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THE PENTAMERON.

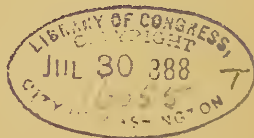
CITATION AND EXAMINATION OF WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

MINOR PROSE PIECES. CRITICISMS.

BY

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR,

AUTHOR OF "IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS," "PERICLES AND ASPASIA."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Note. — This volume, "Imaginary Conversations" (five volumes), and "Pericles and Aspasia" (one volume) comprise Landor's Complete Prose Writings.

LANDOR'S WRITINGS.

They are unique. Having possessed them, we should miss them. Their place would be supplied by no others. There is hardly a conceivable subject in life or literature which they do not illustrate by striking aphorisms, by concise and profound observations, by wisdom ever applicable to the needs of men, and by wit as available for their enjoyment. Nor, above all, will there anywhere be found a more pervading passion for liberty, a fiercer hatred of the base, a wider sympathy with the wronged and the oppressed, or help more ready at all times for those who fight at odds and disadvantage against the powerful and the fortunate, than in the writings of Walter Savage Landor.

JOHN FORSTER.

THE PENTAMERON;

OR,

INTERVIEWS OF MESSER GIOVANNI BOCCACCIO
AND MESSER FRANCESCO PETRARCA,

WHEN

SAID MESSER GIOVANNI LAY INFIRM AT HIS VILLETTA HARD BY
CERTALDO;

AFTER WHICH THEY SAW NOT EACH OTHER ON OUR
SIDE OF PARADISE:

SHOWING HOW THEY DISCOURSED UPON THAT FAMOUS THEOLOGIAN

MESSER DANTE ALIGHIERI,

AND SUNDRY OTHER MATTERS.

EDITED BY PIEVANO D. GRIGI.

THE EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION.

WANTING a bell for my church at San Vivaldo, and hearing that our holy religion is rapidly gaining ground in England, to the unspeakable comfort and refreshment of the faithful, I bethought myself that I might peradventure obtain such effectual aid from the piety and liberality of the converts as wellnigh to accomplish the purchase of one. Desirous, moreover, of visiting that famous nation of whose spiritual prosperity we all entertain such animated hopes now that the clouds of ignorance begin to break and vanish, I resolved that nothing on my part should be wanting to so blessed a consummation. Therefore, while I am executing my mission in regard to the bell, I omit no opportunity of demonstrating how much happier and peacefuller are we who live in unity than those who, abandoning the household of Faith, clothe themselves with shreds and warm themselves with shavings.

Subsidiary to the aid I solicit, I brought with me, and here lay before the public, translated by the best hand I could afford to engage, "Certain Interviews of Messer Francesco Petrarca and Messer Giovanni Boccaccio, etc.," which, the booksellers tell me, should be entitled "The Pentameron," unless I would return with nothing in my pocket. I am ignorant what gave them this idea of my intent, unless it be my deficiency in the language, for certainly I had come to no such resolution. Assurances are made to me by the intelligent and experienced in such merchandise, that the manuscript is honestly worth from twenty-five to thirty francesconi, or dollars. To such a pitch hath England risen up again, within these few years, after all the expenditure of her protracted war!

Is there any true Italian, above all is there any worthy native of Certaldo or San Vivaldo, who revolveth not in his mind what a surprise and delight it will be to Giovanni in paradise the first time he hears, instead of that cracked and jarring tumbril (which must

have grated in his ear most grievously ever since its accident, and have often tried his patience), just such another as he was wont to hear when he rode over to join our townspeople at their *festa?* It will do his heart good, and make him think of old times; and perhaps he may drop a couple of prayers to the Madonna for whoso had a hand in it.

Lest it should be bruited in England or elsewhere, that being in my seventieth year I have unadvisedly quitted my parish, "fond of change," to use the blessed words of Saint Paul, I am ready to show the certificate of Monsignore, my diocesan, approving of my voyage. Monsignore was pleased to think me capable of undertaking it, telling me that I looked hale, spoke without quavering, and, by the blessing of our Lady, had nigh upon half my teeth in their sockets, while, pointing to his own and shaking his head, he repeated the celebrated lines of Horatius Flaccus, who lived in the reign of Augustus, a short time before the Incarnation,—

> "Non ebur, sed horridùm
> Buccâ dehiscit in meâ lacuna!"

Then, turning the discourse from so melancholy a topic, he was pleased to relate from the inexhaustible stores of his archæological acquirements, that no new bell whatever had been consecrated in his diocese of Samminiato since the year of our Lord 1611; in which year, on the first Sunday of August, a thunderbolt fell into the belfry of the Duomo, by the negligence of Canonico Malatesta, who, according to history, in his hurry to dine with Conte Geronimo Bardi, at our San Vivaldo, omitted a word in the Mass. While he was playing at bowls after dinner on that Sunday, or, as some will have it, while he was beating Sèr Matteo Filicaia at backgammon, and the younger men and ladies of those two noble families were bird-catching with the *civetta*, it began to thunder; and, within the evening, intelligence of the thunderbolt was brought to the Canonico. On his return the day following it was remarked, says the chronicler, that the people took off their caps at the distance of only two or three paces instead of fifteen or twenty, and few stopped who met him; for the rumor had already gone abroad of his omission. He often rode as usual to Conte Geronimo's, gammoned Ser Matteo, hooded the *civetta*, limed a twig or two, stood behind the spinette, hummed the next note, turned over the pages of the music-book of the contessine, beating time on the chair-back, and showing them what he could do now and then on the *viola di gamba*. Only eight years had elapsed, when, in the flower of his age (for he had scarcely seen sixty), he was found dead in his bed, after as hearty and convivial a supper as ever Canonico ate! No warning, no *olio santo*, no *viaticum*, poor man! Candles he had; and it was as much as he had, poor sinner! And this also hap-

pened in the month of August! Monsignore, in his great liberality, laid no heavy stress on the coincidence; but merely said, "Well, Pievano! a Mass or two can do him no harm,—let us hope he stands in need of few more; but when you happen to have leisure, and nobody else to think about, prythee clap a wet clout on the fire there below in behalf of Canonico Malatesta."

I have done it gratis, and I trust he finds the benefit of it. In the same spirit and by the same authority I gird myself for this greater enterprise. Unable to form a satisfactory opinion on the manuscript, I must again refer to my superior. It is the opinion, then, of Monsignore that our five dialogues were written down by neither of the interlocutors, but rather by some intimate, who loved them equally. "For," said Monsignore, "it was the practice of Boccaccio to stand up among his personages, and to take part himself in their discourses. Petrarca, who was fonder of sheer dialogue and had much practice in it, never acquired any dexterity in this species of composition, it being all question and answer,—short, snappish, quibbling, and uncomfortable. I speak only of his "Remedies of Adversity and Prosperity," which indeed leave his wisdom all its wholesomeness, but render it somewhat apt to cleave to the roof of the mouth. The better parts of Homer are in dialogue; and downward from him to Galileo the noblest works of human genius have assumed this form: among the rest I am sorry to find no few heretics and scoffers. At the present day the fashion is over; every man pushes every other man behind him, and will let none speak out but himself."

The "Interviews" took place not within the walls of Certaldo, although within the parish, at Boccaccio's villa. It should be notified to the curious, that about this ancient town, small, deserted, dilapidated as it is, there are several towers and turrets yet standing, one of which belongs to the mansion inhabited in its day by Ser Giovanni. His tomb and effigy are in the church. Nobody has opened the grave to throw light upon his relics; nobody has painted the marble; nobody has broken off a foot or a finger to do him honor; not even an English name is engraven on the face, although the English hold confessedly the highest rank in this department of literature. In Italy, and particularly in Tuscany, the remains of the illustrious are inviolable; and among the illustrious, men of genius hold the highest rank. The arts are more potent than curiosity, more authoritative than churchwardens: what Englishman will believe it? Well, let it pass, courteous strangers! ye shall find me in future less addicted to the marvellous. At present I have only to lay before you an ancient and (doubt it not) an authentic account of what passed between my countrymen, Giovanni and Francesco, before they parted forever. It seemed probable at this meeting that Giovanni would have been called away first, for heavy and of long continuance had been his infirmity;

but he outlived it three whole years. He could not outlive his friend so many months, but followed him to the tomb before he had worn the glossiness off the cloak Francesco in his will bequeathed to him.

We struggle with death while we have friends around to cheer us: the moment we miss them we lose all heart for the contest. Pardon my reflection! I ought to have remembered I am not in my stone pulpit, nor at home.

PRETE DOMENICO GRIGI,
Pievano of San Vivaldo.

LONDON, October 1, 1836.

THE PENTAMERON.

Boccaccio. Who is he that entered, and now steps so silently and softly, yet with a foot so heavy it shakes my curtains?

Frate Biagio! can it possibly be you?

No more physic for me, nor masses neither, at present.

Assunta! Assuntina! who is it?

Assunta. I cannot say, Signor Padrone! he puts his finger in the dimple of his chin, and smiles to make me hold my tongue.

Boccaccio. Fra Biagio, are you come from Samminiato for this? You need not put your finger there. We want no secrets. The girl knows her duty and does her business. I have slept well, and wake better. [*Raising himself up a little.*

Why! who are you? It makes my eyes ache to look aslant over the sheets; and I cannot get to sit quite upright so conveniently; and I must not have the window-shutters opener, they tell me.

Petrarca. Dear Giovanni, have you then been very unwell?

Boccaccio. Oh, that sweet voice! and this fat friendly hand of thine, Francesco!

Thou hast distilled all the pleasantest flowers and all the wholesomest herbs of spring into my breast already.

What showers we have had this April, ay! How could you come along such roads? If the Devil were my laborer, I would make him work upon these of Certaldo. He would have little time and little itch for mischief ere he had finished them, but would gladly fan himself with an Agnus-castus, and go to sleep all through the carnival.

Petrarca. Let us cease to talk both of the labor and the laborer. You have then been dangerously ill?

Boccaccio. I do not know; they told me I was; and truly a man might be unwell enough who has twenty masses said for him, and fain sigh when he thinks what he has paid for them. As I hope to be saved, they cost me a lira each. Assunta is a good market-girl in eggs and mutton and cow-heel; but I would not allow her to argue and haggle about the masses. Indeed, she knows best whether they were not fairly worth all that was asked for them, although I could have bought a winter cloak for less money. However, we do not want both at the same time. I did not want the cloak: I wanted *them,* it seems. And yet I begin to think God would have had mercy on me if I had begged it of him myself in my own house. What think you?

Petrarca. I think he might.

Boccaccio. Particularly if I offered him the sacrifice on which I wrote to you.

Petrarca. That letter has brought me hither.

Boccaccio. You do then insist on my fulfilling my promise, the moment I can leave my bed? I am ready and willing.

Petrarca. Promise! none was made. You only told me that if it pleased God to restore you to your health again, you are ready to acknowledge his mercy by the holocaust of your "Decameron." What proof have you that God would exact it? If you could destroy the "Inferno" of Dante, would you?

Boccaccio. Not I, upon my life! I would not promise to burn a copy of it on the condition of a recovery for twenty years.

Petrarca. You are the only author who would not rather demolish another's work than his own, especially if he thought it better: a thought which seldom goes beyond suspicion.

Boccaccio. I am not jealous of any one: I think admiration pleasanter. Moreover, Dante and I did not come forward at the same time, nor take the same walks. His flames are too fierce for you and me: we had trouble enough with milder. I never felt any high gratification in hearing of people being damned; and much less would I toss them into the fire myself. I might indeed have put a nettle under the nose of the learned judge in Florence when he banished you and your family; but I hardly think I could have voted for more than a scourging to the foulest and fiercest of the party.

Petrarca. Be as compassionate, be as amiably irresolute, toward your own "Novelle," which have injured no friend of yours, and deserve more affection.

Boccaccio. Francesco! no character I ever knew, ever heard of, or ever feigned, deserves the same affection as you do; the tenderest lover, the truest friend, the firmest patriot, and, rarest of glories! the poet who cherishes another's fame as dearly as his own.

Petrarca. If aught of this is true, let it be recorded of me that my exhortations and entreaties have been successful in preserving the works of the most imaginative and creative genius that our Italy, or indeed our world, hath in any age beheld.

Boccaccio. I would not destroy his poems, as I told you, or think I told you. Even the worst of the Florentines, who in general keep only one of God's commandments, keep it rigidly in regard to Dante,—

"Love them who curse you.'

He called them all scoundrels, with somewhat less courtesy than cordiality, and less afraid of censure for veracity than adulation; he sent their fathers to hell, with no inclination to separate the child and parent, and now they are hugging him for it in his shroud! Would you ever have suspected them of being such lovers of justice?

You must have mistaken my meaning; the thought never entered my head: the idea of destroying a single copy of Dante! And what effect would that produce? There must be fifty, or near it, in various parts of Italy.

Petrarca. I spoke of you.

Boccaccio. Of me! My poetry is vile; I have already thrown into the fire all of it within my reach.

Petrarca. Poetry was not the question. We neither of us are such poets as we thought ourselves when we were younger, and as younger men think us still. I meant your "Decameron," in which there is more character, more nature, more invention, than either modern or ancient Italy, or than Greece, from whom she derived her whole inheritance, ever claimed or ever knew. Would you consume a beautiful meadow because there are reptiles in it; or because a few grubs hereafter may be generated by the succulence of the grass?

Boccaccio. You amaze me: you utterly confound me.

Petrarca. If you would eradicate twelve or thirteen of the "Novelle," and insert the same number of better, which you could easily do within as many weeks, I should be heartily glad to see it done. Little more than a tenth of the "Decameron" is bad; less than a twentieth of the "Divina Commedia" is good.

Boccaccio. So little?

Petrarca. Let me never seem irreverent to our master.

Boccaccio. Speak plainly and fearlessly, Francesco! Malice and detraction are strangers to you.

Petrarca. Well, then, at least sixteen parts in twenty of the "Inferno" and "Purgatorio" are detestable, both in poetry and principle: the higher parts are excellent indeed.

Boccaccio. I have been reading the "Paradiso" more recently. Here it is, under the pillow. It brings me happier dreams than the others, and takes no more time in bringing them. Preparation for my lectures made me remember a great deal of the poem. I did not request my auditors to admire the beauty of the metrical version,—

> "Osanna sanctus deus Sabbaoth,
> Super-illustrans charitate tuâ
> Felices ignes horum Malahoth;"

nor these, with a slip of Italian between two pales of Latin:

> "Modicum,[1] et non videbitis me,
> Et iterum, sorelle mie dilette,
> Modicum, et vos videbitis me."

I dare not repeat all I recollect of—

> "Pepe Setan, Pepe Setan, aleppe,"

as there is no holy-water sprinkler in the room: and you are aware that other dangers awaited me, had I been so imprudent as to show the Florentines the allusion of our poet. His *gergo* is perpetually in play, and sometimes plays very roughly.

Petrarca. We will talk again of him presently. I must now rejoice with you over the recovery and safety of your prodigal son, the "Decameron."

[1] It may puzzle an Englishman to read the lines beginning with *Modicum*, so as to give the metre. The secret is, to draw out *et* into a dissyllable, *et-te*, as the Italians do, who pronounce Latin verse, if possible, worse than we, adding a syllable to such as end with a consonant.

Boccaccio. So, then, you would preserve at any rate my favorite volume from the threatened conflagration.

Petrarca. Had I lived at the time of Dante, I would have given him the same advice in the same circumstances. Yet how different is the tendency of the two productions! Yours is somewhat too licentious; and young men, in whose nature, or rather in whose education and habits, there is usually this failing, will read you with more pleasure than is commendable or innocent. Yet the very time they occupy with you would perhaps be spent in the midst of those excesses or irregularities to which the moralist, in his utmost severity, will argue that your pen directs them. Now, there are many who are fond of standing on the brink of precipices, and who nevertheless are as cautious as any of falling in. And there are minds desirous of being warmed by description, which, without this warmth, might seek excitement among the things described.

I would not tell you in health what I tell you in convalescence, nor urge you to compose what I dissuade you from cancelling. After this avowal, I do declare to you, Giovanni, that in my opinion the very idlest of your tales will do the world as much good as evil, — not reckoning the pleasure of reading, nor the exercise and recreation of the mind, which in themselves are good. What I reprove you for, is the indecorous and uncleanly; and these, I trust, you will abolish. Even these, however, may repel from vice the ingenuous and graceful spirit, and can never lead any such toward them. Never have you taken an inhuman pleasure in blunting and fusing the affections at the furnace of the passions; never, in hardening, by sour sagacity and ungenial strictures, that delicacy which is more productive of innocence and happiness, more estranged from every track and tendency of their opposites, than what in cold crude systems hath holden the place and dignity of the highest virtue. May you live, O my friend, in the enjoyment of health, to substitute the facetious for the licentious, the simple for the extravagant, the true and characteristic for the indefinite and diffuse.

Boccaccio. I dare not defend myself under the bad example of any: and the bad example of a great man is the worst defence of all. Since however you have mentioned Messer Dante Alighieri, to whose genius I never thought of approach-

ing, I may perhaps have been formerly the less cautious of offending by my levity, after seeing him display as much or more of it in hell itself.

Petrarca. The best apology for Dante, in his poetical character, is presented by the indulgence of criticism, in considering the "Inferno" and "Purgatorio" as a string of Satires, part in narrative and part in action; which renders the title of "Commedia" more applicable. The filthiness of some passages would disgrace the drunkenest horse-dealer; and the names of such criminals are recorded by the poet as would be forgotten by the hangman in six months. I wish I could expatiate rather on his injudiciousness than on his ferocity, in devising punishments for various crimes; or rather, than on his malignity in composing catalogues of criminals to inflict them on. Among the rest we find a gang of coiners. He calls by name all the rogues and vagabonds of every city in Tuscany, and curses every city for not sending him more of them. You would fancy that Pisa might have contented him; no such thing. He hoots, —

"Ah, Pisa! scandal to the people in whose fine country *si* means *yes*, why are thy neighbors slack to punish thee? May Capraia and Gorgona stop up the mouth of the Arno, and drown every soul within thee!"

Boccaccio. None but a prophet is privileged to swear and curse at this rate, and several of those got broken heads for it.

Petrarca. It did not happen to Dante, though he once was very near it, in the expedition of the exiles to recover the city. Scarcely had he taken breath after this imprecation against the Pisans, than he asks the Genoese why such a parcel of knaves as themselves were not scattered over the face of the earth.

Boccaccio. Here he is equitable. I wonder he did not incline to one or other of these rival republics.

Petrarca. In fact, the Genoese fare a trifle better under him than his neighbors the Pisans do.

Boccaccio. Because they have no Gorgona and Capraia to block them up. He cannot do all he wishes, but he does all he can, considering the means at his disposal. In like manner Messer Gregorio Peruzzi, when he was tormented by the quarrels and conflicts of Messer Gino Ubaldini's trufle-dog at the

next door, and Messer Guidone Fantecchi's shop-dog, whose title and quality are in abeyance, swore bitterly, and called the Virgin and Saint Catherine to witness, that he would cut off their tails if ever he caught them. His cook, Niccolo Buonaccorsi, hoping to gratify his master, set baits for them, and captured them both in the kitchen. But unwilling to cast hands prematurely on the delinquents, he, after rating them for their animosities and their ravages, bethought himself in what manner he might best conduct his enterprise to a successful issue. He was the rather inclined to due deliberation in these counsels, as they, laying aside their private causes of contention in front of their common enemy, and turning the principal stream of their ill-blood into another channel, agreed in demonstrations which augured no little indocility. Messer Gregorio hath many servants, and moreover all the conveniences which so plenteous a house requires. Among the rest is a long hempen cloth suspended by a roller. Niccolo, in the most favorable juncture, was minded to slip this hempen cloth over the two culprits, whose consciences had made them slink toward the door against which it was fastened. The smell of it was not unsatisfactory to them, and an influx of courage had nearly borne away the worst suspicions. At this instant, while shrewd inquisitiveness and incipient hunger were regaining the ascendency, Niccolo Buonaccorsi, with all the sagacity and courage, all the promptitude and timeliness of his profession, covered both conspirators in the inextricable folds of the fatal winding-sheet, from which their heads alone emerged. Struggles and barkings and exhibitions of teeth and plunges forward were equally ineffectual. He continued to twist it about them, until the notes of resentment partook of remonstrance and pain: but he told them plainly he would never remit a jot, unless they became more domesticated and reasonable. In this state of exhaustion and contrition he brought them into the presence of Ser Gregorio, who immediately turned round toward the wall, crossed himself, and whispered an *ave*. At ease and happy as he was at the accomplishment of a desire so long cherished, no sooner had he expressed his piety at so gracious a dispensation, than, reverting to the captor and the captured, he was seized with unspeakable consternation. He discovered at once that he had made as rash a vow as Jephtha's. Alas! one of the children of captivity, the trufle-dog, had no tail!

Fortunately for Messer Gregorio, he found a friend among the White Friars, Frate Geppone Pallorco, who told him that when we cannot do a thing promised by vow, whether we fail by moral inability or by physical, we must do the thing nearest it; "which," said Fra Geppone, "hath always been my practice. And now," added this cool considerate white friar, "a dog may have no tail, and yet be a dog to all intents and purposes, and enable a good Christian to perform anything reasonable he promised in his behalf. Whereupon I would advise you, Messer Gregorio, out of the loving zeal I bear toward the whole family of the Peruzzi, to amerce him of that which, if not tail, is next to tail. Such function, I doubt not, will satisfactorily show the blessed Virgin, and Saint Catherine, your readiness and solicitude to perform the vow solemnly made before those two adorable ladies, your protectresses and witnesses." Ser Gregorio bent his knee at first hearing their names, again at the mention of them in this relationship toward him, called for the kitchen knife, and, in absolving his promise, had lighter things to deal with than Gorgona and Capraia.

Petrarca. Giovanni! this will do instead of one among the worst of the hundred: but with little expenditure of labor you may afford us a better.

Our great fellow-citizen — if indeed we may denominate him a citizen who would have left no city standing in Italy, and less willingly his native one — places in the mouth of the Devil, together with Judas Iscariot, the defenders of their country, and the best men in it, Brutus and Cassius. Certainly his feeling of patriotism was different from theirs.

I should be sorry to imagine that it subjected him to any harder mouth or worse company than his own, although in a spirit so contrary to that of the two Romans he threatened us Florentines with the sword of Germans. The two Romans, now in the mouth of the Devil, chose rather to lose their lives than to see their country, not under the government of invaders, but of magistrates from their own city placed irregularly over them, and the laws, not subverted, but administered unconstitutionally. That Frenchmen and Austrians should argue and think in this manner is no wonder, no inconsistency: that a Florentine, the wisest and greatest of Florentines, should have done it, is portentous.

How merciful is the Almighty, O Giovanni! What an argu-

ment is here! how much stronger and more convincing than philosophers could devise or than poets could utter unless from inspiration, against the placing of power in the hands of one man only, when the highest genius at that time in the world, or perhaps at any time, betrays a disposition to employ it with such a licentiousness of inhumanity.

Boccaccio. He treats Nero with greater civility: yet Brutus and Cassius, at worst, but slew an atheist, while the other rogue flamed forth like the pestilential dogstar, and burnt up the first crop of Christians to light the ruins of Rome. And the artist of these ruins thought no more of his operation than a scene-painter would have done at the theatre.

Petrarca. Historians have related that Rome was consumed by Nero for the purpose of suppressing the rising sect, by laying all the blame on it. Do you think he cared what sect fell or what sect rose? Was he a zealot in religion of any kind? I am sorry to see a lying spirit the most prevalent one, in some among the earliest and firmest holders of that religion which is founded on truth and singleness of intention. There are pious men who believe they are rendering a service to God by bearing false witness in his favor, and who call on the Father of Lies to hold up his light before the Sun of righteousness.

We may mistake the exact day when the conflagration began: certain it is, however, that it was in summer;[1] and it is presumable that the commencement of the persecution was in winter, since Juvenal represents the persecuted as serving for lamps in the streets. Now, as the Romans did not frequent the theatres nor other places of public entertainment by night, such conveniences were uncalled for in summer, a season when the people retired to rest betimes, from the same motive as at present, — the insalubrity of the evening air in the hot weather. Nero must have been very forbearing if he waited those many months before he punished a gang of incendiaries. Such clemency is unexampled in milder princes.

Boccaccio. But the Christians were not incendiaries, and he knew they were not.

Petrarca. It may be apprehended that among the many virtuous of the new believers a few seditious were also to be

[1] Des Vignolles has calculated that the conflagration began on the 19th of July, in the year 64, and the persecution on the 15th of November.

found, forming separate and secret associations, choosing generals or superiors to whom they swore implicit obedience, and under whose guidance or impulse they were ready to resist, and occasionally to attack, the magistrates, and even the prince, — men aspiring to rule the state by carrying the sword of assassination under the garb of holiness. Such persons are equally odious to the unenlightened and the enlightened, to the arbitrary and the free. In the regular course of justice, their crimes would have been resisted by almost as much severity as they appear to have undergone from despotic power and popular indignation.

Boccaccio. We will talk no longer about these people. But since the Devil has really and *bonâ fide* Brutus and Cassius in his mouth, I would advise him to make the most of them, for he will never find two more such morsels on the same platter. Kings, emperors, and popes would be happy to partake with him of so delicate and choice a repast; but I hope he has fitter fare for them.

Messer Dante Alighieri does not indeed make the most gentle use of the company he has about him in hell and purgatory. Since however he hath such a selection of them, I wish he could have been contented, and could have left our fair Florentines to their own fancies in their dressing-rooms.

"The time," he cries, "is not far distant, when there will be an indictment on parchment, forbidding the impudent young Florentines to show their breasts and nipples."

Now, Francesco, I have been subject all my life to a strange distemper in the eyes, which no oculist can cure, and which, while it allows me to peruse the smallest character in the very worst female hand, would never let me read an indictment on parchment where female names are implicated, although the letters were a finger in length. I do believe the same distemper was very prevalent in the time of Messer Dante; and those Florentine maids and matrons who were not afflicted by it, were too modest to look at letters and signatures stuck against the walls.

He goes on, "Was there ever girl among the Moors or Saracens, on whom it was requisite to inflict spiritual or *other* discipline to make her go covered?"

Some of the *other* discipline, which the spiritual guides were and are still in the habit of administering, have exactly the contrary effect to make them go covered, whatsoever may be urged by the confessor.

"If the shameless creatures," he continues, "were aware of the speedy chastisement which Heaven is preparing for them, they would at this instant have their mouths wide open to roar withal."

Petrarca. This is not very exquisite satire, nor much better manners.

Boccaccio. Whenever I saw a pretty Florentine in such a condition, I lowered my eyes.

Petrarca. I am glad to hear it.

Boccaccio. Those whom I could venture to cover, I covered with all my heart.

Petrarca. Humanely done. You might likewise have added some gentle admonition.

Boccaccio. They would have taken anything at my hands rather than that. Truly, they thought themselves as wise as they thought me: and who knows but they were, at bottom?

Petrarca. I believe it may, in general, be best to leave them as we find them.

Boccaccio. I would not say that, neither. Much may be in vain, but something sticks.

Petrarca. They are more amused than settled by anything we can advance against them, and are apt to make light of the gravest. It is only the hour of reflection that is at last the hour of sedateness and improvement.

Boccaccio. Where is the bell that strikes it?

Petrarca. Fie! fie! Giovanni! This is worse than the indictment on parchment.

Boccaccio. Women like us none the less for joking with them about their foibles. In fact, they take it ill when we cease to do so, unless it is age that compels us. We may give our courser the rein to any extent, while he runs in the common field and does not paw against privacy, nor open his nostrils on individuality: I mean the individuality of the person we converse with, for another's is pure zest.

Petrarca. Surely, you can not draw this hideous picture from your own observation: has any graver man noted it?

Boccaccio. Who would believe your graver men upon such matters? Gout and gravel, bile and sciatica, are the upholsterers that stuff their moral sentences. Crooked and cramp are truths written with chalk-stones. When people like me talk as I have been talking, they may be credited. We have no ill-will, no ill-humor, to gratify: and vanity has no trial here at issue. He was certainly born on an unlucky day for his friends, who never uttered any truths but unquestionable ones. Give me food that exercises my teeth and tongue, and ideas that exercise my imagination and discernment.

Petrarca. When you are at leisure, and in perfect health, weed out carefully the few places of your "Decameron" which are deficient in these qualities.

Boccaccio. God willing; I wish I had undertaken it when my heart was lighter. Is there anything else you can suggest for its improvement, in particular or in general?

Petrarca. Already we have mentioned the inconsiderate and indecorous. In what you may substitute hereafter, I would say to you, as I have said to myself, do not be on all occasions too ceremonious in the structure of your sentences.

Boccaccio. You would surely wish me to be round and polished. Why do you smile?

Petrarca. I am afraid these qualities are often of as little advantage in composition as they are corporeally. When action and strength are chiefly the requisites, we may perhaps be better with little of them. The modulations of voice and language are infinite. Cicero has practised many of them; but Cicero has his favorite swells, his favorite flourishes and cadences. Our Italian language is in the enjoyment of an ampler scope and compass; and we are liberated from the horrible sounds of *us*, *am*, *um*, *ant*, *int*, *unt*, so predominant in the finals of Latin nouns and verbs. We may be told that they give strength to the dialect: we might as well be told that bristles give strength to the boar. In our Italian we possess the privilege of striking off the final vowel from the greater part of masculine nouns, and from the greater part of tenses in the verbs, when we believe they impede our activity and vigor.

Boccaccio. We are as wealthy in words as is good for us; and she who gave us these would give us more if needful. In

another age it is probable that curtailments will rather be made than additions; for it was so with the Latin and Greek. Barbaric luxury sinks down into civic neatness, and chaster ornaments fill rooms of smaller dimensions.

Petrarca. Cicero came into possession of the stores collected by Plautus, which he always held very justly in the highest estimation; and Sallust is reported to have misapplied a part of them. At his death they were scattered and lost.

Boccaccio. I am wiser than I was when I studied the noble orator, and wiser by his means chiefly. In return for his benefits, if we could speak on equal terms together, — the novelist with the philosopher, the citizen of Certaldo with the Roman consul, — I would fain whisper in his ear, "Escape from rhetoric by all manner of means: and if you must cleave (as indeed you must) to that old shrew Logic, be no fonder of exhibiting her than you would be of a plain economical wife. Let her be always busy, never intrusive, and readier to keep the chambers clean and orderly than to expatiate on their proportions or to display their furniture."

Petrarca. The citizen of Certaldo is fifty-fold more richly endowed with genius than the Roman consul, and might properly —

Boccaccio. Stay! stay! Francesco! or they will shave all the rest of thy crown for thee, and physic thee worse than me.

Petrarca. Middling men, favored in their lifetime by circumstances, often appear of higher stature than belongs to them; great men always of lower. Time, the sovereign, invests with befitting raiment and distinguishes with proper ensigns the familiars he has received into his eternal habitations: in these alone are they deposited,— you must wait for them.

No advice is less necessary to you than the advice to express your meaning as clearly as you can. Where the purpose of glass is to be seen through, we do not want it tinted or wavy. In certain kinds of poetry the case may be slightly different,— such, for instance, as are intended to display the powers of association and combination in the writer, and to invite and exercise the compass and comprehension of the intelligent. Pindar and the Attic tragedians wrote in this manner, and rendered the minds of their audience more alert and ready and capacious. They found some fit for them, and made others.

Great painters have always the same task to perform. What is excellent in their art cannot be thought excellent by many, even of those who reason well on ordinary matters, and see clearly beauties elsewhere. All correct perceptions are the effect of careful practice. We little doubt that a mirror would direct us in the most familiar of our features, and that our hand would follow its guidance, until we try to cut a lock of our hair. We have no such criterion to demonstrate our liability to error in judging of poetry,— a quality so rare that perhaps no five contemporaries ever were masters of it.

Boccaccio. We admire by tradition; we censure by caprice; and there is nothing in which we are more ingenious and inventive. A wrong step in politics sprains a foot in poetry; eloquence is never so unwelcome as when it issues from a familiar voice; and praise hath no echo but from a certain distance. Our critics, who know little about them, would gaze with wonder at anything similar in our days to Pindar and Sophocles, and would cast it aside, as quite impracticable. They are in the right, for sonnet and canzonet charm greater numbers. There are others, or may be hereafter, to whom far other things will afford far higher gratification.

Petrarca. But our business at present is with prose and Cicero; and our question now is, what is Ciceronian. He changed his style according to his matter and his hearers. His speeches to the people vary from his speeches to the senate. Toward the one he was impetuous and exacting; toward the other he was usually but earnest and anxious, and sometimes but submissive and imploring, yet equally unwilling on both occasions to conceal the labor he had taken to captivate their attention and obtain success. At the tribunal of Cæsar the Dictator he laid aside his costly armor, contracted the folds of his capacious robe, and became calm, insinuating, and adulative, showing his spirit not utterly extinguished, his dignity not utterly fallen, his consular year not utterly abolished from his memory, but Rome, and even himself, lowered in the presence of his judge.

Boccaccio. And after all this, can you bear to think what I am?

Petrarca. Complacently and joyfully; venturing, nevertheless, to offer you a friend's advice.

Enter into the mind and heart of your own creatures; think of them long, entirely, solely,— never of style, never of self, never of critics, cracked or sound. Like the miles of an open country, and of an ignorant population, when they are correctly measured they become smaller. In the loftiest rooms and richest entablatures are suspended the most spider-webs; and the quarry out of which palaces are erected is the nursery of nettle and bramble.

Boccaccio. It is better to keep always in view such writers as Cicero, than to run after those idlers who throw stones that can never reach us.

Petrarca. If you copied him to perfection, and on no occasion lost sight of him, you would be an indifferent, not to say a bad writer.

Boccaccio. I begin to think you are in the right. Well, then, retrenching some of my licentious tales, I must endeavor to fill up the vacancy with some serious and some pathetic.

Petrarca. I am heartily glad to hear of this decision; for, admirable as you are in the jocose, you descend from your natural position when you come to the convivial and the festive. You were placed among the Affections, to move and master them, and gifted with the rod that sweetens the fount of tears. My nature leads me also to the pathetic; in which, however, an imbecile writer may obtain celebrity. Even the hard-hearted are fond of such reading when they are fond of any, and nothing is easier in the world than to find and accumulate its sufferings. Yet this very profusion and luxuriance of misery is the reason why few have excelled in describing it. The eye wanders over the mass without noticing the peculiarities; to mark them distinctly is the work of genius,— a work so rarely performed, that, if time and space may be compared, specimens of it stand at wider distances than the trophies of Sesostris. Here we return again to the "Inferno" of Dante, who overcame the difficulty. In this vast desert are its greater and its less oasis,— Ugolino and Francesca di Rimini. The peopled region is peopled chiefly with monsters and mosquitoes: the rest for the most part is sand and suffocation.

Boccaccio. Ah! had Dante remained through life the pure solitary lover of Bice, his soul had been gentler, tranquiller, and more generous. He scarcely hath described half the

curses he went through, nor the roads he took on the journey, — theology, politics, and that barbican of the "Inferno" marriage, surrounded with its

"Selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte."

Admirable is indeed the description of Ugolino, to whoever can endure the sight of an old soldier gnawing at the scalp of an old archbishop.

Petrarca. The thirty lines from

"Ed io sentj"

are unequalled by any other continuous thirty in the whole dominions of poetry.

Boccaccio. Give me rather the six on Francesca: for if in the former I find the simple, vigorous, clear narration, I find also what I would not wish,— the features of Ugolino reflected full in Dante. The two characters are similar in themselves,— hard, cruel, inflexible, malignant, but whenever moved, moved powerfully. In Francesca, with the faculty of divine spirits, he leaves his own nature (not indeed the exact representative of theirs) and converts all his strength into tenderness. The great poet, like the original man of the Platonists, is double, possessing the further advantage of being able to drop one half at his option, and to resume it. Some of the tenderest on paper have no sympathies beyond; and some of the austerest in their intercourse with their fellow-creatures have deluged the world with tears. It is not from the rose that the bee gathers her honey, but often from the most acrid and the most bitter leaves and petals.

"Quando legemmo il disiato viso
Esser baciato di cotanto amante,
Questi, chi mai da me non sia diviso!
La bocca mi baciò tutto tremante —
Galeotto fù il libro, e chi lo scrisse —
Quel giorno più non vi legemmo avante."

In the midst of her punishment, Francesca, when she comes to the tenderest part of her story, tells it with complacency and delight; and instead of naming Paolo, which indeed she never has done from the beginning, she now designates him as

"Questi chi mai da me non sia diviso!"

Are we not impelled to join in her prayer, wishing them happier in their union?

Petrarca. If there be no sin in it.

Boccaccio. Ay, and even if there be — God help us!

What a sweet aspiration in each cæsura of the verse! — three love-sighs fixed and incorporate! Then, when she hath said

"La bocca mi baciò, tutto tremante,"

she stops: she would avert the eyes of Dante from her. He looks for the sequel: she thinks he looks severely. She says, "*Galeotto* is the name of the book," fancying by this timorous little flight she has drawn him far enough from the nest of her young loves. No, the eagle beak of Dante and his piercing eyes are yet over her.

