fevers wrought,
Till through the members they the vitals seized.
Fierce tumults now they to their succor call,
And war must heal the wounds of luxury;
For want may safely dare without a fear.
And sunk in hopeless misery, what could wake
Licentious Rome from her voluptuous trance,
But fire, and sword, and all the din of arms?
Three mighty chiefs kind fortune had supplied,

Whom cruel Fate in various manners slew.

The Parthian fields were drunk with Crassus' gore; [209]

Great Pompey perished on the Libyan main; [210]

And thankless Rome saw greater Julius bleed. [211]

Thus as one soil too narrow were to hold

Their rival dust, their ashes shared the World.

But their immortal glory never dies.

Between Naples and Dicharchian fields extends

A horrid gulf, immensely deep and wide,

Through which Cocytus [212] rolls his lazy streams,

And poisons all the air with sulphurous fogs.

No autumn here ever clothes himself with green,

Nor joyful spring the languid herbage cheers;

Nor feathered warblers chant their mirthful strains

In vernal comfort to the rustling boughs;

But Chaos reigns, and ragged rocks around

With naught but baleful cypress are adorned.

Amidst these horrors Pluto [213] raised his head,

With mingled flames and ashes sprinkled,

Stopped Fortune [214] in her flight, and thus addressed:

Oh! You controller of both Earth and Heaven,

Who had the power which too securely stands,

And only heap thy favors to resume;

Do you not sink beneath Rome's ponderous weight,

Unable to sustain her tottering pride?

Even Rome herself beneath her burden groans,

And ill sustains monopoly of power.

For see elate in luxury of spoils,

Her golden domes invade the frighted skies!

Sea is turned to land, and land is turned to sea,

And injured nature mourns her slighted laws.

Even me they threaten, and besiege my throne;

The Earth is ransacked for her treasured stores,

And in the solid hills such caverns made,

That murmuring ghosts begin to hope for day.

Change, Fortune, therefore change this prideful scene!

Fire every Roman's breast with civil rage,

And give new subjects to my desert reign!

For never have I been joyed with human gore,

Nor my Tisiphone [215] ever quenched her thirst,

Since Sulla's sword let loose the purple tide, [216]

And reaped the harvest of insatiate death.

He spoke . . . and behold! The opening Earth disclosed,

And to the Goddess' hand his hand he joined.

Then Fortune, smiling, this reply addressed:

Oh! Father who Cocytus' empire sways!

If dangerous truths may safely be revealed,

Enjoy your wish! not less my anger boils,

And in my breast as fierce resentment burns.

I hate the height to which I've lifted Rome,

And my own lavished favors now repent.

But that same God who built her haughty power,

Shall soon re-humble to the dust her pride.

Then I'll with transport light the general flame,

And with the plenteous slaughter feast revenge.

Methinks I see Thessalia's fatal plain

Already heaped with dead, and funeral piles

Innumerous blazing on Iberia's shore!

I see the Libyan sands stained with blood,

And sevenfold Nile groans with prophetic fears!

On every side the clang of arms resounds,

An Actium's flight seems present to my eyes! [217]

Then open all the portals of thy Reign,

And give thy crowding subjects free access!

Old Charon in his boats can ne'er convey [218]

The shoals of ghosts that for their passage wait,

But needs a fleet!—Tisiphone may then

Quench her dire thirst, and cloy herself with Fate.

The mangled World is hurrying to thy Reign.

Scarce ended she her words, when from a cloud

Blue lightnings flashed, and sudden thunders roared.

Affrighted Pluto feared his brother's darts,

And trembling hid his head in shades of night.

The gods by dreadful omens straight disclosed

The deathful horrors of approaching Fate.

The Sun in bloody clouds obscured his rays,

As if he mourned the dreadful scene begun;

Whilst trembling Cynthia [219] fled the impious sight,

Quenching her orb, and from the World withdrew.

Mountains by sudden storms were overturned;

And erring rivers left their channels dry.

Even Heaven itself confesses the alarm,

And fierce battalions skirmish in the clouds;

Etna [220] redoubles all her sulphurous rage,

And darts strange lightnings at the affrighted sky;

Unburied ghosts too wander round the tombs,

And with impatient threatenings ask repose;

A fiery comet shakes her blazing hair;

And wondering Jove descends in showers of blood.

Nor was it long that Heaven the event concealed;

For mighty Caesar panting for revenge,

Gave peace to Gaul, and flew to civil arms. [221]

Upon the towering Alps' remotest height,

Where the cragged rocks look down upon the clouds,

A Grecian altar to Alcides smokes.

There everlasting Winter bars access,

And the ambitious summit props the skies;

No Summer ever darts his genial beams,

Nor vernal Zephyrs cheer the joyless air;

But snows on snows accumulated rise,

The icy pillars of the starry orb.

Here Caesar with his joyful legions climbed;

Here camped; and from the lofty precipice,

Surveying all Hesperia's fertile plains. [222]

With hands uplifted, thus addressed his prayer:

Almighty Jove! And thou, Saturnian Earth,

So often by me with filial triumphs graced!

Witness these arms I with reluctance bear,

Compelled by matchless wrongs to war's redress.

Exiled and interdicted, whilst the Rhine

Is swelled beyond its banks with native gore,

And to his Alps confined the haughty Gaul,

Once more to storm your Capitol prepared.

But what reward has all these toils repaid?

Conquest alas! is by herself undone!

Germania vanquished a new crime is deemed,

And sixty triumphs are with exile crowned.

But what are they my glory thus compels

To count the aid of mercenary arms?

Oh! Shame to Rome! My Rome disowns their birth

Nor shall they long her injured honors stain,

Beneath this arm their envious Chief shall fall!

Come fellow victors, rouse your martial rage,

And with your conquering swords assert my cause!

One is our danger, and our crime the same.

It was not I alone reaped glory's field,

But thanks to you! by you these laurels won;

Then since disgrace and punishment's decreed,

Mutual our trophies and victorious toils,

The die will be thrown! and Fortune judge the cast!

Let each brave warrior grasp his shining blade!

For me my rights already crowned appear,

Nor amidst so many heroes doubt success.

He spoke. . . . When swift-descending from the Sky,

The bird of Jove urged his auspicious flight.

Strange voices in the left-hand woods were heard;

And issuing flames flashed through the sylvan gloom.

Phoebus [Apollo] himself assumed his brightest beams,

And with unusual splendor cheered the day.

Fired with the omen, dauntless Caesar bids

His engines move; himself the first to essay

The dangerous path; for yet in frost confined

And peaceful horrors lay the passive ground.

But when with ardent feet the innumerous train

Of men and horse and icy fetters loosed,

To fierce resistance swelled the melted snows,

And sudden rivers over the mountains rolled.

But soon again as if by Fate's command,

The rising waves in icy billows stood;

Whilst in confusion over the treacherous path

Horses and men and mingled standards lay.

