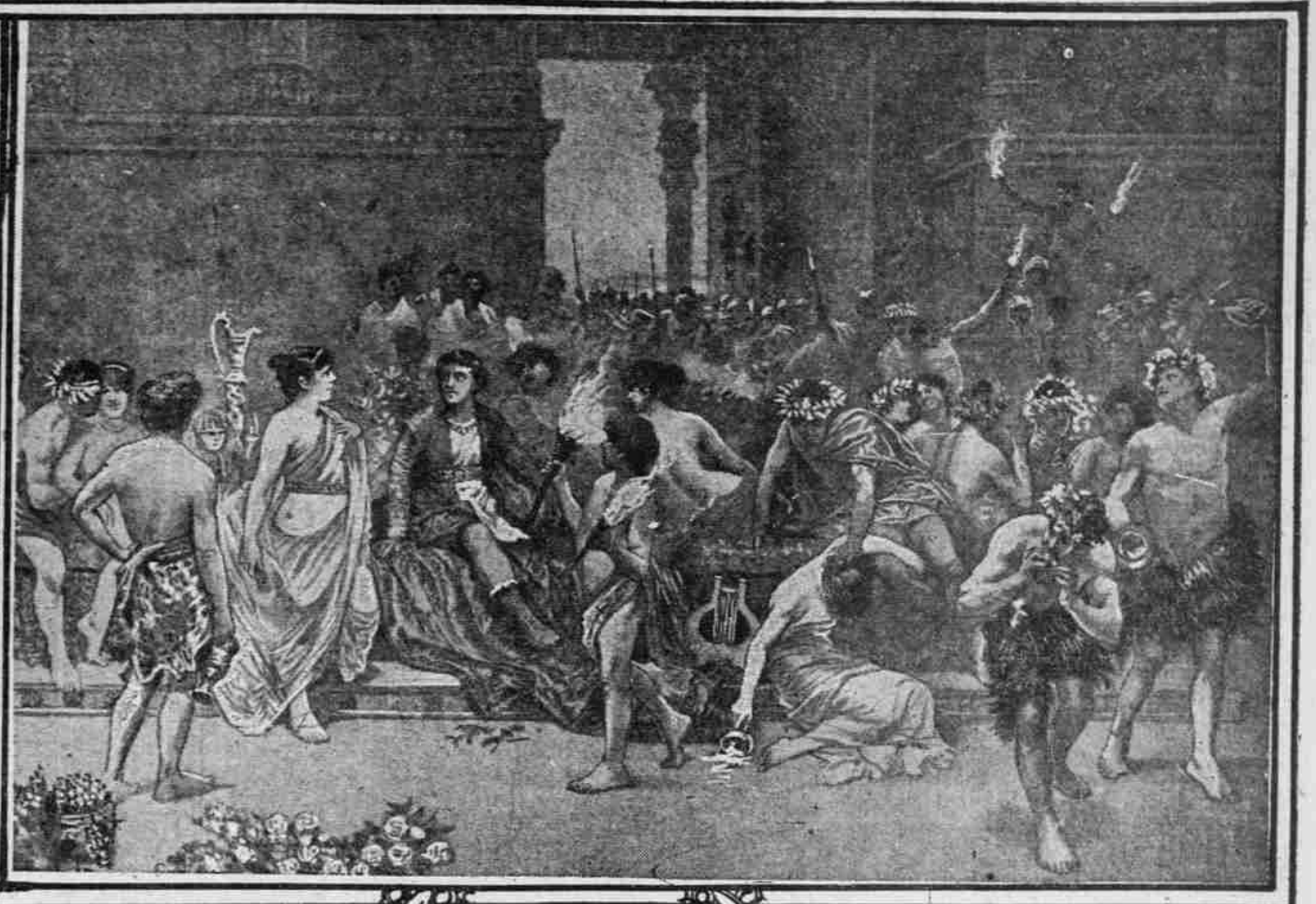


CLASSIC WRITERS EXALT GRAPE BUT TELL OF ORGIES

Wine Well Known to the Heroes Who Fought Under the Walls of Troy, and Long Before the Time of Chares Drunkenness Was Not Uncommon in Greece.



