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Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Gogol Busch
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott
Andersen Andersen Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte
London Descartes Wells Voltaire Cooke
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Roads from Rome

Anne C. E. (Anne Crosby Emery) Allinson

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Three of the papers in this volume have already appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*: "A Poet's Toll," "The Phrase-Maker," and "A Roman Citizen." The author is indebted to the Editors for permission to republish them. The illustration on the title page is reproduced from the poster of the Roman Exposition of 1911, drawn by Duilio Cambiotti, printed by Dr. E. Chappuis.

**PATRI MEO
LUCILIO A. EMERY
JUSTITIAE DISCIPULO, LEGIS MAGISTRO,
LITTERARUM HUMANARUM AMICO**

PREFACE

The main purpose of these Roman sketches is to show that the men and women of ancient Rome were like ourselves.

"Born into life! — 'tis we,
And not the world, are new;
Our cry for bliss, our plea,
Others have urged it too —
Our wants have all been felt, our errors made before."

It is only when we perceive in "classical antiquity" a human nature similar to our own in its mingling of weakness and strength, vice and virtue, sorrow and joy, defeats and victories that we shall find in its noblest literature an intimate rather than a formal inspiration, and in its history either comfort or warning.

A secondary purpose is to suggest Roman conditions as they may have affected or appeared to men of letters in successive epochs, from the last years of the Republic to the Antonine period. Three of the six sketches are concerned with the long and brilliant "Age of Augustus." One is laid in the years immediately preceding the death of Julius Caesar, and one in the time of Trajan and Pliny. The last sketch deals with the period when Hadrian attempted a renaissance of Greek art in Athens and creative Roman literature had come to an end. Its renaissance was to be Italian in a new world.

In all the sketches the essential facts are drawn directly from the writings of the men who appear in them. These facts have been merely cast into an imaginative form which, it is hoped, may help rather to reveal than cloak their significance for those who believe that the roads from Rome lead into the highway of human life.

In choosing between ancient and modern proper names I have thought it best in each case to decide which would give the keener impression of verisimilitude. Consistency has, therefore, been abandoned. Horace, Virgil and Ovid exist side by side with such original Latin names as Julius Paulus. While Como has been preferred to Comum, the "Larian Lake" has been retained. Perugia (instead of Perusia) and Assisi (instead of Assisium) have been used in one sketch and Laurentum, Tusculum and Tibur in another. The modern name that least suggests its original is that of the river Adige. The Latin Atesia would destroy the reader's sense of familiarity with Verona.

My thanks are due to Professor M. S. Slaughter, of the University of Wisconsin, who has had the great kindness to read this book in manuscript. My husband, Francis G. Allinson, has assisted me at every turn in its preparation. With one exception, acknowledged in its place, all the translations are his.

A. C. E. A.

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THE ESTRANGER

I

In the effort to dull the edge of his mental anguish by physical exhaustion Catullus had walked far out from the town, through vineyards and fruit-orchards displaying their autumnal stores and clamorous with eager companies of pickers and vintagers. On coming back to the eastern gate he found himself reluctant to pass from the heedless activities of the fields to the bustle of the town streets and the formal observances of his father's house. Seeking a quiet interlude, he turned northward and climbed the hill which rose high above the tumultuous Adige. The shadows of the September afternoon had begun to lengthen when he reached the top and threw himself upon the ground near a green ash tree.

The bodily exercise had at least done him this service, that the formless misery of the past weeks, the monstrous, wordless sense of desolation, now resolved itself into a grief for which inner words, however comfortless, sprang into being. Below him Verona, proud sentinel between the North and Rome, offered herself to the embrace of the wild, tawny river, as if seeking to retard its ominous journey from Rhaetia's barbarous mountains to Italy's sea by Venice. Far to the northeast ghostly Alpine peaks awaited their coronal of sunset rose. Southward stretched the plain of Lombardy. Within easy reach of his eye shimmered the lagoon that lay about Mantua. The hour veiled hills and plain in a luminous blue from which the sun's radiance was excluded. Through the thick leaves of the ash tree soughed the evening wind, giving a voice to the dying day. In its moan Catullus seemed to find his own words: "He is dead, he is dead." His brother was dead. This fact became at last clear in his consciousness and he began to take it up and handle it.

The news had come two weeks ago, just as he was on the point of flying from Rome and the autumn fevers to the gaieties of Naples and Baia. That was an easy escape for a youth whose only taskmasters were the Muses and who worked or played at the behest of his own mood. But his brother, Valerius, had obeyed the will of Rome, serving her, according to her need, at all seasons and in all places. Stationed this year in Asia Minor he had fallen a victim to one of the disastrous eastern fevers. And now Troy held his ashes, and never

again would he offer thanks to Jupiter Capitolinus for a safe return to Rome.