To aid the horror, sudden winds compel

The gathering clouds, and burst into a storm,

Thick over their ringing arms and hail descends,

And from the Ether pours an icy sea;

One common ruin conquers Earth and Sky,

And frighted rivers hurry over their banks;

But dauntless Caesar aided by his spear

Still presses forward with unshaken soul.

With such an ardor was Alcides fired, [223]

When down Caucasian steeps he rushed to fame.

And thus descending from Olympus' brow,

Almighty Jove the giants put to flight.

Meantime on trembling pinions through the Skies

To Mount Palatium frighted Rumor flew. [224]

And to astonished Rome these tidings bore:

A hostile Fleet is riding on the main,

And over the Alps, with German conquests flushed,

The vengeful Legions pour on guilty Rome.

Straight Fire and Sword and all the dreadful train

Of civil rage before their eyes appear!

Distracting tumults every bosom swayed,

And Reason amidst the dubious fears was lost.

This flies by land, and that confides the sea,

As far less dangerous than his native shores!

These run to arms; Fate aids the wild affright,

And each obeys the guidance of his fears.

No certain course the giddy vulgar know,

But through the Gates in thronged confusion crowd,

And rival terror;—Rome to Rumor yields,

And weeping Romans leave their native seats.

This is his hand his trembling children leads,

And this his gods within his bosom hides,

His long-loved threshold quits with mournful looks.

And wings his curses at the absent foe.

There on the husband's breast the bride complains;

And here his father's age a pious youth

Supports with filial care, nor feels his load,

Nor fears but for his venerable charge.

Whilst these, insensate! to the field convey

Their treasured wealth, and glut the war with spoils.

As on the deep when stormy Auster blows, [225]

And mounts the billows with tumultuous rage,

The affrighted seamen ply their arts in vain;

The pilots stand aghast; these lash their sails;

Whilst these make land, and those avoid the shores,

And rather Fortune than the rocks confide.

But what can paint the fears that seized all men,

When both the Consuls [226] with great Pompey [227] fled?

Pompey, Hydaspes' and proud Pontus' scourge,

The rock of Pirates, whom with wonder Jove

Had thrice beheld in the triumphal car!

That mighty Chief who gave the Euxine laws, [228]

And taught the admiring Bosphorus to obey,

Oh shame! Deserted the Imperial name,

And meanly left both Rome and Fame behind!

Whilst fickle Fortune gloried in his flight.

The Gods with horror see the intestine jars,

And even celestial breasts consent to fear.

For see the mild pacific train depart.

Exiled the World by our impiety!

First soft-winged Peace extends her snowy arm,

And pulling over her brows her olive wreath,

Seeks the Elysian shades with hasty flight.

On her with downcast eyes meek Faith attends,

And mourning Justice with disheveled hair,

And weeping Concord with her garments rent.

But joyful Hell unbolts the brazen doors,

And all her Furies quit the Stygian Court.

Threatening Bellona [229] with Erinys joins,

And dire Megaera armed with fiery brands. [230]

Pale Death, insidious Fraud, and Massacre,

With Rage, burst forth! Who from his fetters freed,

Lifts high his gory head; a helmet hides

His wounded visage, and his left hand grasps

The shield of Mars horrid with countless darts. [231]

Whilst in his right a flaming torch appears,

To light destruction, and to fire the world.

The Gods descending also left the skies,

Whilst wondering Atlas missed his usual load; [232]

And mortal jars even Heaven itself divide.

In Caesar's cause Dione first appeared; [233]

Her Pallas [234] aided, and the God of War [235].

Whilst in espousal of brave Pompey's part

Cynthia and Phoebus [236] and Cyllene's son [237]

And his own model, great Alcides, [238] joined.

The trumpets sound! When straight fell Discord [239] raised

Her Stygian head, and shook her matted locks.

With clotted blood her face was covered over,

And gummy horrors from her eyes distilled;

Two rows of cankered teeth deformed her mouth,

And from her tongue a stream of poison flowed;

While hissing serpents played around her cheeks;

Her livid skin with rags was scarce concealed,

And in her trembling hand a torch she shook.

Ascending thus from the Tartarean gloom,

She reached the top of lofty Apennine;

Whence viewing all the subject land and sea,

And armies floating on the crowded plains,

This into words her joyful fury broke:

Now, rush you Nations, rush to mutual arms,

And let Dissension's torch forever burn!

For flight no longer will the Coward save,

Nor age, nor sex, nor children's pity move,

But the Earth tremble, and her haughtiest towers

Shake in convulsive ruins to the ground.

Do you, Marcellus, the decree uphold;

And Curio, you excite the madding crowd!

Nor you, persuasive Lentulus, forbear [240]

To aid the faction with your potent tongue!

But why, O Caesar, this delayed revenge?

Why burst you not the gates of guilty Rome,

And make her treasured pride your welcome prey?

And you, O Pompey, know you not your power?

If you should fear Rome, to Epidamnus haste, [241]

And feast Thessalia's plain with human gore!

So Discord spoke. . . . The impious Earth obeyed.

Eumolpus having declaimed this effusion with prodigious volubility, we eventually entered the gates of Croton. Here we stayed at a small, mean inn, but started out next morning to find a lodging of greater pretensions. We soon fell in with a mob of legacy hunters, [242] who plied us with questions as to who we were and where we came from. So we answered both inquiries, in strict accordance with the plan arranged between us, with an exaggerated glibness, and they believed every word of it; for they instantly put their fortunes at Eumolpus's disposal, almost fighting which should be first to do him this service. One and all offer presents, in order to curry favor with the supposed millionaire.

[ch. 125] Things went on thus at Croton for a long time, till Eumolpus, intoxicated with success, so completely forgot his former lowly condition as to boast to his followers how no one could resist his influence, and that any misdemeanor they might have committed in the town, they could carry off with impunity by his friends' good offices. For my part however, though every day I stuffed my swollen carcass with a greater superfluity of good things and really thought Fortune had at last ceased watching me with an eye of malevolence, still I often reflected on my present mode of life and the way it had come about. "What if some astute legacy hunter," I often said to myself, "sent someone to Africa to make inquiries, and discovered our swindle? What if Eumolpus's servant, as is just possible, sick of this life of luxury, should give a hint to his cronies and betray the whole imposture out of malice? Why! we should just have to fly once more, return to the penury we have at last got the better of, and start begging afresh. Gods and goddesses of heaven! what a life outlaws lead, forever dreading the penalty of one felony or another!" [….]