"*Galeotto* is the name of the book."

"What matters that?"

"And of the writer."

"Or that either?"

At last she disarms him: but how?

"*That* day we read no more."

Such a depth of intuitive judgment, such a delicacy of perception, exists not in any other work of human genius, — and from an author who on almost all occasions, in this part of the work, betrays a deplorable want of it.

Petrarca. Perfection of poetry! The greater is my wonder at discovering nothing else of the same order or cast in this whole section of the poem. He who fainted at the recital of Francesca, —

"And he who fell as a dead body falls," —

would exterminate all the inhabitants of every town in Italy! What execrations against Florence, Pistoia, Siena, Pisa, Genoa! What hatred against the whole human race! What exultation and merriment at eternal and immitigable sufferings! Seeing this, I cannot but consider the "Inferno" as the most immoral and impious book that ever was written. Yet, hopeless that our country shall ever see again such poetry, and certain that without it our future poets would be more feebly urged forward to excellence, I would have dissuaded Dante from cancelling it, if this had been his intention. Much however as I admire

his vigor and severity of style in the description of Ugolino, I acknowledge with you that I do not discover so much imagination, so much creative power, as in the Francesca. I find indeed a minute detail of probable events; but this is not all I want in a poet, — it is not even all I want most in a scene of horror. Tribunals of justice, dens of murderers, wards of hospitals, schools of anatomy, will afford us nearly the same sensations if we hear them from an accurate observer, a clear reporter, a skilful surgeon, or an attentive nurse. There is nothing of sublimity in the horrific of Dante, which there always is in Æschylus and Homer. If you, Giovanni, had described so nakedly the reception of Guiscardo's heart by Gismonda, or Lorenzo's head by Lisabetta, we could hardly have endured it.

Boccaccio. Prythee, dear Francesco, do not place me over Dante; I stagger at the idea of approaching him.

Petrarca. Never think I am placing you blindly or indiscriminately. I have faults to find with you, and even here. Lisabetta should by no means have been represented cutting off the head of her lover, "*as well as she could*" with a clasp-knife. This is shocking and improbable. She might have found it already cut off by her brothers, in order to bury the corpse more commodiously and expeditiously. Nor indeed is it likely that she should have intrusted it to her waiting-maid, who carried home in her bosom a treasure so dear to her, and found so unexpectedly and so lately.

Boccaccio. That is true: I will correct the oversight. Why do we never hear of our faults until everybody knows them, and until they stand in record against us?

Petrarca. Because our ears are closed to truth and friendship for some time after the triumphal course of composition. We are too sensitive for the gentlest touch; and when we really have the most infirmity, we are angry to be told that we have any.

Boccaccio. Ah, Francesco! thou art poet from scalp to heel; but what other would open his breast as thou hast done! They show ostentatiously far worse weaknesses; but the most honest of the tribe would forswear himself on this. Again, I acknowledge it, you have reason to complain of Lisabetta and Gismonda.

Petrarca. They keep the soul from sinking in such dreadful circumstances by the buoyancy of imagination. The sunshine of poetry makes the color of blood less horrible, and draws up a shadowy and a softening haziness where the scene would otherwise be too distinct. Poems, like rivers, convey to their destination what must without their appliances be left unhandled: these to ports and arsenals, this to the human heart.

Boccaccio. So it is; and what is terror in poetry is horror in prose. We may be brought too close to an object to leave any room for pleasure. Ugolino affects us like a skeleton, by dry bony verity.

Petrarca. We cannot be too distinct in our images; but although distinctness on this and most other occasions is desirable in the imitative arts, yet sometimes in painting, and sometimes in poetry, an object should not be quite precise. In your novel of Andrevola and Gabriotto, you afford me an illustration.

> "Le pareva dal corpo di lui uscire una cosa oscura e terribile."

This is like a dream: this *is* a dream. Afterward, you present to us such palpable forms and pleasing colors as may relieve and soothe us.

> "Ed avendo molte rose, bianche e vermiglie, colte, perciocche la stagione era."

Boccaccio. Surely you now are mocking me. The roses, I perceive, would not have been there had it not been the season.

Petrarca. A poet often does more and better than he is aware at the time, and seems at last to know as little about it as a silkworm knows about the fineness of her thread.

The uncertain dream that still hangs over us in the novel is intercepted and hindered from hurting us by the spell of the roses, of the white and the red; a word the less would have rendered it incomplete. The very warmth and geniality of the season shed their kindly influence on us, and we are renovated and ourselves again by virtue of the clear fountain where we rest. Nothing of this poetical providence comes to our relief in Dante, though we want it oftener. It would be difficult to

form an idea of a poem, into which so many personages are introduced, containing so few delineations of character, so few touches that excite our sympathy, so few elementary signs for our instruction, so few topics for our delight, so few excursions for our recreation. Nevertheless, his powers of language are prodigious; and in the solitary places where he exerts his force rightly, the stroke is irresistible. But how greatly to be pitied must he be, who can find nothing in paradise better than sterile theology! and what an object of sadness and of consternation he who rises up from hell like a giant refreshed!

Boccaccio. Strange perversion! A pillar of smoke by day and of fire by night, — to guide no one. Paradise had fewer wants for him to satisfy than hell had; all which he fed to repletion. But let us rather look to his poetry than his temper.

Petrarca. We will, then.

A good poem is not divided into little panes like a cathedral window; which little panes themselves are broken and blurred, with a saint's coat on a dragon's tail, a doctor's head on the bosom of a virgin martyr, and having about them more lead than glass, and more gloom than coloring. A good satire or good comedy, if it does not always smile, rarely and briefly intermits it, and never rages. A good epic shows us more and more distinctly, at every book of it we open, the feature and properties of heroic character, and terminates with accomplishing some momentous action. A good tragedy shows us that greater men than ourselves have suffered more severely and more unjustly; that the highest human power hath suddenly fallen helpless and extinct; or, what is better to contemplate and usefuller to know, that uncontrolled by law, unaccompanied by virtue, unfollowed by contentment, its possession is undesirable and unsafe. Sometimes we go away in triumph with Affliction proved and purified, and leave her under the smiles of heaven. In all these consummations the object is excellent; and here is the highest point to which poetry can attain. Tragedy has no by-paths, no resting-places; there is everywhere action and passion. What do we find of this nature, or what of the epic, in the Orpheus and Judith, the Charon and Can della Scala, the Sinon and Maestro Adamo?

Boccaccio. Personages strangely confounded! In this cate-

gory it required a strong hand to make Pluto and Pepe Satan keep the peace, both having the same pretensions, and neither the sweetest temper.

Petrarca. Then the description of Mahomet is indecent and filthy. Yet Dante is scarcely more disgusting in this place, than he is insipid and spiritless in his allegory of the marriages between Saint Francesco and Poverty, Saint Dominico and Faith. I speak freely and plainly to you, Giovanni, and the rather, as you have informed me that I have been thought invidious to the reputation of our great poet, — for such he is transcendently, in the midst of his imperfections. Such likewise were Ennius and Lucilius in the same period of Roman literature. They were equalled, and perhaps excelled: will Dante ever be, in his native tongue? The past generations of his countrymen, the glories of old Rome, fade before him the instant he springs upward; but they impart a more constant and a more genial delight.

Boccaccio. They have less hair-cloth about them, and smell less cloisterly; yet they are only choristers.

The generous man, such as you, praises and censures with equal freedom, not with equal pleasure: the freedom and the pleasure of the ungenerous are both contracted, and lie only on the left hand.

Petrarca. When we point out to our friends an object in the country, do we wish to diminish it? Do we wish to show it overcast? Why then should we in those nobler works of creation, God's only representatives, who have cleared our intellectual sight for us, and have displayed before us things more magnificent than Nature would without them have revealed?

We poets are heated by proximity. Those who are gone, warm us by the breath they leave behind them in their course, and *only* warm us: those who are standing near, and just before, fever us. Solitude has kept me uninfected, — unless you may hint perhaps that pride was my preservative against the malignity of a worse disease.

Boccaccio. It might well be, though it were not; you having been crowned in the capital of the Christian world.

Petrarca. That indeed would have been something, if I had been crowned for my Christianity, of which I suspect there

are better judges in Rome than there are of poetry. I would rather be preferred to my rivals by the two best critics of the age than by all the others, who if they think differently from the two wisest in these matters must necessarily think wrong.

Boccaccio. You know that not only the first two, but many more, prefer you; and that neither they, nor any who are acquainted with your character, can believe that your strictures on Dante are invidious or uncandid.

Petrarca. I am borne toward him by many strong impulses. Our families were banished by the same faction: he himself and my father left Florence on the same day, and both left it forever. This recollection would rather make me cling to him than cast him down. Ill fortune has many and tenacious ties: good fortune has few and fragile ones. I saw our illustrious fellow-citizen once only, and when I was a child. Even the sight of such a poet, in early days, is dear to him who aspires to become one, and the memory is always in his favor. The worst I can recollect to have said against his poem to others is, that the architectural fabric of the "Inferno" is unintelligible without a long study, and only to be understood after distracting our attention from its inhabitants. Its locality and dimensions are at last uninteresting, and would better have been left in their obscurity. The zealots of Dante compare it, for invention, with the infernal regions of Homer and Virgil. I am ignorant how much the Grecian poet invented, how much existed in the religion, how much in the songs and traditions of the people. But surely our Alighieri has taken the same idea, and even made his descent in the same part of Italy, as Æneas had done before. In the Odyssea the mind is perpetually relieved by variety of scene and character. There are vices enough in it, but rising from lofty or from powerful passions, and under the veil of mystery and poetry: there are virtues too enough, and human and definite and practicable. We have man, although a shade, in his own features, in his own dimensions: he appears before us neither cramped by systems nor jaundiced by schools,—no savage, no cit, no cannibal, no doctor. Vigorous and elastic, he is such as poetry saw him first; he is such as poetry would ever see him. In Dante, the greater part of those who are not degraded, are debilitated and distorted. No heart swells here, either for overpowered

valor or for unrequited love. In the shades alone, but in the shades of Homer, does Ajax rise to his full loftiness; in the shades alone, but in the shades of Virgil, is Dido the arbitress of our tears.

Boccaccio. I must confess there are nowhere two whole cantos in Dante which will bear a sustained and close comparison with the very worst book of the Odyssea or the Æneid; that there is nothing of the same continued and unabated excellence as Ovid's in the contention for the armor of Achilles,—the most heroic of heroic poetry, and only censurable, if censurable at all, because the eloquence of the braver man is more animated and more persuasive than his successful rival's. I do not think Ovid the best poet that ever lived, but I think he wrote the most of good poetry, and, in proportion to its quantity, the least of bad or indifferent. The "Inferno," the "Purgatorio," the "Paradiso" are pictures from the walls of our churches and chapels and monasteries, some painted by Giotto and Cimabue, some earlier. In several of these we detect not only the cruelty, but likewise the satire and indecency of Dante. Sometimes there is also his vigor and simplicity, but oftener his harshness and meagreness and disproportion. I am afraid the good Alighieri, like his friends the painters, was inclined to think the angels were created only to flagellate and burn us, and paradise only for us to be driven out of it. And in truth, as we have seen it exhibited, there is but little hardship in the case.

The opening of the third canto of the "Inferno" has always been much admired. There is indeed a great solemnity in the words of the inscription on the portal of hell; nevertheless, I do not see the necessity for three verses out of six. After

"Per me si va nell' eterno dolore,"

it surely is superfluous to subjoin

"Per me si va fra la perduta gente;"

for, besides the "perduta gente," who else can suffer the eternal woe? And when the portal has told us that "Justice moved the high Maker to make it," surely it might have omitted the notification that his "divine power" did it,—

"Fecemi la divina potestate."

The next piece of information I wish had been conveyed even in darker characters, so that they never could have been deciphered. The following line is,

"La somma Sapienza e 'l primo Amore."

If God's first love was hell-making, we might almost wish his affections were as mutable as ours are, — that is, if holy church would countenance us therein.

Petrarca. Systems of poetry, of philosophy, of government form and model us to their own proportions. As our systems want the grandeur, the light, and the symmetry of the ancient, we cannot hope for poets, philosophers, or statesmen of equal dignity. Very justly do you remark that our churches and chapels and monasteries, and even our shrines and tabernacles on the road-side, contain in painting the same punishments as Alighieri hath registered in his poem, — and several of these were painted before his birth. Nor surely can you have forgotten that his master, Brunetto Latini, composed one on the same plan.

The Virtues and Vices, and persons under their influence, appear to him likewise in a wood, wherein he, like Dante, is bewildered. Old walls are the tablets both copy: the arrangement is the devise of Brunetto. Our religion is too simple in its verities and too penurious in its decorations, for poetry of high value. We cannot hope or desire that a pious Italian will ever have the audacity to restore to Satan a portion of his majesty, or to remind the faithful that he is a fallen angel.

Boccaccio. No, no, Francesco; let us keep as much of him down as we can, and as long.

Petrarca. It might not be amiss to remember that even human power is complacent in security, and that Omnipotence is ever omnipotent, without threats and fulminations.

Boccaccio. These, however, are the main springs of sacred poetry, of which I think we already have enough.

Petrarca. But good enough?

Boccaccio. Even much better would produce less effect than that which has occupied our ears from childhood, and comes sounding and swelling with a mysterious voice from the deep and dark recesses of antiquity.

Petrarca. I see no reason why we should not revert at

times to the first intentions of poetry. Hymns to the Creator were its earliest efforts.

Boccaccio. I do not believe a word of it, unless He himself was graciously pleased to inspire the singer, — of which we have received no account. I rather think it originated in pleasurable song, perhaps of drunkenness, and resembled the dithyrambic. Strong excitement alone could force and hurry men among words displaced and exaggerated ideas.

Believing that man fell, first into disobedience, next into ferocity and fratricide, we may reasonably believe that war-songs were among the earliest of his intellectual exertions. When he rested from battle he had leisure to think of love; and the skies and the fountains and the flowers reminded him of her, the coy and beautiful, who fled to a mother from the ardor of his pursuit. In after years he lost a son, his companion in the croft and in the forest: images too grew up there, and rested on the grave. A daughter who had wondered at his strength and wisdom, looked to him in vain for succor at the approach of death. Inarticulate grief gave way to passionate and wailing words, and Elegy was awakened. We have tears in this world before we have smiles, Francesco; we have struggles before we have composure; we have strife and complaints before we have submission and gratitude. I am suspicious that if we could collect the "winged words" of the earliest hymns, we should find that they called upon the Deity for vengeance. Priests and rulers were far from insensible to private wrongs. Chryses in the Iliad is willing that his king and country should be enslaved, so that his daughter be sent back to him. David in the Psalms is no unimportunate or lukewarm applicant for the discomfiture and extermination of his adversaries, and among the visions of felicity none brighter is promised a fortunate warrior than to dash the infants of his enemy against the stones. The Holy Scriptures teach us that the human race was created on the banks of the Euphrates, and where the river hath several branches. Here the climate is extremely hot; and men, like birds, in hot climates never sing well. I doubt whether there was ever a good poet in the whole city and whole plain of Babylon. Egypt had none but such as she imported. Mountainous countries bear them as they bear the more fragrant plants and savory

game. Judæa had hers; Attica reared them among her thyme and hives; and Tuscany may lift her laurels not a span below. Never have the accents of poetry been heard on the fertile banks of the Vistula; and Ovid taught the borderers of the Danube an indigenous[1] song in vain.

Petrarca. Orpheus, we hear, sang on the banks of the Hebrus.

Boccaccio. The banks of the Hebrus may be level or rocky for what I know about them; but the river is represented by the poets as rapid and abounding in whirlpools,— hence, I presume, it runs among rocks and inequalities. Be this as it may, do you imagine that Thrace in those early days produced a philosophical poet?

Petrarca. We have the authority of history for it.

Boccaccio. Bad authority too, unless we sift and cross-examine it. Undoubtedly there were narrow paths of commerce in very ancient times from the Euxine to the Caspian, and from the Caspian to the kingdoms of the remoter East. Merchants in those days were not only the most adventurous, but the most intelligent men: and there were ardent minds, uninfluenced by a spirit of lucre, which were impelled by the ardor of imagination into untravelled regions. Scythia was a land of fable, not only to the Greeks, but equally to the Romans. Thrace was a land of fable, we may well believe, to the nearest towns of northern India. I imagine that Orpheus, whoever he was, brought his knowledge from that quarter. We are too apt to fancy that Greece owed everything to the Phœnicians and Egyptians. The elasticity of her mind threw off, or the warmth of her imagination transmuted, the greater part of her earlier acquisitions. She was indebted to Phœnicia for nothing but her alphabet; and even these signs she modified, and endowed them with a portion of her flexibility and grace.

Petrarca. There are those who tell us that Homer lived before the age of letters in Greece.

Boccaccio. I wish they knew the use of them as well as he did. Will they not also tell us that the commerce of the two nations was carried on without the numerals (and such were

[1] 'Aptaque sunt nostris barbara verba modis.'
What are all the other losses of literature in comparison with this?

letters) by which traders cast up accounts? The Phœnicians traded largely with every coast of the Ægean Sea, and among their earliest correspondents were the inhabitants of the Greek maritime cities, insular and continental. Is it credible that Cyprus, that Crete, that Attica, should be ignorant of the most obvious means by which commerce was maintained; or that such means should be restricted to commerce among a people so peculiarly fitted for social intercourse, so inquisitive, so imaginative, as the Greeks?

Petrarca. Certainly it is not.

Boccaccio. The Greeks were the most creative, the Romans the least creative, of mankind. No Roman ever invented anything. Whence then are derived the only two works of imagination we find among them,— the story of the "Ephesian[1] Matron," and the story of "Psyche"? Doubtless from some country farther eastward than Phœnicia and Egypt. The authors in which we find these insertions are of little intrinsic worth.

When the Thracians became better known to the Greeks they turned their backs upon them as worn-out wonders, and looked toward the inexhaustible Hyperboreans. Among these too were wisdom and the arts, and mounted instruments through which a greater magnitude was given to the stars.

Petrarca. I will remain no longer with you among the Thracians or the Hyperboreans. But in regard to low and level countries, as unproductive of poetry, I entreat you not to be too fanciful nor too exclusive. Virgil was born on the Mincio, and has rendered the city of his birth too celebrated to be mistaken.

Boccaccio. He was born in the territory of Mantua, not in the city. He sang his first child's song on the shoulders of the Apennines; his first man's, under the shadow of Vesuvius.

I would not assert that a great poet must necessarily be born on a high mountain,— no, indeed, no such absurdity; but where the climate is hot, the plains have never shown themselves friendly to the imaginative faculties. We surely have more buoyant spirits on the mountain than below; but it is not

[1] One similar, and better conceived, is given by Du Halde from the Chinese. If the fiction of Psyche had reached Greece so early as the time of Plato, it would have caught his attention, and he would have delivered it down to us, however altered.

requisite for this effect that our cradles should have been placed on it.

Petrarca. What will you say about Pindar?

Boccaccio. I think it more probable that he was reared in the vicinity of Thebes than within the walls. For Bœotia, like our Tuscany, has one large plain, but has also many eminences, and is bounded on two sides by hills.

Look at the vale of Capua! Scarcely so much as a sonnet was ever heard from one end of it to the other; perhaps the most spirited thing was some Carthaginian glee, from a soldier in the camp of Hannibal. Nature seems to contain in her breast the same milk for all, but feeding one for one aptitude, another for another; and as if she would teach him a lesson as soon as he could look about him, she has placed the poet where the air is unladen with the exhalations of luxuriance.

Petrarca. In my delight to listen to you after so long an absence, I have been too unwary; and you have been speaking too much for one infirm. Greatly am I to blame, not to have moderated my pleasure and your vivacity. You must rest now: to-morrow we will renew our conversation.

Boccaccio. God bless thee, Francesco! I shall be talking with thee all night in my slumbers. Never have I seen thee with such pleasure as to-day, excepting when I was deemed worthy by our fellow-citizens of bearing to thee, and of placing within this dear hand of thine, the sentence of recall from banishment, and when my tears streamed over the ordinance as I read it, whereby thy paternal lands were redeemed from the public treasury.

Again, God bless thee! Those tears were not quite exhausted: take the last of them.

SECOND DAY'S INTERVIEW.

Petrarca. How have you slept, Giovanni?

Boccaccio. Pleasantly, soundly, and quite long enough. You too, methinks, have enjoyed the benefit of riding; for you either slept well or began late. Do you rise in general three hours after the sun?

Petrarca. No, indeed.

Boccaccio. As for me, since you would not indulge me with your company an hour ago, I could do nothing more delightful than to look over some of your old letters.

Petrarca. Ours are commemorative of no reproaches, and laden with no regrets. Far from us

> "With drooping wing the spell-bound spirit moves
> O'er flickering friendships and extinguished loves."

Boccaccio. Ay, but as I want no record of your kindness now you are with me, I have been looking over those to other persons on past occasions. In the Latin one to the tribune, whom the people at Rome usually call Rienzi, I find you address him by the denomination of Nicolaus Laurentii. Is this the right one?

Petrarca. As we Florentines are fond of omitting the first syllable in proper names,—calling Luigi *Gigi*, Giovanni *Nanni*, Francesco *Cecco*,—in like manner at Rome they say *Renzi* for Lorenzi, and by another corruption it has been pronounced and written *Rienzi*. Believe me, I should never have ventured to address the personage who held and supported the highest dignity on earth until I had ascertained his appellation; for nobody ever quite forgave, unless in the low and ignorant, a wrong pronunciation of his name,—the humblest being of opinion that they have one of their own, and one both worth having and worth knowing. Even dogs, they observe, are not miscalled. It would have been as Latin in sound, if not in structure, to write *Rientius* as *Laurentius*; but it would certainly have been offensive to a dignitary of his station, as being founded on a sportive and somewhat childish familiarity.

Boccaccio. Ah, Francesco! we were a good deal younger in those days; and hopes sprang up before us like mushrooms: the sun produced them, the shade produced them, every hill, every valley, every busy and every idle hour.

Petrarca. The season of hope precedes but little the season of disappointment. Where the ground is unprepared, what harvest can be expected? Men bear wrongs more easily than irritations; and the Romans, who had sunk under worse degradation than any other people on record, rose up against the deliverer who ceased to consult their ignorance. I speak

advisedly and without rhetoric on the foul depths of their debasement. The Jews, led captive into Egypt and into Babylon, were left as little corrupted as they were found; and perhaps some of their vices were corrected by the labors that were imposed on them. But the subjugation of the Romans was effected by the depravation of their morals, which the priesthood took away, giving them ceremonies and promises instead. God had indulged them in the exercise of power; first the kings abused it, then the consuls, then the tribunes. One only magistrate was remaining who never had violated it, further than in petty frauds and fallacies suited to the occasion, not having at present more within his reach. It was now his turn to exercise his functions, and no less grievously and despotically than the preceding had done. For this purpose the Pontifex Maximus needed some slight alterations in the popular belief, and he collected them from that Pantheon which Roman policy had enlarged at every conquest. The priests of Isis had acquired the highest influence in the city: those of Jupiter were jealous that foreign gods should become more than supplementary and subordinate; but as the women in general leaned toward Isis, it was in vain to contest the point, and prudent to adopt a little at a time from the discipline of the shaven brotherhood. The names and titles of the ancient gods had received many additions, and they were often asked which they liked best. Different ones were now given them; and gradually, here and there, the older dropped into desuetude. Then arose the star in the east; and all was manifested.

Boccaccio. Ay, ay! but the second company of shepherds sang to a different tune from the first, and put them out. Trumpeters ran in among them, horses neighed, tents waved their pennons, and commanders of armies sought to raise themselves to supreme authority, some by leading the faction of the ancient faith, and some by supporting the recenter. At last the priesthood succeeded to the power of the prætorian guard, and elected, or procured the election of, an emperor. Every man who loved peace and quiet took refuge in a sanctuary, now so efficient to protect him; and nearly all who had attained a preponderance in wisdom and erudition, brought them to bear against the worn-out and tottering institutions,

and finally to raise up the coping-stone of an edifice which overtopped them all.

Petrarca. At present we fly to princes as we fly to caves and arches, and other things of the mere earth, for shelter and protection.

Boccaccio. And when they afford it at all they afford it with as little care and knowledge. Like Egyptian embalmers, they cast aside the brains as useless or worse, but carefully swathe up all that is viler and heavier, and place it in their painted catacombs.

Petrarca. What Dante saw in his day we see in ours. The danger is, lest first the wiser, and soon afterward the unwiser, in abhorrence at the presumption and iniquity of the priesthood, should abandon religion altogether, when it is forbidden to approach her without such company.

Boccaccio. Philosophy is but the calyx of that plant of paradise, religion. Detach it, and it dies away; meanwhile the plant itself, supported by its proper nutriment, retains its vigor.

Petrarca. The good citizen and the calm reasoner come at once to the same conclusion, — that philosophy can never hold many men together; that religion can, — and those who without it would not let philosophy, nor law, nor humanity exist. Therefore it is our duty and interest to remove all obstruction from it; to give it air, light, space, and freedom, — carrying in our hands a scourge for fallacy, a chain for cruelty, and an irrevocable ostracism for riches that riot in the house of God.

Boccaccio. Moderate wealth is quite enough to teach with.

Petrarca. The luxury and rapacity of the Church, together with the insolence of the barons, excited that discontent which emboldened Nicolo di Rienzi to assume the station of tribune. Singular was the prudence, and opportune the boldness, he manifested at first. His modesty, his piety, his calm severity, his unbiassed justice, won to him the affections of every good citizen, and struck horror into the fastnesses of every castellated felon. He might by degrees have restored the republic of Rome had he preserved his moderation; he might have become the master of Italy had he continued the master of himself; but he allowed the weakest of the passions to run away with him. He fancied he could not inebriate himself soon enough

with the intemperance of power. He called for seven crowns, and placed them successively on his head; he cited Lewis of Bavaria and Charles of Bohemia to appear and plead their causes before him; and lastly, not content with exasperating and concentrating the hostility of barbarians, he set at defiance the best and highest feelings of his more instructed countrymen, and displayed his mockery of religion and decency by bathing in the porphyry font of the Lateran. How my soul grieved for his defection! How bitterly burst forth my complaints, when he ordered the imprisonment of Stefano Colonna in his ninetieth year! For these atrocities you know with what reproaches I assailed him, traitor as he was to the noblest cause that ever strung the energies of mankind. For this cause, under his auspices, I had abandoned all hope of favor and protection from the pontiff; I had cast into peril, almost into perdition, the friendship, familiarity, and love of the Colonnas. Even you, Giovanni, thought me more rash than you would say you thought me, and wondered at seeing me whirled along with the tempestuous triumphs that seemed mounting toward the Capitol. It is only in politics that an actor appears greater by the magnitude of the theatre; and we readily and enthusiastically give way to the deception. Indeed, whenever a man capable of performing great and glorious actions is emerging from obscurity, it is our duty to remove, if we can, all obstruction from before him; to increase his scope and his powers, to extol and amplify his virtues. This is always requisite, and often insufficient to counteract the workings of malignity round about him. But finding him afterward false and cruel, and instead of devoting himself to the commonwealth, exhausting it by his violence and sacrificing it to his vanity, then it behooves us to stamp the foot, and to call in the people to cast down the idol. For nothing is so immoral or pernicious as to keep up the illusion of greatness in wicked men. Their crimes, because they have fallen into the gulf of them, we call misfortunes; and amid ten thousand mourners, grieve only for him who made them so. Is this reason, is this humanity?

Boccaccio. Alas! it is man.

Petrarca. Can we wonder, then, that such wretches have turned him to such purposes? The calmness, the sagacity, the

sanctitude of Rienzi, in the ascent to his elevation, rendered him only the more detestable for his abuse of power.

Boccaccio. Surely, the man grew mad.

Petrarca. Men often give the hand to the madness that seizes them. He yielded to pride and luxury; behind them came jealousy and distrust: fear followed these, and cruelty followed fear. Then the intellects sought the subterfuge that bewildered them; and an ignoble flight was precluded by an ignominious death.

Boccaccio. No mortal is less to be pitied, or more to be detested, than he into whose hands are thrown the fortunes of a nation, and who squanders them away in the idle gratification of his pride and his ambition. Are not these already gratified to the full by the confidence and deference of his countrymen? Can silks and the skins of animals, can hammered metals and sparkling stones, enhance the value of legitimate dominion over the human heart? Can a wise man be desirous of having a less wise successor? — and, of all the world, would he exhibit this inferiority in a son? Irrational as are all who aim at despotism, this is surely the most irrational of their speculations. Vulgar men are more anxious for title and decoration than for power; and notice, in their estimate, is preferable to regard. We ought as little to mind the extinction of such existences as the dying-down of a favorable wind in the prosecution of a voyage. They are fitter for the calendar than for history, and it is well when we find them in last year's.

Petrarca. What a year was Rienzi's last to me! What an extinction of all that had not been yet extinguished! Visionary as was the flash of his glory, there was another more truly so, which this, my second great loss and sorrow, opened again before me.

Verona! loveliest of cities, but saddest to my memory! while the birds were singing in thy cypresses the earliest notes of spring, the blithest of hope, the tenderest of desire, she my own Laura, fresh as the dawn around her, stood before me. It was her transit; I knew it ere she spake.[1]

O Giovanni! the heart that has once been bathed in love's pure fountain, retains the pulse of youth forever. Death can

[1] This event is related by Petrarca as occurring on the 6th of April, the day of her decease.

only take away the sorrowful from our affections: the flower expands; the colorless film that enveloped it falls off and perishes.

Boccaccio. We may well believe it: and believing it, let us cease to be disquieted for their absence who have but retired into another chamber. We are like those who have overslept the hour: when we rejoin our friends, there is only the more joyance and congratulation. Would we break a precious vase, because it is as capable of containing the bitter as the sweet? No: the very things which touch us the most sensibly are those which we should be the most reluctant to forget. The noble mansion is most distinguished by the beautiful images it retains of beings passed away; and so is the noble mind.

The damps of autumn sink into the leaves and prepare them for the necessity of their fall: and thus insensibly are we, as years close round us, detached from our tenacity of life by the gentle pressure of recorded sorrows. When the graceful dance and its animating music are over, and the clapping of hands (so lately linked) hath ceased; when youth and comeliness and pleasantry are departed,—

> 'Who would desire to spend the following day
> Among the extinguished lamps, the faded wreaths,
> The dust and desolation left behind?"

But whether we desire it or not, we must submit. He who hath appointed our days hath placed their contents within them, and our efforts can neither cast them out nor change their quality. In our present mood we will not dwell too long on this subject, but rather walk forth into the world, and look back again on the bustle of life. Neither of us may hope to exert in future any extraordinary influence on the political movements of our country by our presence or intervention; yet surely it is something to have set at defiance the mercenaries who assailed us, and to have stood aloof from the distribution of the public spoils. I have at all times taken less interest than you have taken in the affairs of Rome; for the people of that city neither are, nor were of old, my favorites. It appears to me that there are spots accursed, spots doomed to eternal sterility; and Rome is one of them. No gospel announces the glad tidings of resurrection to a fallen nation: once down, and down forever. The Babylonians, the Macedonians, the Romans, prove it. Babylon is a desert, Macedon

a den of thieves, Rome (what is written as an invitation on the walls of her streets) one vast *immondezzaio*, morally and substantially.

Petrarca. The argument does not hold good throughout. Persia was conquered: yet Persia long afterward sprang up again with renovated strength and courage, and Sapor mounted his war-horse from the crouching neck of Valentinian. In nearly all the campaigns with the Romans she came off victorious; none of her kings or generals was ever led in triumph to the Capitol, but several Roman emperors lay prostrate on their purple in the fields of Parthia. Formidable at home, victorious over friends and relatives, their legions had seized and subdivided the arable plains of Campania and the exuberant pastures of the Po; but the glebe that bordered the Araxes was unbroken by them. Persia, since those times, has passed through many vicissitudes of defeat and victory, of obscurity and glory, and why may not our country? Let us take hopes where we can find them, and raise them where we find none.

Boccaccio. In some places we may; in others, the fabric of hopes is too arduous an undertaking. When I was in Rome, nothing there reminded me of her former state until I saw a goose in the grass under the Capitoline hill. This perhaps was the only one of her inhabitants that had not degenerated. Even the dogs looked sleepy, mangy, suspicious, perfidious, and thievish. The goose meanwhile was making his choice of herbage about triumphal arches and monumental columns, and picking up worms,— the surest descendants, the truest representatives, and enjoying the inalienable succession, of the Cæsars. This is all that goose or man can do at Rome. She, I think, will be the last city to rise from the dead.

Petrarca. There is a trumpet, and on earth, that shall awaken even her.

Boccaccio. I should like to live and be present.

Petrarca. This cannot be expected. But you may live many years, and see many things to make you happy. For you will not close the doors too early in the evening of existence against the visits of renovating and cheerful thoughts, which keep our lives long up, and help them to sink at last without pain or pressure.

Boccaccio. Another year or two perhaps, with God's permission. Fra Biagio felt my pulse on Wednesday, and cried,—

"Courage! Ser Giovanni! there is no danger of paradise yet — the Lord forbid!

"Faith!" said I, "Fra Biagio, I hope there is not. What with prayers and masses, I have planted a foot against my old homestead, and will tug hard to remain where I am."

"A true soldier of the faith!" quoth Fra Biagio, and drank a couple of flasks to my health. Nothing else, he swore to Assunta, would have induced him to venture beyond one,— he hating all excesses, they give the adversary such advantage over us; although God is merciful and makes allowances.

Petrarca. Impossible as it is to look far and with pleasure into the future, what a privilege is it, how incomparably greater than any other that genius can confer, to be able to direct the backward flight of fancy and imagination to the recesses they most delighted in! to be able, as the shadows lengthen in our path, to call up before us the youth of our sympathies in all their tenderness and purity!

Boccaccio. Mine must have been very pure, I suspect, for I am sure they were very tender. But I need not call them up,— they come readily enough of their own accord; and I find it perplexing at times to get entirely rid of them. Sighs are very troublesome when none meet them half-way. The worst of mine now are while I am walking up hill. Even to walk upstairs, which used occasionally to be as pleasant an exercise as any, grows sadly too much for me. For which reason I lie here below; and it is handier too for Assunta.

Petrarca. Very judicious and considerate. In high situations, like Certaldo and this villetta, there is no danger from fogs or damps of any kind. The skylark yonder seems to have made it her first station in the air.

Boccaccio. To welcome thee, Francesco!

Petrarca. Rather say, to remind us both of our Dante. All the verses that ever were written on the nightingale are scarcely worth the beautiful triad of this divine poet on the lark.

> "La lodoletta che in aere si spazia,
> Prima cantando, e poi tace contenta
> Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia."

In the first of them do not you see the twinkling of her wings against the sky? As often as I repeat them my ear is satisfied, my heart (like hers) contented.

Boccaccio. I agree with you in the perfect and unrivalled beauty of the first; but in the third there is a redundance. Is not *contenta* quite enough, without *che la sazia?* The picture is before us, the sentiment within us, and behold! we kick when we are full of manna.

Petrarca. I acknowledge the correctness and propriety of your remark; and yet beauties in poetry must be examined as carefully as blemishes, and even more, for we are more easily led away by them, although we do not dwell on them so long. We two should never be accused, in these days, of malevolence to Dante, if the whole world heard us. Being here alone, we may hazard our opinions even less guardedly, and set each other right as we see occasion.

Boccaccio. Come on then! I will venture. I will go back to find fault; I will seek it even in Francesca.

To hesitate, and waver, and turn away from the subject was proper and befitting in her. The verse, however, in no respect satisfies me. Any one would imagine from it that *Galeotto* was really both the title of the book and the name of the author; neither of which is true. Galeotto, in the "Tavola Ritonda," is the person who interchanges the correspondence between Lancilotto and Ginevra. The appellation is now become the generic of all men whose business it is to promote the success of others in illicit love. Dante was stimulated in his satirical vein when he attributed to Francesca a ludicrous expression, which she was very unlikely in her own nature, and greatly more so in her state of suffering, to employ or think of, whirled round as she was incessantly with her lover. Neither was it requisite to say "the book was a Galeotto, and so was the author," when she had said already that a passage in it had seduced her. Omitting this unnecessary and ungraceful line, her confusion and her delicacy are the more evident, and the following comes forth with fresh beauty. In the commencement of her speech I wish these had likewise been omitted,—

"E cio sa il tuo dottore,"—

since he knew no more about it than anybody else. As we proceed, there are passages in which I cannot find my way, and where I suspect the poet could not show it me. For instance, is it not strange that Briareus should be punished in the

same way as Nimrod, when Nimrod sinned against the living God, and when Briareus attempted to overthrow one of the living God's worst antagonists, Jupiter? — an action which our blessed Lord and the doctors of the Holy Church not only attempted, but (to their glory and praise for evermore) accomplished.

Petrarca. Equally strange that Brutus and Cassius (a remark which escaped us in our mention of them yesterday) should be placed in the hottest pit of hell for slaying Cæsar, and that Cato, who would have done the same thing with less compunction, should be appointed sole guardian and governor of purgatory.