THE PROFLIGACY OF CHARES, THE TUMULTUOUS ATHENIAN GENERAL, WHOSE DRINKING BOUTS SHOCKED THE GRAVER CITIZENS OF ATHENS, BUT MADE HIM MORE POPULAR WITH THE MASSES.



THAIS SUGGESTING TO ALEXANDER THE GREAT THE BURNING OF THE PALACE AT PERSEPOLIS. ACCORDING TO PLUTARCH, ALEXANDER FELL IN EAGERLY WITH THE PROPOSAL AND, BEARING A TORCH, LED REVELERS IN SETTING FIRES.



A GREEK SYMPOSIUM, FOLLOWING THE LAST MEAL OF THE DAY, WHEN DINNERS TABLES WERE REMOVED AND REPLACED WITH STANDS BEARING CUPS AND BOWLS.



A DEDICATION TO BACCHUS AT ROME, A FESTIVAL TO WHICH ONLY WOMEN WERE ADMITTED AT FIRST, ALTHOUGH IN TIME MEN TOOK PART, AND THE CELEBRATION EVENTUALLY BECAME A TIME FOR UNRESTRAINED ORGIES.

THE evil effect of alcohol in ancient Greece might be illustrated in many glaring instances. A little known but striking example is that of Chares, a courageous Athenian general and admiral, who was as famous for profligacy as for bravery.

Chares had a tumultuous life through the years 356 to 322 B. C. He had a high command in the social war and was defeated in a great naval battle in the Hellespont, but the Athenians blamed his colleagues for the disaster, claiming that Chares would have won had he not been so drunk. He was a lion in battle but he was extremely popular. He boasted of his evil behavior, but the drinking bouts indulged in on his fleet and the presence of dancing girls at entertainments apparently shocked only the graver citizens of Athens, and perhaps merely added to his popularity among the uneducated.

Long before the period of Chares, drunkenness was not uncommon in Greece. Wine was well known to the heroes who fought under the walls of Troy, when history and legend are still mingled. Homer describes a red wine produced in Thrace which was very sweet, but so strong that it was mixed with 20 times its bulk of water. There were many varieties of wine were famous, but the Greeks were never such connoisseurs as were the later Romans. Quality and age did not greatly appeal to them.

Nor did the Greeks drink their wines undiluted. Almost never do we find a reference to the drinking of pure wine. Herodotus says that the Spartans thought that Cleomenes became insane because he had adopted the barbarous custom of mixing no water with his wine. At the end of a dinner it was good form to take a small draught of clear wine, but this seems to have been the only occasion when it was judged inoffensive, and the limit of a single drink was rigidly adhered to.

As a general rule wine was diluted with more than its bulk in water. The best contemporary authorities agree that to six measures of water were added two, three or four of wine. A half and half mixture was looked upon as too strong.

The Greeks also did not care for the purity of taste that modern wine bibbers seek. They spiced their wines with horehound, wormwood and myrtle berries; they sprinkled grated cheese over it; they were extremely fond of honey mixed with it. It did not seem to be a matter of grave concern whether the water added was hot or cold. Sometimes it was one and sometimes the other. The residents of the island of Euboea flavored their native drink with resin, and there is even mention of sea water being added to wine.

In nearly everything else the ancient Greeks cared more for quality than for quantity, but in wine quantity seems to have been their standard of perfection. They mixed water with their wine, but they apparently wanted a great deal of the mixture. Drunkenness does not seem to have been held a great vice, and some of the stories that have come down to us about the Greek capacities for drinking are almost incredible. Tradition says that Socrates and Alcibiades were not content with the sines of the drinking vessels at feasts and were accustomed to drink from the crater, the great receptacle in which all the wine for the banquet was cooled. These craters were huge affairs, and yet Socrates and Alcibiades were credited with being



A ROMAN VINTAGE FESTIVAL, FROM THE PAINTING BY ALMA TADEMA. DURING THE EARLY PERIODS OF THE EMPIRE THIS WAS A GRAVE AND BEAUTIFUL CEREMONY, BUT LATER IT BECAME A RIOTOUS DEBAUCH.

able to empty one piece without great effort.

Socrates at Debauch Out-drinks All Companions.