While staying in Croton, Encolpius becomes entangled with a prosperous woman named Circe (an allusion to the sorceress of the same name from The Odyssey *and probably used as a fake name). Encolpius, likewise, calls himself Polyaenos, one of Odysseus' epithets. In the following speech, Circe's maid Chrysis addresses Polyaenos.*

[ch. 126] "But I see, because you know your own beauty, you give yourself airs, and sell your favors, instead of giving them. What else can those waved and well combed locks mean, and that made-up face, and the languishing look of your eyes? For what else that studied gait, and mincing steps that never exceed a measured pace, except to sell your person by the meretricious display of your charms? Look at me; I am no augur, no student of the planets like the astrologers, yet I can infer a man's character from his looks, and foretell his intentions the moment I see his way of walking. Therefore, if you are willing to sell us what I require, there's a customer all ready; or, if you will give it, like a gentleman, we shall be glad to be under this obligation to you. You tell me you are a slave and a common varlet; this only the more inflames my mistress's heated imagination. There are women who fancy muck, whose passions are stirred only at the sight of slaves or runner boys with bare legs. Others are hot after gladiators, or dusty muleteers, or actors swaggering on the boards. This is the sort my mistress is; she jumps clean over the fourteen rows from orchestra to gallery, to seek her choice among the rabble of the back benches." [243]

So, charmed with her fascinating chatter, "Tell me, my dear," I said, "is this lady who loves me yourself?"The maid laughed heartily at my cool way of putting it, saying, "Please! Please! don't be so mighty pleased with yourself. I've never given myself to a slave yet; and God forbid I should waste my embraces on gallows-birds. 'It is their own lookout, if ladies go kissing the marks the lash has left; for my part, though I'm only a servant maid, I never go with anybody below an equestrian." [244] I was astounded at such abnormal predilections, and thought it monstrous thus to find the maid with the mistress's fastidiousness, the mistress with the maid's vulgar tastes.

Presently, after further pleasantries had passed, I begged the girl to bring her mistress into the plane tree avenue. She was quite agreeable, and tucking up her skirts dived into a laurel wood that bordered the promenade. In a very few moments she brought out her mistress from where she was hiding, and led her up to me, a more perfect being than ever artist fashioned. There are no words

to express her beauty, for anything I can say will fall far short of the reality. Her locks, which curled naturally, rippled all over her shoulders, her brow was low, the hair being turned back from it, her brows, extending to the very spring of the cheek, almost met between the eyes, which shone brighter than stars in a moonless sky, her nose was slightly aquiline, her little mouth such as Praxiteles gave Diana. [245] Chin, neck, hands, snow-white feet confined in elegant sandals of gold work, all vied with Parian marble in brilliancy. For the first time I thought lightly of Doris, whose long-time admirer I was.

Why tarries Jove, scorning the arts of Love,

Mute and inglorious in the heavens above?

How well the bull would now the god become,

Or his gray hairs to be transformed to down!

Here's Danae's self,—a touch from her would fire,

And make the God in liquid joys expire. [246]

[127] Quite delighted, she smiled so sweetly I thought I saw the moon breaking full-faced from a cloud. Presently, with fingers punctuating her words, she laughed, "If you are not too proud to enjoy a woman of condition, and one who only within the year has known your sex. I offer you a 'sister,' fair youth. You have a 'brother' already, I know, for I did not disdain to make inquiries, but what hinders you to adopt a sister too? I claim a similar dignity. Only taste and try, when you will, how you like my kisses."

"Nay!" I replied, "by your own loveliness I adjure you, deign to admit an alien among your worshipers. You will find him a sincere devotee, if you give him leave to adore you. And that you may not think I enter this temple of Love giftless, I will sacrifice my 'brother' to you."

"What!" she cried, "you sacrifice to me the being you cannot live without, on whose kisses your happiness depends, whom you love as I would have you love me?" As she said these words, they sounded so sweetly you might have thought it was the Sirens' harmonies floating on the breeze. [247] So, lost in admiration and dazzled with a wondrous effulgence brighter than the light of heaven, I was inclined to ask my divinity's name.

"Why! did not my maid tell you," she replied, "I was called Circe? I am not indeed the daughter of the Sun; nor did my mother ever stay at her good pleasure the course of the revolving globe. Still I have one noble boon to thank heaven for, if the fates unite us two. Yes! Some god's mysterious, silent workings are beneath all this. 'It is not without a cause Circe loves Polyaenos; a great torch of sympathy flames between these names. Then take your will of me, beloved one. For we have no prying interference to dread, and your 'brother' is far away." [248]

With these words Circe threw her arms, that were softer than down, around my neck, and drew me down on the flower-bespangled grass:

On Ida's top, when Jove his nymph caressed,

And lawless heat in open view expressed,

His mother Earth in all her charms was seen,

The rose, the violet, the sweet jasmine,

And the fair lily smiling on the green.

Such was the plat whereon my Venus lay;

Our Love was secret, but the charming day

Was bright, like her, and as her temple gay.

Side by side on the grass we lay, dallying with a thousand kisses, the prelude to robuster joys […]

[ch. 128] [Circe to "Polyaenos"] "What now? do my kisses revolt you? is my breath offensive with fasting? are my armpits uncleanly and smelling? If it is nothing of this sort, can it be that you are afraid of Giton?" Flushing hotly at her words, I lost any little vigor still left me, and my whole frame feeling dislocated, I besought my mistress, "Do not, my Queen, aggravate my misery. I am bewitched." […]

[Circe to her maid] “Tell me, Chrysis,” she said, “and tell me true. Am I repulsive? Am I sluttish? Is there some natural blemish that disfigures my beauty? Do not deceive your mistress; there must be something strangely amiss about us.” Then, as Chrysis stood silent, she snatched up a mirror, and after rehearsing all the looks and smiles lovers are wont to exchange, she shook out her robe that lay crumpled on the ground, and flounced off into the temple of Venus. [249] I was left standing like a convicted felon, or a man horror-struck with some awful vision, asking myself whether the bliss I had been cheated of was indeed a reality or only a dream.

As when in sleep our wanton fancy sports,

And our fond eyes with hidden riches courts,

We hug the theft; the smiling treasure fills

Our guilty hands; the conscious sweat distills;

Whilst laboring fear sits heavy on the mind,

Lest the big secret should an utterance find.

But when with night the illusive joys retreat,

And our eyes open to the gay deceit,

That which we never possessed, as lost, we mourn,

And for imaginary blessings burn […]

[Giton to Encolpius] “Well! Thank you, thank you for the Socratic innocency of your passion. Alcibiades was not more uncontaminated when he lay in his preceptor’s bed.” […] [250]

[ch. 129] [Encolpius to Giton] “I tell you, little brother,” I went on, “I have lost all knowledge and sense of manhood. Dead and buried is that part of me that once made me a very Achilles!” […] [251]

Seeing I was really unnerved, and afraid, if he were caught alone with me, it might give rise to scandal, he withdrew in haste, retreating to an inner room of the house […]

He was hardly gone when Chrysis entered my room and handed me her mistress’s tablets, [252] on which was written the following letter:

“CIRCE TO POLYAENOS—GREETING. If I were a mere wanton, I should complain of my disappointment. Instead I am positively grateful to your impotence; for so I enjoyed longer dalliance with the semblance of pleasure. What I ask is, how you do, and whether you got home on your own legs; for doctors say a man cannot walk without nerves. I will tell you what I think; beware, young Sir, of paralysis. I never saw a patient in more imminent danger; upon my word and honor, you are as good as dead already. If a similar lethargy strikes your knees and hands, I would advise you to send immediately for the undertaker’s men. Well! well! dire as is the affront I have received, still I will never grudge a prescription to a man in your miserable plight. If you would be cured, ask Giton’s help. You will recover your nerve, I assure you, if you sleep three nights running apart from your ‘little brother.’ For myself, I have no fear but I can find another admirer to love me a little. My mirror and my reputation both tell me this is true. Farewell, (if you can).”