Boccaccio. What interest could he have made to be promoted to so valuable a post in preference to doctors, popes, confessors, and fathers? Wonderful indeed! and they never seemed to take it much amiss.

Petrarca. Alighieri not only throws together the most opposite and distant characters, but even makes Jupiter and our Saviour the same person,—

> "E se lecito m' è, o sommo *Giove!*
> Che fosti in terra per noi *crocifisso.*"

Boccaccio. Jesus Christ ought no more to be called Jupiter than Jupiter ought to be called Jesus Christ.

Petrarca. In the whole of the "Inferno" I find only the descriptions of Francesca and of Ugolino at all admirable. Vigorous expressions there are many, but lost in their application to base objects; and insulated thoughts in high relief, but with everything crumbling round them. Proportionally to the extent, there is a scantiness of poetry, if delight is the purpose or indication of it. Intensity shows everywhere the powerful master; and yet intensity is not invitation. A great poet may do everything but repel us. Established laws are pliant before him: nevertheless, his office hath both its duties and its limits.

Boccaccio. The simile in the third canto, the satire at the close of the fourth, and the description at the commencement of the eighth, if not highly admirable, are what no ordinary poet could have produced.

Petrarca. They are streaks of light in a thunder-cloud.

You might have added the beginning of the twenty-seventh, in which the poetry of itself is good, although not excellent, and the subject of it assuages the weariness left on us, after passing through so many holes and furnaces, and undergoing the dialogue between Simon and master Adam.

Boccaccio. I am sorry to be reminded of this. It is like the brawl of the two fellows in Horace's "Journey to Brundusium." They are the straitest parallels of bad wit and bad poetry that ancient and modern times exhibit. Ought I to speak so sharply of poets who elsewhere have given me so great delight?

Petrarca. Surely you ought. No criticism is less beneficial to an author or his reader than one tagged with favor and tricked with courtesy. The gratification of our humors is not the intent and scope of criticism, and those who indulge in it on such occasions are neither wise nor honest.

Boccaccio. I never could see why we should designedly and prepensely give to one writer more than his due, to another less. If we offer an honest man ten crowns when we owe him only five, he is apt to be offended. The perfumer and druggist weigh out the commodity before them to a single grain. If they do it with odors and powders, should not we attempt it likewise, in what is either the nutriment or the medicine of the mind? I do not wonder that Criticism has never yet been clear-sighted and expert among us: I do, that she has never been dispassionate and unprejudiced. There are critics who, lying under no fear of a future state in literature, and all whose hope is for the present day, commit injustice without compunction. Every one of these people has some favorite object for the embraces of his hatred, and a figure of straw will never serve the purpose. He must throw his stone at what stands out; he must twitch the skirt of him who is ascending. Do you imagine that the worst writers of any age were treated with as much asperity as you and I? No, Francesco! give the good folks their due: they are humaner to their fellow-creatures.

Petrarca. Disregarding the ignorant and presumptuous, we have strengthened our language by dipping it afresh in its purer and higher source, and have called the Graces back to it. We never have heeded how Jupiter would have spoken, but only how the wisest men would, and how words follow the movements of the mind. There are rich and copious veins of

mineral in regions far remote from commerce and habitations: these veins are useless; so are those writings of which the style is uninviting and inaccessible through its ruggedness, its chasms, its points, its perplexities, its obscurity. There are scarcely three authors, besides yourself, who appear to heed whether any guest will enter the gate, quite satisfied with the consciousness that they have stores within. Such wealth in another generation may be curious, but cannot be current. When a language grows up all into stalk, and its flowers begin to lose somewhat of their character, we must go forth into the open fields, through the dingles, and among the mountains for fresh seed. Our ancestors did this, no very long time ago. Foremost in zeal, in vigor, and authority, Alighieri took on himself the same patronage and guardianship of our adolescent dialect as Homer of the Greek; and my Giovanni hath since endowed it so handsomely that additional bequests, we may apprehend, will only corrupt its principles, and render it lax and lavish.

Boccaccio. Beware of violating those canons of criticism you have just laid down. We have no right to gratify one by misleading another, nor, when we undertake to show the road, to bandage the eyes of him who trusts us for his conductor. In regard to censure, those only speak ill who speak untruly,—unless a truth be barbed by malice and aimed by passion. To be useful to as many as possible is the especial duty of a critic, and his utility can be attained only by rectitude and precision. He walks in a garden which is not his own; and he neither must gather the blossoms to embellish his discourse, nor break the branches to display his strength. Rather let him point to what is out of order, and help to raise what is lying on the ground.

Petrarca. Auditors, and readers in general, come to hear or read, not your opinion delivered, but their own repeated. Fresh notions are as disagreeable to some as fresh air to others; and this inability to bear them is equally a symptom of disease. Impatience and intolerance are sure to be excited at any check to admiration in the narratives of Ugolino and of Francesca. Nothing is to be abated: they are not only to be admirable, but entirely faultless.

Boccaccio. You have proved to me that in blaming our

betters we ourselves may sometimes be unblamed. When authors are removed by death beyond the reach of irritation at the touch of an infirmity, we best consult their glory by handling their works comprehensively and unsparingly. Vague and indefinite criticism suits only slight merit, and presupposes it. Lineaments irregular and profound as Dante's are worthy of being traced with patience and fidelity. In the charts of our globe we find distinctly marked the promontories and indentations, and oftentimes the direction of unprofitable marshes and impassable sands and wildernesses: level surfaces are unnoted. I would not detract one atom from the worth of Dante, which cannot be done by summing it up exactly, but may be by negligence in the computation.

Petrarca. Your business in the lectures is not to show his merits, but his meaning, and to give only so much information as may be given without offence to the factious. Whatever you do beyond is for yourself, your friends, and futurity.

Boccaccio. I may write more lectures, but never shall deliver them in person, as the first. Probably, so near as I am to Florence, and so dear as Florence hath always been to me, I shall see that city no more. The last time I saw it, I only passed through. Four years ago, you remember, I lost my friend Acciaioli. Early in the summer of the preceding, his kindness had induced him to invite me again to Naples, and I undertook a journey to the place where my life had been too happy. There are many who pay dearly for sunshine early in the season: many, for pleasure in the prime of life. After one day lost in idleness at Naples, if intense and incessant thoughts (however fruitless) may be called so, I proceeded by water to Sorrento, and thence over the mountains to Amalfi. Here, amid whatever is most beautiful and most wonderful in scenery, I found the Seniscalco. His palace, his gardens, his terraces, his woods, abstracted his mind entirely from the solicitudes of State; and I was gratified at finding in the absolute ruler of a kingdom the absolute master of his time. Rare felicity! and he enjoyed it the more after the toils of business and the intricacies of policy. His reception of me was most cordial. He showed me his long avenues of oranges and citrons; he helped me to mount the banks of slippery short herbage, whence we could look down on their dark masses, and their broad irregular

belts, gemmed with golden fruit and sparkling flowers. We stood high above them, but not above their fragrance; and sometimes we wished the breeze to bring us it, and sometimes to carry a part of it away,—and the breeze came and went as if obedient to our volition. Another day he conducted me farther from the palace, and showed me, with greater pride than I had ever seen in him before, the pale-green olives, on little smooth plants, the first year of their bearing. "I will teach my people here," said he, "to make as delicate oil as any of our Tuscans." We had feasts among the caverns; we had dances by day under the shade of the mulberries, by night under the lamps of the arcade; we had music on the shore and on the water.

When next I stood before him it was afar from these. Torches flamed through the pine forest of the Certosa; priests and monks led the procession; the sound of the brook alone filled up the intervals of the dirge, and other plumes than the dancers' waved round what was Acciaioli.

Petrarca. Since in his family there was nobody who, from education or pursuits or consanguinity, could greatly interest him,—nobody to whom so large an accumulation of riches would not rather be injurious than beneficial, and place rather in the way of scoffs and carpings than exalt to respectability,—I regret that he omitted to provide for the comforts of your advancing years.

Boccaccio. The friend would not spoil the philosopher. Our judgment grows the stronger by the dying-down of our affections.

Petrarca. With a careful politician and diplomatist all things find their places but men; and yet he thinks he has niched it nicely, when, as the gardener is left in the garden, the tailor on his board at the casement, he leaves the author at his desk: to remove him would put the world in confusion.

Boccaccio. Acciaioli knew me too well to suppose we could serve each other; and his own capacity was amply sufficient for all the exigencies of the State. Generous,[1] kind, constant soul! the emblazoned window throws now its rich mantle over him, moved gently by the vernal air of Marignole, or, as the great chapel door is opened to some visitor of distinction, by

[1] This sentiment must be attributed to the gratitude of Boccaccio, not to the merits of Acciaioli, who treated him unworthily.

the fresh eastern breeze from the valley of the Elsa. We too (mayhap) shall be visited in the same condition, but in a homelier edifice, but in a humbler sepulchre, but by other and far different guests! While they are discussing and sorting out our merits, which are usually first discovered among the nettles in the church-yard, we will carry this volume with us, and show Dante what we have been doing.

Petrarca. We have each of us had our warnings; indeed, all men have them, — and not only at our time of life, but almost every day of their existence. They come to us even in youth; although, like the lightnings that are said to play incessantly, in the noon and in the morning and throughout the year, we seldom see and never look for them. Come, as you proposed, let us now continue with our Dante.

Ugolino relates to him his terrible dream, in which he fancied that he had seen Gualando, Sismondi, and Lanfranco, killing his children; and he says that when he awakened he heard them moan in their sleep. In such circumstances his awakening ought rather to have removed the impression he labored under, since it showed him the vanity of the dream, and afforded him the consolation that the children were alive. Yet he adds immediately, what, if he were to speak it at all, he should have deferred, —

"You are very cruel if you do not begin to grieve, considering what my heart presaged to me; and if you do not weep at it, what is it you are wont to weep at?"

Boccaccio. Certainly this is ill-timed; and the conference would indeed be better without it anywhere.

Petrarca. Farther on, in whatever way we interpret

"Poscia più che 'l dolor potè 'l digiuno,"

the poet falls sadly from his sublimity.

Boccaccio. If the fact were as he mentions he should have suppressed it, since we had already seen the most pathetic in the features, and the most horrible in the stride, of Famine. Gnawing, not in hunger but in rage and revenge, the archbishop's skull is, in the opinion of many, rather ludicrous than tremendous.

Petrarca. In mine, rather disgusting than ludicrous; but Dante (we must whisper it) is the great master of the disgust-

ing. When the ancients wrote indecently and loosely, they presented what either had something alluring or something laughable about it; and if they disgusted, it was involuntarily. Indecency is the most shocking in deformity. We call indecent, while we do not think it, the nakedness of the Graces and the Loves.

Boccaccio. When we are less barbarous we shall become more familiar with them, more tolerant of sliding beauty, more hospitable to erring passion, and perhaps as indulgent to frailty as we now are to ferocity. I wish I could find in some epitaph, "He loved so many:" it is better than, "He killed so many." Yet the world hangs in admiration over this: you and I should be found alone before the other.

Petrarca. Of what value are all the honors we can expect from the wisest of our species, when even the wisest hold us lighter in estimation than those who labor to destroy what God delighted to create, came on earth to ransom, and suffered on the cross to save! Glory then, glory can it be, to devise with long study, and to execute with vast exertions, what the fang of a reptile or the leaf of a weed accomplishes in an hour? Shall any one tell me that the numbers sent to death or to wretchedness make the difference, and constitute the great? Away then from the face of Nature as we see her daily! away from the interminable varieties of animated creatures! away from what is fixed to the earth and lives by the sun and dew! Brute inert matter does it: behold it in the pestilence, in the earthquake, in the conflagration, in the deluge!

Boccaccio. Perhaps we shall not be liked the better for what we ourselves have written; yet I do believe we shall be thanked for having brought to light, and for having sent into circulation, the writings of other men. We deserve as much, were it only that it gives people an opportunity of running over us (as ants over the images of gods in orchards), and of reaching by our means the less crude fruits of less ungenial days. Be this as it may, we have spent our time well in doing it, and enjoy (what idlers never can) as pleasant a view in looking back as forward.

Now do tell me, before we say more of the "Paradiso," what can I offer in defence of the Latin scraps from litanies and lauds, to the number of fifty or thereabout?

Petrarca. Say nothing at all, unless you can obtain some Indulgences for repeating them.

Boccaccio. And then such verses as these, and several score of no better: —

> "I credo ch' ei credette ch' io credessi,
> O Jacomo, dicea, di Sant Andrea,
> Come Livio scrisse, che non erra,
> Nel quale un cinque cento dieci e cinque,
> Mille ducento con sessanta sei.
> Pepe Satan, Pepe Satan, Pepè.
> Raffael mai *amec, zabe, almî.*
> Non avria pur dell orlo fatto *crich.*"

Petrarca. There is no occasion to look into and investigate a puddle, — we perceive at first sight its impurity; but it is useful to analyze, if we can, a limpid and sparkling water, in which the common observer finds nothing but transparency and freshness, for in this, however the idle and ignorant ridicule our process, we may exhibit what is unsuspected, and separate what is insalubrious. We must do, then, for our poet that which other men do for themselves; we must defend him by advancing the best authority for something as bad or worse; and although it puzzle our ingenuity, yet we may almost make out in quantity, and quite in quality, our spicilege from Virgil himself. If younger men were present, I would admonish and exhort them to abate no more of their reverence for the Roman poet on the demonstration of his imperfections, than of their love for a parent or guardian who had walked with them far into the country, and had shown them its many beauties and blessings, on his lassitude or his debility. Never will such men receive too much homage. He who can best discover their blemishes will best appreciate their merit, and most zealously guard their honor. The flippancy with which genius is often treated by mediocrity, is the surest sign of a prostrate mind's incontinence and impotence. It will gratify the national pride of our Florentines, if you show them how greatly the nobler parts of their fellow-citizen excel the loftiest of his Mantuan guide.

Boccaccio. Of Virgil?

Petrarca. Even so.

Boccaccio. He had no suspicion of his equality with this

prince of Roman poets, whose footsteps he follows with reverential and submissive obsequiousness.

Petrarca. Have you never observed that persons of high rank universally treat their equals with deference; and that ill-bred ones are often smart and captious? Even their words are uttered with a brisk and rapid air, a tone higher than the natural, to sustain the factitious consequence and vaporing independence they assume. Small critics and small poets take all this courage when they licentiously shut out the master; but Dante really felt the veneration he would impress. Suspicion of his superiority he had none whatever, nor perhaps have you yourself much more.

Boccaccio. I take all proper interest in my author; I am sensible to the duties of a commentator; but in truth I dare hardly entertain that exalted notion. I should have the whole world against me.

Petrarca. You must expect it for *any* exalted notion, — for anything that so startles a prejudice as to arouse a suspicion that it may be dispelled. You must expect it if you throw open the windows of infection. Truth is only unpleasant in its novelty. He who first utters it, says to his hearer, "You are less wise than I am." Now, who likes this?

Boccaccio. But surely if there are some very high places in our Alighieri, the inequalities are perpetual and vast; whereas the regularity, the continuity, the purity of Virgil are proverbial.

Petrarca. It is only in literature that what is proverbial is suspicious; and mostly in poetry. Do we find in Dante, do we find in Ovid, such tautologies and flatnesses as these: —

> "Quam si dura silex — *aut stet Marpesia cautes*
> Majus adorata nefas — *majoremque orsa furorem.*
> Arma *amens* capio — nec *sat rationis* in armis.
> Superatne — *et vescitur aura*
> *Ætheria — neque adhuc crudelibus occubat umbris?*
> Omnes — cœlicolas — omnes supera alta tenentes.
> Scuta *latentia condunt.*
> Has inter voces — *media inter talia verba.*
> Finem dedit — *ore loquendi.*
> Insonuere cavæ — *sonitumque dedere cavernæ.*
> *Ferro* accitam — crebrisque *bipennibus.*
> Nec nostri generis puerum — *nec sanguinis.*"

Boccaccio. These things look very ill in Latin, and yet they had quite escaped my observation. We often find in the

Psalms of David one section of a sentence placed as it were in symmetry with another, and not at all supporting it by presenting the same idea. It is a species of piety to drop the nether lip in admiration; but in reality it is not only the modern taste that is vitiated, — the ancient is little less so, although differently. To say over again what we have just ceased to say, with nothing added, nothing improved, is equally bad in all languages and all times.

Petrarca. But in these repetitions we may imagine one part of the chorus to be answering another part opposite.

Boccaccio. Likely enough. However, you have ransacked poor Virgil to the skin, and have stripped him clean.

Petrarca. Of all who have ever dealt with Winter, he is the most frost-bitten. Hesiod's description of the snowy season is more poetical and more formidable. What do you think of these icicles, —

> "Œraque dissiliunt vulgo; *vestesque rigescunt*"?

Boccaccio. Wretched falling-off.

Petrarca. He comes close enough presently, —

> "Stiriaque hirsutis dependent horrida barbis."

We will withdraw from the Alps into the city. And now are you not smitten with reverence at seeing

> "Romanos rerum dominos; *gentemque togatam?*
> The masters of the world — and *long-tailed coats!*"

Come to Carthage. What a recommendation to a beautiful queen does Æneas offer, in himself and his associates!

> "*Lupi ceu*
> *Raptores;* atrâ in nebulâ, quos *improba ventris*
> Exegit cæcos rabies!"

Ovid is censured for his

> "*Consiliis* non *curribus* utere nostris;"

Virgil never for

> "*Inceptoque* et *sedibus* hæret in iisdem," —

the same in its quality, but more forced.

The affectation of Ovid was light and playful; Virgil's was wilful, perverse, and grammatistical. Are we therefore to sup-

pose that every hand able to elaborate a sonnet may be raised up against the majesty of Virgil? Is ingratitude so rare and precious that we should prefer the exposure of his faults to the enjoyment of his harmony? He first delivered it to his countrymen in unbroken links under the form of poetry, and consoled them for the eloquent tongue that had withered on the Rostra. It would be no difficult matter to point out at least twenty bad passages in the Æneid, and a proportionate number of worse in the Georgics. In your comparison of poet with poet, the defects as well as the merits of each ought to be placed side by side. This is the rather to be expected, as Dante professes to be Virgil's disciple. You may easily show that his humility no more became him than his fierceness.

Boccaccio. You have praised the harmony of the Roman poet. Now, in single verses I think our poetry is sometimes more harmonious than the Latin, but never in whole sentences. Advantage could perhaps be taken of our metre if we broke through the stanza. Our language is capable, I think, of all the vigor and expression of the Latin; and in regard to the pauses in our versification, in which chiefly the harmony of metre consists, we have greatly the advantage. What for instance is more beautiful than your

"Solo — e pensoso — i piu deserti campi
Vo — misurando — a passi tardi — e lenti"?

Petrarca. My critics have found fault with the "lenti," calling it an expletive, and ignorant that equally in Italian and Latin the word signifies both *slow* and *languid*, while "tardi" signifies *slow* only.

Boccaccio. Good poetry, like good music, pleases most people, but the ignorant and inexpert lose half its pleasures; the invidious lose them all. What a paradise lost is here!

Petrarca. If we deduct the inexpert, the ignorant, and the invidious, can we correctly say it pleases most people? But either my worst compositions are the most admired, or the insincere and malignant bring them most forward for admiration, keeping the others in the background! Sonneteers, in consequence, have started up from all quarters.

Boccaccio. The sonnet seems peculiarly adapted to the languor of a melancholy and despondent love, the rhymes

returning and replying to every plaint and every pulsation. Our poetasters are now converting it into the penfold and pound of stray thoughts and vagrant fancies. No sooner have they collected in their excursions as much matter as they conveniently can manage, than they seat themselves down and set busily to work, punching it neatly out with a clever cubic stamp of fourteen lines in diameter.

Petrarca. A pretty sonnet may be written on a lambkin or a parsnip, there being room enough for truth and tenderness on the edge of a leaf or the tip of an ear; but a great poet must clasp the higher passions breast high, and compel them in an authoritative tone to answer his interrogatories.

We will now return again to Virgil, and consider in what relation he stands to Dante. Our Tuscan and Homer are never inflated.

Boccaccio. Pardon my interruption; but do you find that Virgil is? Surely he has always borne the character of the most chaste, the most temperate, the most judicious among the poets.

Petrarca. And will not soon lose it. Yet never had there swelled, in the higher or the lower regions of poetry, such a gust as here in the exordium of the Georgics: —

> "Tuque adeo, quem mox quæ sint habitura deorum
> Concilia incertum est, urbisne invisere, Cæsar,
> Terrarumque velis curam, et te maximus orbis
> Auctorem frugum? — "

Boccaccio. Already forestalled!

Petrarca.

> "— tempestatumque potentem."

Boccaccio. Very strange coincidence of opposite qualifications, truly.

Petrarca.

> "Accipiat, cingens maternâ tempora myrto:
> An deus immensi venias maris — "

Boccaccio. Surely he would not put down Neptune!

Petrarca.

> "— ac tua nautæ
> Numina sola colant: *tibi serviat ultima Thule.*"

Boccaccio. Catch him up! catch him up! uncoil the whole

of the vessel's rope! never did man fall overboard so unluckily, or sink so deep on a sudden.

Petrarca.

> "Teque sibi generum Tethys *emat omnibus undis?*"

Boccaccio. Nobody in his senses would bid against her. What indiscretion! and at her time of life too!

> "Tethys then really, most gallant Cæsar,
> If you would only condescend to please her,
> With all her waves would your good graces buy,
> And you should govern all the Isle of Skie."

Petrarca.

> "Anne novum *tardis* sidus te mensibus addas?"

Boccaccio. For what purpose? If the months were *slow,* he was not likely to mend their speed by mounting another passenger. But the vacant place is such an inviting one!

Petrarca.

> "Qua locus Erigonen inter Chelasque sequentes
> Panditur —"

Boccaccio. Plenty of room, sir!

Petrarca.

> "— ipse tibi jam brachia contrahit ardens
> Scorpius —"

Boccaccio. I would not incommode him; I would beg him to be quite at his ease.

Petrarca.

> "— et cœli justâ plus parte reliquit.
> Quicquid eris (nam te nec sperent Tartara regem
> Nec tibi regnandi veniet tam dira cupido,
> Quamvis Elysios miretur Græcia campos,
> Nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem)."

Boccaccio. Was it not enough to have taken all Varro's invocation, much enlarged, without adding these verses to the other twenty-three?

Petrarca. Vainly will you pass through the later poets of the empire, and look for the like extravagance and bombast. Tell me candidly your opinion, not of the quantity but of the quality.

Boccaccio. I had scarcely formed one upon them before. Honestly and truly, it is just such a rumbling rotundity as

might have been blown, with much ado, if Lucan and Nero had joined their pipes and puffed together into the same bladder. I never have admired, since I was a schoolboy, the commencement or the conclusion of the Georgics, — an unwholesome and consuming fungus at the foot of the tree, a withered and loose branch at the summit.

Boccaccio. Virgil and Dante are altogether so different that, unless you will lend me your whole store of ingenuity, I shall never bring them to bear one upon the other.

Petrarca. Frequently the points of comparison are salient in proportion as the angles of similitude recede, and the absence of a quality in one man usually makes us recollect its presence in another; hence the comparison is at the same time natural and involuntary. Few poets are so different as Homer and Virgil, yet no comparison has been made oftener. Ovid although unlike Homer, is greatly more like him than Virgil is; for there is the same facility, and apparently the same negligence, in both. The great fault in the "Metamorphoses" is in the plan, as proposed in the argument: —

> "primaque ab origine mundi
> In mea *perpetuum* deducere tempora carmen."

Had he divided the more interesting of the tales, and omitted all the transformations, he would have written a greater number of exquisite poems than any author of Italy or Greece. He wants on many occasions the gravity of Virgil; he wants on all the variety of cadence; but it is a very mistaken notion that he either has heavier faults or more numerous. His natural air of levity, his unequalled and unfailing ease, have always made the contrary opinion prevalent. Errors and faults are readily supposed, in literature as in life, where there is much gayety; and the appearance of ease, among those who never could acquire or understand it, excites a suspicion of negligence and faultiness. Of all the ancient Romans, Ovid had the finest imagination; he likewise had the truest tact in judging the poetry of his contemporaries and predecessors. Compare his estimate with Quintilian's of the same writers, and this will strike you forcibly. He was the only one of his countrymen who could justly appreciate the labors of Lucretius.

> "Carmina sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucretî,
> Exitio terras quum dabit una dies."

And the kindness with which he rests on all the others, shows a benignity of disposition which is often lamentably deficient in authors who write tenderly upon imaginary occasions.

I begin to be inclined to your opinion in regard to the advantages of our Italian versification. It surely has a greater variety in its usual measure than the Latin, in dactyls and spondees. We admit several feet into ours; the Latin, if we believe the grammarians, admits only two into the heroic; and at least seven verses in every ten conclude with a dissyllabic word.

Boccaccio. We are taught indeed that the final foot of an hexameter is always a spondee; but our ears deny the assertion, and prove to us that it never is, any more than it is in the Italian. In both the one and the other the last foot is uniformly a trochee in pronunciation. There is only one species of Latin verse which ends with a true inflexible spondee, and this is the *scazon.* Its name of the *limper* is but little prepossessing, yet the two most beautiful and most perfect poems of the language are composed in it, — the "Miser Catulle" and the "Sirmio."

Petrarca. This is likewise my opinion of those two little golden images, which however are insufficient to raise Catullus on an equality with Virgil: nor would twenty such. Amplitude of dimensions is requisite to constitute the greatness of a poet, besides his symmetry of form and his richness of decoration. We have conversed more than once together on the defects and oversights of the correct and elaborate Mantuan, but never without the expression of our gratitude for the exquisite delight he has afforded us. We may forgive him his Proteus and his Pollio; but we cannot well forbear to ask him how Æneas came to know that Acragas was *formerly* the sire of high-mettled steeds, even if such had been the fact. But such was only the fact a thousand years afterward, in the reign of Gelon.

Boccaccio. Was it *then?* Were the horses of Gelon and Theron and Hiero of Agrigentine or Sicilian breed? The country was never celebrated for a race adapted to chariots; such horses were mostly brought from Thessaly, and probably some from Africa. I do not believe there was ever a fine one in Italy before the invasion of Pyrrhus. No doubt, Hannibal introduced many. Greece herself, I suspect, was greatly indebted to the studs of Xerxes for the noblest of her prizes on

the Olympic plain. In the kingdom of Naples I have observed more horses of high blood than in any other quarter of Italy. It is there that Pyrrhus and Hannibal were stationary; and long after these the most warlike of men, the Normans, took possession of the country. And the Normans would have horses worthy of their valor, had they unyoked them from the chariot of the sun. Subduers of France, of Sicily, of Cyprus, they made England herself accept their laws.

Virgil, I remember, in the Georgics, has given some directions in the choice of horses. He speaks unfavorably of the white; yet painters have been fond of representing the leaders of armies mounted on them. And the reason is quite as good as the reason of a writer on husbandry (Cato or Columella) for choosing a house-dog of a contrary color: it being desirable that a general should be as conspicuous as possible, and a dog, guarding against thieves, as invisible.

I love beyond measure in Virgil his kindness toward dumb creatures. Although he represents his Mezentius as a hater of the Gods, and so inhuman as to fasten dead bodies to the living, and violates in him the unity of character more than character was ever violated before, we treat as impossible all he has been telling us of his atrocities when we hear his allocution to Rhœbus.

Petrarca. The dying hero, for hero he is transcendently above all the others in the Æneid, is not only the kindest father, not only the most passionate in his grief for Lausus, but likewise gives way to manly sorrows for the mute companion of his warfare.

> "Rhœbe diu, res si qua diu mortalibus usquam,
> Viximus."

Here the philosophical reflection addressed to the worthy quadruped on the brief duration of human and equine life, is ill applied. It is not the thought for the occasion, it is not the thought for the man. He could no more have uttered it than Rhœbus could have appreciated it. This is not, however, quite so great an absurdity as the tender apostrophe of the monster Proteus to the dead Eurydice. Besides, the youth of Lausus and the activity and strength of Mezentius, as exerted

in many actions just before his fall, do not allow us to suppose that he who says to his horse

"Diu viximus,"

had passed the meridian of existence.

Boccaccio. Francesco, it is a pity you had no opportunity of looking into the mouth of the good horse Rhœbus; perhaps his teeth had not lost all their marks.

Petrarca. They would have been lost upon me, though horses' mouths to the intelligent are more trustworthy than many others.

Boccaccio. I have always been of opinion that Virgil is inferior to Homer, not only in genius but in judgment, and to an equal degree at the very least. I shall never dare to employ half your suggestions in our irritable city, for fear of raising up two new factions, — the Virgilians and the Dantists.

Petrarca. I wish in good truth and seriousness you could raise them, or anything like zeal for genius, with whomsoever it might abide.

Boccaccio. You really have almost put me out of conceit with Virgil.

Petrarca. I have done a great wrong then both to him and you. Admiration is not the pursuivant to all the steps even of an admirable poet; but respect is stationary. Attend him where the ploughman is unyoking the sorrowful ox from his companion dead at the furrow; follow him up the arduous ascent where he springs beyond the strides of Lucretius; and close the procession of his glory with the coursers and cars of Elis.

THIRD DAY'S INTERVIEW.

It being now the Lord's Day, Messer Francesco thought it meet that he should rise early in the morning and bestir himself to hear Mass in the parish church at Certaldo. Whereupon he went on tiptoe, if so weighty a man could indeed go in such a fashion, and lifted softly the latch of Ser Giovanni's

chamber-door, that he might salute him ere he departed, and occasion no wonder at the step he was about to take. He found Ser Giovanni fast asleep, with the missal wide open across his nose, and a pleasant smile on his genial joyous mouth. Ser Francesco leaned over the couch, closed his hands together, and looking with even more than his usual benignity, said in a low voice, "God bless thee, gentle soul! the mother of purity and innocence protect thee!"

He then went into the kitchen, where he found the girl Assunta, and mentioned his resolution. She informed him that the horse had eaten his two beans,[1] and was as strong as a lion and as ready as a lover. Ser Francesco patted her on the cheek, and called her *semplicetta!* She was overjoyed at this honor from so great a man, the bosom-friend of her good master, whom she had always thought the greatest man in the world, not excepting Monsignore, until he told her he was only a dog confronted with Ser Francesco. She tripped alertly across the paved court into the stable, and took down the saddle and bridle from the farther end of the rack. But Ser Francesco, with his natural politeness, would not allow her to equip his palfrey.

"This is not the work for maidens," said he; "return to the house, good girl!"

She lingered a moment, then went away; but mistrusting the dexterity of Ser Francesco, she stopped and turned back again, and peeped through the half-closed door, and heard sundry sobs and wheezes round about the girth. Ser Francesco's wind ill seconded his intention; and although he had thrown the saddle valiantly and stoutly in its station, yet the girths brought him into extremity. She entered again, and, dissembling the reason, asked him whether he would not take a small beaker of the sweet white wine before he set out, and offered to girdle the horse while his reverence bitted and bridled him. Before any answer could be returned, she had begun; and having now satisfactorily executed her undertaking, she felt irrepressible delight and glee at being able to do what Ser Francesco had failed in. He was scarcely more successful with his allotment of the labor; found unlooked-for in-

[1] Literally, *due fave*, — the expression on such occasions to signify a small quantity.

tricacies and complications in the machinery, wondered that human wit could not simplify it, and declared that the animal had never exhibited such restiveness before. In fact, he never had experienced the same grooming. At this conjuncture, a green cap made its appearance, bound with straw-colored ribbon, and surmounted with two bushy sprigs of hawthorn, of which the globular buds were swelling, and some bursting, but fewer yet open. It was young Simplizio Nardi, who sometimes came on the Sunday morning to sweep the court-yard for Assunta.

"Oh! this time you are come just when you were wanted," said the girl. "Bridle, directly, Ser Francesco's horse, and then go away about your business."

The youth blushed, and kissed Ser Francesco's hand, begging his permission. It was soon done. He then held the stirrup; and Ser Francesco, with scarcely three efforts, was seated and erect on the saddle. The horse, however, had somewhat more inclination for the stable than for the expedition, and as Assunta was handing to the rider his long ebony staff, bearing an ivory caduceus, the quadruped turned suddenly round. Simplizio called him *bestiaccia!* and then, softening it, *poco garbato!* and proposed to Ser Francesco that he should leave the bastone behind, and take the crab-switch he presented to him, giving at the same time a sample of its efficacy, which covered the long grizzly hair of the worthy quadruped with a profusion of pink blossoms, like embroidery. The offer was declined; but Assunta told Simplizio to carry it himself, and to walk by the side of Ser Canonico quite up to the church porch, having seen what a sad dangerous beast his reverence had under him.

With perfect good-will, partly in the pride of obedience to Assunta, and partly to enjoy the renown of accompanying a canon of Holy Church, Simplizio did as she enjoined.

And now the sound of village bells, in many hamlets and convents and churches out of sight, was indistinctly heard, and lost again; and at last the five of Certaldo seemed to crow over the faintness of them all. The freshness of the morning was enough of itself to excite the spirits of youth, — a portion of which never fails to descend on years that are far removed from it, if the mind has partaken in innocent mirth while it

was its season and its duty to enjoy it. Parties of young and old passed the canonico and his attendant with mute respect, bowing and bare-headed; for that ebony staff threw its spell over the tongue, which the frank and hearty salutation of the bearer was inadequate to break. Simplizio once or twice attempted to call back an intimate of the same age with himself; but the utmost he could obtain was a *riveritissimo*, and a genuflection to the rider. It is reported that a heart-burning rose up from it in the breast of a cousin, some days after, too distinctly apparent in the long-drawn appellation of *Gnor*[1] Simplizio.

Ser Francesco moved gradually forward, his steed picking his way along the lane, and looking fixedly on the stones with all the sobriety of a mineralogist. He himself was well satisfied with the pace, and told Simplizio to be sparing of the switch, unless in case of a hornet or gadfly. Simplizio smiled, toward the hedge, and wondered at the condescension of so great a theologian and astrologer in joking with him about the gadflies and hornets in the beginning of April. "Ah! there are men in the world who can make wit out of anything!" said he to himself.

As they approached the walls of the town, the whole country was pervaded by a stirring and diversified air of gladness. Laughter and songs and flutes and viols, inviting voices and complying responses, mingled with merry bells and with processional hymns, along the woodland paths and along the yellow meadows. It was really the *Lord's Day*, for he made his creatures happy in it, and their hearts were thankful. Even the cruel had ceased from cruelty; and the rich man alone exacted from the animal his daily labor. Ser Francesco made this remark, and told his youthful guide that he had never been before where he could not walk to church on a Sunday; and that nothing should persuade him to urge the speed of his beast, on the seventh day, beyond his natural and willing foot's-pace. He reached the gates of Certaldo more than half an hour before the time of service, and he found laurels suspended over them, and being suspended; and many pleasant and beautiful faces were protruded between the ranks of gentry and clergy who awaited him. Little did he expect such an

[1] Contraction of *signor*, customary in Tuscany.

attendance; but Fra Biagio of San Vivaldo, who himself had offered no obsequiousness or respect, had scattered the secret of his visit throughout the whole country. A young poet, the most celebrated in the town, approached the canonico with a long scroll of verses, which fell below the knee, beginning —

"How shall we welcome our illustrious guest?"

To which Ser Francesco immediately replied, "Take your favorite maiden, lead the dance with her, and bid all your friends follow; you have a good half-hour for it."

Universal applauses succeeded, the music struck up, couples were instantly formed. The gentry on this occasion led out the cittadinanza, as they usually do in the villeggiatura, — rarely in the carnival, and never at other times. The elder of the priests stood round in their sacred vestments, and looked with cordiality and approbation on the youths, whose hands and arms could indeed do much, and did it, but whose active eyes could rarely move upward the modester of their partners.

While the elder of the clergy were thus gathering the fruits of their liberal cares and paternal exhortations, some of the younger looked on with a tenderer sentiment, not unmingled with regret. Suddenly the bells ceased; the figure of the dance was broken; all hastened into the church; and many hands that joined on the green met together at the font, and touched the brow reciprocally with its lustral waters in soul-devotion.

After the service, and after a sermon a good church-hour in length to gratify him, enriched with compliments from all authors, Christian and Pagan, informing him at the conclusion that although he had been crowned in the Capitol he must die, being born mortal, Ser Francesco rode homeward. The sermon seemed to have sunk deeply into him, and even into the horse under him, for both of them nodded, both snorted, and one stumbled. Simplizio was twice fain to cry, —

"Ser Canonico! Riverenza! in this country if we sleep before dinner it does us harm. There are stones in the road, Ser Canonico, loose as eggs in a nest, and pretty nigh as thick together, huge as mountains."

"Good lad," said Ser Francesco, rubbing his eyes, "toss the biggest of them out of the way, and never mind the rest."

