

CHAPTER XVI. -Crome yellow

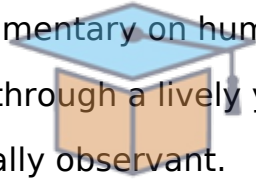
In Chapter XVI of "Crome Yellow," the setting shifts to a post-dinner atmosphere among gentlemen, focusing on an eccentric conversation led by Mr. Scogan. The women have departed, allowing the port to circulate freely among the men left in the room. Scogan, engaged deeply with his thoughts and mildly entertained by a private amusement, catches the attention of Gombauld, who inquires about the source of his amusement. Mr. Scogan reveals that he was assessing each person at the table, imagining which of the first six Caesars they would resemble in a hypothetical scenario where they behaved as such, referencing Julius, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. He describes the Caesars as "characters functioning in the void," fully developed human beings that serve as a touchstone or standard for understanding others. By amplifying traits and peculiarities, Mr. Scogan indulges in creating Caesarean formulas for those around him.

When questioned about his own resemblance to any of the Caesars, Mr. Scogan amusingly claims he could potentially embody all of them, except for Claudius, whom he considers too unlike any facet of his character. He laments the mundane circumstances of his life—born into a country rectory, burdened by senseless hard work for minimal reward—which prevented the full realisation of his potential into something "fabulous."

The conversation then shifts into a more philosophical reflection. Mr. Scogan suggests it may be fortunate that potential tyrants among them, like Denis and Ivor, had not been allowed to blossom into their worst forms, though it would have provided a curious spectacle. He expands this idea into a critique of human nature and society, comparing people to bees capable of producing a queen bee under the right conditions, and muses on the unpredictable outcomes when humans are placed in a "Caesarean environment." He points out the irony of historical surprise and moral

outrage at the cruelties of the past and present, reflecting on events from the nineteenth century to the contemporary aftermath of World War I, suggesting that such environments inevitably produce "little Caesars."

Scogan concludes with a grim depiction of the current state of the world, where atrocities occur regularly, highlighting the ubiquity of violence and suffering as a product of the societal and environmental conditions that foster such behaviors, akin to the emergence of little Caesars throughout history. The chapter encapsulates a darkly satirical commentary on human nature, power, and the cyclical pattern of history, presented through a lively yet morose philosophical discussion that is both poignant and critically observant.



Summary