

## Spartacus to the Gladiators.

It had been a day of triumph at Capua. Lentulus returning with victorious eagles, had amused the populace with the sports of the amphitheatre, to an extent hitherto unknown even in that luxurious city. The shouts of revelry had died away; the roar of the lion had ceased; the last loiterer retired from the banquet, and the lights in the place of the victor had extinguished. The moon, piercing the tissue of fleecy clouds, silvered the dew-drops on the corselet of the Roman sentinel, and tipped the dark waters of Volturnus with wavy, tremulous light. It was a night of holy calm, when the zephyr sways the young spring leaves, and whispers among the hollow reeds its dreamy music. No sound was heard but the last sob of some weary wave telling its story to the smooth pebbles of the beach and then all was quiet as the spirit breathes when the spirit has departed.

In the deep recesses of the amphitheatre, a band of gladiators were crowded together; - their muscles still knotted with the agony of conflict, the foam upon their lips, and the scowl of battle yet lingering upon their brows, - when Spartacus rising in the midst of that grim assemblage, thus addressed them: -

"Ye call me chief, and ye do well call him chief, who, for twelve long years, has met upon the arena every shape of man or beast that the broad empire of Rome could furnish and yet never has lowered his arm. And if there be one among you who can say that, ever, in public fight or private brawl, my actions did belie my tongue, let him step forth and say it. If there be three in all your throng dare face me on the bloody sand, let them come on!

"Yet I was not always thus, a hired butcher, a savage

chief of savage men. My father was a reverent man who feared great Jupiter, and brought the rural deities his offerings of fruits and flowers. He dwelt among the vine-clad rocks and olive groves at the foot of Helicon. My early life ran quiet as the brook by which I sported. I was taught to prune the vine, to tend the flock; and then, at noon, I gathered my sheep beneath the shade and played upon the shepherd's flute. I had a friend, the son of our neighbour; we led our flocks to the same pasture, and shared together our rustic meal.

"One evening, after the sheep were folded, and we were all seated beneath the myrtle that shaded our cottage, my grandsire, an old man, was telling of Marathon & Leuctra, and how, in ancient times, a little band of Spartans, in a defile of the mountains, withstood a whole army. I did not know then what was meant; but my cheeks burned, I knew not why, and I clasped the hand of that venerable man, till my mother, parting the hair from off my brow, kissed my throbbing temples, and bade me go to rest, and think no more of those old tales and savage wars.

"That very night Romans landed on our shore, and the clash of steel was heard within our quiet vale. I saw the breast that had nourished me trampled by the iron hoof of the war-horse; the bleeding body of my father flung amid the blazing rafters of our dwelling. To-day I killed a man in the arena and when I broke his helmet clasps, behold! - it was my friend! He knew me - smiled faintly, - gasped, - and died. The same sweet smile that I had marked upon his face, when, in adventurous boyhood, we scaled some lofty cliff to pluck the first ripe grapes, and bear them home in childish triumph. I told the Praetor he

was my friend, brave and noble, and I begged his body that I might burn it upon the funeral-pile, and mourn over him. Ay, upon my knees, amid the dust and blood of the arena, I begged that boon, while all the Roman maids and matrons and those holy virgins they call vestal, and the rabble, shouted in mockery, deeming it rare sport, forsooth, to see Rome's fiercest gladiator turn pale and tremble like a very child, before that piece of bleeding clay; but the Praetor drew back as if I were pollution, and sternly said, "Let the carrion rot! There are no noble men but Romans!" And he, deprived of funeral rites, must wander, a hopeless ghost, beside the waters of that sluggish river, and look, and look - and look in vain to the bright Elysian fields where dwell his ancestors and noble kindred. And so must you and so must I die like dogs!

"O Rome! Rome! thou hast been a tender nurse to me! Ay, thou hast given to that poor, gentle, timid shepherd-lad, who never knew a harsher sound than a flute-note, muscles of iron and a heart of flint; taught him to drive the sword through rugged brass and plaited mail, and warm it in the marrow of ~~the~~ his foe! - to gaze into the glaring eyeballs of the fierce Memidian lion, even as a smooth cheeked boy upon a laughing girl. And he shall pay thee back till thy yellow Tiber is red as frothing wine and in its deepest ooze thy life-blood lies curdled!

"Ye stand here now like giants as ye are! the strength of brass in your toughened sinews; but

tomorrow some Roman Idonis, breathing sweet  
 odors from his curly locks, shall come, and  
 with his lily fingers pat your browny shoulders,  
 and bet his sesterces upon your blood! Hark!  
 Hear ye you lion roaring in his den? 'Tis three  
 days since he tasted meat; but tomorrow he  
 shall break his fast upon your flesh; and ye  
 shall be a dainty meal for him.

"If ye are ~~men~~ brutes, then stand here like  
 fat oxen waiting for the butcher's knife; if  
 ye are men, follow me! strike down your sen-  
 tinel and gain mountain passes and then  
 do bloody work as did your sires at old Ther-  
 mopylae! Is Sparta dead? Is the old Grecian  
 spirit frozen in your veins, that ye do crouch  
 and cower like base-born slaves, beneath  
 your master's lash? O! Comrades! Warriors!  
 Thracians! if we must fight, let us fight  
 for ourselves; if we must slaughter, let  
 us slaughter our oppressors; if we must  
 die, let us die under the open sky, by the  
 bright waters, in noble, honourable battle.

E. Kellogg.