The horse, although he walked, shuffled almost into an amble as he approached the stable, and his master looked up at it with nearly the same contentment. Assunta had been ordered to wait for his return, and cried,—

"O Ser Francesco! you are looking at our long apricot, that runs the whole length of the stable and barn, covered with blossoms as the old white hen is with feathers. You must come in the summer, and eat this fine fruit with Signor Padrone. You cannot think how ruddy and golden and sweet and mellow it is. There are peaches in all the fields, and plums and pears and apples, but there is not another apricot for miles and miles. Ser Giovanni brought the stone from Naples before I was born; a lady gave it to him when she had eaten only half the fruit off it: but perhaps you may have seen her, for you have ridden as far as Rome, or beyond. Padrone looks often at the fruit, and eats it willingly; and I have seen him turn over the stones in his plate, and choose one out from the rest and put it into his pocket, but never plant it."

"Where is the youth?" inquired Ser Francesco.

"Gone away," answered the maiden.

"I wanted to thank him," said the canonico.

"May I tell him so?" asked she.

"And give him," continued he, holding a piece of silver—

"I will give him something of my own, if he goes on and behaves well," said she; "but Signor Padrone would drive him away forever, I am sure, if he were tempted in an evil hour to accept a quattrino for any service he could render the friends of the house."

Ser Francesco was delighted with the graceful animation of this ingenuous girl, and asked her, with a little curiosity, how she could afford to make him a present.

"I do not intend to make him a present," she replied; "but it is better he should be rewarded by me,"—she blushed and hesitated,—"or by Signor Padrone," she added, "than by your reverence. He has not done half his duty yet,—not half. I will teach him; he is quite a child—four months younger than me."

Ser Francesco went into the house, saying to himself at the doorway, "Truth, innocence, and gentle manners have not yet left the earth. There are sermons that never make the ears

weary. I have heard but few of them, and come from church for this."

Whether Simplizio had obeyed some private signal from Assunta, or whether his own delicacy had prompted him to disappear, he was now again in the stable, and the manger was replenished with hay. A bucket was soon after heard ascending from the well; and then two words, "Thanks, Simplizio."

When Petrarca entered the chamber he found Boccaccio with his breviary in his hand, not looking into it, indeed, but repeating a thanksgiving in an audible and impassioned tone of voice. Seeing Ser Francesco, he laid the book down beside him, and welcomed him.

"I hope you have an appetite after your ride," said he, "for you have sent home a good dinner before you."

Ser Francesco did not comprehend him, and expressed it not in words but in looks.

"I am afraid you will dine sadly late to-day; noon has struck this half-hour, and you must wait another, I doubt. However, by good luck I had a couple of citrons in the house, intended to assuage my thirst if the fever had continued. This being over, by God's mercy, I will try (please God!) whether we two greyhounds cannot be a match for a leveret."

"How is this?" said Ser Francesco.

"Young Marc-Antonio Grilli, the cleverest lad in the parish at noosing any wild animal, is our patron of the feast. He has wanted for many a day to say something in the ear of Matilda Vercelli. Bringing up the leveret to my bedside, and opening the lips and cracking the knuckles, and turning the foot round to show the quality and quantity of the hair upon it, and to prove that it really and truly was a leveret and might be eaten without offence to my teeth, he informed me that he had left his mother in the yard, ready to dress it for me; she having been cook to the prior. He protested he owed the *crowned martyr* a forest of leverets, boars, deer, and everything else within them, for having commanded the most backward girls to dance directly. Whereupon he darted forth at Matilda, saying, 'The *crowned martyr* orders it,' seizing both her hands, and swinging her round before she knew what she was about. He soon had an opportunity of applying a word, no doubt as dexterously as hand or foot; and she said sub-

missively, but seriously, and almost sadly, 'Marc-Antonio, now all the people have seen it, they will think it.' And, after a pause, 'I am quite ashamed, and so should you be: are not you now?'

"The others had run into the church. Matilda, who scarcely had noticed it, cried suddenly, 'O Santissima! we are quite alone.'

"'Will you be mine?' cried he, enthusiastically.

"'Oh, they will hear you in the church,' replied she.

"'They shall, they shall!' cried he again, as loudly.

"'If you will only go away.'

"'And then?'

"'Yes, yes, indeed.'

"'The Virgin hears you; fifty saints are witnesses.'

"'Ah! they know you made me; they will look kindly on us.'

"He released her hand; she ran into the church doubling her veil (I will answer for her) at the door, and kneeling as near it as she could find a place.

"'By Saint Peter,' said Marc-Antonio, 'if there is a leveret in the wood, the *crowned martyr* shall dine upon it this blessed day.' And he bounded off, and set about his occupation. I inquired what induced him to designate you by such a title. He answered, that everybody knew you had received the crown of martyrdom at Rome, between the pope and anti-pope, and had performed many miracles, for which they had canonized you, and that you wanted only to die to become a saint."

The leveret was now served up, cut into small pieces, and covered with a rich tenacious sauce, composed of sugar, citron, and various spices. The appetite of Ser Francesco was contagious. Never was dinner more enjoyed by two companions, and never so much by a greater number. One glass of a fragrant wine, the color of honey, and unmixed with water, crowned the repast. Ser Francesco then went into his own chamber, and found on his ample mattress a cool refreshing sleep, quite sufficient to remove all the fatigues of the morning; and Ser Giovanni lowered the pillow against which he had seated himself, and fell into his usual repose. Their separation was not of long continuance; and the religious du-

ties of the Sabbath having been performed, a few reflections on literature were no longer interdicted.

Boccaccio. How happens it, O Francesco! that nearly at the close of our lives, after all our efforts and exhortations, we are standing quite alone in the extensive fields of literature? We are only like to *scoriæ* struck from the anvil of the gigantic Dante. We carry our fire along with us in our parabola, and behold! it falls extinguished on the earth.

Petrarca. Courage! courage! we have hardly yet lighted the lamp and shown the way.

Boccaccio. You are a poet; I am only a commentator, and must soothe my own failures in the success of my master.

I cannot but think, again and again, how fruitlessly the bravest have striven to perpetuate the ascendency or to establish the basis of empire, when Alighieri hath fixed a language for thousands of years and for myriads of men, — a language far richer and more beautiful than our glorious Italy ever knew before, in any of her regions, since the Attic and the Dorian contended for the prize of eloquence on her southern shores. Eternal honor, eternal veneration, to him who raised up our country from the barbarism that surrounded her! Remember how short a time before him, his master Brunetto Latini wrote in French: prose indeed; but whatever has enough in it for poetry, has enough for prose out of its shreds and selvages.

Petrarca. Brunetto! Brunetto! it was not well done in thee. An Italian, a poet, write in French! What human ear can tolerate its nasty nasalities, what homely intellect be satisfied with its bare-bone poverty? By good fortune we have nothing to do with it in the course of our examination. Several things in Dante himself you will find more easy to explain than to excuse. You have already given me a specimen of them, which I need not assist you in rendering more copious.

Boccaccio. There are certainly some that require no little circumspection. Difficult as they are to excuse, the difficulty lies more on the side of the clergy than the laity.

Petrarca. I understand you. The *gergo* of your author has always a reference to the court of the Vatican. Here he speaks in the dark: against his private enemies he always is clear and explicit.

Unless you are irresistibly pressed into it, give no more than

two, or at most three, lectures on the verse which I predict will appear to our Florentines the cleverest in the poem, —

"Che vel viso degli uomini legge O M O."

Boccaccio. We were very near a new civil war about the interpretation of it.

Petrarca. Foolisher questions have excited general ones. What, I wonder, rendered you all thus reasonable at last?

Boccaccio. The majority, which on few occasions is so much in the right, agreed with me that the two eyes are signified by the two vowels, the nose by the centre of the consonant, and the temples by its exterior lines.

Petrarca. In proceeding to explore the "Paradise" more minutely, I must caution you against remarking to your audience, that, although the nose is between the eyes, the temples are not, exactly, — an observation which, if well established, might be resented as somewhat injurious to the Divinity of the "Commedia."

Boccaccio. With all its flatnesses and swamps, many have preferred the "Paradiso" to the other two sections of the poem.

Petrarca. There is as little in it of very bad poetry — or we may rather say, as little of what is no poetry at all — as in either, which are uninviting from an absolute lack of interest and allusion, from the confusedness of the ground-work, the indistinctness of the scene, and the paltriness (in great measure) of the agents. If we are amazed at the number of Latin verses in the "Inferno" and "Purgatorio," what must we be at their fertility in the "Paradiso," where they drop on us in ripe clusters through every glen and avenue! We reach the conclusion of the sixteenth canto before we come in sight of poetry, or more than a glade with a gleam upon it. Here we find a description of Florence in her age of innocence; but the scourge of satire sounds in our ears before we fix the attention.

Boccaccio. I like the old Ghibelline best in the seventeenth, where he dismisses the doctors, corks up the Latin, ceases from psalmody, looses the arms of Calfucci and Arigucci, sets down Caponsacco in the market, and gives us a stave of six verses which repays us amply for our heaviest toils and sufferings, —

"Tu lascierai ogni cosa diletta," etc.

But he soon grows weary of tenderness and sick of sorrow, and returns to his habitual exercise of throwing stones and calling names.

Again we are refreshed in the twentieth. Here we come to the simile; here we look up and see his lark, and are happy and lively as herself. Too soon the hard fingers of the master are round our wrists again; we are dragged into the school, and are obliged to attend the divinity examination, which the poet undergoes from Saint Simon-Peter. He acquits himself pretty well, and receives a handsome compliment from the questioner, who, "inflamed with love," acknowledges he has given "a good account of the coinage, both in regard to weight and alloy."

"Tell me," continues he, "have you any of it in your pocket?"

"Yea," replies the scholar, "and so shining and round that I doubt not what mint it comes from."

Saint Simon-Peter does not take him at his word for it, but tries to puzzle and pose him with several hard queries. He answers both warily and wittily, and grows so contented with his examining master, that, instead of calling him "a sergeant of infantry," as he did before, he now entitles him "the baron."

I must consult our bishop ere I venture to comment on these two verses, —

> "Credo una essenza, si una e si trina
> Che sofferà congiunto *sunt et este*," —

as, whatever may peradventure lie within them, they are hardly worth the ceremony of being burned alive for, although it should be at the expense of the Church.

Petrarca. I recommend to you the straightforward course; but I believe I must halt a little, and advise you to look about you. If you let people see that there are so many faults in your author, they will reward you, not according to your merits, but according to its defects. On celebrated writers, when we speak in public, it is safer to speak magnificently than correctly. Therefore be not too cautious in leading your disciples and in telling them, Here you may step securely, here you must mind your footing; for a florin will drop out of your pocket at every such crevice you stop to cross.

Boccaccio. The room is hardly light enough to let me see whether you are smiling; but being the most ingenuous soul alive, and by no means the least jocose one, I suspect it. My office is to explain what is difficult, rather than to expatiate on what is beautiful or to investigate what is amiss. If those who invite me to read the lectures mark out the topics for me, nothing is easier than to keep within them. Yet with how true and entire a pleasure shall I point out to my fellow-citizens such a glorious tract of splendor as there is in the single line,—

> "Cio ch' io vedevo mi sembrava un riso
> Dell' universo!"

With what exultation shall I toss up my gauntlet into the balcony of proud Antiquity, and cry *Descend! Contend!*

I have frequently heard your admiration of this passage, and therefore I dwell on it the more delighted. Besides, we seldom find anything in our progress that is not apter to excite a very different sensation. School-divinity can never be made attractive to the Muses; nor will Virgil and Thomas Aquinas ever cordially shake hands. The unrelenting rancor against the popes is more tedious than unmerited; in a poem I doubt whether we would not rather find it unmerited than tedious, for of all the sins against the spirit of poetry, this is the most unpardonable. Something of our indignation, and a proportion of our scorn, may fairly be detached from the popes and thrown on the pusillanimous and perfidious who suffered such excrescences to shoot up, exhausting and poisoning the soil they sprang from.

Petrarca. I do not wonder they make Saint Peter "redden," as we hear they do, but I regret that they make him stammer,

> "Quegli che usurpa in terra il luogo mio,
> Il luogo mio, il luogo mio," etc.

Alighieri was not the first Catholic who taught us that the papacy is usurpation, nor will he be (let us earnestly hope) the last to inculcate so evident a doctrine.

Boccaccio. Canonico of Parma! Canonico of Parma! you make my hair stand on end. But since nobody sees it besides yourself, prythee tell me how it happens that an infallible pope should denounce as damnable the decision of another infal-

lible pope, his immediate predecessor? Giovanni the twenty-second, whom you knew intimately, taught us that the souls of the just could not enjoy the sight of God until after the day of universal judgment; but the doctors of theology at Paris, and those learned and competent clerks the kings of France and Naples, would not allow him to die before he had swallowed the choke-pear they could not chew. The succeeding pope, who called himself an ass, — in which infallibility was less wounded, and neither king nor doctor carped at it (for not only was he one, but as truth-telling a beast as Balaam's), — condemned this error, as indeed well he might, after two kings had set their faces against it. But on the whole, the thing is ugly and perplexing. That they were both infallible we know; and yet they differed! Nay, the former differed from himself, and was pope all the while, — of course infallible! Well, since we may not solve the riddle, let us suppose it is only a mystery the more, and be thankful for it.

Petrarca. That is best.

Boccaccio. I never was one of those who wish for ice to slide upon in summer. Being no theologian, I neither am nor desire to be sharp-sighted in articles of heresy; but it is reported that there are among Christians some who hesitate to worship the Virgin.

Petrarca. Few, let us hope.

Boccaccio. Hard hearts! Imagine her, in her fifteenth year, fondling the lovely babe whom she was destined to outlive, — destined to see shedding his blood and bowing his head in agony! Can we ever pass her by and not say from our hearts, "O thou whose purity had only the stain of compassionate tears upon it! blessings, blessings on thee!" I never saw her image but it suspended my steps on the highway of the world, discoursed with me, softened and chastened me, showing me too clearly my unworthiness by the light of a reproving smile.

Petrarca. Woe betide those who cut off from us any source of tenderness, and shut out from any of our senses the access to devotion!

Beatrice, in the place before us, changes color too, as deeply as ever she did on earth; for Saint Peter, in his passion, picks up and flourishes some very filthy words. He does not recover

the use of his reason on a sudden; but after a long and bitter complaint that faith and innocence are only to be found in little children, and that the child moreover who loves and listens to its mother while it lisps, wishes to see her buried when it can speak plainly, — he informs us that this corruption ought to excite no wonder, since the human race must of necessity go astray, not having any one upon earth to govern it.

Boccaccio. Is not this strange though, from the mouth of one inspired? We are taught that there never shall be wanting a head to govern the Church; could Saint Peter say that it *was* wanting? I feel my Catholicism here touched to the quick. However, I am resolved not to doubt; the more difficulties I find, the fewer questions I raise: the saints must settle it, as well as they can, among themselves.

Petrarca. They are nearer the fountain of truth than we are; and I am confident Saint Paul was in the right.

Boccaccio. I do verily believe he may have been, although at Rome we might be in jeopardy for saying it. Well is it for me that my engagement is to comment on Alighieri's "Divina Commedia" instead of his treatise "De Monarchiâ." He says bold things there, and sets apostles and popes together by the ears. That is not the worst. He would destroy what is and should be, and would establish what never can nor ought to be.

Petrarca. If a universal monarch could make children good universally, and keep them as innocent when they grow up as when they were in the cradle, we might wish him upon his throne to-morrow. But Alighieri, and those others who have conceived such a prodigy, seem to be unaware that what they would establish for the sake of unity is the very thing by which this unity must be demolished. For since universal power does not confer on its possessor universal intelligence, and since a greater number of the cunning could and would assemble round him, he must (if we suppose him like the majority and nearly the totality of his class) appoint a greater proportion of such subjects to the management and control of his dominions. Many of them would become the rulers of cities and of provinces in which they have no connections or affinities, and in which the preservation of character is less desirable to them than the possession of power. The opera-

tions of injustice, and the opportunities of improvement would be alike concealed from the monarch in the remoter parts of his territories, and every man of high station would exercise more authority than he.

Boccaccio. Casting aside the impracticable scheme of universal monarchy, if kings and princes there must be, even in the midst of civility and letters, why cannot they return to European customs, renouncing those Asiatic practices which are become enormously prevalent? Why cannot they be contented with such power as the kings of Rome and the lucumons of Etruria were contented with? But forsooth they are wiser! and such customs are obsolete! Of their wisdom I shall venture to say nothing, for nothing, I believe, is to be said of it; but the customs are not obsolete in other countries, — they have taken deep root in the north, and exhibit the signs of vigor and vitality. Unhappily, the weakest men always think they least want help, — like the mad and the drunk. Princes and geese are fond of standing on one leg, and fancy it (no doubt) a position of gracefulness and security, until the cramp seizes them on a sudden: then they find how helpless they are, and how much better it would have been if they had employed all the support at their disposal.

Petrarca. When the familiars of absolute princes taunt us, as they are wont to do, with the only apothegm they ever learned by heart, — namely, that it is better to be ruled by one master than by many, — I quite agree with them, unity of power being the principle of republicanism, while the principle of despotism is division and delegation. In the one system every man conducts his own affairs, either personally or through the agency of some trustworthy representative, which is essentially the same; in the other system no man, in quality of citizen, has any affairs of his own to conduct, but a tutor has been as much set over him as over a lunatic, as little with his option or consent, and without any provision, as there is in the case of the lunatic, for returning reason. Meanwhile, the spirit of republics is omnipresent in them, — as active in the particles as in the mass, in the circumference as in the centre. Eternal it must be, as truth and justice are, although not stationary. Yet when we look on Venice and Genoa, on the turreted Pisa and our own fair Florence, and many smaller

cities self-poised in high serenity; when we see what edifices they have raised, and then glance at the wretched habitations of the slaves around, — the Austrians, the French, and other fierce restless barbarians, — difficult is it to believe that the beneficent God, who smiled upon these our labors, will ever in his indignation cast them down, a helpless prey to such invaders.

Morals and happiness will always be nearest to perfection in small communities, where functionaries are appointed by as numerous a body as can be brought together of the industrious and intelligent, who have observed in what manner they superintend their families and converse with their equals and dependants. Do we find that farms are better cultivated for being large? Is your neighbor friendlier for being powerful? Is your steward honester and more attentive for having a mortgage on your estate, or a claim to a joint property in your mansion? Yet well-educated men are seen about the streets so vacant and delirious as to fancy that a country can only be well governed by somebody who never saw and will never see a twentieth part of it, or know a hundredth part of its necessities, — somebody who has no relationships in it, no connections, no remembrances. A man without soul and sympathy is alone to be the governor of men! Giovanni, our Florentines are, beyond all others, a treacherous, tricking, mercenary race. What in the name of heaven will become of them, if ever they listen to these ravings; if ever they lose, by their cowardice and dissensions (the crust of salt that keeps them from putrescency), their freedom?

Boccaccio. Alas! I dare hardly look out sometimes, lest I see before me the day when German and Spaniard will split them down the back and throw them upon the coals. Sad thought! here we will have done with it. We cannot help them: we have made the most of them, like the good tailor who, as Dante says, cut his coat according to his cloth.

Petrarca. Do you intend, if they should call upon you again, to give them occasionally some of your strictures on his prose-writings?

Boccaccio. It would not be expedient. Enough of his political sentiments is exhibited in various places of his poem, to render him unacceptable to one party, and enough of his

theological, or rather his ecclesiastical, to frighten both. You and I were never passionately fond of the papacy, to which we trace in great measure the miseries of our Italy, its divisions and its corruptions, the substitution of cunning for fortitude, and of creed for conduct. Dante burst into indignation at the sight of this, and because the popes took away our Christianity, he was so angry he would throw our freedom after it. Any thorn in the way is fit enough to toss the tattered rag on. A German king will do, — Austrian or Bavarian, Swabian or Switzer. And to humiliate us more and more, and render us the laughing-stock of our household, he would invest the intruder with the title of Roman Emperor. What! it is not enough then that he assumes it? We must invite him, forsooth, to accept it at our hands!

Petrarca. Let the other nations of Europe be governed by their hereditary kings and feudal princes, — it is more accordant with those ancient habits which have not yet given way to the blandishment of literature and the pacific triumph of the arts; but let the states of Italy be guided by their own citizens. May nations find out by degrees that the next evil to being conquered is to conquer, and that he who assists in making slaves gives over at last by becoming one.

Boccaccio. Let us endure a French pope or any other as well as we can; there is no novelty in his being a stranger. The Romans at all times picked up recruits from the thieves, gods, and priests of all nations. Dante is wrong, I suspect, in imagining the popes to be infidels; and, no doubt, they would pay for Indulgences as honestly as they sell them, if there were anybody at hand to receive the money. But who in the world ever thought of buying the cap he was wearing on his own head? Popes are no such triflers. After all, an infidel pope (and I do not believe there are three in a dozen) is less noxious than a sanguinary soldier, be his appellation what it may, if his power is only limited by his will. My experience has however taught me that where there is a great mass of power concentrated, it will always act with great influence on the secondary around it. Whether pope or emperor or native king occupy the most authority within the Alps, the barons will range themselves under his banner, apart from the citizens. Venice, who appears to have received by succession the politi-

cal wisdom of republican Rome, has less political enterprise; and the jealousies of her rivals will always hold them back, or greatly check them, from any plan suggested by her for the general good.

Petrarca. It appears to be the will of Providence that power and happiness shall never co-exist. Whenever a state becomes powerful, it becomes unjust; and injustice leads it first to the ruin of others, and next and speedily to its own. We whose hearts are republican are dazzled by looking so long and so intently at the eagles and standards and golden letters, "S. P. Q. R." We are reluctant to admit that the most wretched days of ancient Rome were the days of her most illustrious men; that they began amid the triumphs of Scipio, when the Gracchi perished, and reached the worst under the dictatorship of Cæsar, when perished Liberty herself. A milder and better race was gradually formed by Grecian instruction. Vespasian, Titus, Nerva, Trajan, the Antonines, the Gordians, Tacitus, Probus, in an almost unbroken series, are such men as never wore the diadem in other countries; and Rome can show nothing comparable to them in the most renowned and virtuous of her earlier consuls. Humanity would be consoled in some degree by them if their example had sunk into the breasts of the governed. But ferocity is unsoftened by sensuality; and the milk of the wolf could always be traced in the veins of the effeminated Romans.

Petrarca. That is true; and they continue to this day less humane than any other people of Italy. The better part of their character has fallen off from them; and in courage and perseverance they are far behind the Venetians and Ligurians. These last, a scanty population, were hardly to be conquered by Rome in the plenitude of her power, and with all her confederates, — for which reason they were hated by her beyond all other nations. To gratify the pride and malice of Augustus, were written the verses —

> " Vane Ligur! frustraque animis elate superbis,
> Nequicquam patrias tentasti lubricus artes."

Since that time the inhabitants of Genoa and Venice have been enriched with the generous blood of the Lombards. This little tribe on the Subalpine territory, and the Norman on the

Apulian, demonstrate to us, by the rapidity and extension of their conquests, that Italy is an over-ripe fruit, ready to drop from the stalk under the feet of the first insect that alights on it.

Boccaccio. The Germans, although as ignorant as are the French, are less cruel, less insolent, and less rapacious. The French have a separate claw for every object of appetite or passion, and a spring that enables them to seize it. The desires of the German are overlaid with food and extinguished with drink, which to others are stimulants and incentives. The German loves to see everything about him orderly and entire, however coarse and common: the nature of the Frenchman is to derange and destroy everything. Sometimes when he has done so, he will reconstruct and refit it in his own manner, slenderly and fantastically; oftener leaving it in the middle, and proposing to lay the foundation when he has pointed the pinnacles and gilded the weathercock.

Petrarca. There is no danger that the French will have a durable footing in this or any other country. Their levity is more intolerable than German pressure, their arrogance than German pride, their falsehood than German rudeness, and their vexations than German exaction.

Boccaccio. If I must be devoured, I have little choice between the bear and the panther. May we always see the creatures at a distance and across the grating! The French will fondle us, to show us how vastly it is our interest to fondle them, — watching all the while their opportunity, looking mild and half-asleep, making a dash at last, and laying bare and fleshless the arm we extend to them, from shoulder-blade to wrist.

Petrarca. No nation grasping at so much ever held so little, or lost so soon what it had inveigled. Yet France is surrounded by smaller and by apparently weaker states, which she never ceases to molest and invade. Whatever she has won and whatever she has lost, has been alike won and lost by her perfidy,— the characteristic of the people from the earliest ages, and recorded by a succession of historians, Greek and Roman.

Boccaccio. My father spent many years among them, where also my education was completed; yet whatever I have seen, I must acknowledge, corresponds with whatever I have read,

and corroborates in my mind the testimony of tradition. Their ancient history is only a preface to their later. Deplorable as is the condition of Italy, I am more contented to share in her sufferings than in the frothy festivities of her frisky neighbor.

Petrarca. So am I; but we must never deny or dissemble the victories of the ancient Gauls, many traces of which are remaining, — not that a nation's glory is the greener for the ashes it has scattered in the season of its barbarism.

Boccaccio. The Cisalpine regions were indeed both invaded and occupied by them; yet from inability to retain the acquisition, how inconsiderable a part of the population is Gaulish! Long before the time of Cæsar the language was Latin throughout: the soldiers of Marius swept away the last dregs and stains on the ancient hearth. Nor is there in the physiognomy of the people the slightest indication of the Gaul, as we perceive by medals and marbles. These would surely preserve his features, because they can only be the memorials of the higher orders, which of course would have descended from the conquerors. They merged early and totally in the original mass, and the countenances in Cisalpine busts are as beautiful and dignified as our other Italian races.

Petrarca. The French imagine theirs are too.

Boccaccio. I heartily wish them the full enjoyment of their blessings, real or imaginary; but neither their manners nor their principles coincide with ours, nor can a reasonable hope be entertained of benefit in their alliance. Union at home is all we want, and vigilance to perpetuate the better of our institutions.

Petrarca. The land, O Giovanni, of your early youth, the land of my only love, fascinates us no longer. Italy is our country; and not ours only, but every man's, wherever may have been his wanderings, wherever may have been his birth, who watches with anxiety the recovery of the Arts, and acknowledges the supremacy of Genius. Besides, it is in Italy at last that all our few friends are resident. Yours were left behind you at Paris in your adolescence, if indeed any friendship can exist between a Florentine and a Frenchman; mine at Avignon were Italians, and older for the most part than myself. Here we know that we are beloved by some, and esteemed by many. It indeed gave me pleasure, the first morning as I lay in bed,

to overhear the fondness and earnestness which a worthy priest was expressing in your behalf.

Boccaccio. In mine?

Petrarca. Yes, indeed: what wonder?

Boccaccio. A worthy priest?

Petrarca. None else, certainly.

Boccaccio. Heard in bed! dreaming, dreaming — ay?

Petrarca. No, indeed: my eyes and ears were wide open.

Boccaccio. The little parlor opens into your room. But what priest could that be? Canonico Casini? He only comes when we have a roast of thrushes, or some such small matter at table; and this is not the season, — they are pairing. Plover eggs might tempt him hitherward. If he heard a plover he would not be easy, and would fain make her drop her oblation before she had settled her nest.

Petrarca. It is right and proper that you should be informed who the clergyman was to whom you are under an obligation.

Boccaccio. Tell me something about it, for truly I am at a loss to conjecture.

Petrarca. He must unquestionably have been expressing a kind and ardent solicitude for your eternal welfare. The first words I heard on awakening were these: "Ser Giovanni, although the best of masters — "

Boccaccio. Those were Assuntina's.

Petrarca. — "may hardly be quite so holy (not being priest or friar) as your reverence."

She was interrupted by the question, "What conversation holdeth he?"

She answered: "He never talks of loving our neighbor with all our heart, all our soul, and all our strength, although he often gives away the last loaf in the pantry."

Boccaccio. It was she! Why did she say that? — the slut!

Petrarca. "He doth well," replied the confessor. "Of the Church, of the brotherhood, that is, of me, what discourses holdeth he?"

I thought the question an indiscreet one; but confessors vary in their advances to the seat of truth.

She proceeded to answer: "He never said anything about

the power of the Church to absolve us, if we should happen to go astray a little in good company, like your reverence."

Here, it is easy to perceive, is some slight ambiguity. Evidently she meant to say, by the seduction of "bad" company, and to express that his reverence had asserted his power of absolution; which is undeniable.

Boccaccio. I have my version.

Petrarca. What may yours be?

Boccaccio. Frate Biagio! broad as daylight! the whole frock round!

I would wager a flask of oil against a turnip, that he laid another trap for a penance. Let us see how he went on. I warrant, as he warmed, he left off limping in his paces, and bore hard upon the bridle.

Petrarca. "Much do I fear," continued the expositor, "he never spoke to thee, child, about another world."

There was a silence of some continuance.

"Speak!" said the confessor.

"No, indeed, he never did, poor Padrone!" was the slow and evidently reluctant avowal of the maiden; for in the midst of the acknowledgment her sighs came through the crevices of the door; then, without any further interrogation, and with little delay, she added, "But he often makes this look like it."

Boccaccio. And now, if he had carried a holy scourge, it would not have been on his shoulders that he would have laid it.

Petrarca. Zeal carries men often too far afloat; and confessors in general wish to have the sole steerage of the conscience. When she told him that your benignity made this world another heaven, he warmly and sharply answered, "It is only we who ought to do that."

"Hush," said the maiden; and I verily believe she at that moment set her back against the door, to prevent the sounds from coming through the crevices, for the rest of them seemed to be just over my night-cap. "Hush," said she, in the whole length of that softest of all articulations, "there is Ser Francesco in the next room; he sleeps long into the morning, but he is so clever a clerk he may understand you just the same. I doubt whether he thinks Ser Giovanni in the wrong for

making so many people quite happy; and if he should, it would grieve me very much to think he blamed Ser Giovanni."

"Who is Ser Francesco?" he asked in a low voice.

"Ser Canonico," she answered.

"Of what Duomo?" continued he.

"Who knows?" was the reply; "but he is Padrone's heart's friend, for certain."

"Cospetto di Bacco! It can then be no other than Petrarca. He makes rhymes and love like the devil. Don't listen to him, or you are undone. Does he love you too, as well as Padrone?" he asked, still lowering his voice.

"I cannot tell that matter," she answered somewhat impatiently; "but I love him."

"To my face!" cried he, smartly.

"To the Santissima!" replied she, instantaneously; "for have not I told your reverence he is Padrone's true heart's friend! And are not you my confessor, when you come on purpose?"

"True, true!" answered he; "but there are occasions when we are shocked by the confession, and wish it made less daringly."

"I was bold; but who can help loving him who loves my good Padrone?" said she, much more submissively.

Boccaccio. Brave girl, for that!

Dog of a Frate! They are all of a kidney, all of a kennel. I would dilute their meal well, and keep them low. They should not waddle and wallop in every hollow lane, nor loll out their watery tongues at every wash-pool in the parish. We shall hear, I trust, no more about Fra Biagio in the house while you are with us. Ah, were it then for life!

Petrarca. The man's prudence may be reasonably doubted, but it were uncharitable to question his sincerity. Could a neighbor, a religious one in particular, be indifferent to the welfare of Boccaccio, or any belonging to him?

Boccaccio. I do not complain of his indifference. Indifferent! no, not he. He might as well be, though. My Villetta here is my castle: it was my father's; it was his father's. Cowls did not hang to dry upon the same cord with caps in their *podere;* they shall not in mine. The girl is an honest girl, Francesco, though I say it. Neither she nor any other shall be

befooled and bamboozled under my roof. Methinks Holy Church might contrive some improvement upon confession.

Petrarca. Hush, Giovanni! But, it being a matter of discipline, who knows but she might.

Boccaccio. Discipline! ay, ay, ay! faith and troth, there are some who want it.

Petrarca. You really terrify me. These are sad surmises.

Boccaccio. Sad enough! but I am keeper of my handmaiden's probity.

Petrarca. It could not be kept safer.

Boccaccio. I wonder what the Frate would be putting into her head.

Petrarca. Nothing, nothing; be assured.

Boccaccio. Why did he ask her all those questions?

Petrarca. Confessors do occasionally take circuitous ways to arrive at the secrets of the human heart.

Boccaccio. And sometimes they drive at it, methinks, a whit too directly. He had no business to make remarks about me.

Petrarca. Anxiety.

Boccaccio. 'Fore God, Francesco, he shall have more of that; for I will shut him out the moment I am again up and stirring, though he stand but a nose's length off. I have no fear about the girl, no suspicion of her. He might whistle to the moon on a frosty night, and expect as reasonably her descending. Never was a man so entirely at his ease as I am about that; never, never! She is adamant; a bright sword now first unscabbarded, — no breath can hang about it. A seal of beryl, of chrysolite, of ruby, — to make impressions (all in good time and proper place though) and receive none; incapable, just as they are, of splitting or cracking or flawing or harboring dirt. Let him mind that! Such, I assure you, is that poor little wench, Assuntina.

Petrarca. I am convinced that so well-behaved a young creature as Assunta —

Boccaccio. Right! Assunta is her name by baptism: we usually call her Assuntina, because she is slender, and scarcely yet full-grown, perhaps: but who can tell?

As for those friars, I never was a friend to impudence; I hate loose suggestions. In girls' minds you will find little dust but what is carried there by gusts from without. They seldom want

sweeping; when they do, the broom should be taken from behind the house-door, and the master should be the sacristan.

— Scarcely were these words uttered when Assunta was heard running up the stairs; and the next moment she rapped. Being ordered to come in, she entered with a willow twig in her hand, from the middle of which willow twig (for she held the two ends together) hung a fish, shining with green and gold.

"What hast there, young maiden?" said Ser Francesco.

"A fish, Riverenza!" answered she. "In Tuscany we call it *tinca*."

Petrarca. I too am a little of a Tuscan.

Assunta. Indeed! well, you really speak very like one, but only more sweetly and slowly. I wonder how you can keep up with Signor Padrone, — he talks fast when he is in health; and you have made him so. Why did not you come before? Your reverence has surely been at Certaldo in time past?

Petrarca. Yes, before thou wert born.

Assunta. Ah, sir! it must have been long ago then.

Petrarca. Thou hast just entered upon life.

Assunta. I am no child.

Petrarca. What then art thou?

Assunta. I know not; I have lost both father and mother: there is a name for such as I am.

Petrarca. And a place in heaven.

Boccaccio. Who brought us that fish, Assunta? Hast paid for it? There must be seven pounds; I never saw the like.

Assunta. I could hardly lift up my apron to my eyes with it in my hand. Luca, who brought it all the way from the Padule, could scarcely be entreated to eat a morsel of bread, or to sit down.

Boccaccio. Give him a flask or two of our wine; he will like it better than the sour puddle of the plain.

Assunta. He is gone back.

Boccaccio. Gone! who is he, pray?

Assunta. Luca, to be sure.

Boccaccio. What Luca?

Assunta. Dominedio! O Riverenza, how sadly must Ser Giovanni, my poor Padrone, have lost his memory in this cruel long illness! He cannot recollect young Luca of the Bientola, who married Maria.

Boccaccio. I never heard of either, to the best of my knowledge.

Assunta. Be pleased to mention this in your prayers to-night, Ser Canonico! May Our Lady soon give him back his memory! and everything else she has been pleased (only in play, I hope) to take away from him! Ser Francesco, you must have heard all over the world how Maria Gargarelli, who lived in the service of our paroco, somehow was outwitted by Satanasso. Monsignore thought the paroco had not done all he might have done against his wiles and craftiness, and sent his reverence over to the monastery in the mountains, — Laverna yonder, — to make him look sharp; and there he is yet. And now does Signor Padrone recollect?

Boccaccio. Rather more distinctly.

Assunta. Ah, me! Rather more distinctly! have patience, Signor Padrone! I am too venturous, God help me! But, Riverenza, when Maria was the scorn or the abhorrence of everybody else, excepting poor Luca Sabbatini, who had always cherished her, and excepting Signor Padrone, who had never seen her in his lifetime, — for Paroco Snello said he desired no visits from any who took liberties with Holy Church (as if Padrone did!), — Luca one day came to me out of breath, with money in his hand for our duck. Now it so happened that the duck, stuffed with noble chestnuts, was going to table at that instant. I told Signor Padrone.

Boccaccio. Assunta, I never heard thee repeat so long and tiresome a story before, nor put thyself out of breath so. Come, we have had enough of it.

Petrarca. She is mortified; pray let her proceed.

Boccaccio. As you will.

Assunta. I told Signor Padrone how Luca was lamenting that Maria was seized with an *imagination.*

Petrarca. No wonder then she fell into misfortune, and her neighbors and friends avoided her.

Assunta. Riverenza, how can you smile? Signor Padrone, and you, too? You shook your head and sighed at it when it happened. The Demonio, who had caused all the first mischief, was not contented until he had given her the *imagination.*

Petrarca. He could not have finished his work more effectually.

Assunta. He was balked, however. Luca said, "She shall not die under her wrongs, please God!" I repeated the words to Signor Padrone (he seems to listen, Riverenza, and will remember presently), and Signor Padrone cut away one leg for himself, clean forgetting all the chestnuts inside, and said sharply, "Give the bird to Luca; and, hark ye, bring back the minestra."