As soon as Chrysis saw I had read this caustic epistle to the end, “These accidents are common enough,” she said, “and particularly in this city, where there are women who can lure down the moon out of the sky. So never fear, your matter shall be set right; only write back graciously to my mistress and restore her confidence with a candid and gently-worded reply. For to tell you the honest truth—from the hour you wronged her, she has not been her own woman.”

I complied very willingly with the girl’s suggestion, and wrote the following answer on the tablets:

[ch. 130] “POLYAENOS TO CIRCE—GREETING. I confess, Lady, I have often offended; I am but a man, and a young one still. But never before this day have I done mortal sin. The criminal admits his crime; any penalty you inflict, I have richly deserved. I have betrayed a trust, slain a man, violated a temple; assign due punishment for all these crimes. If you choose to kill me, I hand you my sword; if you are satisfied with stripes, I haste to throw myself naked at my mistress’s feet. Remember one thing only, it was not myself, but my tools that failed me. The soldier was ready but he had no arms. What so demoralized me, I cannot tell.

Perhaps my imagination outran my lagging powers, perhaps in my all-aspiring eagerness, I lavished by ardor prematurely. I know not how it was. You bid me beware of paralysis; as if a greater palsy could exist than that which robbed me of the power to possess you. But this is the sum and substance of my plea: I will satisfy you yet, if you will grant me leave to repair my fault."

After dismissing Chrysis with fair promises of this sort, I put my body, which had served me so ill, into special training, and omitted the bath together, restricted myself to a moderate use of unguents. Then adopting a more fortifying diet, that is to say onions and snails' heads without sauce, I also cut down my wine. Finally composing my nerves by an easy walk before retiring, I went to bed with no Giton to share my couch. For, anxious as I was to make my peace, I was afraid of even the slightest contact with my favorite.

[ch. 131] Next day, having risen sound in mind and body, I went down to the same plane tree walk, though truly I felt a dread of the ominous locality, and waited for Chrysis to act as my guide. After strolling to and fro for a while, I had just sat down in the same spot as the day before, when she came in sight, bringing a little old woman with her. When she had saluted me, "How now, Sir Squeamish," she began, "do you feel yourself in better fettle?"

The old woman meantime drew from her pocket a hank of plaited yarns of different colors, and tied it round my neck. Then puddling dust and spittle together, she dipped her middle finger in the mess, and disregarding my repugnance, marked my forehead with it [….]

The incantation ended, she bade me spit out thrice, and thrice toss pebbles into my bosom, which she had wrapped up in purple after pronouncing a charm over them. Then putting her hands to my privates, she began to try my virile condition. Quicker than thought the nerves obeyed her summons, and filled the old lady's hand with a huge erection. Then jumping for joy, "Look, Chrysis, look," she cried, "how I've started the hare for other folk to course." [….]

Where noble Planes cast a refreshing shade,

And well-cared Pines their shaking tops displayed,

And Daphne [253] amidst the Cypress crowned her head.

Near-by a circling river gently flows,

And rolls the pebbles as it murmuring goes.

A spot designed for Love; the nightingale

And gentle swallow its delights can tell,

Who on each bush salute the coming day,

And in their orgies sing its hours away [….]

She lay luxuriously stretched on golden cushions, which supported her marble neck, fanning the calm air with a branch of flowering myrtle. [254] Directly she saw me, she blushed a little, no doubt remembering yesterday's affront; presently, when we were quite alone, and at her invitation I had sat down by her side, she laid the branch over my eyes, and this emboldening her as if a wall had been raised between us, "How goes it, paralytic?" she laughed, "are you quite recovered, that you've come back again today?" "Why ask me," I returned, "instead of testing things?" and throwing myself bodily into her arms, I took my fill of good, healthy, unbewitched kisses.

[ch. 132] Her loveliness drew me irresistibly to her and disposed me to enjoyment. Already had our lips joined in many a sounding kiss, our fingers interlocked had played all sorts of amorous pranks, our two bodies had twined in mutual embraces till our very souls seemed fused in one [….]

Lashed to fury by two such dire affronts, the lady ends by seeking vengeance, and summoning her chamberlains, orders me a sound thumping. Not content with this cruel treatment of me, she calls together all the spinning wenches and meanest drudges of the house, and bids them spit at me. Clapping my hands to my eyes, and without one word of expostulation, for I knew I richly deserved it all, I fled from the house, driven forth under a hurricane of blows and spittle. Proselenos [255] is kicked out too, and Chrysis beaten. The whole household was in dismay, all grumbling together and asking who it was had put their mistress in so vile a temper [….]

This was some compensation and encouragement to me, and I carefully hid the marks of the blows I had received, not to make Eumolpus merry over my disaster, or Giton sad for the same reason. The only thing I could do to save my dignity was to pretend to be ill; this I did, and creeping into bed, turned the whole fire of my wrath against the vile cause of all my calamities:

With dreadful steel the part I would have lopped;

Thrice from my trembling hand the razor dropped.

Now, what I might before, I could not do;

For, cold as ice, the shuddering thing withdrew,

And shrank behind a wrinkled canopy.

Hiding its head from my revenge and me.

Thus by its fear I'm balked of my intent,

And in mere mouthing words my anger vent.

So raising myself on my elbow, I address the recreant [256] in some such terms as these, "What have you to say for yourself, abomination of gods and men? For indeed your very name must not be mentioned by self-respecting folks. Did I merit such treatment from you,—to be dragged down from heaven's bliss to hell's torments, to have the prime and vigor of my years maligned and to be reduced to the imbecility of dotage? Give me, I beseech you, give me a proof you are yet good for something." In words such as these I vented my irritation.

But with averted eyes, unmoved he mourned

Nor to my fond reproach one look returned;

Like bended osiers trembling o'er a brook,

Or wounded poppies by no zephyr shook.

Nevertheless, on reaching the end of this undignified expostulation, I began to be ashamed of what I had been saying, and to blush furtively at having so far forgotten my self-respect as to bandy words with a part of my person men of graver sort do not so much as deign to notice. Presently after rubbing my brow awhile, "After all, what have I done so much amiss," I asked myself, "in thus relieving my resentment by means of a little natural abuse? Do we not habitually curse various parts of our bodies, our belly, throat, —head even, when it aches, as it often does? Does not Ulysses quarrel with his own heart? And do not our tragedians rail at their own eyes, as if they could hear? The gouty abuse their feet, the rheumatic their hands, the sore-eyed their optics; and does not a man who has damaged his toes, vent all the agony of his pain on his poor feet?"

Why do you look at me, Cato, with furrowed brow,

and why do you condemn a work of novel simplicity?

The easy grace of refined speech smiles,

and whatever people do an honest tongue recounts.

Who does not know about sex, the pleasures of Venus?