As soon as the letter from Valerius's comrade reached him, Catullus had started for Verona. For nearly ten years he had spoken of himself as living in Rome, his house and his work, his friendships and his love knitting him closely, he had supposed, into the city's life. But in this naked moment she had shown him her alien and indifferent face and he knew that he must *go home* or die. It was not until he saw his father's stricken eyes that he realised that, for once, impulse had led him into the path of filial duty. In the days that followed, however, except by mere presence, neither mourner could help the other. His father's inner life had always been inaccessible to Catullus and now in a common need it seemed more than ever impossible to penetrate beyond the outposts of his noble stoicism. With Catullus, on the other hand, a moved or troubled mind could usually find an outlet in swift, hot words, and, in the unnatural restraint put upon him by his father's speechlessness, his despair, like a splinter of steel, had only encysted itself more deeply. To-day he welcomed the relief of being articulate.

The tie between his brother and himself was formed on the day of his own birth, when the two year old Valerius—how often their old nurse had told the story!—had been led in to see him, his little feet stumbling over each other in happy and unjealous haste. Through the years of tutelage they had maintained an offensive and defensive alliance against father, nurses and teachers; and their playmates, even including Cælius, who was admitted into a happy triumvirate, knew that no intimacy could exact concessions from their fraternal loyalty. Their days were spent in the same tasks and the same play, and the nights, isolating them from the rest of their little world, nurtured confidence and candour. Memories began to gather and to torture him: smiling memories of childish nights in connecting bedrooms, when, left by their nurse to sleep, each boy would slip down into the middle of his bed, just catching sight of the other through the open door in the dim glow of the nightlamp, and defy Morpheus with lively tongue; poignant memories of youthful nights, when elaborate apartments and separate servants had not checked the emergence into wholesome speech of vague ambitions, lusty hopes and shy emotions. It was in one of these nights that

Valerius had first hit upon his favourite nickname for his brother. Pretty Aufilena had broken a promise and Catullus had vehemently maintained that she was less honest than a loose woman who kept her part of a bargain. It was surprising that a conversation so trifling should recur in this hour, but he could see again before him his brother's smiling face and hear him saying: "My Diogenes, never let your lantern go out. It will light your own feet even if you never find a truthful woman."

All this exquisite identity of daily life had ended eight years ago. Catullus felt the weight of his twenty-six years when he realised that ever since he and Valerius had ceased to be boys they had lived apart, save for the occasional weeks of a soldier's furloughs. Their outward paths had certainly diverged very widely. He had chosen literature and Valerius the army. In politics they had fallen equally far apart, Catullus following Cicero in allegiance to the constitution and the senate, Valerius continuing his father's friendship for Cæsar and faith in the new democratic ideal. Different friendships followed upon different pursuits, and divergent mental characteristics became intensified. Catullus grew more untamed in the pursuit of an untrammelled individual life, subversive of accepted standards, rich in emotional incident and sensuous perception. His adherence to the old political order was at bottom due to an æsthetic conviction that democracy was vulgar. To Valerius, on the contrary, the Republic was the chief concern and Cæsar its saviour from fraud and greed. As the years passed he became more and more absorbed in his country's service at the cost of his own inclinations. Gravity and reserve grew upon him and the sacrifice of inherited moral standards to the claims of intellectual freedom would to him have been abhorrent.

And yet there had not been even one day in these eight years when Catullus had felt that he and his brother were not as close to each other as in the old Verona days. He had lived constantly with his friends and rarely with his brother, but below even such friendships as those with Cælius and Calvus, Nepos and Cornificius lay the bond of brotherhood. In view of their lives this bond had seemed to Catullus as incomprehensible as it was unbreakable. And he had often wondered—he wondered now as he lay under the ash tree and listened to the wind—whether it had had its origin in some

urgent determination of his mother who had brooded over them both.

She had died before he was six years old, but he had one vivid memory of her, belonging to his fifth birthday, the beginning, indeed, of all conscious memory. The day fell in June and could be celebrated at Sirmio, their summer home on Lake Benacus. In the morning, holding his silent father's hand, he had received the congratulations of the servants, and at luncheon he had been handed about among the large company of June guests to be kissed and toasted. But the high festival began when all these noisy people had gone off for the siesta. Then, according to a deep-laid plan, his mother and Valerius and he had slipped unnoticed out of the great marble doorway and run hand in hand down the olive-silvery hill to the shore of the lake. She had promised to spend the whole afternoon with them. Never had he felt so happy. The deep blue water, ruffled by a summer breeze, sparkled with a million points of crystal light. Valerius became absorbed in trying to launch a tiny red-sailed boat, but Catullus rushed back to his mother, exclaiming, "Mother, mother, the waves are laughing too!" And she had caught him in her arms and smiled into his eyes and said: "Child, a great poet said that long ago. Are you going to be a poet some day? Is that all my bad dreams mean?"