Maria loved Luca with all her heart, and Luca loved Maria with all his; but they both hated Paroco Snello for such neglect about the evil one. And even Monsignore, who sent for Luca on purpose, had some difficulty in persuading him to forbear from choler and discourse; for Luca, who never swears, swore bitterly that the Devil should play no such tricks again, nor alight on girls napping in the parsonage. Monsignore thought he intended to take violent possession, and to keep watch there himself without consent of the incumbent. "I will have no scandal," said Monsignore; so there was none. Maria, though she did indeed, as I told your reverence, love her Luca dearly, yet she long refused to marry him, and cried very much at last on the wedding-day, and said, as she entered the porch, "Luca, it is not yet too late to leave me."

He would have kissed her, but her face was upon his shoulder.

Pievano Locatelli married them, and gave them his blessing; and going down from the altar he said before the people, as he stood on the last step, "Be comforted, child! be comforted! God above knows that thy husband is honest, and that thou art innocent." Pievano's voice trembled, for he was an aged and holy man, and had walked two miles on the occasion. Pulcheria, his governante, eighty years old, carried an apronful of lilies to bestrew the altar; and partly from the lilies, and partly from the blessed angels, who although invisible were present, the church was filled with fragrance. Many who heretofore had been frightened at hearing the mention of Maria's name, ventured now to walk up toward her; and some gave her needles, and some offered skeins of thread, and some ran home again for pots of honey.

Boccaccio. And why didst not thou take her some trifle?

Assunta. I had none.

Boccaccio. Surely there are always such about the premises.

Assunta. Not mine to give away.

Boccaccio. So then at thy hands, Assunta, she went off not overladen! Ne'er a bone-bodkin out of thy bravery, ay?

Assunta. I ran out knitting, with the woodbine and syringa in the basket for the parlor. I made the basket — I and — but myself chiefly, for boys are loiterers.

Boccaccio. Well, well, — why not bestow the basket, together with its rich contents?

Assunta. I am ashamed to say it — I covered my half-stocking with them as quickly as I could, and ran after her and presented it. Not knowing what was under the flowers, and never minding the liberty I had taken being a stranger to her, she accepted it as graciously as possible, and bade me be happy.

Petrarca. I hope you have always kept her command.

Assunta. Nobody is ever unhappy here excepting Fra Biagio, who frets sometimes; but that may be the walk, or he may fancy Ser Giovanni to be worse than he really is.

— Having now performed her mission and concluded her narrative, she bowed and said, "Excuse me, Riverenza! excuse me, Signor Padrone! my arm aches with this great fish." Then bowing again, and moving her eyes modestly toward each, she added, "with permission!" and left the chamber.

"About the Sposina," after a pause, began Ser Francesco, "about the Sposina, — I do not see the matter clearly."

"You have studied too much to see all things clearly," answered Ser Giovanni; "you see only the greatest. In fine, the Devil, on this count, is acquitted by acclamation; and the Paroco Snello eats lettuce and chiccory up yonder at Laverna. He has mendicant friars for his society every day, and snails, as pure as water can wash and boil them, for his repast on festivals. Under this discipline, if they keep it up, surely one devil out of legion will depart from him."

FOURTH DAY'S INTERVIEW.

Petrarca. Do not throw aside your "Paradiso" for me. Have you been reading it again so early?

Boccaccio. Looking into it here and there. I had spare time before me.

Petrarca. You have coasted the whole poem, and your boat's bottom now touches ground. But tell me what you think of Beatrice.

Boccaccio. I think her in general more of the seraphic doctor than of the seraph. It is well she retained her beauty where she was, or she would scarcely be tolerable now and then. And yet, in other parts, we forget the captiousness in which Theology takes delight, and feel our bosoms refreshed by the perfect presence of the youthful and innocent Bice.

There is something so sweetly sanctifying in pure love!

Petrarca.

> "Pure love? there is no other, nor shall be,
> Till the worse angels hurl the better down,
> And heaven lie under hell; if God is one
> And pure, so surely love is pure and one."

Boccaccio. You understand it better than I do: you must have your own way.

Above all, I have been admiring the melody of the cadence in this portion of the "Divina Commedia." Some of the stanzas leave us nothing to desire in facility and elegance. Alighieri grows harmonious as he grows humane, and does not, like Orpheus, play the better with the beasts about him.

Petrarca. It is in paradise that we might expect his tones to be tried and modulated.

Boccaccio. None of the imitative arts should repose on writhings and distortions. Tragedy herself, unless she lead from Terror to Pity, has lost her way.

Petrarca. What then must be thought of a long and crowded work, whence Pity is violently excluded, and where Hatred is the first personage we meet, and almost the last we part from?

Boccaccio. Happily the poet has given us here a few breezes of the morning, a few glimpses of the stars, a few similes of objects to which we have been accustomed among the amusements or occupations of the country. Some of them would be less admired in a meaner author, and are welcome here chiefly as a variety and relief to the mind, after a long continuance in a painful posture. Have you not frequently been pleased with a short quotation of verses in themselves but indifferent, from finding them in some tedious dissertation,—and especially if they carry you forth a little into the open air?

Petrarca. I am not quite certain whether if the verses were indifferent, I should willingly exchange the prose for them, bad prose being less wearisome than bad poetry,—so much less, indeed, that the advantage of the exchange might fail to balance the account.

Boccaccio. Let me try whether I cannot give you an example of such effect, having already given you the tedious dissertation.

Petrarca. Do your worst.

Boccaccio. Not that neither, but bad enough.

THE PILGRIM'S SHELL.

Under a tuft of eglantine, at noon,
I saw a pilgrim loosen his broad shell
To catch the water off a stony tongue:
Medusa's it might be, or Pan's, erewhile,
For the huge head was shapeless, eaten out
By time and tempest here, and here embossed
With clasping tangles of dark maidenhair
"How happy is thy thirst! how soon assuaged!
How sweet that coldest water this hot day!"
Whispered my thoughts; not having yet observed
His shell so shallow and so chipped around.
Tall though he was, he held it higher, to meet
The sparkler at its outset: with fresh leap,
Vigorous as one just free upon the world,
Impetuous too as one first checked, with stamp
Heavy as ten such sparklers might be deemed,
Rushed it amain, from cavity and rim
And rim's divergent channels, and dropped thick
(Issuing at wrist and elbow) on the grass.
The pilgrim shook his head, and fixing up
His scallop,
"There is something yet," said he.
"Too scanty in this world for my desires!"

Petrarca. O Giovanni! these are better thoughts and opportuner than such lonely places formerly supplied us with. The whispers of rose-bushes were not always so innocent: under the budding and under the full-blown we sometimes find other images; sometimes the pure fountain failed in bringing purity to the heart.

> "Unholy fire sprang up in fields and woods;
> The air that fanned it came from solitudes."

If our desires are worthy ones and accomplished, we rejoice in after time; if unworthy and unsuccessful, we rejoice no less at their discomfiture and miscarriage. We cannot have all we wish for. Nothing is said oftener, nothing earlier, nothing later: it begins in the arms with the chidings of the nurse; it will terminate with the milder voice of the physician at the death-bed. But although everybody has heard and must have said it, yet nobody seems to have said or considered that it is much, very much, to be able to form and project our wishes; that in the voyage we take to compass and turn them to account, we breathe freely and hopefully; and that it is chiefly in the stagnation of port we are in danger of disappointment and disease.

Boccaccio. The young man who resolves to conquer his love is only half in earnest, or has already half conquered it. But fields and woods have no dangers now for us. I may be alone until doomsday, and loose thoughts will be at fault if they try to scent me.

Petrarca. When the rest of our smiles have left us, we may smile at our immunities. There are indeed, for nearly all,

> "Rocks on the shore wherefrom we launch on life,
> Before our final harbor rocks again,
> And (narrow sun-paced plains sailed swiftly by)
> Eddies and breakers all the space between."

Yet Nature preserves her sedater charms for us both; and I doubt whether we do not enjoy them the more by exemption from solicitations and distractions. We are not old while we can hear and enjoy, as much as ever,

> "The lonely bird, the bird of even-song,
> When, catching one far call, he leaps elate,
> In his full fondness drowns it, and again
> The shrill, shrill glee through Serravalle rings."

Boccaccio. The nightingale is a lively bird to the young and joyous, a melancholy one to the declining and pensive. He has notes for every ear, he has feelings for every bosom; and he exercises over gentle souls a wider and more welcome dominion than any other creature. If I must not offer you my thanks for bringing to me such associations as the bedside of sickness is rarely in readiness to supply; if I must not declare to you how pleasant and well-placed are your reflections on our condition, — I may venture to remark on the nightingale, that our Italy is the only country where this bird is killed for the market. In no other is the race of avarice and gluttony so hard run. What a triumph for a Florentine to hold under his fork the most delightful being in all animated nature, — the being to which every poet, or nearly every one, dedicates the first fruits of his labors! A cannibal who devours his enemy through intolerable hunger, or, what he holds as the measure of justice and of righteousness, revenge, may be viewed with less abhorrence than the heartless gormandizer who casts upon his loaded stomach the little breast that has poured delight on thousands.

Petrarca. The English, I remember Ser Geoffreddo [1] telling us, never kill singing-birds nor swallows.

Boccaccio. Music and hospitality are sweet and sacred things with them; and well may they value their few warm days, out of which, if the produce is not wine and oil, they gather song and garner sensibility.

Petrarca. Ser Geoffreddo felt more pleasure in the generosity and humanity of his countrymen than in the victories they had recently won with incredibly smaller numbers over their boastful enemy.

Boccaccio. I know not of what nation I could name so amusing a companion as Ser Geoffreddo. The Englishman is rather an island than an islander; bluff, stormy, rude, abrupt, repulsive, inaccessible. We must not, however, hold back or dissemble the learning and wisdom and courtesy of the better. While France was without one single man above a dwarf in literature, and we in Italy had only a small sprinkling of it, Richard de Bury was sent ambassador to Rome by King Edward. So great was his learning, that he composed two

[1] Chaucer.

grammars, — one Greek, one Hebrew, neither of which labors had been attempted by the most industrious and erudite of those who spoke the languages; he likewise formed so complete a library as belongs only to the Byzantine emperors. This prelate came into Italy attended by Ser Geoffreddo, in whose company we spent, as you remember, two charming evenings at Arezzo.

Petrarca. What wonderful things his countrymen have been achieving in this century!

Boccaccio. And how curious it is to trace them up into their Norwegian coves and creeks three or four centuries back!

Petrarca. Do you think it possible that Norway, which never could maintain sixty thousand [1] male adults, was capable of sending from her native population a sufficient force of warriors to conquer the best province of France and the whole of England? And you must deduct from these sixty thousand the aged, the artisans, the cultivators, and the clergy, together with all the dependents of the Church, which numbers united, we may believe, amounted to above one half.

Boccaccio. That she could embody such an army from her own very scanty and scattered population? No, indeed; but if you recollect that a vast quantity of British had been ejected by incursions of Picts, and that also there had been on the borders a general insurrection against the Romans, and against those of half-blood (which is always the case in a rebellion of the aboriginals); and if you believe as I do, that the ejected Romans, of the coast at least, became pirates, and were useful to the Scandinavians by introducing what was needful of their arts and salable of their plunder, taking in exchange their iron and timber, — you may readily admit as a probability, that, by the display of spoils and the spirit of enterprise, they encouraged, headed, and carried into effect the invasion of France, and subsequently of England. The English gentlemen of Norman descent have neither blue eyes in general, nor fair complexions, differing in physiognomy altogether both from the Belgic race and the Norwegian. Besides, they are remarkable for a sedate and somewhat repulsive pride, very different

[1] With the advantages of her fisheries, which did not exist in the age of Petrarca, and of her agriculture, which probably is quintupled since, Norway does not contain at present the double of the number.

from the effervescent froth of the one and the sturdy simplicity of the other. Ser Geoffreddo is not only the greatest genius, but likewise the most amiable of his nation. He gave his thoughts and took yours with equal freedom. His countrymen, if they give you any, throw them at your head; and if they receive any, cast them under their feet before you. Courtesy is neither a quality of native growth, nor communicable to them. Their rivals, the French, are the best imitators in the world; the English the worst, particularly under the instruction of the Graces. They have many virtues, no doubt; but they reserve them for the benefit of their families or of their enemies, and they seldom take the trouble to unpack them in their short intercourse abroad.

Petrarca. Ser Geoffreddo, I well remember, was no less remarkable for courtesy than for cordiality.

Boccaccio. He was really as attentive and polite toward us as if he had made us prisoners. It is on that occasion the English are most unlike their antagonists and themselves. What an evil must they think it to be vanquished, when, struggling with their bashfulness and taciturnity, they become so solicitous and inventive in raising the spirits of the fallen! The Frenchman is ready to truss you on his rapier unless you acknowledge the perfection of his humanity, and to spit in your face if you doubt for a moment the delicacy of his politeness. The Englishman is almost angry if you mention either of these as belonging to him, and turns away from you that he may not hear it.

Petrarca. Let us felicitate ourselves that we rarely are forced to witness his self-affliction.

Boccaccio. In palaces, and especially the pontifical, it is likely you saw the very worst of them; indeed, there are few in any other country of such easy, graceful, unaffected manners as our Italians. We are warmer at the extremities than at the heart: sunless nations have central fires. The Englishman is more gratified when you enable him to show you a fresh kindness than when you remind him of a past one; and he forgets what he has conferred as readily as we forget what we have received. In our civility, in our good nature, in our temperance, in our frugality, none excel us; and greatly are we in advance of other men in the arts, in the sciences, in the culture, in the application, and in the power of intellect. Our faculties are

perfect, with the sole exception of memory; and our memory is only deficient in its retentiveness of obligation.

Petrarca. Better had it failed in almost all its other functions. Yet if our countrymen presented any flagrant instances of ingratitude, Alighieri would have set apart a *bolga* for their reception.

Boccaccio. When I correct and republish my "Commentary," I must be as careful to gratify as my author was to affront them. I know, from the nature of the Florentines and of the Italians in general, that in calling on me to produce one, they would rather I should praise indiscriminately than parsimoniously; and respect is due to them for repairing, by all the means in their power, the injustice their fathers committed, — for enduring in humility his resentment, and for investing him with public honors as they would some deity who had smitten them. Respect is due to them, and I will offer it, for placing their greatness on so firm a plinth, for deriving their pride from so wholesome a source, and for declaring to the world that the founder of a city is less than her poet and instructor.

Petrarca. In the precincts of those lofty monuments, those towers and temples, which have sprung up amid her factions, the name of Dante is heard at last, and heard with such reverence as only the angels or the saints inspire.

Boccaccio. There are towns so barbarous that they must be informed by strangers of their own great man, when they happen to have produced one, and would then detract from his merits that they might not exhibit their awkwardness in doing him honor, or their shame in withholding it. There are such; but not in Italy. I have seen youths standing and looking with seriousness, and indeed with somewhat of veneration, on the broad and low stone bench to the south of the cathedral, where Dante sat to enjoy the fresh air in summer evenings, and where Giotto, in conversation with him, watched the scaffolding rise higher and higher up his gracefullest of towers. It was truly a bold action when a youngster pushed another down on the poet's seat: the surprised one blushed and struggled, as those do who unwittingly have been drawn into a penalty (not lightened by laughter) for having sitten in the imperial or the papal chair.

Petrarca. These are good signs, and never fallacious. In

the presence of such young persons we ought to be very cautious how we censure a man of genius. One expression of irreverence may eradicate what demands the most attentive culture, may wither the first love for the fair and noble, and may shake the confidence of those who are about to give the hand to a guidance less liable to error. We have ever been grateful to the Deity for saving us from among the millions swept away by the pestilence, which depopulated the cities of Italy and ravaged the whole of Europe : let us be equally grateful for an exemption as providential and as rare in the world of letters, — an exemption from that *Plica Polonica* of invidiousness, which infests the squalider of poetical heads, and has not always spared those which ought to have been cleanlier.

Boccaccio. Critics are indignant if we are silent, and petulant if we complain. You and I are so kindly and considerate in regard to them, that we rather pat their petulance than prick up their indignation. Marsyas, while Apollo was flaying him leisurely and dexterously with all the calmness of a god, shortened his upper lip prodigiously, and showed how royal teeth are fastened in their gums ; his eyes grew blood-shot, and expanded to the size of rock-melons, though naturally, in length and breadth as well as color, they more resembled a well-ripened bean-pod ; and there issued from his smoking breast, and shook the leaves above it, a rapid irregular rush of yells and howlings. Remarking so material a change in his countenance and manners, a satyr, who was much his friend and deeply interested in his punishment, said calmly, " Marsyas ! Marsyas ! is it thou who criest out so unworthily ? If thou couldst only look down from that pleasant, smooth, shady beech-tree, thou wouldst have the satisfaction of seeing that thy skin is more than half drawn off thee ; it is hardly worth while to make a bustle about it now."

Petrarca. Every Marsyas hath his consoling satyr. Probably when yours was flayed he was found out to be a good musician, by those who recommended the flaying and celebrated the flayer. Among authors, none hath so many friends as he who is just now dead, and had the most enemies last week. Those who were then his adversaries are now sincerely his admirers — for moving out of the way, and leaving one name less in the lottery. And yet, poor souls ! the prize will never fall to them. There is something sweet and generous in the tone of praise,

which captivates an ingenuous mind whatever may be the subject of it; while propensity to censure not only excites suspicion of malevolence, but reminds the hearer of what he cannot disentangle from his earliest ideas of vulgarity. There being no pleasure in thinking ill, it is wonderful there should be any in speaking ill. You, my friend, can find none in it; but every step you are about to take in the revisal of your Lectures will require much caution. Aware you must be that there are many more defects in our author than we have touched or glanced at: principally, the loose and shallow foundation of so vast a structure; its unconnectedness; its want of manners, of passion, of action consistently and uninterruptedly at work toward a distinct and worthy purpose; and lastly (although less importantly as regards the poetical character) that splenetic temper, which seems to grudge brightness to the flames of hell, to delight in deepening its gloom, in multiplying its miseries, in accumulating weight upon depression, and building labyrinths about perplexity.

Boccaccio. Yet, O Francesco! when I remember what Dante had suffered and was suffering from the malice and obduracy of his enemies; when I feel (and how I do feel it!) that you also have been following up his glory through the same paths of exile, — I can rest only on what is great in him, and the exposure of a fault appears to me almost an inhumanity.

The first time I ever walked to his villa on the Mugnone, I felt a vehement desire to enter it; and yet a certain awe came upon me, as about to take an unceremonious and an unlawful advantage of his absence. While I was hesitating, its inhabitant opened the gate, saluted and invited me. My desire vanished at once; and although the civility far exceeded what a stranger as I was (and so young a stranger too) could expect, or what probably the more illustrious owner would have vouchsafed, the place itself and the disparity of its occupier made me shrink from it in sadness, and stand before him almost silent. I believe I should do the same at the present day.

Petrarca. With such feelings, which are ours in common, there is little danger that we should be unjust toward him; and if ever our opinions come before the public, we may disregard the petulance and aspersions of those whom Nature never con-

stituted our judges, as she did us of Dante. It is our duty to speak with freedom; it is theirs to listen with respect.

Boccaccio. History would come much into the criticism, and would perform the most interesting part in it. But I clearly see how unsafe it is to meddle with the affairs of families; and every family in Florence is a portion of the government, or has been lately. Every one preserves the annals of the Republic, — the facts being nearly the same, the inferences widely diverging, the motives utterly dissimilar. A strict examination of Dante would involve the bravest and most intelligent; and the court of Rome, with its royal agents, would persecute them as conspirators against religion, against morals, against the peace, the order, the existence of society. When studious and quiet men get into power, they fancy they cannot show too much activity, and very soon prove, by exerting it, that they can show too little discretion. The military, the knightly, the baronial, are spurred on to join in the chase; but the fleshers have other names and other instincts.

Petrarca. Posterity will regret that many of those allusions to persons and events which we now possess in the pages of Dante, have not reached her. Among the ancients there are few poets who more abound in them than Horace does, and yet we feel certain that there are many which are lost to us.

Boccaccio. I wonder you did not mention him before. Perhaps he is no favorite with you.

Petrarca. Why cannot we be delighted with an author, and even feel a predilection for him, without a dislike of others? An admiration of Catullus or Virgil, of Tibullus or Ovid, is never to be heightened by a discharge of bile on Horace.

Boccaccio. The eyes of critics, whether in commending or carping, are both on one side, like a turbot's.

Petrarca. There are some men who delight in heating themselves with wine, and others with headstrong frowardness. These are resolved to agitate the puddle of their blood by running into parties, literary or political, and espouse a champion's cause with such ardor that they run against everything in their way. Perhaps they never knew or saw the person, or understood his merits. What matter? No sooner was I about to be crowned than it was predicted by these astrologers that Protonatory Nerucci and Cavallerizzo Vuotasacchetti, — two

lampooners, whose hands latterly had been kept from their occupation by drawing gold-embroidered gloves on them, — would be rife in the mouths of men after my name had fallen into oblivion.

Boccaccio. I never heard of them before.

Petrarca. So much the better for them, and none the worse for you. Vuotasacchetti had been convicted of filching in his youth; and Nerucci was so expert a logician, and so rigidly economical a moralist, that he never had occasion for veracity.

Boccaccio. The upholders of such gentry are like little girls with their dolls, — they must clothe them, although they strip every other doll in the nursery. It is reported that our Giotto, — a great mechanician as well as architect and painter, — invented a certain instrument by which he could contract the dimensions of any head laid before him. But these gentlemen, it appears, have improved upon it, and not only can contract one, but enlarge another.

Petrarca. He could perform his undertaking with admirable correctness and precision: can they theirs?

Boccaccio. I never heard they could; but well enough for their customers and their consciences.

Petrarca. I see, then, no great accuracy is required.

Boccaccio. If they heard you, they would think you very dull.

Petrarca. They have always thought me so, and if they change their opinion I shall begin to think so myself.

Boccaccio. They have placed themselves just where, if we were mischievous, we might desire to see them. We have no power to make them false and malicious, yet they become so the moment they see or hear of us, and thus sink lower than our force could ever thrust them. Pigs, it is said, driven into a pool beyond their depth, cut their throats by awkward attempts at swimming. We could hardly wish them worse luck, although each had a devil in him. Come, let us away; we shall find a purer stream and pleasanter company on the Sabine farm.

Petrarca. We may indeed think the first ode of little value, the second of none, until we come to the sixth stanza.

Boccaccio. Bad as are the first and second, they are better than that wretched one, sounded so lugubriously in our ears at

school as the masterpiece of the pathetic, — I mean the ode addressed to Virgil on the death of Quinctilius Varus.

> " Præcipe lugubres
> Cantus, Melpomene, cui liquidam pater
> Vocem cum citharâ dedit."

Did he want any one to help him to cry? What man immersed in grief cares a quattrino about Melpomene, or her father's fairing of an artificial cuckoo and a gilt guitar? What man, on such an occasion, is at leisure to amuse himself with the little plaster images of Pudor and Fides, of Justitia and Veritas, or disposed to make a comparison of Virgil and Orpheus? But if Horace had written a thousand-fold as much trash, we are never to forget that he also wrote

> " Cœlo tonantem, etc," —

in competition with which ode, the finest in the Greek language itself has, to my ear, too many low notes, and somewhat of a wooden sound. And give me "Vixi puellis," and give me "Quis multa gracilis," and as many more as you please; for there are charms in nearly all of them. It now occurs to me that what is written, or interpolated,

> " Acer et *Mauri* peditis cruentum
> Vultus in hostem,"

should be *manci*, — a foot soldier *mutilated*, but looking with indignant courage at the trooper who inflicted the wound. The Mauritanians were celebrated only for their cavalry. In return for my suggestion, pray tell me what is the meaning of

> " Obliquo laborat
> Lympha fugax trepidare rivo."

Petrarca. The moment I learn it you shall have it. *Laborat trepidare! lympha rivo! fugax* too! *Fugacity* is not the action for hard work, or *labor.*

Boccaccio. Since you cannot help me out, I must give up the conjecture, it seems, while it has cost me only half a century. Perhaps it may be *curiosa felicitas.*

Petrarca. There again! Was there ever such an unhappy (not to say absurd) expression! And this from the man who wrote the most beautiful sentence in all latinity.

Boccaccio. What is that?

Petrarca. I am ashamed of repeating it, although in itself it is innocent. The words are,

> "Gratias ago languori tuo, quo diutius sub
> umbrâ voluptatis lusimus."

Boccaccio. Tear out this from the volume; the rest, both prose and poetry, may be thrown away. In the "Dinner of Nasidienus," I remember the expression *nosse laboro;* "I am anxious to know": this expedites the solution but little. In the same piece there is another odd expression, —

> "Tum in lecto quôque *videres*
> *Stridere* secretâ divisos aure *susurros*."

Petrarca. I doubt Horace's felicity in the choice of words, being quite unable to discover it, and finding more evidences of the contrary than in any contemporary or preceding poet; but I do not doubt his infelicity in his *transpositions* of them, in which certainly he is more remarkable than whatsoever writer of antiquity. How simple, in comparison, are Catullus [1] and Lucretius in the structure of their sentences! But the most simple and natural of all are Ovid and Tibullus. Your main difficulty lies in another road; it consists not in making explanations, but in avoiding them. Some scholars will assert that everything I have written in my sonnets is allegory or allusion; others will deny that anything is; and similarly of Dante. It was known throughout Italy that he was the lover of *Beatrice* Porticari. He has celebrated her in many compositions, — in prose and poetry, in Latin and Italian. Hence it became the safer for him afterward to introduce her as an allegorical personage, in opposition to the *Meretrice;* under which appellation he (and I subsequently) signified the papacy. Our great poet wandered among the marvels of the Apocalypse, and fixed his eyes the most attentively on the words,

> "Veni, et ostendam tibi sponsam, uxorem Agni."

He, as you know, wrote a commentary on his "Commedia" at the close of his Treatise "De Monarchiâ." But he chiefly aims at showing the duties of pope and emperor, and explain-

[1] Except "Non ita me divi vera gemunt juêrint."

ing such parts of the poem as manifestly relate to them. The Patarini accused the pope of despoiling and defiling the Church; the Ghibellines accused him of defrauding and rebelling against the Emperor: Dante enlists both under his flaming banner, and exhibits the *Meretrice* stealing from *Beatrice* both the *divine* and the *august* chariot; the Church and Empire. Grave critics will protest their inability to follow you through such darkness, saying you are not worth the trouble, and they must give you up. If Laura and Fiametta were allegorical, they could inspire no tenderness in our readers, and little interest. But, alas! these are no longer the days to dwell on them.

> Let human art exert her utmost force,
> Pleasure can rise no higher than its source;
> And there it ever stagnates where the ground
> Beneath it, O Giovanni! is unsound.

Boccaccio. You have given me a noble quaternion; for which I can only offer you such a string of beads as I am used to carry about with me. Memory, they say, is the mother of the Muses; this is her gift, not theirs.

DEPARTURE FROM FIAMETTA.

> When go I must, as well she knew,
> And neither yet could say adieu,
> Sudden was my Fiametta's fear
> To let me see or feel a tear.
> It could but melt my heart away,
> Nor add one moment to my stay.
> But it was ripe and would be shed:
> So from her cheek upon my head
> It, falling on the neck behind,
> Hung on the hair she oft had twined.
> Thus thought she, and her arm's soft strain
> Clasped it, and down it fell again.

Come, come! bear your disappointment, and forgive my cheating you in the exchange! Ah, Francesco, Francesco! well may you sigh, and I too, seeing we can do little now but make verses and doze, and want little but medicine and Masses, while Fra Biagio is merry as a lark, and half master of the house. Do not look so grave upon me for remembering so well another state of existence. He who forgets his love may still more easily forget his friendships. I am weak, I

confess it, in yielding my thoughts to what returns no more; but you alone know my weakness.

Petrarca. We have loved,[1] and so fondly as we believe none other ever did; and yet although it was in youth, Giovanni, it was not in the earliest white dawn, when we almost shrink from its freshness, when everything is pure and quiet, when little of earth is seen, and much of heaven. It was not so with us: it was with Dante. The little virgin Beatrice Porticari breathed all her purity into his boyish heart, and inhaled it back again; and if war and disaster, anger and disdain, seized upon it in her absence, they never could divert its course nor impede its destination. Happy the man who carries love with him in his opening day! he never loses its freshness in the meridian of life, nor its happier influence in the later hour. If Dante enthroned his Beatrice in the highest heaven, it was Beatrice who conducted him thither. Love preceding passion insures, sanctifies, and I would say survives it, were it not rather an absorption and transfiguration into its own most perfect purity and holiness.

Boccaccio. Up! up! look into that chest of letters, out of which I took several of yours to run over yesterday morning. All those of a friend whom we have lost, to say nothing of a tenderer affection, touch us sensibly, be the subject what it may. When in taking them out to read again we happen to come upon him in some pleasant mood, it is then the dead man's hand is at the heart. Opening the same paper long afterward, can we wonder if a tear has raised its little island in it? Leave me the memory of all my friends, even of the ungrateful! They must remind me of some kind feeling, and perhaps of theirs; and for that very reason they deserve another. It was not my fault if they turned out less worthy than I hoped and fancied them. Yet half the world complains of ingratitude, and the remaining half of envy. Of the one I have already told you my opinion, and heard yours; and the other we may surely bear with quite as much equanimity.

[1] The tender and virtuous Shenstone, in writing the most beautiful of epitaphs, was unaware how near he stood to Petrarca, — "Heu quanto minus est cum aliis versari quam tui meminisse."

"Pur mi consola che morir per lei
Meglio è che gioir d'altra."

For rarely are we envied, until we are so prosperous that envy is rather a familiar in our train than an enemy who waylays us. If we saw nothing of such followers and outriders, and no scabbard with our initials upon it, we might begin to doubt our station.

Petrarca. Giovanni, you are unsuspicious, and would scarcely see a monster in a minotaur. It is well, however, to draw good out of evil, and it is the peculiar gift of an elevated mind. Nevertheless, you must have observed, although with greater curiosity than concern, the slipperiness and tortuousness of your detractors.

Boccaccio. Whatever they detract from me, they leave more than they can carry away. Besides, they always are detected.

Petrarca. When they are detected, they raise themselves up fiercely, as if their nature were erect and they could reach your height.

Boccaccio. Envy would conceal herself under the shadow and shelter of contemptuousness, but she swells too huge for the den she creeps into. Let her lie there and crack, and think no more about her. The people you have been talking of can find no greater and no other faults in my writings than I myself am willing to show them, and still more willing to correct. There are many things, as you have just now told me, very unworthy of their company.

Petrarca. He who has much gold is none the poorer for having much silver too. When a king of old displayed his wealth and magnificence before a philosopher, the philosopher's exclamation was, "How many things are here which I do not want!"

Does not the same reflection come upon us, when we have laid aside our compositions for a time, and look into them again more leisurely? Do we not wonder at our own profusion, and say like the philosopher, "How many things are here which I do not want!"

It may happen that we pull up flowers with weeds; but better this than rankness. We must bear to see our first-born despatched before our eyes, and give them up quietly.

Boccaccio. The younger will be the most reluctant. There are poets among us who mistake in themselves the freckles of the hay-fever for beauty-spots. In another half-century their

volumes will be inquired after; but only for the sake of cutting out an illuminated letter from the titlepage, or of transplanting the willow at the end, that hangs so prettily over the tomb of Amaryllis. If they wish to be healthy and vigorous, let them open their bosoms to the breezes of Sunium; for the air of Latium is heavy and overcharged. Above all, they must remember two admonitions: first, that sweet things hurt digestion; secondly, that great sails are ill adapted to small vessels. What is there lovely in poetry unless there be moderation and composure? Are they not better than the hot, uncontrollable harlotry of a flaunting, dishevelled enthusiasm? Whoever has the power of creating, has likewise the inferior power of keeping his creation in order. The best poets are the most impressive, because their steps are regular; for without regularity there is neither strength nor state. Look at Sophocles, look at Æschylus, look at Homer.

Petrarca. I agree with you entirely to the whole extent of your observations; and if you will continue, I am ready to lay aside my Dante for the present.

Boccaccio. No, no; we must have him again between us: there is no danger that he will sour our tempers.

Petrarca. In comparing his and yours, since you forbid me to declare all I think of your genius, you will at least allow me to congratulate you as being the happier of the two.

Boccaccio. Frequently, when there is great power in poetry, the imagination makes encroachments on the heart, and uses it as her own. I have shed tears on writings which never cost the writer a sigh, but which occasioned him to rub the palms of his hands together, until they were ready to strike fire, with satisfaction at having overcome the difficulty of being tender.

Petrarca. Giovanni, are you not grown satirical?

Boccaccio. Not in this. It is a truth as broad and glaring as the eye of the Cyclops. To make you amends for your shuddering, I will express my doubt, on the other hand, whether Dante felt all the indignation he threw into his poetry. We are immoderately fond of warming ourselves; and we do not think, or care, what the fire is composed of. Be sure it is not always of cedar, like Circe's.[1] Our Alighieri had slipped into

[1] Dives inaccessis ubi Solis filia lucis
Urit odoratam nocturna in lumina cedrum. — *Æneid.*

the habit of vituperation; and he thought it fitted him, — so he never left it off.

Petrarca. Serener colors are pleasanter to our eyes and more becoming to our character. The chief desire in every man of genius is to be thought one; and no fear or apprehension lessens it. Alighieri, who had certainly studied the gospel, must have been conscious that he not only was inhumane, but that he betrayed a more vindictive spirit than any pope or prelate who is enshrined within the fretwork of his golden grating.

Boccaccio. Unhappily, his strong talon had grown into him, and it would have pained him to suffer its amputation. This eagle, unlike Jupiter's, never loosened the thunderbolt from it under the influence of harmony.

Petrarca. The only good thing we can expect in such minds and tempers is good poetry; let us at least get that, and having it, let us keep and value it. If you had never written some wanton stories, you would never have been able to show the world how much wiser and better you grew afterward.

Boccaccio. Alas! if I live, I hope to show it. You have raised my spirits; and now, dear Francesco, do say a couple of prayers for me, while I lay together the materials of a tale, — a right merry one, I promise you. Faith! it shall amuse you, and pay decently for the prayers, — a good honest litany-worth. I hardly know whether I ought to have a nun in it: do you think I may?

Petrarca. Cannot you do without one?

Boccaccio. No! a nun I must have, — say nothing against her; I can more easily let the abbess alone. Yet Frate Biagio,[1]

[1] Our San Vivaldo is enriched by his deposit. In the church, on the fifth flagstone from before the high altar, is this inscription: —

HIC SITUS EST,
BEATAM IMMORTALITATEM EXPECTANS,
D. BLASIUS DE BLASIIS,
HUJUS CŒNOBII ABBAS,
SINGULARI VIR CHARITATE,
MORIBUS INTEGERRIMIS,
REI THEOLOGICÆ NEC NON PHYSICÆ
PERITISSIMUS.
ORATE PRO ANIMA EJUS.

To the word *orate* have been prefixed the letters PL, — the aspiration, no doubt, of some friendly monk, although Monsignore thinks it susceptible of two interpretations; the other he reserves *in petto*. — *Domenico Grigi.*

— that Frate Biagio, who never came to visit me but when he thought I was at extremities or asleep — Assuntina! are you there?

Petrarca. No; do you want her?

Boccaccio. Not a bit. That Frate Biagio has heightened my pulse when I could not lower it again. The very devil is that Frate for heightening pulses. And with him I shall now make merry, — God willing! — in God's good time, should it be his divine will to restore me, which I think he has begun to do miraculously. I seem to be within a frog's leap of well again; and we will presently have some rare fun in my "Tale of the Frate."

Petrarca. Do not openly name him.

Boccaccio. He shall recognize himself by one single expression. He said to me, when I was at the worst, —

"Ser Giovanni, it would not be much amiss (with permission!) if you begin to think (at any spare time) just a morsel of eternity."

"Ah! Fra Biagio!" answered I, contritely, "I never heard a sermon of yours but I thought of it seriously and uneasily long before the discourse was over."

"So must all," replied he; "and yet few have the grace to own it."

Now, mind, Francesco! if it should please the Lord to call me unto him, I say "The Nun and Fra Biagio" will be found, after my decease, in the closet cut out of the wall, behind yon Saint Zacharias in blue and yellow.

Well done! well done! Francesco. I never heard any man repeat his prayers so fast and fluently. Why! how many (at a guess) have you repeated? Such is the power of friendship, and such the habit of religion! They have done me good; I feel myself stronger already. To-morrow I think I shall be able, by leaning on that stout maple stick in the corner, to walk half over my *podere*.

Have you done? Have you done?

Petrarca. Be quiet; you may talk too much.

Boccaccio. I cannot be quiet for another hour; so if you have any more prayers to get over, stick the spur into the other side of them; they must verily speed, if they beat the last.

Petrarca. Be more serious, dear Giovanni.

Boccaccio. Never bid a convalescent be more serious; no, nor a sick man neither. To health it may give that composure which it takes away from sickness. Every man will have his hours of seriousness, but like the hours of rest, they often are ill chosen and unwholesome. Be assured, our Heavenly Father is as well pleased to see his children in the playground as in the schoolroom. He has provided both for us, and has given us intimations when each should occupy us.