Who avoids heating their limbs on a warm couch?

Epicurus himself, father of truth, skilled in art,

recommends it, and said that this is living!

Nothing is falser than mankind's silly prejudices,

or sillier than an affectation of peculiar gravity [….][257]

[ch. 133] My declamation ended, I called Giton to me and asked him, "Tell me, darling, tell me on your honor; that night Ascyltos stole you from me, did he resort to active violence upon you, or was he content with a night of self-restraint and continence?" The lad touched his eyes, and swore in the most solemn terms that Ascyltos had done him no harm [....]

Dropping on my knees at the temple threshold I besought the deity's [258] intervention in the following lines:

Delight of Bacchus, guardian of the groves,

The kind restorer of decaying loves,

Lesbos and verdant Thasos thee implore, [259]

Whose maids thy power in wanton rites adore;

Joy of the dryads, with propitious care [260]

Attend my wishes, and indulge my prayer.

My guiltless hands with blood I never stained,

Or sacrilegiously the gods profaned;

Thus low I bow; restoring blessings send,

I did not thee with my whole self offend,

Who sins through weakness is less guilty thought;

Indulge my crime, and spare a venial fault.

When kindly Fate shall genial gifts allow,

I'll, not ungrateful, to thy godhead bow.

A sucking pig I'll offer at thy shrine.

And sacred bowls brimful of generous wine;

A destined goat shall on thy altars lie,

And the horned parent of my flock shall die.

Then thrice thy frantic votaries shall round

Thy temple dance, with smiling garlands crowned,

And most devoutly drunk, thy orgies sound.

Whilst I was thus engaged, anxiously intent on the part affected, the old woman entered the shrine with disheveled hair and wearing black garments all in a state of disorder, and laying her hand on my shoulder led me outside the vestibule […]

[ch. 134] [Proselenos to Encolpius] "What foul witches have devoured your manhood?" she exclaimed; "What refuse or what garbage have you trod on in the streets at night? You could not so much as do your duty by the boy; but flabby, faint and weary, like a cart-horse at a hill, you wasted your labor and your sweat in vain! And now, not content with your own delinquencies, you have set the gods against me as well!" […]

So she led me unresisting back again into the temple and to the priestess's chamber, where she pushed me down on the bed, and snatching up a cane that hung behind the door, she gave me yet another thrashing. Still I said not a word, and if the cane had not split at the first stroke, and so lessened the force of her blows, she would likely have broken my arms or my head. I groaned dismally, particularly at the way she worked my member, and bursting into a torrent of weeping, hid my face in my hand and cowered down on the pillow. The old woman was also melted to tears, and sitting down on the other side of the bed, began to complain in quavering tones of the tediousness of having lived too long.

Presently the priestess came in, "Why! what has brought you to my chamber," she cried, "and with these long faces, as if you have come to a funeral? And on a holiday too, when the most sorrow-laden laugh for once."

"Oh, it's this young man here, Oenothea," [261] the old woman answered; "for sure, he was born under an evil star; he cannot sell his goods to boy or girl. You never saw so unfortunate a fellow; soaked leather, that's what his tool is! What do you think of a man, I ask you that, who left Circe's bed without having tasted pleasure?" On hearing this, Oenothea sat down between us, and after

shaking her head awhile, “I am the only woman,” she said, “who knows how to cure this complaint. And so that you may not think I’m doing this at random, I require the young fellow to sleep one night with me, and see if I don’t make it stiff as horn!

Everything you see obeys me, flowery Earth

grows dry and weary when I want,

and when I want she flourishes, while the peaks and harsh rocks.

send forth waters like the Nile. For me the sea

calms its swell, and the west wind places its force;

at my feet. Rivers obey me;

tigers and snakes stop at my command.

Why do I mention these trivial things? The image of the moon

descends, charmed by my spells, the fearful god of the sun

is compelled to turn back his horses, his path reversed.

So powerful are my spells. Sacred Medea restrained

the fire-breathing bulls. Circe, daughter of the Sun,

transformed Ulysses’ companions with spells;

Proteus can take what form he pleases. I will skillfully

plant mountain plants in the sea

and make streams flow back to mountain tops. [262]

[ch. 135] I shuddered with terror to hear her promise such miracles, and began to scrutinize the old woman more carefully [….]

“Now,” exclaimed Oenothea, “now do as I tell you.” And after washing her hands with scrupulous care, she bent over the couch and kissed me again and again [….]

She then placed an old table on the middle of the altar, and filling it with live coals, proceeded to patch up an ancient bowl, so time-worn it was falling to pieces, with melted pitch. Next she put back in the smoke-begrimed wall a peg which had come down along with the wooden bowl, when she unhitched the latter. Presently after donning a square cloak, she set a huge cooking-pot on the fire, at the same time with a fork reaching down a cloth from the meat-rack, in which was stored a supply of beans and some exceedingly stale pieces of pig’s cheek, slashed with a thousand cuts. She undid the string, shook out some of the contents on to the table, and bade me strip them smartly. Obeying her orders, I proceed carefully to separate the beans from the filthy pods that contained them. But Oenothea, chiding my slowness, incontinently snatches them from me, and instantly stripping off the husks with her teeth, spits them out on the ground, where they looked just like dead flies [….]

I could not help admiring the ingenuity of poverty, and the knack there is in every single thing.

No Indian ivories here are set in gold,

No marble covers the deluded mold;

Void of expensive art, the reverent shrine

With natural modest ornaments doth shine.

Round Ceres’ bower the bending osier grows; [263]

Earthen is all the plate the priestess knows;

The jug is earth which holds the holy wine,

Osier the dish, sacred to Powers divine;

No brazen baubles are here, no purple pride,

Mud and dirt mixed the pious relics hide;

Rushes and reeds the humble roof adorn,

And straw deprived of its autumnal corn.

On an old shelf a savory ham is found,

And service-berries into garlands bound.

Such a low cottage Hecale confined, [264]

Low was her dwelling, but sublime her mind.

Her bounteous heart a grateful praise shall crown,

And Muses make immortal her renown.

[ch. 136] Then, having shelled the beans and eaten a scrap of the meat, she took a fork and went to replace the pig's cheek, which was as old as she was; but the rotten stool, on which she had climbed so as to reach up to the rack, broke under the old woman's weight and threw her on the fire. The lip of the cooking-pot was smashed, and put out the fire that was just burning up; the woman's elbow was burnt by a red-hot ember, and her whole face begrimed with the flying ashes. I sprang up in dismay, and not without some inward laughter, set the old thing on her legs again; this accomplished, she ran instantly to a neighbor's to replenish the fire, that nothing might delay the sacrifice [….]

I was making my way to the door of the cottage, [when][….]

