two friends reached the amphitheater, Metellus repaired without delay to the interior, in order to place his friend as near as possible to the imperial pavilion,—for Caligula designed to preside in person. The arena was occupied by a host of naked barbarians, who, drawn up in bands on opposite sides of the podium, were awaiting, with amazing indifference, the moment that was destined to lay most of them in a bloody grave. A promiscuous crowd of plebeians, seated on the upper benches of the building, were measuring out their expressions of approbation or contempt for the different nobles who entered at every moment to take their places.

"Are these indications of public feeling to be considered as much the test of merit now as in the days of Cicero, do you think?" asked Cælius of his friend.

"You shall judge," replied Metellus. "You marked that tall senator, whose appearance was hailed with such idle tumult,—I mean the man now standing with his arms folded; that is Protegenes, the direst villain, save one, in the Roman Empire; and you will soon perceive that the distinguished exception I allude to, the man who never permitted a more meritorious deed than the murder of his uncle and benefactor, is a prodigious favorite with these ragged brawlers."

"Hush!" exclaimed Cælius; "you mean Caligula; they are gathering around us, and will hear."

By this time the capacious body of the amphitheater was intensely crowded, and presented one vast horizon of human beings, ascending in regular gradations. The emperor's presence was alone required for the work of death to begin. His approach was soon announced. A body of lictors entered, and clearing the avenue to the imperial canopy, called out, "Room! room! give room to the emperor!" Caligula appeared. As had been predicted by Metellus, a burst of thundering applause followed, and all ranks and orders of spectators rose to do him honor. Caligula was of a tall, awkward, and ungainly figure, approaching in some degree to corpulence, at the same time a singular emaciation was visible in his face; indeed, the hollowness of his temples, his deeply sunken eyes, a forehead distorted with wrinkles and destitute of hair, communicated to him the semblance of a man worn out with illness or excess, and assailed before his time with the infirmities of age.

He advanced amid reiterated acclamations, leaning on the shoulder of his favorite sister, Drusilla. Several ladies and senators followed in their train. Caligula threw himself carelessly on the couch prepared for him, and without waiting till his retinue was disposed around him, gave the signal for commencing the sanguinary festivity.

Every one now gave themselves up to the enjoyment of the spectacle, which was similar to the rest of the gladiatorial sports of that day. Suddenly the attention of the whole assembly was attracted by the loud and angry accents of Caligula. It appeared that the tyrant, having taken offense at some criticisms passed by Proculus, a Roman knight, upon his gladiators, was insisting upon his putting their excellence to trial by descending into the arena and contending with them. Proculus hesitated. The Batavian guards of the emperor, long accustomed to his wanton and extravagant purposes, approached, to enforce obedience. Cælius gazed on the whole scene with astonishment; but his astonishment was increased when he observed that the people, instead of testifying any indignation at this outrage, received the command of the despot with delight and enthusiasm. Powerless to oppose, and hopeless of diverting the savage purpose of his master, the Roman submitted to his fate, and descended to the blood-stained sand. He had been furnished only with a sword, but he had wrapped his cloak round his left arm to serve as a buckler. The general combat had terminated, and wretches trained and exercised for single encounter were the next objects of popular diversion. A gladiator was soon turned upon Proculus to destroy him; but the knight was a wary