

voyages in distant lands. the Nile voyage came to an end at thebes of the hundred gates, and here nothing that could attract the roman travellers remained unvisited. the tombs of the pharaohs extending into the very heart of the rocky hills, and the grand temples that stood to the west of the city of the dead, shorn though they were of their ancient glory, filled the emperor with admiration. the imperial travellers and their companions listened to the famous colossus of memnon, of which the upper portion had been overthrown by an earthquake, and three times in the dawn they heard it sound. balbilla described the incident in several long poems which sabina caused to be engraved on the stone of the colossus. the poetess imagined herself as hearing the voice of memnon singing to his mother eos while her tears, the fresh morning dew, fell upon the image of her son, fallen before the walls of troy. these verses she composed in the aeolian dialect, named herself as their writer and informed the readers among whom she included pontius that she was descended from a house no less noble than that of king antiochus. the gigantic structures on each bank of the Nile fully equalled hadrian's expectations, though they had suffered so much injury from earthquakes and sieges, and the impoverished priesthood of thebes were no longer in a position to provide for their preservation even, much less for their restoration. balbilla accompanied caesar on a visit to the sanctuary of ammon, on the eastern shore of the Nile. in the great hall, the most vast and lofty pillared hall in the world, her impressionable soul felt a peculiar exaltation, and as the emperor observed how, with a heightened color she now gazed cruelly, that the miserable wretch gave up the ghost, with these dying words: i beseech the almighty god, creator of heaven and earth, that he permit the wicked spirit to make thee feel as many torments before thy death, as thou hast caused me to feel before mine. a strange thing, and worthy of astonishment and admiration scarce three or four days were past, after this horrible fact, when the almighty judge, who had heard the cries of the tormented wretch, suffered the evil one suddenly to possess this barbarous and inhuman homicide, so that those cruel hands which had punished to death his innocent servant, were the tormentors of his own body: for he beat himself and tore his flesh, after a miserable manner, till he lost the very shape of a man; not ceasing to howl and cry, without any rest by day or night. thus he continued raving mad, till he died. many other examples of this kind i could rehearse; but these not belonging to our present discourse, i omit them. the planters of the caribbee islands are rather worse, and more cruel to their servants, than the former. in the isle of st. christopher dwells one named bettesa, well known to the dutch merchants, who has killed above a hundred of his servants with blows and stripes. the english do the same with their servants; and the mildest cruelty they exercise towards them is, that when they have served six years of their time they being bound among the english for seven they use them so cruelly, as to force them to beg of their masters to sell them to others, though it be to begin another servitude of seven years, or at least three or four. and i have known many, who have thus served fifteen or twenty years, before they could obtain the present be informed of his true origin. he is a strangely constituted man, said ameni, and he is not incapable of playing us some unforeseen trick before he has done his part, if he is told who he is. the storm had exhausted itself, and the sky, though covered still with torn and flying clouds, cleared by degrees, as the morning went on; a sharp coolness succeeded the hot blast, but the sun as it mounted higher and higher soon heated the air. on the roads and in the gardens lay uprooted trees and many slightly built houses which had been blown down, while the tents in the strangers quarter, and hundreds of light palm thatched roofs, had been swept away. the regent was returning to thebes, and with him went ameni, who desired to ascertain by his own eyes what mischief the whirlwind had done to his garden in the city. on the Nile they met paakers boat, and ani caused it and his own to be stopped, while he requested paaker to visit him shortly at the palace. the high priests garden was in no respect inferior in beauty and extent to that of the mohar. the ground had belonged to his family from the remotest generations, and his house was large and magnificent. he seated himself in a shady arbor, to take a repast with his still handsome wife and his young and pretty daughters. he consoled his wife for