Lo and behold! Three sacred geese, [265] which I suppose the old woman was in habit of feeding at midday, rushed at me and set me all in a twitter, pressing round me with their disconcerting and almost rabid cackle. One of them tore my tunic, another undid my shoestrings and dragged at them, the third, leader and director of the savage assault, actually worried my leg with its serrated beak. So, thinking it no time for nonsense, I dragged off a leg of the table, and armed with this weapon started belaboring the warlike creature. Nor was I satisfied with trifling blows, but avenged my hurt by killing the bird outright:

Such were the birds Herculean art subdued, [266]

And with loud tumults to the skies pursued;

And such the Harpies the winged brothers chased

From trembling Phineus' illusive feast. [267]

The heavens were startled at their clamorous flight,

And backward seemed to roll in wild affright [….]

I left the creature sprawling, while its companions, after gobbling up the beans that were scattered all about the floor, and finding themselves I suppose bereft of their leader, retreated into the temple again. Then, proud of my booty and the vengeance I had exacted, I tossed the dead bird behind the bed, and washed the trifling wound in my leg with vinegar. Presently, fearing a scolding, I determined to be off, and gathering my belongings together started to leave the cottage. I had not yet crossed the threshold however when I saw Oenothea coming along with an earthen pot full of fire. I drew back again therefore, and throwing aside my robe, as if I had been waiting for her return, took my stand at the entrance. She built her fire on some reeds broken up small, and piling up the top with a number of logs, began to excuse her delay, saying her friend had refused to let her go till she had drained the three cups custom required. Then, "What have you been doing," she asked, "in my absence? and where are the beans?"

I really thought I had done something very praiseworthy and described the whole battle to her in detail, finally, to end her melancholy, presenting her with the dead goose in compensation for her loss. Directly the old woman set eyes on the bird, she set up such a terrible outcry you might have thought the geese had invaded the place again. Confused at this and astounded at the strange nature of my offense, I repeatedly begged her to tell me why she was so angry, and why all her pity was for the goose and none at all for me.

[ch. 137] But beating her palms together, "How dare you speak," she screamed, "abandoned wretch! You must know what an atrocity you have committed; you have killed the delight of Priapus, the goose that was the darling of all the matrons. You think it's

a trifle you've done!—if the Magistrates get wind of it, you'll be crucified. You have polluted my home with blood, that was never profaned before; and put it in the power of any ill-wisher I may have to turn me out of my office." [….]

"Don't shout so, I beseech you," I interposed; "I tell you, I'll give you an ostrich for your goose." [….]

She was still sitting on the pallet and bewailing the goose's untimely death, with me standing in amazement, when Proselenos arrived with the materials for the sacrifice. Directly she saw the dead bird, she asked excitedly how the calamity had occurred, and she too began to weep violently, and make as much ado over me as if I had killed my own father instead of a public goose. Feeling utterly sick of the tiresome business, "Now tell me," I expostulated, "could not I purchase expiation for money, if it was you I had assaulted, even though I'd done murder. Look here, I offer two gold pieces, enough to buy both gods and geese with." As soon as Oenothea saw the coins, "Forgive me, young man," she exclaimed; "it is for your sake I am so anxious, and that shows affection surely, not malice. (And we'll take care that no one shall know anything about it.) Only do you pray to the gods to pardon the sacrilege you have done."

Whoever has magic gold, secure may sail

Wherever he please, he's lord of Fortune's gale;

May in a Danae's arms make soft abode,—

There's no Acrisius will dispute the God! [268]

He may turn poet, orator, what not?

When he harangues, old Cato is forgot!

Or if the noisy bar delights him more,

Behold what mighty Labeo was before! [269]

In short—when of the money you're possessed,

You need but wish,—you've Jove within your chest.

Meantime the priestess, bustling about, placed a bowl of wine under my hands, and making me spread out my fingers evenly, purified them with leeks and parsley. Then with a muttered charm she dipped filberts [270] in the wine, and according as they rose to the surface again, or sank, she drew her prognostications. But I did not fail to observe that the blind nuts, with nothing but air inside of kernels, naturally floated on the top, while the heavy ones, that were full and sound within, settled to the bottom [….]

Next turning her attention to the goose, she opened its breast and drew out a fine fat liver, and proceeded to predict my future prospects from the indications it afforded. Nay! that not a trace of my crime might be left, she broke up the whole bird, and sticking the pieces on spits, prepared a very appetizing dinner for me, whom she so short a time before condemned to death with her own lips [….]

Meantime brimming cups of unmixed wine were circulating freely [….]

[ch. 138] Oenothea brought out a leather dildo, which she smeared with oil and ground pepper and pounded nettle seed, and then proceeded to insert it little by little up my backside [….]

Next the cruel old crone anoints my two thighs with the same concoction [….]

Then mixing nasturtium juice with southern-wood, she bathes my genitals with the stuff, and grasping a bundle of stinging nettles, begins slowly and methodically to lash my belly with them all over below the navel [….]

Though disordered with wine and lust, they take the right road, and follow me up through several streets, screaming, "Stop thief!" However, I escaped eventually, after making all my toes bleed in the course of my headlong gallop [….]

"Chrysis who once despised my humble condition, is now bent on following it up even at the risk of life itself." [….]

"What was Ariadne's beauty, or Leda's, compared to hers? What had Helen of Troy, or Venus herself, to boast against her? [271] If Paris, umpire of the rival goddesses, had seen her at the trial with her dancing eyes, he would have given up all to her, Helen and the goddesses three! [272] Could I but kiss that mouth, could I press that divine, that heavenly bosom, maybe my powers of body

would return, and those parts of me revive that now lie torpid and, I verily believe, bewitched. No insults exhaust my patience. I have been thrashed,—'tis nothing; I have been kicked out,—'tis a merry jest; if only I may be restored to favor." [….]

[ch. 139] I wore out the bed with tossing and turning, as though I saw the image of my beloved. [….]

"Not I alone have Heaven's just anger felt,

The gods with others have severely dealt;

By Juno's rage the heavens Alcides bore,

And lost fair Hylas on the Pontic Shore. [273]

Laomedon did Jove's resentment feel, [274]

And Telephus bled by the fatal steel. [275]

Fate's sure decrees no mortal power can shun,

Nor can the swiftest from Heaven's vengeance run" [….]

I asked my companion if anyone had been looking for me. "No one today," Giton replied; "but yesterday there was a woman, stylishly dressed enough, who came in. After a long talk with me and nearly boring me to death with her forced conversation, she ended by saying you deserved the gallows and would surely get a slave's scourging, if the individual you had wronged persisted in his complaint." [….]

My invective was still in full swing when Chrysis came in, and throwing her arms wildly round my neck, exclaimed, "I have you in my arms, my heart's desire! My love, my joy! Never, never will you end this fire of mine, but by quenching it in my blood." [….]

One of the newly engaged servants rushed in to tell me the master was excessively angry at my two days' neglect of my duties. The best thing I could do, he said, was to get some plausible excuse ready; for it was hardly possible his angry passions could subside without somebody getting a thrashing. [….]

The final two fragments of the novel relate Eumolpus' escapades among the Crotonians.