Petrarca. You are right, Giovanni; but we know which bell is heard the most distinctly. We fold our arms at the one, try the cooler part of the pillow, and turn again to slumber; at the first stroke of the other, we are beyond our monitors. As for you, hardly Dante himself could make you grave.

Boccaccio. I do not remember how it happened that we slipped away from his side. One of us must have found him tedious.

Petrarca. If you were really and substantially at his side, he would have no mercy on you.

Boccaccio. In sooth, our good Alighieri seems to have had the appetite of a dogfish or shark, and to have bitten the harder the warmer he was. I would not voluntarily be under his manifold rows of dentals. He has an incisor to every saint in the calendar. I should fare, methinks, like Brutus and the Archbishop. He is forced to stretch himself, out of sheer listlessness, in so idle a place as Purgatory; he loses half his strength in Paradise. Hell alone makes him alert and lively; there he moves about and threatens as tremendously as the serpent that opposed the legions on their march in Africa. He would not have been contented in Tuscany itself, even had his enemies left him unmolested. Were I to write on his model a tripartite poem, I think it should be entitled, "Earth, Italy, and Heaven."

Petrarca. You will never give yourself the trouble.

Boccaccio. I should not succeed.

Petrarca. Perhaps not; but you have done very much, and may be able to do very much more.

Boccaccio. Wonderful is it to me, when I consider that an infirm and helpless creature as I am should be capable of laying thoughts up in their cabinets of words, which Time, as he rushes by with the revolutions of stormy and destructive years, can never move from their places. On this coarse mattress, one

among the homeliest in the fair at Impruneta, is stretched an old burgess of Certaldo, of whom perhaps more will be known hereafter than we know of the Ptolemies and the Pharaohs; while popes and princes are lying as unregarded as the fleas that are shaken out of the window. Upon my life, Francesco, to think of this is enough to make a man presumptuous.

Petrarca. No, Giovanni, not when the man thinks justly of it, as such a man ought to do, and must. For so mighty a power over Time, who casts all other mortals under his, comes down to us from a greater; and it is only if we abuse the victory that it were better we had encountered a defeat. Unremitting care must be taken that nothing soil the monuments we are raising: sure enough we are that nothing can subvert, and nothing but our negligence, or worse than negligence, efface them. Under the glorious lamp intrusted to your vigilance, one among the lights of the world which the ministering angels of our God have suspended for his service, let there stand, with unclosing eyes, Integrity, Compassion, Self-denial.

Boccaccio. These are holier and cheerfuller images than Dante has been setting up before us. I hope every thesis in dispute among his theologians will be settled ere I set foot among them. I like Tuscany well enough, — it answers all my purposes for the present; and I am without the benefit of those preliminary studies which might render me a worthy auditor of incomprehensible wisdom.

Petrarca. I do not wonder you are attached to Tuscany. Many as have been your visits and adventures in other parts, you have rendered it pleasanter and more interesting than any; and indeed we can scarcely walk in any quarter from the gates of Florence without the recollection of some witty or affecting story related by you. Every street, every farm, is peopled by your genius; and this population cannot change with seasons or with ages, with factions or with incursions. Ghibellines and Guelphs will have been contested for only by the worms, long before the "Decameron" has ceased to be recited on our banks of blue lilies and under our arching vines. Another plague may come amidst us; and something of a solace in so terrible a visitation would be found in your pages, by those to whom letters are a refuge and relief.

Boccaccio. I do indeed think my little bevy from Santa

Maria Novella would be better company on such an occasion than a devil with three heads, who diverts the pain his claws inflicted by sticking his fangs in another place.

Petrarca. This is atrocious, not terrific nor grand. Alighieri is grand by his lights, not by his shadows; by his human affections, not by his infernal. As the minutest sands are the labors of some profound sea or the spoils of some vast mountain, in like manner his horrid wastes and wearying minutenesses are the chafings of a turbulent spirit, grasping the loftiest things and penetrating the deepest, and moving and moaning on the earth in loneliness and sadness.

Boccaccio. Among men he is what among waters is

> The strange, mysterious, solitary Nile.

Petrarca. Is that his verse? I do not remember it.

Boccaccio. No, it is mine for the present; how long it may continue mine, I cannot tell. I never run after those who steal my apples, — it would only tire me; and they are hardly worth recovering when they are bruised and bitten, as they are usually. I would not stand upon my verses; it is a perilous boy's trick, which we ought to leave off when we put on square shoes. Let our prose show what we are, and our poetry what we have been.

Petrarca. You would never have given this advice to our Alighieri.

Boccaccio. I would never plough porphyry; there is ground fitter for grain. Alighieri is the parent of his system, — like the sun, about whom all the worlds are but particles thrown forth from him. We may write little things well, and accumulate one upon another, but never will any be justly called a great poet unless he has treated a great subject worthily. He may be the poet of the lover and of the idler, he may be the poet of green fields or gay society; but whoever is this can be no more. A throne is not built of birds' nests, nor do a thousand reeds make a trumpet.

Petrarca. I wish our Alighieri had blown his on nobler occasions.

Boccaccio. We may rightly wish it; but in regretting what he wanted, let us acknowledge what he had, and never forget (which we omitted to mention) that he borrowed less from his

predecessors than any of the Roman poets from theirs. Reasonably may it be expected that almost all who follow will be greatly more indebted to antiquity, to whose stores we every year are making some addition.

Petrarca. It can be held no flaw in the title-deeds of genius if the same thoughts reappear as have been exhibited long ago. The indisputable sign of defect should be looked for in the proportion they bear to the unquestionably original. There are ideas which necessarily must occur to minds of the like magnitude and materials, aspect and temperature. When two ages are in the same phasis, they will excite the same humors, and produce the same coincidences and combinations. In addition to which, a great poet may really borrow; he may even condescend to an obligation at the hand of an equal or inferior, — but he forfeits his title if he borrows more than the amount of his own possessions. The nightingale himself takes somewhat of his song from birds less glorified; and the lark, having beaten with her wing the very gates of heaven, cools her breast among the grass. The lowlier of intellect may lay out a table in their field, at which table the highest one shall sometimes be disposed to partake; want does not compel him. Imitation, as we call it, is often weakness, but it likewise is often sympathy.

Boccaccio. Our poet was seldom accessible in this quarter. Invective picks up the first stone on the wayside, and wants leisure to consult a forerunner.

Petrarca. Dante, original enough everywhere, is coarse and clumsy in this career. Vengeance has nothing to do with comedy, nor properly with satire. The satirist who told us that Indignation made his verses [1] for him, might have been told in return that she excluded him thereby from the first class, and thrust him among the rhetoricians and declaimers. Lucretius, in his vituperation, is graver and more dignified than Alighieri. Painful, to see how tolerant is the atheist, how intolerant the Catholic, how anxiously the one removes from among the sufferings of mortality her last and heaviest,—the fear of a vindictive fury pursuing her shadow across rivers of fire and tears, — how laboriously the other brings down anguish and despair, even when death has done his work. How grateful the one is to that

[1] Facit indignatio versum. — *Juvenal.*

beneficent philosopher who made him at peace with himself, and tolerant and kindly toward his fellow-creatures! How importunate the other that God should forego his divine mercy, and hurl everlasting torments both upon the dead and the living!

Boccaccio. I have always heard that Ser Dante was a very good man and sound Catholic; but Christ forgive me if my heart is oftener on the side of Lucretius.[1] Observe, I say my heart; nothing more. I devoutly hold to the sacraments and the mysteries; yet somehow I would rather see men tranquillized than frightened out of their senses, and rather fast asleep than burning. Sometimes I have been ready to believe, as far as our holy faith will allow me, that it were better our Lord were nowhere than torturing in his inscrutable wisdom, to all eternity, so many myriads of us poor devils, the creatures of his hands. Do not cross thyself so thickly, Francesco, nor hang down thy nether lip so loosely, languidly, and helplessly, for I would be a good Catholic, alive or dead. But upon my conscience, it goes hard with me to think it of him, when I hear that woodlark yonder gushing with joyousness, or when I see the beautiful clouds, resting so softly upon one another, dissolving — and not damned for it. Above all, I am slow to apprehend it when I remember his great goodness vouchsafed to me, and reflect on my sinful life heretofore, chiefly in summer time, and in cities or their vicinity. But I was tempted beyond my strength, and I fell as any man might do. However, this last illness, by God's grace, has well-nigh brought me to my right mind again in all such matters; and if I get stout in the present month, and can hold out the next without sliding, I do verily think I am safe, or nearly so, until the season of beccaficoes.

Petrarca. Be not too confident!

Boccaccio. Well, I will not be.

Petrarca. But be firm.

Boccaccio. Assuntina! what! are you come in again?

Assunta. Did you or my master call me, Riverenza?

Petrarca. No, child!

Boccaccio. Oh, get you gone! get you gone! you little roguc you! Francesco, I feel quite well. Your kindness to my

[1] Query: How much of Lucretius (or Petronius or Catullus, before cited) was then known? — *Remark by Monsignore.*

playful creatures in the "Decameron" has revived me, and has put me into good humor with the greater part of them. Are you quite certain the Madonna will not expect me to keep my promise? You said you were; I need not ask you again. I will accept the whole of your assurances, and half your praises.

Petrarca. To represent so vast a variety of personages so characteristically as you have done, to give the wise all their wisdom, the witty all their wit, and (what is harder to do advantageously) the simple all their simplicity, requires a genius such as you alone possess. Those who doubt it are the least dangerous of your rivals.

FIFTH DAY'S INTERVIEW.

It being now the last morning that Petrarca could remain with his friend, he resolved to pass early into his bed-chamber. Boccaccio had risen, and was standing at the open window, with his arms against it. Renovated health sparkled in the eyes of the one; surprise and delight and thankfulness to Heaven filled the other's with sudden tears. He clasped Giovanni, kissed his flaccid and sallow cheek, and falling on his knees, adored the Giver of life, the source of health to body and soul. Giovanni was not unmoved; he bent one knee as he leaned on the shoulder of Francesco, looking down into his face, repeating his words, and adding, —

"Blessed be thou, O Lord! who sendest me health again! and blessings on thy messenger who brought it!"

He had slept soundly; for ere he closed his eyes he had unburdened his mind of its freight, not only by employing the prayers appointed by Holy Church, but likewise by ejaculating; as sundry of the Fathers did of old. He acknowledged his contrition for many transgressions, and chiefly for uncharitable thoughts of Fra Biagio; on which occasion he turned fairly round on his couch, and leaning his brow against the wall, and his body being in a becomingly curved position, and proper for the purpose, he thus ejaculated, —

"Thou knowest, O most Holy Virgin! that never have

I spoken to handmaiden at this villetta, or within my mansion at Certaldo, wantonly or indiscreetly, but have always been, inasmuch as may be, the guardian of innocence; deeming it better, when irregular thoughts assailed me, to ventilate them abroad than to poison the house with them. And if, sinner as I am, I have thought uncharitably of others, and more especially of Fra Biagio, pardon me, out of thy exceeding great mercies! And let it not be imputed to me, if I have kept, and may keep hereafter, an eye over him, in wariness and watchfulness; not otherwise. For thou knowest, O Madonna! that many who have a perfect and unwavering faith in thee, yet do cover up their cheese from the nibblings of vermin."

Whereupon, he turned round again, threw himself on his back at full length, and feeling the sheets cool, smooth, and refreshing, folded his arms and slept instantaneously. The consequence of his wholesome slumber was a calm alacrity; and the idea that his visitor would be happy at seeing him on his feet again made him attempt to get up: at which he succeeded, to his own wonder, — it being increased by the manifestation of his strength in opening the casement, stiff from being closed, and swelled by the continuance of the rains. The morning was warm and sunny; and it is known that on this occasion he composed the verses below: —

My old familiar cottage green!
I see once more thy pleasant sheen,
The gossamer suspended over
Smart celandine by lusty clover,
And the last blossom of the plum
Inviting her first leaves to come, —
Which hang a little back, but show
'T is not their nature to say no.
I scarcely am in voice to sing
How graceful are the steps of Spring;
And, ah! it makes me sigh to look
How leaps along my merry brook,
The very same to-day as when
He chirrupped first to maids and men.

Petrarca. I can rejoice at the freshness of your feelings; but the sight of the green turf reminds me rather of its ultimate use and destination, —

For many serves the parish pall,
The turf in common serves for all.

Boccaccio. Very true; and such being the case, let us carefully fold it up and lay it by until we call for it.

Francesco, you made me quite light-headed yesterday. I am rather too old to dance either with Spring, as I have been saying, or with Vanity; and yet I accepted her at your hand as a partner. In future, no more of comparisons for me! You not only can do me no good, but you can leave me no pleasure; for here I shall remain the few days I have to live, and shall see nobody who will be disposed to remind me of your praises. Besides, you yourself will get hated for them. We neither can deserve praise nor receive it with impunity.

Petrarca. Have you never remarked that it is into quiet water that children throw pebbles to disturb it; and that it is into deep caverns that the idle drop sticks and dirt? We must expect such treatment.

Boccaccio. Your admonition shall have its wholesome influence over me, when the fever your praises have excited has grown moderate.

— After the conversation on this topic and various others had continued some time, it was interrupted by a visitor. The clergy and monkery at Certaldo had never been cordial with Messer Giovanni, it being suspected that certain of his Novelle were modelled on originals in their orders. Hence, although they indeed both professed and felt esteem for Canonico Petrarca, they abstained from expressing it at the villetta. But Frate Biagio of San Vivaldo was (by his own appointment) the friend of the house; and being considered as very expert in pharmacy, had day after day brought over no indifferent store of simples, in ptisans and other refections, during the continuance of Ser Giovanni's ailment. Something now moved him to cast about in his mind whether it might not appear dutiful to make another visit. Perhaps he thought it possible that among those who peradventure had seen him lately on the road, one or other might expect from him a solution of the questions, What sort of person was the *crowned martyr;* whether he carried a palm in his hand; whether a seam was visible across the throat; whether he wore a ring over his glove, with a chrysolite in it, like the bishops, but representing the city of Jerusalem and the judgment-seat of Pontius Pilate? Such were the reports; but the inhabitants of San Vivaldo could not believe the Certaldese,

who, inhabiting the next township to them, were naturally their enemies. Yet they might believe Frate Biagio, and certainly would interrogate him accordingly. He formed his determination, put his frock and hood on, and gave a curvature to his shoe, to evince his knowledge of the world, by pushing the extremity of it with his breast-bone against the corner of his cell. Studious of his figure and of his attire, he walked as much as possible on his heels, to keep up the reformation he had wrought in the workmanship of the cordwainer. On former occasions he had borrowed a horse, as being wanted to hear confession or to carry medicines, which might otherwise be too late. But having put on an entirely new habiliment, and it being the season when horses are beginning to do the same, he deemed it prudent to travel on foot. Approaching the villetta, his first intention was to walk directly into his patient's room; but he found it impossible to resist the impulses of pride in showing Assunta his rigid and stately frock, with shoes rather of the equestrian order than the monastic. So he went into the kitchen where the girl was at work, having just taken away the remains of the breakfast.

"Frate Biagio!" cried she, "is this you? Have you been sleeping at Conte Jeronimo's?"

"Not I," replied he.

"Why!" said she, "those are surely his shoes! Santa Maria! you must have put them on in the dusk of the morning, to say your prayers in! Here, here! take these old ones of Signor Padrone, for the love of God! I hope your reverence met nobody."

Frate. What dost smile at?

Assunta. Smile at! I could find in my heart to laugh outright, if I only were certain that nobody had seen your reverence in such a funny trim. Riverenza, put on these.

Frate. Not I, indeed.

Assunta. Allow me, then?

Frate. No, nor you.

Assunta. Then let me stand upon yours, to push down the points.

Frate Biagio now began to relent a little, when Assunta, who had made one step toward the project, bethought herself suddenly, and said, "No; I might miss my footing. But, mercy upon us! what made you cramp your reverence with those

ox-yoke shoes, and strangle your reverence with that hang-dog collar?"

"If you must know," answered the Frate, reddening, "it was because I am making a visit to the Canonico of Parma. I should like to know something about him: perhaps you could tell me?"

Assunta. Ever so much.

Frate. I thought no less; indeed, I knew it. Which goes to bed first?

Assunta. Both together.

Frate. Demonio! what dost mean?

Assunta. He tells me never to sit up waiting, but to say my prayers and dream of the Virgin.

Frate. As if it were any business of his! Does he put out his lamp himself?

Assunta. To be sure he does: why should not he? What should he be afraid of? It is not winter; and besides, there is a mat upon the floor, all around the bed, excepting the top and bottom.

Frate. I am quite convinced he never said anything to make you blush. Why are you silent?

Assunta. I have a right.

Frate. He did then — ay? Do not nod your head; that will never do. Discreet girls speak plainly.

Assunta. What would you have?

Frate. The truth! the truth! again, I say the truth!

Assunta. He *did* then.

Frate. I knew it! The most dangerous man living!

Assunta. Ah! indeed he is! Signor Padrone said so.

Frate. He knows him of old: he warned you, it seems.

Assunta. Me! He never said it was I who was in danger.

Frate. He might: it was his duty.

Assunta. Am I so fat? Lord! you may feel every rib. Girls who run about as I do slip away from apoplexy.

Frate. Ho! ho! that is all, is it?

Assunta. And bad enough too! that such good-natured men should ever grow so bulky, and stand in danger, as Padrone said they both do, of such a seizure!

Frate. What! and art ready to cry about it? Old folks cannot die easier; and there are always plenty of younger to

run quick enough for a confessor. But I must not trifle in this manner. It is my duty to set your feet in the right way; it is my bounden duty to report to Ser Giovanni all irregularities I know of, committed in his domicile. I could indeed, and would, remit a trifle, on hearing the worst. Tell me now, Assunta! tell me, you little angel! did you — we all may, the very best of us may, and do — sin, my sweet?

Assunta. You may be sure I do not; for whenever I sin I run into church directly, although it snows or thunders: else I never could see again Padrone's face, or any one's.

Frate. You do not come to me.

Assunta. You live at San Vivaldo.

Frate. But when there is sin so pressing I am always ready to be found. You perplex, you puzzle me. Tell me at once how he made you blush.

Assunta. Well, then!

Frate. Well, then! you did not hang back so before him. I lose all patience.

Assunta. So famous a man —

Frate. No excuse in that.

Assunta. So dear to Padrone —

Frate. The more shame for him!

Assunta. Called me —

Frate. And *called* you, did he? the traitorous swine!

Assunta. Called me — *good girl.*

Frate. Psha! the wenches, I think, are all mad: but few of them in this manner.

Without saying another word, Fra Biagio went forward and opened the bed-chamber door, saying briskly, "Servant, Ser Giovanni! Ser Canonico! most devoted, most obsequious! I venture to incommode you. Thanks to God, Ser Canonico, you are looking well for your years. They tell me you were formerly (who would believe it!) the handsomest man in Christendom, and worked your way glibly yonder at Avignon.

"Capperi, Ser Giovanni! I never observed that you were sitting bolt upright in that long-backed arm-chair, instead of lying abed. Quite in the right. I am rejoiced at such a change for the better. Who advised it?"

Boccaccio. So many thanks to Fra Biagio! I not only am

sitting up, but have taken a draught of fresh air at the window, and every leaf had a little present of sunshine for me.

There is one pleasure, Fra Biagio, which I fancy you never have experienced, and I hardly know whether I ought to wish it you, — the first sensation of health after a long confinement.

Frate. Thanks, infinite! I would take any man's word for that, without a wish to try it. Everybody tells me I am exactly what I was a dozen years ago, while for my part I see everybody changed; those who ought to be much about my age, even those — Per Bacco! I told them my thoughts when they had told me theirs; and they were not so agreeable as they used to be in former days.

Boccaccio. How people hate sincerity!

Cospetto! why, Frate, what hast got upon thy toes? Hast killed some Tartar and tucked his bow into one, and torn the crescent from the vizier's tent to make the other match it? Hadst thou fallen in thy mettlesome expedition (and it is a mercy and a miracle thou didst not!) those sacrilegious shoes would have impaled thee.

Frate. It was a mistake in the shoemaker. But no pain or incommodity whatsoever could detain me from paying my duty to Ser Canonico the first moment I heard of his auspicious arrival, or from offering my congratulations to Ser Giovanni, on the annunciation that he was recovered and looking out of the window. All Tuscany was standing on the watch for it, and the news flew like lightning. By this time it is upon the Danube.

And pray, Ser Canonico, how does Madonna Laura do?

Petrarca. Peace to her gentle spirit! she is departed.

Frate. Ay, true. I had quite forgotten; that is to say, I recollect it. You told us as much, I think, in a poem on her death. Well, and do you know, our friend Giovanni here is a bit of an author in his way.

Boccaccio. Frate, you confuse my modesty!

Frate. Murder will out. It is a fact, on my conscience. Have you never heard anything about it, Canonico? Ha! we poets are sly fellows; we can keep a secret.

Boccaccio. Are you quite sure you can?

Frate. Try, and trust me with any. I am a confessional on legs; there is no more a whisper in me than in a woolsack.

I am in feather again as you see; and in tune, as you shall hear. April is not the month for moping. Sing it lustily!

Boccaccio. Let it be your business to sing it, being a Frate; I can only recite it.

Frate. Pray do, then.

Boccaccio.

Frate Biagio! sempre quando
Quà tu vieni cavalcando,
Pensi che le buone strade
Per il mondo sien ben rade;
E, di quante sono brutte,
La più brutta è tua di tutte.
Badi, non cascare sulle
Graziosissime fanciulle,
Che con capo dritto, alzato,
Uova portano al mercato.
Pessima mi pare l'opra
Rovesciarle sottosopra.
Deh! scansando le erte e sassi,
Sempre con premura passi.
Caro amico! Frate Biagio!
Passi pur, ma passi adagio.[1]

Frate. Well now, really, Canonico, for one not exactly one of us, that canzone of Ser Giovanni has merit; has not it? I did not ride, however, to-day, as you may see by the lining of my frock. But *plus non vitiat*, — ay, Canonico? About the roads he is right enough; they are the Devil's own roads; that must be said for them.

Ser Giovanni, with permission: your mention of eggs in the canzone has induced me to fancy I could eat a pair of them. The hens lay well now: that white one of yours is worth more than the goose that laid the golden; and you

[1] Avendo io fatto comparire nel nostro idioma toscano, e senza traduzione, i leggiadri versi sopra stampati, chiedo perdono da chi legge. Non potei, badando con dovuta premura ai miei interessi ed a quelli del proposito mio, non potei, dico, far di meno; stanteche una riunione de'critici, i più vistosi del Regno unito d'Inghilterra ed Irlanda, avrà con unanimità dichiarato, che nessuno, di quanti esistono i mortali, saprà mai indovinare la versione. Stimo assai il tradduttore; lavora per poco, e agevolmente; mi pare piutosto galantuomo; non c' è male; ma poeta poco felice poi. Parlano que' Signori critici riveritissimi di certi poemetti e frammenti già da noi ammessi in questo volume, ed anche di altri del medesimo autore forse originali, e restano di avviso commune, che non vi sia neppure una sola parola veramente da intendersi; che il senso (chi sa?) sarà di *ateisimo*, ovvero di *alto tradimento*. Che *questo* non lo sia, nè palsesamente nè occultamente, fermo col proprio pugno. — *Domenico Grigi.*

have a store of others, her equals or betters. We have none like them at poor San Vivaldo. *A rivederci, Ser Giovanni! Schiavo, Ser Canonico! mi commandino.*

Fra Biagio went back into the kitchen, helped himself to a quarter of a loaf, ordered a flask of wine, and trying several eggs against his lips, selected seven, which he himself fried in oil, although the maid offered her services. He never had been so little disposed to enter into conversation with her; and on her asking him how he found her master, he replied that in bodily health Ser Giovanni, by his prayers and ptisans, had much improved, but that his faculties were wearing out apace. "He may now run in the same couples with the canonico; they cannot catch the mange one of the other; the one could say nothing to the purpose, and the other nothing at all. The whole conversation was entirely at my charge," added he. "And now, Assunta, since you press it, I will accept the service of your master's shoes. How I shall ever get home I don't know." He took the shoes off the handles of the bellows, where Assunta had placed them out of her way, and tucking one of his own under each arm, limped toward San Vivaldo.

The unwonted attention to smartness of apparel in the only article wherein it could be displayed, was suggested to Frate Biagio by hearing that Ser Francesco, accustomed to courtly habits and elegant society, and having not only small hands but small feet, usually wore red slippers in the morning. Fra Biagio had scarcely left the outer door than he cordially cursed Ser Francesco for making such a fool of him, and for wearing slippers of black list. "These canonicoes," said he, "not only lie themselves, but teach everybody else to do the same. He has lamed me for life; I burn as if I had been shod at the blacksmith's forge."

The two friends said nothing about him, but continued the discourse which his visit had interrupted.

Petrarca. Turn again, I entreat you, to the serious; and do not imagine that because by nature you are inclined to playfulness you must therefore write ludicrous things better. Many of your stories would make the gravest men laugh, and yet there is little wit in them.

Boccaccio. I think so myself; though authors, little disposed as they are to doubt their possession of any quality they would bring into play, are least of all suspicious on the side of wit. You have convinced me. I am glad to have been tender, and to have written tenderly, for I am certain it is this alone that has made you love me with such affection.

Petrarca. Not this alone, Giovanni; but this principally. I have always found you kind and compassionate, liberal and sincere; and when Fortune does not stand very close to such a man, she leaves only the more room for Friendship.

Boccaccio. Let her stand off then, now and forever! To my heart, to my heart, Francesco! preserver of my health, my peace of mind, and (since you tell me I may claim it) my glory.

Petrarca. Recovering your strength, you must pursue your studies to complete it. What can you have been doing with your books? I have searched in vain this morning for the treasury. Where are they kept? Formerly they were always open. I found only a short manuscript, which I suspect is poetry; but I ventured not on looking into it until I had brought it with me and laid it before you.

Boccaccio. Well guessed! They are verses written by a gentleman who resided long in this country, and who much regretted the necessity of leaving it. He took great delight in composing both Latin and Italian, but never kept a copy of them latterly, so that these are the only ones I could obtain from him. Read, for your voice will improve them: —

TO MY CHILD CARLINO.

Carlino, what art thou about, my boy?
Often I ask that question, though in vain,
For we are far apart. Ah! therefore 't is
I often ask it; not in such a tone
As wiser fathers do, who know too well.
Were we not children, you and I together?
Stole we not glances from each other's eyes?
Swore we not secrecy in such misdeeds?
Well could we trust each other. Tell me then
What thou art doing. Carving out thy name,
Or haply mine, upon my favorite seat,
With the new knife I sent thee over sea?
Or hast thou broken it, and hid the hilt
Among the myrtles, starred with flowers, behind?

Or under that high throne whence fifty lilies
(With sworded tuberoses dense around)
Lift up their heads at once, not without fear
That they were looking at thee all the while?

Does Cincirillo follow thee about?
Inverting one swart foot suspensively,
And wagging his dread jaw at every chirp
Of bird above him on the olive-branch?
Frighten him then away! 't was he who slew
Our pigeons, our white pigeons peacock-tailed,
That feared not you and me — alas, nor him!
I flattened his striped sides along my knee,
And reasoned with him on his bloody mind,
Till he looked blandly, and half closed his eyes
To ponder on my lecture in the shade.
I doubt his memory much, his heart a little,
And in some minor matters (may I say it?)
Could wish him rather sager. But from thee
God hold back wisdom yet for many years!
Whether in early season or in late,
It always comes high-priced. For thy pure breast
I have no lesson: it for me has many.
Come throw it open then! What sports, what cares
(Since there are none too young for these) engage
Thy busy thoughts? Are you again at work,
Walter and you, with those sly laborers
Geppo, Giovanni, Cecco, and Poeta,
To build more solidly your broken dam
Among the poplars, whence the nightingale
Inquisitively watched you all day long?
I was not of your council in the scheme,
Or might have saved you silver without end,
And sighs, too, without number. Art thou gone
Below the mulberry, where that cold pool
Urged to devise a warmer, and more fit
For mighty swimmers, swimming three abreast?
Or art thou panting in this summer noon
Upon the lowest step before the hall,
Drawing a slice of watermelon, long
As Cupid's bow, athwart thy wetted lips
(Like one who plays Pan's pipe), and letting drop
The sable seeds from all their separate cells,
And leaving bays profound and rocks abrupt,
Redder than coral round Calypso's cave?

Petrarca. There have been those anciently who would have been pleased with such poetry; and perhaps there may be again. I am not sorry to see the Muses by the side of childhood, and forming a part of the family. But now tell me about the books.

Boccaccio. Resolving to lay aside the more valuable of those I had collected or transcribed, and to place them under the guardianship of richer men, I locked them up together in the higher story of my tower at Certaldo. You remember the old tower?

Petrarca. Well do I remember the hearty laugh we had together (which stopped us upon the staircase) at the calculation we made how much longer you and I, if we continued to thrive as we had thriven latterly, should be able to pass within its narrow circle. Although I like this little villa much better, I would gladly see the place again, and enjoy with you, as we did before, the vast expanse of woodlands and mountains and maremma, frowning fortresses inexpugnable, and others more prodigious for their ruins; then below them lordly abbeys, over-canopied with stately trees, and girded with rich luxuriance; and towns that seem approaching them to do them honor, and villages nestling close at their sides for sustenance and protection.

Boccaccio. My disorder, if it should keep its promise of leaving me at last, will have been preparing me for the accomplishment of such a project. Should I get thinner and thinner at this rate, I shall soon be able to mount not only a turret or a belfry, but a tube of macaroni,[1] while a Neapolitan is suspending it for deglutition.

What I am about to mention, will show you how little you can rely on me! I have preserved the books, as you desired, but quite contrary to my resolution; and no less contrary to it, by your desire I shall now preserve the "Decameron." In vain had I determined not only to mend in future, but to correct the past; in vain had I prayed most fervently for grace to accomplish it, with a final aspiration to Fiametta that she would unite with your beloved Laura, and that, gentle and beatified spirits as they are, they would breathe together their purer prayers on mine. See what follows.

Petrarca. Sigh not at it. Before we can see all that follows from their intercession, we must join them again. But let me hear anything in which they are concerned.

[1] This is valuable, since it shows that *macaroni* (here called *pasta*) was invented in the time of Boccaccio; so are the letters of Petrarca, which inform us equally in regard to *spectacles:* "Ad *ocularium* [occhiali] mihi confugiendum esset auxilium." — *Domenico Grigi.*

Boccaccio. I prayed; and my breast, after some few tears, grew calmer. Yet sleep did not ensue until the break of morning, when the dropping of soft rain on the leaves of the fig-tree at the window, and the chirping of a little bird to tell another there was shelter under them, brought me repose and slumber. Scarcely had I closed my eyes, if indeed time can be reckoned any more in sleep than in heaven, when my Fiametta seemed to have led me into the meadow. You will see it below you: turn away that branch, — gently! gently! do not break it, for the little bird sat there.

Petrarca. I think, Giovanni, I can divine the place. Although this fig-tree growing out of the wall between the cellar and us is fantastic enough in its branches, yet that other which I see yonder, bent down and forced to crawl along the grass by the prepotency of the young shapely walnut-tree, is much more so. It forms a seat about a cubit above the ground, level and long enough for several.

Boccaccio. Ha! you fancy it must be a favorite spot with me, because of the two strong forked stakes wherewith it is propped and supported!

Petrarca. Poets know the haunts of poets at first sight; and he who loved Laura — O Laura! did I say he who *loved* thee? — hath whisperings where those feet would wander which have been restless after Fiametta.

Boccaccio. It is true, my imagination has often conducted her thither; but here in this chamber she appeared to me more visibly in a dream.

"Thy prayers have been heard, O Giovanni," said she.

I sprang to embrace her.

"Do not spill the water! Ah! you have spilt a part of it."

I then observed in her hand a crystal vase. A few drops were sparkling on the sides and running down the rim; a few were trickling from the base and from the hand that held it.

"I must go down to the brook," said she, "and fill it again as it was filled before."

What a moment of agony was this to me! Could I be certain how long might be her absence? She went; I was following: she made a sign for me to turn back. I disobeyed her only an instant; yet my sense of disobedience, increasing my feebleness and confusion, made me lose sight of her. In the next

moment she was again at my side with the cup quite full. I stood motionless: I feared my breath might shake the water over. I looked her in the face for her commands, and to see it, — to see it so calm, so beneficent, so beautiful. I was forgetting what I had prayed for, when she lowered her head, tasted of the cup, and gave it me. I drank, and suddenly sprang forth before me many groves and palaces and gardens, and their statues and their avenues, and their labyrinths of alaternus and bay, and alcoves of citron and watchful loopholes in the retirements of impenetrable pomegranate. Farther off, just below where the fountain slipped away from its marble hall and guardian gods, arose from their beds of moss and drosera and darkest grass the sisterhood of oleanders, fond of tantalizing with their bosomed flowers and their moist and pouting blossoms the little shy rivulet, and of covering its face with all the colors of the dawn. My dream expanded and moved forward. I trod again the dust of Posilipo, soft as the feathers in the wings of Sleep. I emerged on Baia; I crossed her innumerable arches; I loitered in the breezy sunshine of her mole; I trusted the faithful seclusion of her caverns, the keepers of so many secrets; and I reposed on the buoyancy of her tepid sea. Then Naples, and her theatres and her churches, her grottoes and dells and forts and promontories, rushed forward in confusion, now among soft whispers, now among sweetest sounds, and subsided and sank and disappeared. Yet a memory seemed to come fresh from every one; each had time enough for its tale, for its pleasure, for its reflection, for its pang. As I mounted with silent steps the narrow staircase of the old palace, how distinctly did I feel against the palm of my hand the coldness of that smooth stone-work, and the greater of the cramps of iron in it!

"Ah, me! is this forgetting?" cried I anxiously to Fiametta.

"We must recall these scenes before us," she replied; "such is the punishment of them. Let us hope and believe that the apparition and the compunction which must follow it will be accepted as the full penalty, and that both will pass away almost together."

I feared to lose anything attendant on her presence; I feared to approach her forehead with my lips; I feared to touch the lily on its long wavy leaf in her hair, which filled my

whole heart with fragrance. Venerating, adoring, I bowed my head at last to kiss her snow-white robe, and trembled at my presumption. And yet the effulgence of her countenance vivified while it chastened me. I loved her — I must not say *more* than ever — *better* than ever; it was Fiametta who had inhabited the skies. As my hand opened toward her, —

"Beware!" said she, faintly smiling; "beware, Giovanni! Take only the crystal; take it and drink again."

"Must all be then forgotten?" said I, sorrowfully.

"Remember your prayer and mine, Giovanni? Shall both have been granted — oh! how much worse than in vain?"

I drank instantly; I drank largely. How cool my bosom grew! — how could it grow so cool before her? But it was not to remain in its quiescency; its trials were not yet over. I will not, Francesco! no, I may not commemorate the incidents she related to me, nor which of us said, "I blush for having loved *first;*" nor which of us replied, "Say *least*, say *least*, and blush again!"

The charm of the words (for I felt not the encumbrance of the body nor the acuteness of the spirit) seemed to possess me wholly. Although the water gave me strength and comfort, and somewhat of celestial pleasure, many tears fell around the border of the vase as she held it up before me, exhorting me to take courage, and inviting me with more than exhortation to accomplish my deliverance. She came nearer, more tenderly, more earnestly; she held the dewy globe with both hands, leaning forward, and sighed and shook her head, drooping at my pusillanimity. It was only when a ringlet had touched the rim, and perhaps the water (for a sunbeam on the surface could never have given it such a golden hue), that I took courage, clasped it, and exhausted it. Sweet as was the water, sweet as was the serenity it gave me, — alas! that also which it moved away from me was sweet!

"This time you can trust me alone," said she, and parted my hair, and kissed my brow. Again she went toward the brook; again my agitation, my weakness, my doubt, came over me; nor could I see her while she raised the water, nor knew I whence she drew it. When she returned, she was close to me at once. She smiled: her smile pierced me to the bones; it seemed an angel's. She sprinkled the pure water

on me; she looked most fondly; she took my hand; she suffered me to press hers to my bosom: but, whether by design I cannot tell, she let fall a few drops of the chilly element between.

"And now, O my beloved!" said she, "we have consigned to the bosom of God our earthly joys and sorrows. The joys cannot return, — let not the sorrows. These alone would trouble my repose among the blessed."

"Trouble thy repose, Fiametta! Give me the chalice!" cried I; "not a drop will I leave in it, — not a drop."

"Take it!" said that soft voice. "O now most dear Giovanni, I know thou hast strength enough; and there is but little — at the bottom lies our first kiss."

"Mine, didst thou say, beloved one? And is that left thee still?"

"*Mine*," said she, pensively; and as she abased her head, the broad leaf of the lily hid her brow and her eyes; the light of heaven shone through the flower.

"O Fiametta! Fiametta!" cried I in agony, "God is the God of mercy! God is the God of love! Can I, can I ever — "

I struck the chalice against my head, unmindful that I held it; the water covered my face and my feet. I started up, not yet awake, and I heard the name of Fiametta in the curtains.