Then she had called Valerius and asked if they wanted a story of the sea, and they had curled up in the hollows of her arms and she had told them about the Argo, the first ship that ever set forth upon the waters; of how, when her prow broke through the waves, the sailors could see white-faced Nereids dance and beckon, and of how she bore within her hold many heroes dedicated to a great quest. It was the first time Catullus had heard the magic tale of the Golden Fleece and in his mother's harp-like voice it had brought him his first desire for strange lands and the wide, grey spaces of distant seas. Then he had felt his mother's arm tighten around him and something in her voice made his throat ache, as she went on to tell them of the sorceress Medea; how she brought the leader of the quest into wicked ways, so that the glory of his heroism counted for nothing and misery pursued him, and how she still lived on in one disguise after another, working ruin, when unresisted, by poisoned sheen or honeyed draught. Catullus began to feel very much fright-

ened, and then all at once his mother jumped up and called out excitedly, "Oh, see, a Nereid, a Nereid!" And they had all three rushed wildly down the beach to the foamy edge of the lake, and there she danced with them, her blue eyes laughing like the waves and her loosened hair shining like the red-gold clouds around the setting sun. They had danced until the sun slipped below the clouds and out of sight, and a servant had come with cloaks and a reminder of the dinner hour.

Now from the hill above Verona Catullus could see the red gold of another sunset and he was alone. Valerius, who had known him with that Nereid-mother, had gone forever. Because they had lain upon the same mother's breast and danced with her upon the Sirmian shore, Catullus had always known that his older brother's sober life was the fruit of a wine-red passion for Rome's glory. And Valerius's knowledge of him — ah, how penetrating that had been!

Across the plain below him stretched the road to Mantua. Was it only last April that upon this road he and Valerius had had that revealing hour? The most devastating of all his memories swept in upon him. Valerius had had his first furlough in two years and they had spent a week of it together in Verona. The day before Valerius was to leave to meet his transport at Brindisi they had repeated a favorite excursion of their childhood to an excellent farm a little beyond Mantua, to leave the house steward's orders for the season's honey.

What a day it had been, with the spring air which set mind and feet astir, the ride along the rush-fringed banks of the winding Mincio and the unworldly hours in the old farmstead! The cattle-sheds were fragrant with the burning of cedar and of Syrian gum to keep off snakes, and Catullus had felt more strongly than ever that in the general redolence of homely virtues, natural activities and scrupulous standards all the noisome life of town and city was kept at bay. The same wooden image of Bacchus hung from a pine tree in the vineyard, and the same weather-worn Ceres stood among the first grain, awaiting the promise of her sheaves. Valerius had been asked by his father's overseer to make inquiries about a yoke of oxen, and Catullus went off to look at the bee-hives in their sheltered corner near a wild olive tree. When he came back he found his brother

seated on a stone bench, carving an odd little satyr out of a bit of wood and talking to a fragile looking boy about twelve years old. Valerius's sympathetic gravity always charmed children and Catullus was not surprised to see this boy's brown eyes lifted in eager confidence to the older face.

"So," Valerius was saying, "you don't think we work only to live? I believe you are right. You find the crops so beautiful that you don't mind weeding, and I find Rome so beautiful that I don't mind fighting." "Rome!" The boy's face quivered and his singularly sweet voice sank to a whisper. "Do you fight for Rome? Father doesn't know it, but I pray every day to the Good Goddess in the grainfield that she will let me go to Rome some day. Do you think she will?" Valerius rose and looked down into the child's starry eyes. "Perhaps she will for Rome's own sake," he said. "Every lover counts. What is your name, Companion-in-arms? I should like to know you when you come." "Virgil," the boy answered shyly, colouring and drawing back as he saw Catullus. A farm servant brought up the visitors' horses. "Goodbye, little Virgil," Valerius called out, as he mounted. "A fair harvest to your crops and your dreams."