[ch. 140] A matron entered, a lady of the highest distinction, Philomela [276] by name, who in earlier days had won many a fat legacy by the charms of her youth; but who being old now and past her prime, used to put her son and daughter in the way of childless old men, and so continued to extend her old trade by the efforts of these successors. Well! this woman came to Eumolpus and proceeded to commend her children to his judicious guardianship, and confide herself and her hopes to his kindly good nature, asseverating he was the only man in all the world to train young people by the daily inculcation of healthy precepts; in fine, that she was leaving her children under Eumolpus's roof, that they might hear his words of wisdom, the only heritage worth having that could be bestowed on youth. And she was as good as her word; for leaving behind her a very attractive looking girl along with her brother, a stripling, in the old man's chamber, she left the house under pretext of visiting the temple to say her prayers.

Eumolpus, who was so careful a soul he was ready to take even me at my age for a minion, was not long in inviting the girl to sacrifice to the rearward Venus. But then he had informed everybody he was gouty and crippled in the loins, and if he failed to keep up the pretense, he ran considerable risk of spoiling the whole play. So, to maintain the imposture intact, he begged the girl to take a seat on that kindly good nature her mother had appealed to, ordering Corax [277] at the same time to slip under the bed he lay on himself, and resting his hands on the floor, to hoist him up and down with his back. The servant obeyed, and gently seconded the child's artful movements with a corresponding, rhythmical seesaw. Then when the crisis was coming, Eumolpus shouted out loud and clear to Corax to work faster. Thus the old fellow, suspended between his servant and his mistress, enjoyed himself as if in a swing. This exercise he repeated more than once, to the accompaniment of peals of laughter, in which he himself joined. Nor was I idle; but fearing my hand might get out of practice from disuse, I assailed the brother, where he stood admiring his sister's gymnastics through the keyhole, to see if he were amenable to outrage. He made no bones about accepting my caresses; but once more, alas! I found the god unpropitious to my efforts. [….]

"It is the great gods of higher heaven who have made me a man again! Mercury, who conveys and reconveys the souls of men, has of his loving kindness given me back what an unfriendly hand had docked me of, to show you I am really more graciously endowed than ever was Protesilaus [278] or any of the mighty men of yore." So saying, I lifted my tunic, and offered Eumolpus a

view of all my glories. For an instant he stood panic-stricken; then, to make assurance doubly sure, he put out both hands and felt the good gift the gods had given me [….]

“Socrates, [279] wisest of mankind as both men and gods allow, was in the habit of boasting that he had never so much as glanced into a tavern, nor trusted his eyes to look at any crowded and disorderly assemblage. Nothing in the world is more advisable than always to speak within the bounds of prudence.” [….]

“All this is true,” I insisted, “and no class of men is more liable to come to mischance than those who covet other folks’ goods. How could mountebanks, and swindlers, live, unless they were now and again to toss a little purse or a jingling bag of money as bait to the crowd? Just as dumb beasts are enticed by food, so men may be caught only with something solid in the way of expectations to bite at.” [….]

[ch. 141] “The ship from Africa with your money and your slaves has not arrived, as you promised. Our fortune-hunters are tired out, and already stint their generosity. Either I am much mistaken, or the jade Fortune has begun to repent of her favors to you.” [….]

“All who shall receive legacies under my will, my own freedmen excepted, will inherit the said bequests subject to this condition, that is, that they must cut up my body into pieces and eat the same before the eyes of the public there present. They need not be over and above shocked, I tell them; for we know that to this day some nations observe the custom by which the dead are eaten by their relatives—so much so indeed that sick folk amongst them are often reproached for spoiling their flesh by being so long ill. I remind my friends of these facts, that they may not refuse to follow my directions, but rather consume my dead body with the same heartiness with which they prayed the living breath might leave it.” [….]

But the glamour of his wealth so dazzled the wretched creatures and stifled their consciences. One of them, however Gorgias, was ready to comply, provided he had not too long to wait. [….]

“I have no worries that your stomach will rebel; it will obey orders, once you promise it, in return for one hour’s nausea, a plethora of good things. Just shut your eyes, and pretend it’s not human flesh you’ve bolted, but a cool ten million. Besides, we’ll find some condiments, never fear, to disguise the flavor. Indeed, no meat really tastes good by itself, but is always masked in some artful way, and the recalcitrant stomach reconciled to it. Why! if you want examples to fortify your resolutions—the Saguntines, when hard pressed by Hannibal, ate human flesh; [280] and they had no legacy to expect. The men of Petelia did the same thing in the extremity of famine, looking for no other benefit from their horrid diet but simply to escape starvation. [281] When Numantia was taken by Scipio, [282] mothers were found grasping their children’s half-eaten bodies to their bosoms.” [....]

The surviving fragments of the novel end here. Who knows what further adventures were originally described but now lost?

Footnotes:

[193] The *penates* were household gods.

[194] Epicurus and his followers argued against the necessity of a proper burial for entrance into the afterlife.

[195] This may be Cybele, a mother goddess popular in the Middle East and Asia Minor.

[196] Carthage was the former stronghold of Rome’s rivals, the Carthaginians. Various Mediterranean powers struggled to control North Africa (Libya to the Greeks) because of its rich resources. There are beautiful Roman ruins in modern day Libya and Tunisia.

[197] A mountain in Greece thought to inspire poets.

[198] Horace was a famous Roman poet. Eumolpus quotes one of Horace’s odes.

[199] Homer was the most famous Greek epic poet; Virgil was the equivalent for Latin epic poetry. Mount Parnassus was another mountain in Greece associated with poetic inspiration. Eumolpus’ poem is a parody of Lucan’s *Civil War*, an epic poem describing the civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great. Lucan was Petronius’ contemporary.

[200] The Romans utilized several Silk Roads to obtain this prized commodity through trade.

[201] Maurian refers to the Roman province of Mauretania in North Africa. Ammon was an Egyptian god, here standing for Egypt..

[202] Similar to the Greeks, the Romans characterized what some decried as effeminate luxury as “Persian” or “exotic”.

[203] Venus was goddess of sensual love, here depicted as heterosexual and offended by devotees engaging in non-heterosexual relationships.

[204] The Romans loved oysters and seafood; overfishing was a problem then as now.

[205] The Phasis was a river near the Black Sea, famed for its flocks of migratory birds.

[206] During the Republic, voting was held at the Campus Martius in Rome.

[207] SPQR, or the “Senate and the people of Rome” indicated the two main voting assemblies and the Roman state.

[208] Marcus Porcius Cato was a famed orator and politician who tried to protect the traditional aristocratic government of the Republic against popular influence and tyranny.

[209] As Persia was to Greece, so Parthia was to Rome -- an eastern empire whose expansion threatened Roman’s own imperial pretensions. Crassus was a wealthy Roman general who died campaigning against the Parthians.

[210] Pompey the Great was Julius Caesar’s ally, then rival during the civil war.

[211] This refers to Julius Caesar’s assassination in Rome by champions of the Republic.

[212] One of the rivers of the Underworld of the dead.

[213] Pluto was the Roman equivalent of Hades, god of the dead.

[214] Fortuna was worshipped as a goddess in Rome.

[215] One of the Furies, deities of vengeance.