Petrarca. Love, O Giovanni, and life itself, are but dreams at best. I do think

> Never so gloriously was Sleep attended
> As with the pageant of that heavenly maid.

But to dwell on such subjects is sinful. The recollection of them, with all their vanities, brings tears into my eyes.

Boccaccio. And into mine too, — they were so very charming.

Petrarca. Alas, alas! the time always comes when we must regret the enjoyments of our youth.

Boccaccio. If we have let them pass us.

Petrarca. I mean our indulgence in them.

Boccaccio. Francesco, I think you must remember Raffaellino degli Alfani.

Petrarca. Was it Raffaellino who lived near San Michele in Orto?

Boccaccio. The same. He was an innocent soul, and fond

of fish. But whenever his friend Sabbatelli sent him a trout from Pratolino, he always kept it until next day or the day after, just long enough to render it unpalatable. He then turned it over in the platter, smelt at it closer, although the news of its condition came undeniable from a distance, touched it with his forefinger, solicited a testimony from the gills which the eyes had contradicted, sighed over it, and sent it for a present to somebody else. Were I a lover of trout as Raffaellino was, I think I should have taken an opportunity of enjoying it while the pink and crimson were glittering on it.

Petrarca. Trout, yes.

Boccaccio. And all other fish I could encompass.

Petrarca. O thou grave mocker! I did not suspect such slyness in thee: proof enough I had almost forgotten thee.

Boccaccio. Listen! listen! I fancied I caught a footstep in the passage. Come nearer; bend your head lower, that I may whisper a word in your ear. Never let Assunta hear you sigh: she is mischievous. She may have been standing at the door: not that I believe she would be guilty of any such impropriety, but who knows what girls are capable of! She has no malice, only in laughing; and a sigh sets her windmill at work, van over van, incessantly.

Petrarca. I should soon check her. I have no notion —

Boccaccio. After all, she is a good girl, — a trifle of the wilful. She must have it that many things are hurtful to me, — reading in particular: it makes people so odd. Tina is a small matter of the madcap, — in her own particular way, — but exceedingly discreet, I do assure you, if they will only leave her alone.

I find I was mistaken, there was nobody.

Petrarca. A cat, perhaps.

Boccaccio. No such thing. I order him over to Certaldo while the birds are laying and sitting; and he knows by experience, favorite as he is, that it is of no use to come back before he is sent for. Since the first impetuosities of youth, he has rarely been refractory or disobliging. We have lived together now these five years, unless I miscalculate; and he seems to have learned something of my manners, wherein violence and enterprise by no means predominate. I have watched him looking at a large green lizard; and, their eyes

being opposite and near, he has doubted whether it might be pleasing to me if he began the attack; and their tails on a sudden have touched one another at the decision.

Petrarca. Seldom have adverse parties felt the same desire of peace at the same moment, and none ever carried it more simultaneously and promptly into execution.

Boccaccio. He enjoys his *otium cum dignitate* at Certaldo: there he is my castellan, and his chase is unlimited in those domains. After the doom of relegation is expired, he comes hither at midsummer: and then if you could see his joy! His eyes are as deep as a well, and as clear as a fountain; he jerks his tail into the air like a royal sceptre, and waves it like the wand of a magician. You would fancy that, as Horace with his head, he was about to smite the stars with it. There is ne'er such another cat in the parish; and he knows it, a rogue! We have rare repasts together in the bean-and-bacon time, although in regard to the bean he sides with the philosopher of Samos, — but after due examination. In cleanliness he is a very nun; albeit in that quality which lies between cleanliness and godliness, there is a smack of Fra Biagio about him. What is that book in your hand?

Petrarca. My breviary.

Boccaccio. Well, give me mine too, — there, on the little table in the corner, under the glass of primroses. We can do nothing better.

Petrarca. What prayer were you looking for? Let me find it.

Boccaccio. I don't know how it is: I am scarcely at present in a frame of mind for it. We are of one faith: the prayers of the one will do for the other, and I am sure that if you omitted my name, you would say them all over afresh. I wish you could recollect in any book as dreamy a thing to entertain me as I have been just repeating. We have had enough of Dante: I believe few of his beauties have escaped us, and small faults, which we readily pass by, are fitter for small folks, as grubs are the proper bait for gudgeons.

Petrarca. I have had as many dreams as most men. We are all made up of them, as the webs of the spider are particles of her own vitality. But how infinitely less do we profit by them! I will relate to you, before we separate, one among the multitude of mine, as coming the nearest to the poetry of

yours, and as having been not totally useless to me. Often have I reflected on it, — sometimes with pensiveness, with sadness never.

Boccaccio. Then, Francesco, if you had with you as copious a choice of dreams as clustered on the elm-trees where the Sibyl led Æneas, this, in preference to the whole swarm of them, is the queen dream for me.

Petrarca. When I was younger I was fond of wandering in solitary places, and never was afraid of slumbering in woods and grottoes. Among the chief pleasures of my life, and among the commonest of my occupations, was the bringing before me such heroes and heroines of antiquity, such poets and sages, such of the prosperous and the unfortunate, as most interested me by their courage, their wisdom, their eloquence, or their adventures. Engaging them in the conversation best suited to their characters, I knew perfectly their manners, their steps, their voices; and often did I moisten with my tears the models I had been forming of the less happy.

Boccaccio. Great is the privilege of entering into the studies of the intellectual; great is that of conversing with the guides of nations, the movers of the mass, the regulators of the unruly will, stiff, in its impurity and rust, against the finger of the Almighty Power that formed it: but give me, Francesco, give me rather the creature to sympathize with; apportion me the sufferings to assuage. Ah, gentle soul! thou wilt never send them over to another; they have better hopes from thee.

Petrarca. We both alike feel the sorrows of those around us. He who suppresses or allays them in another breaks many thorns off his own, and future years will never harden fresh ones.

My occupation was not always in making the politician talk politics, the orator toss his torch among the populace, the philosopher run down from philosophy to cover the retreat or the advances of his sect, but sometimes in devising how such characters must act and discourse on subjects far remote from the beaten track of their career. In like manner the philologist, and again the dialectician, were not indulged in the review and parade of their trained bands, but at times brought forward to show in what manner and in what degree external habits had influenced the conformation of the internal man. It was

far from unprofitable to set passing events before past actors, and to record the decisions of those whose interests and passions are unconcerned in them.

Boccaccio. This is surely no easy matter. The thoughts are in fact your own, however you distribute them.

Petrarca. All cannot be my own, if you mean by *thoughts* the opinions and principles I should be the most desirous to inculcate. Some favorite ones perhaps may obtrude too prominently, but otherwise no misbehavior is permitted them; reprehension and rebuke are always ready, and the offence is punished on the spot.

Boccaccio. Certainly you thus throw open, to its full extent, the range of poetry and invention, which cannot but be very limited and sterile, unless where we find displayed much diversity of character as disseminated by nature, much peculiarity of sentiment as arising from position, marked with unerring skill through every shade and gradation; and finally and chiefly, much intertexture and intensity of passion. You thus convey to us more largely and expeditiously the stores of your understanding and imagination than you ever could by sonnets or canzonets, or sinewless and sapless allegories.

But weightier works are less captivating. If you had published any such as you mention, you must have waited for their acceptance. Not only the fame of Marcellus, but every other,

"Crescit occulto velut arbor ævo;"

and that which makes the greatest vernal shoot is apt to make the least autumnal. Authors in general who have met celebrity at starting, have already had their reward,—always their utmost due, and often much beyond it. We cannot hope for both celebrity and fame,—supremely fortunate are the few who are allowed the liberty of choice between them. We two prefer the strength that springs from exercise and toil, acquiring it gradually and slowly; we leave to others the earlier blessing of that sleep which follows enjoyment. How many at first sight are enthusiastic in their favor! Of these how large a portion come away empty-handed and discontented!—like idlers who visit the seacoast, fill their pockets with pebbles bright from the passing wave, and carry them off with rapture. After a short examination at home, every streak seems faint and dull, and the

whole contexture coarse, uneven, and gritty: first one is thrown away, then another; and before the week's end the store is gone of things so shining and wonderful.

Petrarca. Allegory, which you named with sonnets and canzonets, had few attractions for me, believing it to be the delight in general of idle, frivolous, inexcursive minds, in whose mansions there is neither hall nor portal to receive the loftier of the passions. A stranger to the affections, she holds a low station among the handmaidens of Poetry, being fit for little but an apparition in a mask. I had reflected for some time on this subject, when, wearied with the length of my walk over the mountains, and finding a soft old molehill covered with gray grass by the way-side, I laid my head upon it and slept. I cannot tell how long it was before a species of dream or vision came over me.

Two beautiful youths appeared beside me. Each was winged; but the wings were hanging down, and seemed ill adapted to flight. One of them, whose voice was the softest I ever heard, looking at me frequently, said to the other, "He is under my guardianship for the present; do not awaken him with that feather."

Methought, hearing the whisper, I saw something like the feather on an arrow, and then the arrow itself, — the whole of it, even to the point; although he carried it in such a manner that it was difficult at first to discover more than a palm's length of it: the rest of the shaft, and the whole of the barb, was behind his ankles.

"This feather never awakens any one," replied he, rather petulantly; "but it brings more of confident security, and more of cherished dreams, than you without me are capable of imparting."

"Be it so!" answered the gentler, — "none is less inclined to quarrel or dispute than I am. Many whom you have wounded grievously, call upon me for succor. But so little am I disposed to thwart you, it is seldom I venture to do more for them than to whisper a few words of comfort in passing. How many reproaches on these occasions have been cast upon me for indifference and infidelity! Nearly as many, and nearly in the same terms, as upon you!"

"Odd enough that we, O Sleep! should be thought so alike!"

said Love, contemptuously. "Yonder is he who bears a nearer resemblance to you: the dullest have observed it."

I fancied I turned my eyes to where he was pointing, and saw at a distance the figure he designated. Meanwhile the contention went on uninterruptedly. Sleep was slow in asserting his power or his benefits; Love recapitulated them, but only that he might assert his own above them. Suddenly he called on me to decide, and to choose my patron. Under the influence first of the one, then of the other, I sprang from repose to rapture, I alighted from rapture on repose, — and knew not which was sweetest. Love was very angry with me, and declared he would cross me throughout the whole of my existence. Whatever I might on other occasions have thought of his veracity, I now felt too surely the conviction that he would keep his word. At last, before the close of the altercation, the third Genius had advanced and stood near us. I cannot tell how I knew him, but I knew him to be the Genius of Death. Breathless as I was at beholding him, I soon became familiar with his features. First they seemed only calm, presently they grew contemplative, and lastly beautiful: those of the Graces themselves are less regular, less harmonious, less composed. Love glanced at him unsteadily, with a countenance in which there was somewhat of anxiety, somewhat of disdain; and cried, "Go away! go away! nothing that thou touchest lives!"

"Say rather, child!" replied the advancing form, and advancing grew loftier and statelier, — "say rather that nothing of beautiful or of glorious lives its own true life until my wing hath passed over it."

Love pouted, and rumpled and bent down with his forefinger the stiff short feathers on his arrow-head, but replied not. Although he frowned worse than ever, and at me, I dreaded him less and less, and scarcely looked toward him. The milder and calmer Genius, the third, in proportion as I took courage to contemplate him, regarded me with more and more complacency. He held neither flower nor arrow, as the others did; but throwing back the clusters of dark curls that overshadowed his countenance, he presented to me his hand, openly and benignly. I shrank on looking at him so near, and yet I sighed to love him. He smiled, not without an expression of pity, at perceiving my diffidence, my timidity, — for I remembered how

soft was the hand of Sleep, how warm and entrancing was Love's. By degrees I became ashamed of my ingratitude; and turning my face away, I held out my arms and felt my neck within his. Composure strewed and allayed all the throbbings of my bosom; the coolness of freshest morning breathed around; the heavens seemed to open above me; while the beautiful cheek of my deliverer rested on my head. I would now have looked for those others, but knowing my intention by my gesture, he said consolatorily, —

"Sleep is on his way to the Earth, where many are calling him; but it is not to these he hastens, for every call only makes him fly farther off. Sedate and grave as he looks, he is nearly as capricious and volatile as the more arrogant and ferocious one."

"And Love!" said I, "whither is he departed? If not too late, I would propitiate and appease him."

"He who cannot follow me, he who cannot overtake and pass me," said the Genius, "is unworthy of the name, the most glorious in earth or heaven. Look up! Love is yonder, and ready to receive thee."

I looked; the earth was under me; I saw only the clear blue sky, and something brighter above it.

PIEVANO GRIGI TO THE READER.

Before I proceeded on my mission, I had a final audience of Monsignore, in which I asked his counsel whether a paper sewed and pasted to the "Interviews," being the substance of an intended Confession, might, according to the *Decretals*, be made public. Monsignore took the subject into his consideration, and assented. Previously to the solution of this question, he was graciously pleased to discourse on Boccaccio, and to say, "I am happy to think he died a good Catholic, and contentedly."

"No doubt, Monsignore!" answered I, "for when he was on his death-bed, or a little sooner, the most holy man in Italy admonished him terribly of his past transgressions, and frightened him fairly into paradise."

"Pievano," said Monsignore, "it is customary in the fashionable literature of our times to finish a story in two manners. The most approved is to knock on the head every soul that has been interesting you; the second is to put the two youngest into bed together, promising the same treatment to another couple, or more. Our forefathers were equally zealous about those they dealt with. Every Pagan turned Christian; every loose woman had bark to grow about her, as thick and as stringent as the ladies had in Ovid's Metamorphoses; and the gallants who had played false with them were driven mad by the monks at their death-bed. I neither hope nor believe that poor Boccaccio gave way to their importunities, but am happy in thinking that his decease was as tranquil as his life was inoffensive. He was not exempt from the indiscretions of youth; he allowed his imagination too long a dalliance with his passions, but malice was never found among them. Let us then, in charity to him and to ourselves, be persuaded that such a pest as this mad zealot had no influence over him, —

> Nè turbò il tuono di nebbiosa mente
> Acqua si limpida e ridente.[1]

I cannot but break into verse (although no poet) while I am thinking of him. Such men as he would bring over more to our good-natured honest old faith again than fifty monks with scourges at their shoulders."

"Ah, Monsignore!" answered I, "could I but hope to be humbly instrumental in leading back the apostate Church to our true Catholic, I should be the happiest man alive."

"God forbid you should be without the hope!" said Monsignore. "The two chief differences now are, — with ours, that we must not eat butcher's meat on a Friday; with the Anglican, that they must not eat baked meat on a Sunday. Secondly, that *we* say, 'Come, and be saved;' the Anglican says, 'Go, and be damned.'"

Since the exposition of Monsignore, the Parliament has issued an Act of Grace in regard to eating. One article says, "Nobody shall eat on a Sunday roast or baked or other hot victuals whatsoever, unless he goes to church in his own car-

[1] Nor did the thunderings of a cloudy mind
Trouble so limpid and serene a water.

riage; if he goes thither in any other than his own, be he halt or blind, he shall be subject to the penalty of twenty pounds. Nobody shall dance on a Sunday, or play music, unless he also be able to furnish three *écarté* tables at the least, and sixteen wax-lights."

I write from memory; but if the wording is inexact, the sense is accurate. Nothing can be more gratifying to a true Catholic than to see the amicable game played by his bishops with the Anglican. The Catholic never makes a false move. His fish often slips into the red square, marked "Sunday," but the shoulder of mutton can never get into its place, marked "Friday;" it lies upon the table, and nobody dares touch it. Alas! I am forgetting that this is purely an English game, and utterly unknown among us, or indeed in any other country under heaven.

To promote still further the objects of religion, as understood in the Universities and the Parliament, it was proposed that public prayers should be offered up for rain on every Sabbath-day, the more effectually to encompass the provisions of the Bill. But this clause was cancelled in the Committee, on the examination of a groom, who deposed that a coach-horse of his master, the bishop of London, was touched in the wind, and might be seriously a sufferer, — "for the bishop," said he, "is no better walker than a goose."

There is, moreover, great and general discontent in the lower orders of the clergy that some should be obliged to serve a couple of churches, and perhaps a jail or hospital to boot, for a stipend of a hundred pounds and even less, while others are incumbents of pluralities, doing no duty at all, and receiving three or four thousands. It is reported that several of the more fortunate are so utterly shameless as to liken the Church to a lottery-office, and to declare that unless there were great prizes no man in his senses would enter into the service of our Lord. I myself have read with my own eyes this declaration; but I hope the signature is a forgery. What is certain is, that the emoluments of the bishopric of London are greater than the united revenue of *twelve* cardinals; that they are amply sufficient for the board, lodging, and education of *three hundred* young men destined to the ministry; and that they might relieve from famine, rescue from sin, and save perhaps from

eternal punishment *three thousand fellow-creatures yearly.* On a narrow inspection of one manufacturing town in England, I deliver it as my firm opinion that it contains more crime and wretchedness than all the four continents of our globe. If these enormous masses of wealth had been fairly subdivided and carefully expended; if a more numerous and more efficient clergy had been appointed, — how very much of sin and sorrow had been obviated and allayed! Ultimately the poor will be driven to desperation, there being no check upon them, no guardian over them; and the eyes of the sleeper, it is to be feared, will be opened by pincers. In the midst of such woes, originating in her iniquities and aggravated by her supineness, the Church of England, the least reformed Church in Christendom and the most opposite to the institutions of the State, boasts of being the purest member of the Reformation. Shocked at such audacity and impudence, the conscientious and pious, not only of her laity but also of her clergy, fall daily off from her, and, resigning all hope of parks and palaces, embrace the cross.

Never since the Reformation (so called) have our prospects been so bright as at the present day. Our own prelates and those of the English Church are equally at work to the same effect; and the Catholic clergy will come into possession of their churches with as little change in the temporals as in the spirituals. It is the law of the land that the Church cannot lose her rights and possessions by lapse of time; impossible then that she should lose it by fraud and fallacy. Although the bishops of England, regardless of their vocations and vows, have by deceit and falsehood obtained Acts of Parliament, under sanction of which they have severed from their sees and made over to their families the possessions of the Episcopacy, it cannot be questioned that what has been wrongfully alienated will be rightfully restored. No time, no trickery, no subterfuge can conceal it. The exposure of such thievery in such eminent stations (worse and more shameful than any on the Thames or in the lowest haunts of villany and prostitution), and of attempts to seize from their poorer brethren a few decimals to fill up a deficiency in many thousands, has opened wide the eyes of England. Consequently, there are religious men who resort from all quarters to the persecuted mother they had so long

abandoned. God at last has made his enemies perform his work; and the English prelates, not indeed on the stool of repentance as would befit them, but thrust by the scorner into his uneasy chair, are mending with scarlet silk and seaming with threads of gold the copes and dalmatics of their worthy predecessors. I am overjoyed in declaring to my townsmen that the recent demeanor of these prelates, refractory and mutinous as it has been (in other matters) to the government of their patron the king, has ultimately (by joining the malcontents in abolishing the favorite farce of religious freedom, and in forbidding roast-meat and country air on the Sabbath) filled up my subscription for the bell of San Vivaldo.

Salve Regina Cœli!

PRETE DOMENICO GRIGI.

LONDON, June 17, 1837.

HEADS OF CONFESSION; A MONTHFUL.

Printed and Published Superiorum Licentiâ.

March 14. Being ill at ease, I cried, "Diavolo! I wish that creaking shutter was at thy bedroom, instead of mine, old fellow!" Assuntina would have composed me, showing me how wrong it was. Perverse; and would not acknowledge my sinfulness to her. I said she had nothing to do with it, which vexed her.

March 23. Reproved Assuntina, and called her *ragazzaccia*, for asking of Messer Piero Pimperna half the evening's milk of his goat. Very wrong in me, it being impossible she should have known that Messer Piero owed me four *lire* since — I forget when.

March 31. It blowing tramontana, I was ruffled; suspected a feather in the minestra; said the rice was as black as a coal. Sad falsehood! made Assuntina cry. Saracenic doings.

Recapitulation. Shameful all this month; I did not believe such bad humor was in me.

Reflection. The Devil, if he cannot have his walk one way,

will take it another; never at a fault. Manifold proof; poor sinner!

April 2. Thought uncharitably of Fra Biagio. The Frate took my hand, asking me to confess, reminding me that I had not confessed since the 3d of March, although I was so sick and tribulated I could hardly stir. Peevish; said, "Confess yourself! I won't; I am not minded. You will find those not far off who —" and then I dipped my head under the coverlet, and saw my error.

April 6. Whispers of Satanasso, pretty clear! A sprinkling of vernal thoughts, much too advanced for the season. About three hours before sunset, Francesco came. Forgot my prayers; woke at midnight, recollected, and did not say them. Might have told him; never occurred that, being a canonico, he could absolve me; now gone again these three days, this being the fourteenth. Must unload ere heavier-laden. Gratiæ plena! have mercy upon me!

THE TRANSLATOR'S REMARKS

ON THE ALLEGED JEALOUSY OF BOCCACCIO AND PETRARCA.

Among the most heinous crimes that can be committed against society is the

> "temerati crimen amici,"

and no other so loosens the bonds by which it is held together. Once and only once in my life, I heard it defended by a person of intellect and integrity. It was the argument of a friendly man, who would have invalidated the fact; it was the solicitude of a prompt and dexterous man, holding up his hat to cover the shame of genius. I have indeed had evidence of some who saw nothing extraordinary or amiss in these filchings and twitchings; but there are persons whose thermometer stands higher by many degrees at other points than at honor. There are insects on the shoals and sands of literature, shrimps which must be half boiled before they redden; and there are blushes

(no doubt) in certain men, of which the precious vein lies so deep that it could hardly be brought to light by cordage and windlass. Meanwhile their wrathfulness shows itself at once by a plashy and puffy superficies, with an exuberance of coarse rough stuff upon it, and is ready to soak our shoes with its puddle at the first pressure.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" is a commandment which the literary cast down from over their communion table, to nail against the doors of the commonalty, with a fist and forefinger pointing at it. Although the depreciation of any work is dishonest, the attempt is more infamous when committed against a friend. The calumniator on such occasions may in some measure err from ignorance, or from inadequate information, but nothing can excuse him if he speaks contemptuously. It is impossible to believe that such writers as Boccaccio and Petrarca could be widely erroneous in each other's merits; no less incredible is it that if they did err at all, they would openly avow a disparaging opinion. This baseness was reserved for days when the study opens into the market-place, when letters are commodities, and authors chapmen. Yet even upon their stalls, where an antique vase would stand little chance with a noticeable piece of blue-and-white crockery, and shepherds and sailors and sunflowers in its circumference, it might be heartily and honestly derided, — but less probably by the fellow-villager of the vender, with whom he had been playing at quoits every day of his life. When an ill-natured story is once launched upon the world, there are many who are careful that it shall not soon founder. Thus the idle and inconsiderate rumor which has floated through ages about the mutual jealousy of Boccaccio and Petrarca, finds at this day a mooring in all quarters. Never were two men so perfectly formed for friendship; never were two who fulfilled so completely that happy destination. True it is, the studious and exact Petrarca had not elaborated so entirely to his own satisfaction his poem "Africa" as to submit it yet to the inspection of Boccaccio, to whom unquestionably he would have been delighted to show it the moment he had finished it. He died, and left it incomplete. We have, it must be acknowledged, the authority of Petrarca himself that he never had read the "Decameron" through, even to the last year of his life,

when he had been intimate with Boccaccio four-and-twenty years. How easy would it have been for him to dissemble this fact! How certainly would any man have dissembled it who doubted of his own heart or of his friend's! I must request the liberty of adducing his whole letter, as already translated: —

"I have only run over your 'Decameron,' and therefore I am not capable of forming a true judgment of its merit; but upon the whole it has given me a great deal of pleasure. *The freedoms in it are excusable, from having been written in youth, from the subjects it treats of, and from the persons for whom it was designed.* Among a great number of gay and witty jokes, there are however many grave and serious sentiments. I did as most people do, — I paid most attention to the beginning and the end. Your description of the people in the Plague is very true and pathetic, and the touching story of Griseldis has *been ever since laid up in my memory, that I may relate it in my conversations with my friends.* A friend of mine at Padua, a man of wit and knowledge, undertook to read it aloud; but he had scarcely got through half of it, when his tears prevented him going on. He attempted it a second time; but his sobs and sighs obliged him to desist. Another of my friends determined on the same venture; and having read it from beginning to end, without the least alteration of voice or gesture, he said, on returning the book, 'It must be owned that this is an affecting history, and I should have wept could I have believed it true; but there never was and never will be a woman like Griseldis.'"

Here was the termination of Petrarca's literary life; he closed it with the last words of this letter, which are, "Adieu, my friends! adieu, my correspondence!" Soon afterward he was found dead in his library, with his arm leaning on a book. In the whole of this composition, what a carefulness and solicitude to say everything that could gratify his friend! With what ingenuity are those faults not palliated but *excused* (his own expression) which must nevertheless have appeared very grievous ones to the purity of Petrarca!

But why did not Boccaccio send him his "Decameron" long before? Because there never was a more perfect gentleman, a man more fearful of giving offence, a man more sensitive to the delicacy of friendship, or more deferential to sanctity of character. He knew that the lover of Laura could not amuse his hours with mischievous or idle passions; he knew that he rose at midnight to repeat his matins, and never intermitted them. On what succeeding hour could he venture to seize; with what

countenance could he charge it with the levities of the world? Perhaps the Recluse of Arqua, the visitor of old Certaldo, read at last the "Decameron" only that he might be able the better to defend it. And how admirably has the final stroke of his indefatigable pen effected the purpose! Is this the jealous rival? Boccaccio received the last testimony of unaltered friendship in the month of October, 1373, a few days after the writer's death. December was not over when they met in heaven: and never were two gentler spirits united there.

The character of Petrarca shows itself in almost every one of his various works, — unsuspicious, generous, ardent in study, in liberty, in love, with a self-complacence which in less men would be vanity, but arising in him from the general admiration of a noble presence, from his place in the interior of a heart which no other could approach or merit, and from the homage of all who held the principalities of Learning in every part of Europe.

Boccaccio is only reflected in full from a larger mass of compositions; yet one letter is quite sufficient to display the beauty and purity of his mind. It was written from Venice, when finding there, not Petrarca whom he expected to find, but Petrarca's daughter, he describes to the father her modesty, grace, and cordiality in his reception. The imagination can form to itself nothing more lovely than this picture of the gentle Ermissenda; and Boccaccio's delicacy and gratitude are equally affecting. No wonder that Petrarca, in his will, bequeathed to his friend a sum the quintuple in amount of that which he bequeathed to his only brother, whom however he loved tenderly. Such had been, long before their acquaintance, the celebrity of Petrarca, such the honors conferred on him wherever he resided or appeared, that he never thought of equality or rivalry. And such was Boccaccio's reverential modesty, that, to the very close of his life, he called Petrarca his master. Immeasurable as was his own superiority, he no more thought himself the equal of Petrarca than Dante (in whom the superiority was almost as great) thought himself Virgil's. These, I believe, are the only instances on record where poets have been very tenaciously erroneous in the estimate of their own inferiority. The same observation cannot be made so confidently on the decisions of contemporary critics. Indeed, the balance in which works of the highest merit are balanced, vibrates long

before it is finally adjusted. Even the most judicious men have formed injudicious opinions on the living and the recently deceased. Bacon and Hooker could not estimate Shakspeare, nor could Taylor and Barrow give Milton his just award. Cowley and Dryden were preferred to both, by a great majority of the learned. Many, although they believe they discover in a contemporary the qualities which elevate him above the rest, yet hesitate to acknowledge it: part, because they are fearful of censure for singularity; part, because they differ from him in politics or religion; and part, because they delight in hiding, like dogs and foxes, what they can at any time surreptitiously draw out for their sullen solitary repast. Such persons have little delight in the glory of our country, and would hear with disapprobation and moroseness that it has produced four men so pre-eminently great that no name, modern or ancient, excepting Homer, can stand very near the lowest: these are, Shakspeare, Bacon, Milton, and Newton. Beneath the least of these (if any one can tell which is least) are Dante and Aristoteles, who are unquestionably the next.[1] Out of Greece and England, Dante is the only man of the first order; such he is, with all his imperfections. Less ardent and energetic, but having no less at command the depths of thought and treasures of fancy, — beyond him in variety, animation, and interest, beyond him in touches of nature and truth of character, — is Boccaccio. Yet he believed his genius was immeasurably inferior to Alighieri's; and it would have surprised and pained him to find himself preferred to his friend Petrarca, — which indeed did not happen in his lifetime. So difficult is it to shake the tenure of long possession, or to believe that a living man is as valuable as an old statue, that for five hundred years together the critics held Virgil far above his obsequious but high-souled scholar, who now has at least the honor of standing alone, if not first. Milton and Homer may be placed together: on the continent Homer will be seen at the right hand; in England, Milton. Supreme above all, immeasurably supreme, stands Shakspeare. I do not think Dante is any more the equal of Homer than Hercules is the equal of Apollo. Though Hercules may display more muscles, yet Apollo is the

[1] We can speak only of those whose works are extant. Democritus and Anaxagoras were perhaps the greatest in discovery and invention.

powerfuller without any display of them at all. Both together are just equivalent to Milton, shorn of his Sonnets, and of his "Allegro" and "Penseroso," — the most delightful of what (wanting a better name) we call *lyrical* poems.

But in the contemplation of these prodigies we must not lose the company we entered with. Two contemporaries so powerful in interesting our best affections as Giovanni and Francesco, never existed before or since. Petrarca was honored and beloved by all conditions. He collated with the student and investigator, he planted with the husbandman, he was the counsellor of kings, the reprover of pontiffs, and the pacificator of nations. Boccaccio, who never had occasion to sigh for solitude, never sighed *in* it: there was his station, there his studies, there his happiness. In the vivacity and versatility of imagination, in the narrative, in the descriptive, in the playful, in the pathetic, the world never saw his equal until the sunrise of our Shakspeare. Ariosto and Spenser may stand at great distance from him in the shadowy and unsubstantial; but multiform Man was utterly unknown to them. The human heart, through all its foldings, vibrates to Boccaccio.

CITATION AND EXAMINATION

OF

WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE,

EUSEBY TREEN, JOSEPH CARNABY, AND SILAS GOUGH, CLERK,

BEFORE THE WORSHIPFUL

SIR THOMAS LUCY, KNIGHT,

TOUCHING DEER-STEALING,

ON THE 19TH DAY OF SEPTEMBER, IN THE YEAR OF GRACE 1582.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

"It was an ancestor of my husband who *brought out* the famous Shakspeare." These words were really spoken, and were repeated in conversation as ridiculous. Certainly such was very far from the lady's intention; and who knows to what extent they are true?

The frolic of Shakspeare in deer-stealing was the cause of his "Hegira;" and his connection with players in London was the cause of his writing plays. Had he remained in his native town, his ambition had never been excited by the applause of the intellectual, the popular, and the powerful, which after all was hardly sufficient to excite it. He wrote from the same motive as he acted,—to earn his daily bread. He felt his own powers, but he cared little for making them felt by others more than served his wants.

The malignant may doubt, or pretend to doubt, the authenticity of the "Examination" here published. Let us, who are not malignant, be cautious of adding anything to the noisome mass of incredulity that surrounds us; let us avoid the crying sin of our age, in which the "Memoirs of a Parish Clerk," edited as they were by a pious and learned dignitary of the Established Church, are questioned in regard to their genuineness; and even the privileges of Parliament are inadequate to cover from the foulest imputation — the imputation of having exercised his inventive faculties — the elegant and accomplished editor of Eugene Aram's apprehension, trial, and defence.

Indeed, there is little of real history excepting in romances. Some of these are strictly true to nature; while histories in general give a distorted view of her, and rarely a faithful record either of momentous or of common events.

Examinations taken from the mouth are surely the most trustworthy: whoever doubts it, may be convinced by Ephraim Barnett.

The Editor is confident he can give no offence to any person who may happen to bear the name of Lucy. The family of Sir Thomas became extinct nearly half a century ago, and the estates descended to the Rev. Mr. John Hammond, of Jesus College, in Oxford, a

respectable Welsh curate, between whom and him there existed at his birth eighteen prior claimants. He took the name of Lucy.

The reader will form to himself, from this "Examination of Shakspeare," a more favorable opinion of Sir Thomas than is left upon his mind by the dramatist in the character of Justice Shallow. The knight indeed is here exhibited in all his pride of birth and station, in all his pride of theologian and poet. He is led by the nose, while he believes that nobody can move him, and shows some other weaknesses, which the least attentive observer will discover; but he is not without a little kindness at the bottom of the heart, — a heart too contracted to hold much, or to let what it holds ebulliate very freely. But, upon the whole, we neither can utterly hate nor utterly despise him. Ungainly as he is,

"Circum præcordia ludit."

The author of the "Imaginary Conversations" seems, in his "Boccaccio and Petrarca," to have taken his idea of Sir Magnus from this manuscript. He however has adapted that character to the times; and in Sir Magnus the coward rises to the courageous, the unskilful in arms becomes the skilful, and war is to him a teacher of humanity. With much superstition, theology never molests him; scholarship and poetry are no affairs of his: he doubts of himself and others, and is as suspicious in his ignorance as Sir Thomas is confident.

With these wide diversities there are family features, such as are likely to display themselves in different times and circumstances, and some so generically prevalent as never to lie quite dormant in the breed. In both of them there is parsimony, there is arrogance, there is contempt of inferiors, there is abject awe of power, there is irresolution, there is imbecility. But Sir Magnus has no knowledge, and no respect for it. Sir Thomas would almost go thirty miles, even to Oxford, to see a fine specimen of it, although like most of those who call themselves the godly, he entertains the most undoubting belief that he is competent to correct the errors of the wisest and most practised theologian.

A part only of the many deficiencies which the reader will discover in this book is attributable to the Editor. These however it is his duty to account for, and he will do it as briefly as he can.

The *fac-similes* (as printers' boys call them, meaning *specimens*) of the handwriting of nearly all the persons introduced might perhaps have been procured, had sufficient time been allowed for another journey into Warwickshire. That of Shakspeare is known already in the signature to his will, but deformed by sickness; that of Sir Thomas Lucy is extant at the bottom of a commitment of a female vagrant, for having a sucking child in her arms on the public road; that of Silas Gough is affixed to the register of births and marriages, during several years, in the parishes of Hampton Lucy and

Charlecote, and certifies one death, — Euseby Treen's; surmised at least to be his by the letters "E. T." cut on a bench seven inches thick, under an old pollard-oak outside the park paling of Charlecote, toward the northeast. For this discovery the Editor is indebted to a most respectable intelligent farmer in the adjoining parish of Wasperton, in which parish Treen's elder brother lies buried. The worthy farmer is unwilling to accept the large portion of fame justly due to him for the services he has thus rendered to literature in elucidating the history of Shakspeare and his times. In possession of another agricultural gentleman there was recently a very curious piece of iron, believed by many celebrated antiquaries to have constituted a part of a knight's breast-plate. It was purchased for two hundred pounds by the trustees of the British Museum, among whom, the reader will be grieved to hear, it produced dissension and coldness; several of them being of opinion that it was merely a gorget, while others were inclined to the belief that it was the forepart of a horse-shoe. The Committee of Taste and the Heads of the Archæological Society were consulted. These learned, dispassionate, and benevolent men had the satisfaction of conciliating the parties at variance, — each having yielded somewhat and every member signing, and affixing his seal to the signature, that, if indeed it be the forepart of a horse-shoe, it was probably Ismael's; there being a curved indentation along it, resembling the first letter of his name, and there being no certainty or record that he died in France, or was left in that country by Sir Magnus.

The Editor is unable to render adequate thanks to the Rev. Stephen Turnover for the gratification he received in his curious library by a sight of Joseph Carnaby's name at full-length, in red ink, coming from a trumpet in the mouth of an angel. This invaluable document is upon an engraving in a frontispiece to the New Testament. But since unhappily he could procure no signature of Hannah Hathaway, nor of her mother, and only a questionable one of Mr. John Shakspeare, the poet's father, — there being two, in two very different hands, — both he and the publisher were of opinion that the graphical part of the volume would be justly censured as extremely incomplete, and that what we could give would only raise inextinguishable regret for that which we could not. On this reflection all have been omitted.

The Editor is unwilling to affix any mark of disapprobation on the very clever engraver who undertook the sorrel mare; but as in the memorable words of that ingenious gentleman from Ireland, whose polished and elaborate epigrams raised him justly to the rank of prime minister, —

> "White was not *so very* white,"—

in like manner it appeared to nearly all the artists he consulted that the sorrel mare was not *so sorrel* in print.

There is another and a graver reason why the Editor was induced to reject the contribution of his friend the engraver: and this is, a neglect of the late improvements in his art, he having, unadvisedly or thoughtlessly, drawn in the old-fashioned manner lines at the two sides and at the top and bottom of his print, confining it to such limits as paintings are confined in by their frames. Our spirited engravers, it is well known, disdain this thraldom, and not only give unbounded space to their scenery, but also melt their figures in the air, — so advantageously, that, for the most part, they approach the condition of cherubs. This is the true aërial perspective, so little understood heretofore. Trees, castles, rivers, volcanoes, oceans, float together in absolute vacancy; the solid earth is represented, what we know it actually is, buoyant as a bubble, so that no wonder if every horse is endued with all the privileges of Pegasus, save and except our sorrel. Malicious carpers, insensible or invidious of England's glory, deny her in this beautiful practice the merit of invention, assigning it to the Chinese in their tea-cups and saucers; but if not absolutely new and ours, it must be acknowledged that we have greatly improved and extended the invention.