WINE played so important a part in the civilization of ancient Greece that the most popular private entertainment seems to have been the symposium. The character of these festive affairs depended upon the desire of the guests and especially upon the person corresponding to the modern toastmaster at a banquet. He had much more authority than a toastmaster, however, for he not only directed the conversation, but he also determined how much water should be mixed with the wine and how large cups should be used.

The symposium was a drinking party and followed the last meal of the day. The dinner tables were removed and before the guests were spread smaller tables with cups and bowls, with perhaps light dessert dishes and salty or highly spiced dainties to stimulate thirst. Except for the hired entertainers—singers, dancers and musicians—only men attended these gatherings.

The symposium was a much more informal affair than anything that we have today. Any Athenian citizen strolling past a house and hearing laughter and talk within could enter and take his place with the other guests. Apparently it did not make any difference if he did not know the host.

Libations to the gods were always drunk at the opening of a symposium. Thereafter they differed widely in tone. Sometimes they were grave affairs without music. This was apt to be the case if the guests included men like Socrates and other philosophers. Some subject to be discussed was proposed by the leader of the assemblage and those present took turns in speaking.

Even at these gatherings a great deal of wine was poured down thirsty throats, but as the favorite drink appears to have been two parts of wine mixed with five parts of water, it took longer for intoxication to set in.

Plato describes one of these symposia at great length, and he tells us that even at this assemblage of philosophers there was much drunkenness. At the end of the party, which had lasted all night, many of the guests had departed and most of the rest had fallen asleep over their wine. Only Socrates, Aristophanes and Agathon remained discoursing. Finally Aristophanes nodded and was soon asleep. Agathon soon followed his example. And then Socrates, as fresh as though he had been sleeping instead of drinking all night, walked out of the house, went to the bath and spent the day in his usual manner.

The usual symposium was probably much more of a debauch than the one that Plato tells about. There was a good deal of singing and music, which was orderly at first, but which became very disorderly as the wine went to the heads of the guests. The Greeks seem to have been fond of playing a great many trivial games at these parties. At a late hour of a symposium an admirer of Greek culture who looked upon one of these gatherings would probably have received a rude shock. He would have seen a number of able-looking men lying upon couches in various stages of intoxication. A few of them might be discussing learnedly and some might be playing games of wits. But most of those present would probably be seen cheering the feeble jokes of professional entertainers or trying to upset nutshells floating in water by throwing upon them drops of wine.

Sometimes the guests at one of these symposia would form a procession and march through the streets, singing and dancing with the girls who furnished the music, playing all sorts of noisy

practical jokes and often getting into fights with reputable citizens.

Alexander the Great Is Notorious Drinker.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT was a glaring example of the hard drinking that had become so widespread in the days of the decadence of ancient Greece, when Athens and all the other proud little states were compelled to yield submission to the Macedonian. Tradition credits Alexander with being able to finish at one sitting an enormous cup of wine that held no less than a gallon and a half. After one of these feats it is said that he complained of not feeling well, which seems a rather naive remark.

Alexander did not, despite the prevalence of hard drinking in Greece, acquire his taste for alcohol in Europe. While there he was noted for temperance both in eating and drinking. In the intervals between his Asiatic conquests, however, he yielded more and more to the temptation of the wine cup. It was on one of these occasions that he slew Clitus, his staunchest follower.

The two most famous of these escapades culminated in the burning of the palace at Persepolis and in the conqueror's death. The first of these furnished the subject for the painter who depicted the scene above. Plutarch says that Alexander and his warriors had been drinking deeply when one of the girls present, a Greek named Thais, suggested that he revenge himself upon the ancient enemies of Attica by burning the Persian palace at Persepolis. Alexander fell in eagerly with the proposal and, with his head bound with flowers and bearing a lighted torch, he led the band of revellers, who set fires in the corridors of the magnificent structure. All the revelers were in various stages of intoxication. The drinking habits of the age are well illustrated in the last days of Alexander's life. Although Babylon was notoriously unhealthy, the conqueror drank freely at a feast held in the day-time. But instead of going to bed he stayed up all night and drank steadily until dawn. He spent the next day sleeping off his drunkenness, but that night he again spent in heavy drinking. It is not remarkable that, with the germs of fever already in his blood, he hardly rose again from his couch.