[216] When Lucius Cornelius Sulla became dictator, he had many senators put to death. Senators wore togas with purple stripes.

[217] The poem lists various regions of the Roman empire embroiled in the civil war and alludes to the battle of Actium, where Mark Anthony and Cleopatra were defeated by Octavian’s fleet. Octavian later became Caesar Augustus.

[218] Charon ferried souls over the River Styx into Hades.

[219] The goddess Diana, associated with the moon.

[220] An active volcano in Sicily.

[221] Julius Caesar had campaigned in the province of “Gaul” for a decade before returning to Italy with his legions, sparking a civil war.

[222] Given the context, this would seem to refer to Italy, although this term was sometimes used for the Iberian peninsula.

[223] The poet is here comparing Julius Caesar to the famous mythological hero Hercules (Heracles) or Alcides.

[224] The Palatine Hill in Rome. Rumor was often depicted as a goddess.

[225] The North Wind.

[226] Rome’s top elected executive leaders were two consuls, who served for one year.

[227] Pompey the Great was Julius Caesar’s ally and rival. He had been awarded multiple triumphal processions in Rome for the success of his campaigns against Mediterranean pirates and Mithradates VI, ruler of Pontus. Pompey was married to Caesar’s daughter, Julia.

[228] Euxine refers to the Black Sea region.

[229] Goddess of war.

[230] These two were Furies, deities of the Underworld who issued forth to wreak vengeance on those who broke essential laws or taboos.

[231] Mars was god of war.

[232] Atlas was a Titan condemned to bear the earth oh his shoulders.

[233] Dione was one of Venus' names. Julius Caesar claimed to be descended from her.

[234] Minerva or Pallas Athena, Ulysses/Odysseus' patroness.

[235] Supposedly Mars, but Sarah Ruden has "Mars' son," Romulus, who was one of Rome's mythical founders (Satyricon, 107, n263).

[236] Apollo and Diana.

[237] Mercury.

[238] Hercules again.

[239] Discord is depicted here as a goddess.

[240] Marcellus and Lentulus were two consuls and political opponents of Julius Caesar. Curio served as tribune and as such, was meant to represent the *populates*, who supported Julius Caesar.

[241] Epidamnus was a city on the west coast of Greece, where Pompey was mustering his army.

[242] Legacy hunters seek to obtain legacies or inheritances by marrying or becoming designated heirs of a wealthy individual. In other words, gold-diggers.

[243] Freeborn Romans were not meant to become actors or charioteers because of the "shame" associated with these professions. Sections of seats at theaters and amphitheaters were reserved for particular social groups and Circe is interested in lovers below her social ranking.

[244] That is, a member of the equestrian class, which was just below the rank of the senatorial class. Hanging from a cross refers to the fact that only those with the least legal rights faced crucifixion.

[245] Praxiteles was a famous Greek sculptor, Diana goddess of the hunt noted for her beauty.

[246] Encolpius recounts Jupiter's pursuit of Europa as a bull, Leda as a swan, and Danae as a shower of golden coins.

[247] The Sirens were mythical creatures who lured sailors to their deaths with their enchanting songs. Ulysses famously had his sailors lash him to the mast and stuff their ears with wax so that they could pass unharmed and he could hear the Sirens' singing.

[248] These two are assuming fake lovers' names. The woman takes the name of Circe, daughter of Helios, with whom Ulysses tarried for a year. Encolpius assumes a nickname of Ulysses, Polyaenos.

[249] Venus was goddess of erotic love.

[250] In Plato's *Symposium*, Alcibiades does all he can to persuade Socrates to sleep with him, with no success. Encolpius is temporarily impotent.

[251] Achilles was one of the Greeks' greatest warriors before Troy.

[252] The Greeks and Romans used wooden or ivory tablets coated with wax to write letters and notes. The wax had the advantage of being easily erasable.

[253] Pursued by Apollo, Daphne turned into a tree to avoid being raped.

[254] Myrtle was associated with Venus, goddess of erotic love.

[255] The old woman mentioned above, who had attempted to cure Encolpius' impotence.

[256] Encolpius is addressing his impotent penis.

[257] Another mockery of the war between philosophical schools, including Stoics such as Cato and Epicureans. Cato was a famous political opponent of Julius Caesar who died by suicide. Known as incorruptible, he decried the excesses of his times. The philosophical opposite of Cato (who was a Stoic), Epicurus advocated for moderated pleasure as the highest good in life. The simple work may be the *Satyricon* itself.

[258] Probably Bacchus, god of revelry.

[259] Lesbos and Thassos were famous for their wine; Bacchus was god of wine and revelry.

[260] The maids may be Bacchus' female followers; dryads were wood nymphs.

[261] Her name means "goddess of the wine."

[262] More mythological allusions. Circe transformed Odysseus' men into pigs. Medea gave Jason a magical ointment to protect him from the fire-breathing bulls. Proteus was a famous shape-shifter.

[263] Ceres was goddess of agriculture. If she can make plants grow, perhaps she can help Encolpius.

[264] Hecale famously gave hospitality to the hero Theseus despite her poverty.

[265] More joking allusions to *The Odyssey.* Remember Penelope's dream with the geese and the eagle.

[266] Hercules famously defeated the human-devouring Stymphalian birds as one of his labors.

[267] Harpies were hideous winged monsters sent by Jove to punish Phineus, king of Thrace.

[268] King of Argos, and Danae's father, Acrisius feared Danae's son Perseus (because of a prophecy). He locked both into a wooden trunk and had them thrown into the sea.

[269] Both Cato and Labeo were famous orators and advocates for their clients in court.

[270] Hazelnuts.

[271] Leda was Helen's mother, Ariadne assisted Theseus in slaying the Minotaur. Here, with Venus, they are being referred to as examples of famously beautiful women.

[272] The episode that started the Trojan War. Paris was asked to choose who was the most beautiful goddess: Hera/Juno, Venus/Aphrodite or Athena/Minerva. He chose Venus, who granted him Helen as a reward.

[273] Juno targeted Hercules because he was the offspring of Juno's husband, Jupiter, and a mortal. She caused the death of Hylas, Hercules' lover.

[274] Mythological king of Troy who persuaded Apollo and Neptune to build his city's walls, then refused to reward them and was punished.

[275] A mythical king punished by Dionysios/Bacchus.

[276] This name is meant to be deeply ironic. We've met the harrowing tale of Philomena and her sister Procne in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. There, the two women take their revenge by killing Procne's child, born of a deeply violent rape. Here, Philomena is essentially pimping out her own children.

[277] Corax means "battering ram."

[278] The first hero to die in the Trojan War, he was returned to life to briefly visit his grieving wife. He was then required to return to the Underworld.

[279] Um, we've just met Socrates at a drinking party in Plato's *Symposium*.

[280] A town on the Iberian peninsula besieged and taken by the Carthaginian general Hannibal during the Second Punic War.

[281] Another town taken by Hannibal.

[282] A town on the Iberian peninsula besieged and taken by the Roman general Scipio.

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