

before us, in the inner life of the two great empires of Greece and Rome, among whom we find the ceremonies attached to drinking were by no means sparse; and as the Romans copied most of their social manners from the Greeks, the formalities observed among the two nations in drinking differ but little. In public assemblies the wine-cup was never raised to the lips without previously invoking a blessing from a supposed good deity, from which custom it is probable that the grace-cup of later days took its origin; and at the conclusion of their feast, a cup was quaffed to their good genius, termed "poculum boni Dei," which corresponds in the present day with the "coup d'étrier" of the French, the "dock un dorish" of the Highland Scotch, and the "parting-pot" of our own country. The Romans also frequently drank the healths of their Emperors; and among other toasts they seldom forgot "absent friends," though we have no record of their drinking to "all friends round St. Peter's." It was customary at their entertainments to elect, by throwing the dice, a person termed "arbiter bibendi," to act much in the same way as our modern toast-master, his business being to lay down to the company the rules to be observed in drinking, with the power to punish such as did not conform to them. The gods having been propitiated, the master of the feast drank his first cup to the most distinguished guest, and then handed a full cup to him, in which he acknowledged the compliment; the cup was then passed round by the company, invariably from left to right, and always presented with the right hand: on