In considering the influence of alcohol upon history, this last debauch of Alexander may be regarded as one that had tremendous results. He was only 32 years of age when he died. He had a sound constitution and he had steered his body by his numerous hard campaigns. It seems more than probable that he might have recovered from the fever if he had not indulged in this protracted orgy.

With his indomitable energy and his lust for conquest it is not likely that he would long have remained content with peace. But there was no formidable enemy left him in Asia, and only Rome in Europe had strength enough to attract him. Had he lived he must almost inevitably have waged against the growing power by the Tiber. Most historians believe that Rome at that period had not become strong enough to have withstood him and that, had Alexander lived, no distinctive Roman civilization would have arisen. What might have happened in that event is something too big for speculation, but it would have been something that would have affected the destinies of almost everyone living today. The whole course of human history would have been wrested away from the path that it has followed.

It is evident that for a good many centuries there was little abuse of alcohol in ancient Rome. But when the tide turned it turned with overwhelming speed and force. Drunkenness and its attendant evils became so common that they almost ceased to attract attention. For many generations wine had been scarce, but by the first century B. C. it flowed almost as freely as water. One wealthy citizen left 10,000 casks of it to his heir, each cask containing 20 gallons. Its use led to extravagance so unbounded that Apuleius, who has spent \$3,600,000 in inventing rare and costly dishes, committed suicide when he balanced his accounts and found he had but \$360,000 left. He could not see how it was possible to live on such a pittance, although \$360,000 then represented very

much more than it did even before the war smashed all earlier records by boosting the high cost of living.

There are many evidences that wine was too scarce in the earliest periods to allow drunkenness to become common. King Numa issued a law that funeral pyres must not be sprinkled with wine, and one of the generals of the olden time vowed an offering of a small cup of wine to Jupiter. If the god would permit him to gain a victory over his foes. And oftentimes milk is mentioned instead of wine as being offered to the gods. This was not because the Romans thought that the gods would be better pleased with wholesome milk than with intoxicating wine, but merely because wine cost too much and was too difficult to procure.

This is a great contrast to the later periods, when Rome was beginning to show unmistakable signs of degeneracy. By that time wine had become so common that almost the poorest slaves could get hold of enough money to buy drink enough to bring about a state of sodden drunkenness. At one time a gallon of wine could be bought for 12 cents, but even this is high as contrasted with the period when 6 cents bought ten gallons. This was not, of course, the delicate and old wine that was served at feasts of the wealthy, but it was strong and fiery, much more alcoholic than the wines of today.

In their capacities, the Romans made Socrates, Alexander and all the other famous drinkers of Greece seem like children. A certain Calpurnius Piso was promoted under Tiberius for no other reason than his ability to sit for 48 hours drinking steadily without an intermission. Novellus Torquatus has had his name preserved for posterity because he is credited with being able to drink ten quarts of wine at a draught, a feat that seems quite incredible to us. The Emperor Maximilian boasted that he could drink six gallons of wine without getting drunk. The hardest drinkers of our colonial days shrink to paleaces when contrasted with Romans in the days of the decadence. They ate all sorts of highly seasoned dishes to stimulate an enormous thirst. Some of them even swallowed powdered pumice, or large quantities of salt, so fearful were they that they would otherwise fail to drink all the wine they wanted.

But the most astounding of their habits was that of taking a dose of hemlock before they started a drinking bout. Hemlock is a slow poison, but the wines of the ancient Romans were sufficient antidote to it if they were taken in excessive amounts. So guests at a prospective banquet deliberately poisoned themselves to make it certain that they would not shrink from drinking even when they had had more than enough.

The wealthy had great cellars filled with wine, but this was, of course, beyond the powers of the poor. The state, however, established for their

Degeneracy of Romans Due to Drunkenness.

THE vintage festivals of very early periods in ancient Rome were grave and beautiful ceremonies, like the procession depicted upon a Greek vase that Kostas celebrates in his famous ode. But, as was noted in our last article, they degenerated into drunken revels so unrestrained in debauchery and riot that they make New York's wildest welcomes to the New Year seem tame affairs by contrast.

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