The brothers rode on for some time without speaking, Valerius rather sombrely, it seemed, absorbed in his own thoughts. When he broke the silence it was to say abruptly: "I wonder if, when he goes to Rome, he will keep the light in those eyes and the music in that young throat." Then he brought his horse close up to his brother's and spoke rapidly as if he must rid himself of the weight of words. "My Lantern Bearer, you are not going to lose your light and your music, are you? The last time I saw Cicero he talked to me about your poetry and your gifts, which you know I cannot judge as he can. He told me that for all your 'Greek learning' and your 'Alexandrian technique' no one could doubt the good red Italian blood in your verses, or even the homely strain of our own little town. I confess I was thankful to hear a literary man and a friend praise you for not being cosmopolitan. I am not afraid now of your going over to the Greeks. But are you in danger of losing Verona in Rome?"

The gathering dusk, the day's pure happiness, the sense of impending separation opened Catullus's heart. "Do you mean Clodia?" he asked straightforwardly. "Did Cicero talk of her too?" "Not only

Cicero," Valerius had answered gently, "and not only your other friends. Will you tell me of her yourself?" "What have you heard?" Catullus asked. Valerius paused and then gave a direct and harsh reply: "That she was a Medea to her husband, has been a Juno to her brother's Jupiter and is an easy mistress to many lovers."

After that, Catullus was thankful now to remember, he himself had talked passionately as the road slipped away under their horses' feet. He had told Valerius how cruel the world had been to Clodia. Metellus had been sick all winter and had died as other men die. He had belittled her by every indignity that a man of rank can put upon his wife, but she had borne with him patiently enough. Because she was no Alcestis need she be called a Medea or a Clytemnestra? And because the unspeakable Clodius had played Jupiter to his youngest sister's Juno need Clodia be considered less than a Diana to his Apollo? As for her lovers—his voice broke upon the word—she loved him, Catullus, strange as that seemed, and him only. Of course, like all women of charm, she could play the harmless coquette with other men. He hated the domestic woman—Lucretius's dun-coloured wife, for instance—on whom no man except her mate would cast an eye.

He wanted men to fall at his Love's feet, he thanked Aphrodite that she had the manner and the subtle fire and the grace to bring them there. Her mind was wonderful, too, aflame, like Sappho's, with the love of beauty. That was why he called her Lesbia. He had used Sappho's great love poem (Valerius probably did not know it, but it was like a purple wing from Eros's shoulder) as his first messenger to her, when his heart had grown hot as Ætna's fire or the springs of Thermopylæ. She had finally consented to meet him at Allius's house. Afterwards she had told him that the day was marked for her also by a white stone.

If Valerius could only know how he felt! She was the greatest lady in Rome, accoutred with wealth and prestige and incomparable beauty. And she loved him, and was as good and pure and tender-hearted as any unmarried girl in Verona. He was her lover, but often he felt toward her as a father might feel toward a child. Catullus had trembled as he brought out from his inner sanctuary this shyest treasure. And never should he forget the healing sense of

peace that came to him when Valerius rode closer and put his arm around his shoulder. "Diogenes," he said, "your flame is still bright. I could wish you had not fallen in love with another man's wife, and if he were still living I should try to convince you of the folly of it. But I know this hot heart of yours is as pure as the snow we see on the Alps in midsummer. That is all I need to know." And they had ridden on in the darkness toward the lights of home.

The wind rose in a fresh wail: "He is dead, he is dead." The touch of his arm was lost in the unawakening night. His perfect speech was stilled in the everlasting silence. A smile, both bitter and wistful, came upon Catullus's lips as he remembered a letter he had had yesterday from Lucretius, bidding him listen to the voice of Nature who would bring him peace. "What is so bitter," his friend had urged, "if it comes in the end to sleep? The wretched cannot want more of life, and the happy men, men like Valerius, go unreluctantly, like well-fed guests from a banquet, to enter upon untroubled rest. Nor is his death outside of law. From all eternity life and death have been at war with each other. No day and no night passes when the first cry of a child tossed up on the shores of light is not mingled with the wailings of mourners. Let me tell you how you may transmute your sorrow. A battle rages in the plain. The earth is shaken with the violent charges of the cavalry and with the tramping feet of men. Cruel weapons gleam in the sun. But to one afar off upon a hill the army is but a bright spot in the valley, adding beauty, it may well be, to a sombre scene. And so, ascending into the serene citadel of Knowledge and looking down upon our noisy griefs, we may find them to be but high lights, ennobling life's monotonous plain. My friend, come to Nature and learn of her. Surely Valerius would have wished you peace."

"Peace, peace!" Catullus groaned aloud. Lucretius seemed as remote as the indifferent gods. Valerius, who knew his feet were shaped for human ways, would have understood that he could not scale the cold steeps of thought. If he suffered in this hour, what comfort was there in the thought of other suffering and other years? If Troy now held Valerius, what peace was there in knowing that its accursed earth once covered Hector and Patroclus also, and would be forever the common grave of Asia and of Europe? What healing