

whole nights at tables, and, with a full glass of unmixed wine in their hands, they glory in vying with them, and, if they can, in overcoming them." This worthy philosopher, however, appears not to have considered excess of drinking in men a vice; for he goes so far as to advise men of high-strained minds to get intoxicated now and then. "Not," says he, "that it may overpower us, but only relax our overstrained faculties." Soon afterwards he adds, "Do you call Cato's excess in wine a vice? Much sooner may you be able to prove drunkenness to be a virtue, than Cato to be vicious."

Let us, with these casual remarks, leave the Greeks and Romans, with jovial old Horace at their head, quaffing his cup of rosy Falernian, his brow smothered in evergreens (as was his wont), and pass on to our immediate ancestry, the Anglo-Saxon race; not forgetting, however, that the ancient Britons had their veritable cup of honeyed drink, called Metheglin, though this may be said indeed to have had a still greater antiquity, if Ben Jonson is right in pronouncing it to have been the favourite drink of Demosthenes while composing his excellent and mellifluous orations. The Anglo-Saxons not only enjoyed their potations, but conducted them with considerable pomp and ceremony, although, as may readily be conceived, from want of civilization, excess prevailed. In one of our earliest Saxon romances we learn that "it came to the mind of Hrothgar to build a great mead-hall, which was to be the chief palace;" and, further on, we find this