Such are the reasons why the little volume here laid before the public is defective in those decorations which the exalted state of literature demands. Something of compensation is supplied by a Memorandum of Ephraim Barnett, written upon the inner cover, and printed below.

The Editor, it will be perceived, is but little practised in the ways of literature, much less is he gifted with that prophetic spirit which can anticipate the judgment of the public. It may be that he is too idle or too apathetic to think anxiously or much about the matter; and yet he has been amused, in his earlier days, at watching the first appearance of such few books as he believed to be the production of some powerful intellect. He has seen people slowly rise up to them, like carp in a pond when food is thrown into it; some of which carp snatch suddenly at a morsel, and swallow it; others touch it gently with their barb, pass deliberately by, and leave it; others wriggle and rub against it more disdainfully; others, in sober truth, know not what to make of it, swim round and round it, eye it on the sunny side, eye it on the shady, approach it, question it, shoulder it, flap it with the tail, turn it over, look askance at it, take a pea-shell or a worm instead of it, and plunge again their heads into the comfortable mud. After some seasons the same food will suit their stomachs better.

MEMORANDUM, BY EPHRAIM BARNETT.

STUDYING the benefit and advantage of such as by God's blessing may come after me, and willing to show them the highways of Providence from the narrow by-lane in the which it hath been His pleasure to station me, and being now advanced full-nigh unto the close and consummation of my earthly pilgrimage, methinks I cannot do better at this juncture than preserve the looser and lesser records of those who have gone before me in the same, with higher heel-piece to their shoe and more polished scallop to their beaver. And here, beforehand, let us think gravely and religiously on what the Pagans in their blindness did call Fortune, making a goddess of her, and saying, —

> "One body she lifts up so high
> And suddenly, she makes him cry
> And scream as any wench might do
> That you should play the rogue unto:
> And the same Lady Light sees good
> To drop another in the mud,
> Against all hope and likelihood." [1]

My kinsman, Jacob Eldridge, having been taught by me, among other useful things, to write a fair and laudable hand, was recommended and introduced by our worthy townsman, Master Thomas Greene, unto the Earl of Essex, to keep his accounts, and to write down sundry matters from his dictation, even letters occasionally. For although our nobility, very unlike the French, not only can read and write, but often do, yet some from generosity and some from dignity keep in their employment what those who are illiterate, and would not appear so, call an "amanuensis," thereby meaning *secretary* or *scribe*. Now, it happened that our gracious Queen's Highness was desirous of knowing all that could be known about the rebellion in Ireland; and hearing but little truth from her nobility in that country, — even the fathers in God inclining more unto court favor than will be readily believed of spiritual lords, and moulding their ductile depositions on the pasteboard of their temporal mistress until she was angry at seeing the lawn-sleeves so besmirched from wrist to elbow,— she herself did say unto the Earl of Essex: "Essex, these fellows lie! I am inclined to unfrock and scourge them sorely for their leasings. Of that anon. Find out, if you can, somebody who hath his wit and his honesty about him at the same time. I know that when one of these panniers is full the

[1] The Editor has been unable to discover who was the author of this very free translation of an Ode in Horace. He is certainly happy in his amplification of the *stridore acuto*. May it not be surmised that he was some favorite scholar of Ephraim Barnett?

other is apt to be empty, and that men walk crookedly for want of balance. No matter, we must search and find. Persuade — thou canst persuade, Essex! — say anything; do anything. We must talk gold and give iron. Dost understand me?"

The earl did kiss the jewels upon the dread fingers, for only the last joint of each is visible, — and surely no mortal was ever so fool-hardy as to take such a monstrous liberty as touching it, except in spirit! On the next day there did arrive many fugitives from Ireland; and among the rest was Master Edmund Spenser, known even in those parts for his rich vein of poetry, in which he is declared by our best judges to excel the noblest of the ancients, and to leave all the moderns at his feet. Whether he notified his arrival unto the earl, or whether fame brought the notice thereof unto his lordship, Jacob knoweth not. But early in the morning did the earl send for Jacob, and say unto him: "Eldridge, thou must write fairly and clearly out, and in somewhat large letters, and in lines somewhat wide apart, all that thou hearest of the conversation I shall hold with a gentleman from Ireland. Take this gilt and illumined vellum, and albeit the civet make thee sick fifty times, write upon it all that passes! Come not out of the closet until the gentleman hath gone homeward. The Queen requireth much exactness; and this is equally a man of genius, a man of business, and a man of worth. I expect from him not only what is true, but what is the most important and necessary to understand rightly and completely; and nobody in existence is more capable of giving me both information and advice. Perhaps if he thought another were within hearing, he would be offended or over-cautious. His delicacy and mine are warranted safe and sound by the observance of those commands which I am delivering unto thee."

It happened that no information was given in this conference relating to the movements or designs of the rebels; so that Master Jacob Eldridge was left possessor of the costly vellum, which, now Master Spenser is departed this life, I keep as a memorial of him, albeit oftener than once I have taken pounce-box and pen-knife in hand in order to make it a fit and proper vehicle for my own very best writing. But I pretermitted it, finding that my hand is no longer the hand it was, or rather that the breed of geese is very much degenerated, and that their quills, like men's manners, are grown softer and flaccider. Where it will end God only knows! I shall not live to see it.

Alas, poor Jacob Eldridge! he little thought that within twelve months his glorious master, and the scarcely less glorious poet, would be no more! In the third week of the following year was Master Edmund buried at the charges of the earl; and within these few days hath this lofty nobleman bowed his head under the axe of God's displeasure, — such being our gracious Queen's. My kinsman Jacob sent unto me by the Alcester drover, old Clem Fisher,

this among other papers, fearing the wrath of that offended Highness, which allowed not her own sweet disposition to question or thwart the will divine. Jacob did likewise tell me in his letter that he was sure I should be happy to hear the success of William Shakspeare, our townsman. And in truth right glad was I to hear of it, being a principal in bringing it about, as those several sheets will show which have the broken tile laid upon them to keep them down compactly.

Jacob's words are these: "Now I speak of poets, you will be in a maze at hearing that our townsman hath written a power of matter for the playhouse. Neither he nor the booksellers think it quite good enough to print, but I do assure you, on the faith of a Christian, it is not bad; and there is rare fun in the last thing of his about Venus, where a Jew, one Shiloh, is choused out of his money and his revenge. However, the best critics and the greatest lords find fault, and very justly, in the words, —

"'Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer, as a Christian is?'

"Surely this is very unchristianlike. Nay, for supposition sake, suppose it to be true, was it his business to tell the people so? Was it his duty to ring the crier's bell and cry to them, 'The sorry Jews are quite as much men as you are'? The Church, luckily, has let him alone for the present, and the Queen winks upon it. The best defence he can make for himself is that it comes from the mouth of a Jew, who says many other things as abominable. Master Greene may over-rate him; but Master Greene declares that if William goes on improving and taking his advice, it will be desperate hard work in another seven years to find so many as half-a-dozen chaps equal to him within the liberties.

"Master Greene and myself took him with us to see the burial of Master Edmund Spenser in Westminster Abbey, on the 19th of January last. The halberdmen pushed us back as having no business there. Master Greene told them he belonged to the Queen's company of players. William Shakspeare could have said the same, but did not. And I, fearing that Master Greene and he might be halberded back into the crowd, showed the badge of the Earl of Essex. Whereupon did the serjeant ground his halberd, and say unto me, 'That badge commands admittance everywhere: your folk likewise may come in.'

"Master Greene was red-hot angry, and told me he would bring him before the *council*.

"William smiled, and Master Greene said, 'Why! would not you, if you were in my place?'

"He replied, 'I am an half inclined to do worse, — to bring him before the *audience* some spare hour.'

"At the close of the burial service all the poets of the age threw their pens into the grave, together with the pieces they had composed in praise or lamentation of the deceased. William Shakspeare was the only poet who abstained from throwing in either pen or poem; at which no one marvelled, he being of low estate, and the others not having yet taken him by the hand. Yet many authors recognized him, not indeed as author, but as player; and one civiller than the rest, came up unto him triumphantly, his eyes sparkling with glee and satisfaction, and said consolatorily, 'In due time, my honest friend, you may be admitted to do as much for one of us.'

"'After such encouragement,' replied our townsman, 'I am bound in duty to give you the preference, should I indeed be worthy.'

"This was the only smart thing he uttered all the remainder of the day; during the whole of it he appeared to be half lost, I know not whether in melancholy or in meditation, and soon left us."

Here endeth all that my kinsman Jacob wrote about William Shakspeare, saving and excepting his excuse for having written so much. The rest of his letter was on a matter of wider and weightier import; namely, on the price of Cotteswolde cheese at Evesham Fair. And yet, although ingenious men be not among the necessaries of life, there is something in them that makes us curious in regard to their goings and doings. It were to be wished that some of them had attempted to be better accountants; and others do appear to have laid aside the copybook full early in the day. Nevertheless, they have their uses and their merits. Master Eldridge's letter is the wrapper of much wholesome food for contemplation. Although the decease (within so brief a period) of such a poet as Master Spenser and such a patron as the earl be unto us appalling, we laud and magnify the great Disposer of events no less for his goodness in raising the humble than for his power in extinguishing the great. And peradventure ye, my heirs and descendants, who shall read with due attention what my pen now writeth, will say with the royal Psalmist that it inditeth of a good matter when it showeth unto you that, whereas it pleased the Queen's Highness to send a great lord before the judgment-seat of Heaven, having fitted him by means of such earthly instruments as princes in like cases do usually employ, and deeming (no doubt) in her princely heart that by such shrewd tonsure his head would be best fitted for a crown of glory, and thus doing all that she did out of the purest and most considerate love for him, — it likewise hath pleased her Highness to use her right hand as freely as her left, and to raise up a second burgess of our town to be one of her company of players. And ye also, by industry and loyalty, may cheerfully hope for promotion in your callings, and come up (some of you) as nearly to him in the

presence of royalty as he cometh up (far off indeed at present) to the great and wonderful poet who lies dead among more spices than any phœnix, and more quills than any porcupine. If this thought may not prick and incitate you, little is to be hoped from any gentle admonition or any earnest expostulation of

Your loving friend and kinsman,

E. B.

ANNO ÆT. SUÆ 74, DOM. 1599,
DECEMB. 16;
GLORIA DP. DF. ET DSS.
AMOR VERSUS VIRGINEM REGINAM!
PROTESTANTICE LOQUOR ET HONESTO SENSU:
OBTESTOR CONSCIENTIAM MEAM!

EXAMINATION,

ETC.

About one hour before noontide, the youth William Shakspeare, accused of deer-stealing, and apprehended for that offence, was brought into the great hall at Charlecote, where, having made his obeisance, it was most graciously permitted him to stand.

The worshipful Sir Thomas Lucy, Knight, seeing him right opposite on the farther side of the long table, and fearing no disadvantage, did frown upon him with great dignity; then, deigning ne'er a word to the culprit, turned he his face toward his chaplain Sir Silas Gough, who stood beside him, and said unto him most courteously, and unlike unto one who in his own right commandeth, "Stand out of the way! What are those two varlets bringing into the room?"

"The table, sir," replied Master Silas, "upon the which the consumption of the venison was perpetrated."

The youth, William Shakspeare, did thereupon pray and beseech his lordship most fervently, in this guise: "Oh, sir! do not let him turn the tables against me, who am only a simple stripling, and he an old codger."

But Master Silas did bite his nether lip, and did cry aloud, "Look upon those deadly spots!"

And his worship did look thereupon most staidly, and did say in the ear of Master Silas, but in such wise that it reached even unto mine, "Good honest chandlery, methinks!"

"God grant it may turn out so!" ejaculated Master Silas.

The youth, hearing these words, said unto him, "I fear, Master Silas, gentry like you often pray God to grant what *he* would rather not; and now and then what *you* would rather not."

Sir Silas was wroth at this rudeness of speech about God in the face of a preacher, and said, reprovingly, "Out upon thy foul mouth, knave! upon which lie slaughter and venison."

Whereupon did William Shakspeare sit mute awhile, and discomfited; then turning toward Sir Thomas, and looking and speaking as one submiss and contrite, he thus appealed unto him, "Worshipful sir! were there any signs of Venison on my mouth, Master Silas could not for his life cry out upon it, nor help kissing it as 't were a wench's."

Sir Thomas looked upon him with most lordly gravity and wisdom, and said unto him in a voice that might have come from the bench, "Youth, thou speakest irreverently;" and then unto Master Silas, "Silas, to the business on hand. Taste the fat upon yon boor's table, which the constable hath brought hither, good Master Silas! And declare upon oath, being sworn in my presence, first, whether said fat do proceed of venison; secondly, whether said venison be of buck or doe."

Whereupon the Reverend Sir Silas did go incontinently, and did bend forward his head, shoulders, and body, and did severally taste four white solid substances upon an oaken board; said board being about two yards long, and one yard four inches wide, found in, and brought thither from, the tenement or messuage of Andrew Haggit, who hath absconded. Of these four white solid substances, two were somewhat larger than a groat, and thicker; one about the size of King Henry VIII.'s shilling, when our late sovereign lord of blessed memory was toward the lustiest; and the other, that is to say the middlemost, did resemble in some sort a mushroom, not over fresh, turned upward on its stalk.

"And what sayest thou, Master Silas?" quoth the knight.

In reply whereunto Sir Silas thus averred: —

"Venison! o' my conscience!
Buck! or burn me alive!

The three splashes in the circumference are verily and indeed venison; buck, moreover, and Charlecote buck, upon my oath!"

Then, carefully tasting the protuberance in the centre, he spat it out crying, "Pho! pho! villain! villain!" and shaking his fist at the culprit.

Whereat the said culprit smiled and winked, and said off-hand, "Save thy spittle, Master Silas! It would supply a gaudy mess to the hungriest litter; but it would turn them from whelps into wolvets. 'T is pity to throw the best of thee away. Nothing comes out of thy mouth that is not savory and solid, bating thy wit, thy sermons, and thy promises."

It was my duty to write down the very words, irreverent as they are, being so commanded. More of the like, it is to be feared, would have ensued, but that Sir Thomas did check him, saying shrewdly, "Young man, I perceive that if I do not stop thee in thy courses, thy name being involved in thy company's may one day or other reach across the county; and folks may handle it and turn it about as it deserveth, from Coleshill to Nuneaton, from Bromwicham to Brownsover. And who knoweth but that, years after thy death, the very house wherein thou wert born may be pointed at and commented on by knots of people, gentle and simple? What a shame for an honest man's son! Thanks to me, who consider of measures to prevent it! Posterity shall laud and glorify me for plucking thee clean out of her head, and for picking up timely a ticklish skittle, that might overthrow with it a power of others just as light. I will rid the hundred of thee with God's blessing! nay, the whole shire! We will have none such in our county; we justices are agreed upon it, and we will keep our word now and forever more. Woe betide any that resembles thee in any part of him!"

Whereunto Sir Silas added, "We will dog him and worry him and haunt him and bedevil him; and if ever he hear a comfortable word, it shall be in a language very different from his own."

"As different as thine is from a Christian's," said the youth.

"Boy, thou art slow of apprehension," said Sir Thomas, with much gravity, and taking up the cue did rejoin: "Master Silas would impress upon thy ductile and tender mind the danger of evil doing; that we, — in other words, that justice is resolved to follow him up, even beyond his country, where he shall hear nothing better than the Italian or the Spanish or the black language, or the language of Turk or Troubadour, or Tartar or Mongol. And forsooth, for this gentle and indirect

reproof, a gentleman in priest's orders is told by a stripling that he lacketh Christianity! Who then shall give it?"

Shakspeare. Who, indeed, when the founder of the feast leaveth an invited guest so empty? Yea, sir, the guest was invited, and the board was spread. The fruits that lay upon it be there still, and fresh as ever; and the bread of life in those capacious canisters is unconsumed and unbroken.

Sir Silas (*aside*). The knave maketh me hungry with his mischievous similitudes.

Sir Thomas. Thou hast aggravated thy offence, Will Shakspeare! Irreverent caitiff! is this a discourse for my chaplain and clerk? Can he or the worthy scribe Ephraim [his worship was pleased to call me worthy] write down such words as those, about litter and wolvets, for the perusal and meditation of the grand jury? If the whole corporation of Stratford had not unanimously given it against thee, still his tongue would catch thee, as the evet catcheth a gnat. Know, sirrah, the reverend Sir Silas, albeit ill appointed for riding, and not over fond of it, goeth to every house wherein is a venison feast for thirty miles round. Not a buck's hoof on any stable-door but it awakeneth his recollections like a red letter.

—This wholesome reproof did bring the youth back again to his right senses; and then said he, with contrition and with a wisdom beyond his years, and little to be expected from one who had spoken just before so unadvisedly and rashly, "Well do I know it, your worship! And verily do I believe that a bone of one, being shovelled among the soil upon his coffin, would forthwith quicken[1] him. Sooth to say, there is ne'er a buckhound in the county but he treateth him as a godchild, patting him on the head, soothing his velvety ear between thumb and forefinger, ejecting tick from tenement, calling him 'fine fellow,' 'noble lad,' and giving him his blessing, as one dearer to him than a king's death to a debtor,[2] or a bastard to a dad of eighty. This is the only kindness I ever heard of Master Silas toward his fellow-creatures. Never hold me unjust, Sir Knight, to Master Silas. Could I learn other good of him, I would freely say it; for we do good by speaking it, and none

[1] "Quicken," bring to life.

[2] Debtors were often let out of prison at the coronation of a new king, but creditors never paid by him.

is easier. Even bad men are not bad men while they praise the just. Their first step backward is more troublesome and wrenching to them than the first forward."

"In God's name, where did he gather all this?" whispered his worship to the chaplain, by whose side I was sitting. "Why, he talks like a man of forty-seven or more!"

"I doubt his sincerity, sir!" replied the chaplain. "His words are fairer now — Devil choke him for them!" interjected he in an undervoice — "and almost book-worthy; but out of place. What the scurvy cur yelped against me, I forgive him as a Christian. Murrain upon such varlet vermin! It is but of late years that dignities have come to be reviled; the other parts of the gospel were broken long before, — this was left us; and now this likewise is to be kicked out of doors, amid the mutterings of such moon-calves as him yonder."

"Too true, Silas," said the knight, sighing deeply. "Things are not as they were in our glorious wars of York and Lancaster. The knaves were thinned then, — two or three crops a year of that rank squitch-grass which it has become the fashion of late to call the people. There was some difference then between buff doublets and iron mail, and the rogues felt it. Well-a-day! we must bear what God willeth, and never repine, although it gives a man the heart-ache. We are bound in duty to keep these things for the closet, and to tell God of them only when we call upon his holy name, and have him quite by ourselves."

Sir Silas looked discontented and impatient, and said snappishly, "Cast we off here, or we shall be at fault. Start him, sir! prythee, start him!"

Again his worship, Sir Thomas, did look gravely and grandly, and taking a scrap of paper out of the Holy Book then lying before him, did read distinctly these words: "Providence hath sent Master Silas back hither this morning to confound thee in thy guilt."

Again, with all the courage and composure of an innocent man, and indeed with more than what an innocent man ought to possess in the presence of a magistrate, the youngster said, pointing toward Master Silas, "The first moment he ventureth to lift up his visage from the table, hath Providence marked

him miraculously. I have heard of black malice. How many of our words have more in them than we think of! Give a countryman a plough of silver, and he will plough with it all the season, and never know its substance. 'T is thus with our daily speech. What riches lie hidden in the vulgar tongue of the poorest and most ignorant! What flowers of Paradise lie under our feet, with their beauties and parts undistinguished and undiscerned, from having been daily trodden on! Oh, sir, look you, — but let me cover my eyes! — look at his lips! Gracious Heaven! they were not thus when he entered: they are blacker now than Harry Tewe's bull-bitch's!"

Master Silas did lift up his eyes in astonishment and wrath; and his worship Sir Thomas did open his wider and wider, and cried by fits and starts, "Gramercy! true enough! nay, afore God, too true by half! I never saw the like! Who would believe it? I wish I were fairly rid of this examination, — my hands washed clean thereof! Another time! anon! We have our quarterly sessions! We are many together; at present I remand —"

And now, indeed, unless Sir Silas had taken his worship by the sleeve, he would mayhap have remanded the lad. But Sir Silas, still holding the sleeve and shaking it, said hurriedly, "Let me entreat your worship to ponder. What black does the fellow talk of? My blood and bile rose up against the rogue; but surely I did not turn black in the face, or in the mouth, as the fellow calls it?"

Whether Master Silas had some suspicion and inkling of the cause or not, he rubbed his right hand along his face and lips, and looking upon it, cried aloud, "Ho, ho! is it off? There is some upon my finger's end, I find. Now I have it; ay, there it is. That large splash upon the centre of the table is tallow, by my salvation! The profligates sat up until the candle burned out, and the last of it ran through the socket upon the board. We knew it before. I did convey into my mouth both fat and smut!"

"Many of your cloth and kidney do that, good Master Silas, and make no wry faces about it," quoth the youngster, with indiscreet merriment, although short of laughter, as became him, who had already stepped too far, and reached the mire.

To save paper and time, I shall now, for the most part, write only what they all said, not saying that they said it, and just copying out in my clearest hand what fell respectively from their mouths.

Sir Silas. I did indeed spit it forth, and emunge my lips, as who should not?

Shakspeare. Would it were so!

Sir Silas. "Would it were so!" in thy teeth, hypocrite!

Sir Thomas. And truly I likewise do incline to hope and credit it, as thus paraphrased and expounded.

Shakspeare. Wait until this blessed day next year, sir, at the same hour. You shall see it forth again at its due season; it would be no miracle if it lasted. Spittle may cure sore eyes, but not blasted mouths and scald consciences.

Sir Thomas. Why, who taught thee all this?

— Then turned he leisurely toward Sir Silas, and placing his hand outspredden upon the arm of the chaplain, said unto him in a low, judicial, hollow voice, "Every word true and solemn! I have heard less wise saws from between black covers."

Sir Silas was indignant at this under-rating, as he appeared to think it, of the Church and its ministry, and answered impatiently, with Christian freedom, "Your worship surely will not listen to this wild wizard in his brothel-pulpit!"

Shakspeare. Do I live to hear Charlecote Hall called a brothel-pulpit! Alas, then, I have lived too long!

Sir Silas. We will try to amend that for thee.

— William seemed not to hear him, loudly as he spake and pointedly unto the youngster, who wiped his eyes, crying, "Commit me, sir! in mercy commit me, Master Ephraim! O Master Ephraim! A guiltless man may feel all the pangs of the guilty! Is it you who are to make out the commitment? Dispatch! dispatch! I am a-weary of my life. If I dared to lie I would plead guilty."

Sir Thomas. Heyday! No wonder, Master Ephraim, thy entrails are moved and wamble. Dost weep, lad? Nay, nay! thou bearest up bravely. Silas, I now find, although the example come before me from humble life, that what my mother said was true, — 't was upon my father's demise: "In great grief there are few tears."

Upon which did the youth, Willy Shakspeare, jog himself by

the memory, and repeat these short verses, not wide from the same purport: —

> "There are, alas, some depths of woe
> Too vast for tears to overflow."

Sir Thomas. Let those who are sadly vexed in spirit mind that notion, whoever indited it, and be men. I always was; but some little griefs have pinched me woundily.

— Master Silas grew impatient, for he had ridden hard that morning, and had no cushion upon his seat, as Sir Thomas had. I have seen in my time that he who is seated on beech-wood hath very different thoughts and moralities from him who is seated on goose-feathers under doe-skin. But that is neither here nor there; albeit an I die, as I must, my heirs, Judith and her boy Elijah, may note it.

Master Silas, as above, looked sourishly, and cried aloud, "The witnesses! the witnesses! Testimony! testimony! We shall now see whose black goes deepest. There is a fork to be had that can hold the slipperiest eel, and a finger that can strip the slimiest. I cry your worship to the witnesses."

Sir Thomas. Ay, indeed, we are losing the day; it wastes toward noon, and nothing done. Call the witnesses. How are they called by name? Give me the paper.

— The paper being forthwith delivered into his worship's hand by the learned clerk, his worship did read aloud the name of Euseby Treen. Whereupon did Euseby Treen come forth through the great hall-door, which was ajar, and answer most audibly, "Your worship!"

Straightway did Sir Thomas read aloud, in like form and manner, the name of Joseph Carnaby; and in like manner, as aforesaid, did Joseph Carnaby make answer and say, "Your worship!"

Lastly did Sir Thomas turn the light of his countenance on William Shakspeare, saying, "Thou seest these good men deponents against thee, William Shakspeare."

And then did Sir Thomas pause. And pending this pause, did William Shakspeare look steadfastly in the faces of both; and stroking down his own with the hollow of his hand, from the jaw-bone to the chin-point, said unto his honor, —

"Faith! it would give me much pleasure, and the neighbor-

hood much vantage, to see these two fellows good men. Joseph Carnaby and Euseby Treen! Why, your worship, they know every hare's form in Luddington-field better than their own beds, and as well pretty nigh as any wench's in the parish."

Then turned he, with jocular scoff, unto Joseph Carnaby, thus accosting him whom his shirt, being made stiffer than usual for the occasion, rubbed and frayed: "Ay, Joseph, smoothen and soothe thy collar-piece again and again! Hark ye; I know what smock that was knavishly cut from."

Master Silas rose up in high choler, and said unto Sir Thomas, "Sir, do not listen to that lewd reviler! I wager ten groats I prove him to be wrong in his scent. Joseph Carnaby is righteous and discreet."

Shakspeare. By daylight and before the parson. Bears and boars are tame creatures and discreet in the sunshine and after dinner.

Treen. I do know his down-goings and up-risings.

Shakspeare. The man and his wife are one, saith Holy Scripture.

Treen. A sober-paced and rigid man, if such there be. Few keep Lent like unto him.

Shakspeare. I warrant him, both lent and stolen.

Sir Thomas. Peace, and silence! Now, Joseph Carnaby, do thou depose on particulars.

Carnaby. May it please your worship, I was returning from Hampton upon Allhallowmas Eve, between the hours of ten and eleven at night, in company with Master Euseby Treen; and when we came to the bottom of Mickle Meadow, we heard several men in discourse. I plucked Euseby Treen by the doublet, and whispered in his ear, "Euseby! Euseby! let us slink along in the shadow of the elms and willows."

Treen. Willows and elm-trees were the words.

Shakspeare. See, your worship, what discordances! They cannot agree in their own story.

Sir Silas. The same thing, the same thing, in the main!

Shakspeare. By less differences than this estates have been lost, hearts broken, and England, our country, filled with homeless, helpless, destitute orphans. I protest against it!

Sir Silas. Protest, indeed! He talks as if he were a member of the House of Lords. They alone can protest.

Sir Thomas. Your attorney may object, not protest, before the lord judge. Proceed you, Joseph Carnaby.

Carnaby. In the shadow of the willows and elm-trees then —

Shakspeare. No hints, no conspiracies! Keep to your own story, man, and do not borrow his.

Sir Silas. I overrule the objection. Nothing can be more futile and frivolous.

Shakspeare. So learned a magistrate as your worship will surely do me justice by hearing me attentively. I am young; nevertheless, having more than one year written in the office of an attorney, and having heard and listened to many discourses and questions on law, I cannot but remember the heavy fine inflicted on a gentleman of this county who committed a poor man to prison for being in possession of a hare, — it being proved that the hare was in his possession, and not he in the hare's.

Sir Silas. Synonymous term! synonymous term!

Sir Thomas. In what term sayest thou was it? I do not remember the case.

Sir Silas. Mere quibble! mere equivocation! Jesuitical! Jesuitical!

Shakspeare. It would be Jesuitical, Sir Silas, if it dragged the law by its perversions to the side of oppression and cruelty. The order of Jesuits, I fear, is as numerous as its tenets are lax and comprehensive. I am sorry to see their frocks flounced with English serge.

Sir Silas. I don't understand thee, viper!

Sir Thomas. Cease thou, Will Shakspeare! Know thy place! And do thou, Joseph Carnaby, take up again the thread of thy testimony.

Carnaby. We were still at some distance from the party, when on a sudden Euseby hung an —[1]

Sir Thomas. As well write "drew back," Master Ephraim and Master Silas! Be circumspecter in speech, Master Joseph Carnaby! I did not look for such rude phrases from that starch-warehouse under thy chin. Continue, man!

Carnaby. "Euseby," said I in his ear, "what ails thee, Euseby?" "I wag no farther," quoth he. "What a number of names and voices!"

[1] The word here omitted is quite illegible.

Sir Thomas. Dreadful gang! a number of names and voices! Had it been any other day in the year but Allhallowmas Eve! To steal a buck upon such a day! Well, God may pardon even that. Go on, go on! But the laws of our country must have their satisfaction and atonement. Were it upon any other day in the calendar less holy, the buck were nothing, or next to nothing, saving the law and our conscience and our good report. Yet we, her Majesty's justices, must stand in the gap, body and soul, against evil-doers. Now do thou, in furtherance of this business, give thine aid unto us, Joseph Carnaby; remembering that mine eye from this judgment-seat, and her Majesty's bright and glorious one overlooking the whole realm, and the broader of God above, are upon thee.

— Carnaby did quail a matter at these words about the judgment-seat and the broad eye, — aptly and gravely delivered by him, moreover, who hath to administer truth and righteousness in our ancient and venerable laws, and especially at the present juncture in those against park-breaking and deer-stealing. But finally, nought discomfited, and putting his hand valiantly atwixt hip and midriff, so that his elbow well-nigh touched the taller pen in the ink-pot, he went on.

Carnaby. "In the shadow of the willows and elm-trees," said he, "and get nearer!" We were still at some distance, may be a score of furlongs, from the party —

Sir Thomas. Thou hast said it already, all save the score of furlongs. Hast room for them, Master Silas?

Sir Silas. Yea, and would make room for fifty to let the fellow swing at his ease.

Sir Thomas. Hast room, Master Ephraim?

"'T is done, most worshipful," said I. The learned knight did not recollect that I could put fifty furlongs in a needle's eye, give me pen fine enough. But far be it from me to vaunt of my penmanship, although there be those who do malign it, even in my own township and parish; yet they never have unperched me from my calling, and have had hard work to take an idle wench or two from under me on Saturday nights.

I memorize thus much, not out of any malice or any soreness about me, but that those of my kindred into whose hands it please God these papers do fall hereafter may bear up stoutly

in such straits: and if they be good at the cudgel, that they, looking first at their man, do give it him heartily and unsparingly, keeping within law.

Sir Thomas, having overlooked what we had written, and meditated awhile thereupon, said unto Joseph: "It appeareth by thy testimony that there was a huge and desperate gang of them a-foot. Revengeful dogs! it is difficult to deal with them. The laws forbid precipitancy and violence. A dozen or two may return and harm me; not me indeed, but my tenants and servants. I would fain act with prudence, and like unto him who looketh abroad. He must tie his shoe tightly who passeth through mire; he must step softly who steppeth over stones; he must walk in the fear of the Lord (which, without a brag, I do at this present feel upon me) who hopeth to reach the end of the straightest road in safety."

Sir Silas. Tut, tut! your worship. Her Majesty's deputy hath matchlocks and halters at a knight's disposal, or the world were topsy-turvy indeed.

Sir Thomas. My mental ejaculations, and an influx of grace thereupon, have shaken and washed from my brain all thy last words, good Joseph. Thy companion here, Euseby Treen, said unto thee — ay?

Carnaby. Said unto me, "What a number of names and voices! And there be but three living men in all! And look again! Christ deliver us! all the shadows save one go leftward: that one lieth right upon the river. It seemeth a big squat monster, shaking a little, as one ready to spring upon its prey."

Sir Thomas. A dead man in his last agonies, no doubt. Your deer-stealer doth boggle at nothing: he hath alway the knife in doublet and the Devil at elbow. I wot not of any keeper killed or missing. To lose one's deer and keeper too were overmuch. Do, in God's merciful name, hand unto me a glass of sack, Master Silas! I wax faintish at the big squat man: he hath harmed not only me, but mine. Furthermore, the examination is grown so long.

— Then was the wine delivered by Sir Silas into the hand of his worship, who drank it off in a beaker of about half a pint, but little to his satisfaction; for he said shortly afterward: "Hast thou poured no water into the sack, good Master Silas?

It seemeth weaker and washier than ordinary, and affordeth small comfort unto the breast and stomach."

Sir Silas. Not I, truly, sir; and the bottle is a fresh and sound one. The cork reported on drawing, as the best diver doth on sousing from Warwick bridge into Avon. A rare cork! as bright as the glass bottle, and as smooth as the lips of any cow.

Sir Thomas. My mouth is out of taste this morning; or the same wine, mayhap, hath a different force and flavor in the dining-room and among friends. But to business. What more?

Carnaby. "Euseby Treen, what may it be?" said I. "I know," quoth he, "but dare not breathe it."

Sir Thomas. I thought I had taken a glass of wine, verily. Attention to my duty as a magistrate is paramount. I mind nothing else when that lies before me. Carnaby, I credit thy honesty, but doubt thy manhood. Why not breathe it with a vengeance?

Carnaby. It was Euseby who dared not.

Sir Thomas. Stand still; say nothing yet; mind my orders; fair and softly; compose thyself.

—They all stood silent for some time, and looked very composed, awaiting the commands of the knight. His mind was clearly in such a state of devotion that peradventure he might not have descended for a while longer to his mundane duties, had not Master Silas told him that, under the shadow of his wing, their courage had returned, and they were quite composed again.

"You may proceed," said the knight.

Carnaby. Master Treen did take off his cap and wipe his forehead. I, for the sake of comforting him in this his heaviness, placed my hand upon his crown; and truly I might have taken it for a tuft of bents,—the hair on end, the skin immovable as God's earth.

—Sir Thomas hearing these words, lifted up his hands above his own head, and in the loudest voice he had yet uttered did he cry, "Wonderful are thy ways in Israel, O Lord!"

So saying, the pious knight did strike his knee with the palm of his right hand; and then gave he a sign, bowing his head and closing his eyes, by which Master Carnaby did think he

signified his pleasure that he should go on deposing, and he went on thus: —

Carnaby. At this moment one of the accomplices cried, "Willy, Willy! prythee stop! enough in all conscience! First thou divertedst us from our undertaking with thy strange vagaries, thy Italian girl's nursery sighs, thy pucks and pinchings, and thy Windsor whimsies. No kitten upon a bed of marum ever played such antics. It was summer and winter, night and day with us, within the hour; and in such religion did we think and feel it, we would have broken the man's jaw who gainsaid it. We have slept with thee under the oaks in the ancient forest of Arden, and we have wakened from our sleep in the tempest far at sea.[1] Now art thou for frightening us again out of all the senses thou hadst given us, with witches and women more murderous than they."

Then followed a deeper voice: "Stouter men and more resolute are few; but thou, my lad, hast words too weighty for flesh and bones to bear up against. And who knows but these creatures may pop among us at last, as the wolf did, sure enough, upon him the noisy rogue who so long had been crying *wolf!* and *wolf!*"

Sir Thomas. Well spoken, for two thieves; albeit I miss the meaning of the most part. Did they prevail with the scapegrace, and stop him?

Carnaby. The last who had spoken did slap him on the shoulder, saying, "Jump into the punt, lad, and across!" Thereupon did Will Shakspeare jump into said punt, and begin to sing a song about a mermaid.

Shakspeare. Sir, is this credible? I will be sworn I never saw one, and verily do believe that scarcely one in a hundred years doth venture so far up the Avon.

Sir Thomas. There is something in this. Thou mayest have sung about one, nevertheless. Young poets take great liberties with all female kind; not that mermaids are such very unlawful game for them, and there be songs even about worse and staler fish. Mind ye that! Thou hast written songs and hast sung them, and lewd enough they be, God wot!

[1] By this deposition it would appear that Shakspeare had formed the idea, if not the outline, of several plays already, much as he altered them no doubt in after-life.

Shakspeare. Pardon me, your worship; they were not mine then. Peradventure the song about the mermaid may have been that ancient one which every boy in most parishes has been singing for many years, and perhaps his father before him; and somebody was singing it then, mayhap, to keep up his courage in the night.

Sir Thomas. I never heard it.

Shakspeare. Nobody would dare to sing in the presence of your worship unless commanded; not even the mermaid herself.

Sir Thomas. Canst thou sing it?

Shakspeare. Verily, I can sing nothing.

Sir Thomas. Canst thou repeat it from memory?

Shakspeare. It is so long since I have thought about it that I may fail in the attempt.

Sir Thomas. Try, however.

Shakspeare, —

> The mermaid sat upon the rocks
> All day long,
> Admiring her beauty and combing her locks,
> And singing a mermaid song.

Sir Thomas. What was it, what was it? I thought as much. There thou standest like a woodpecker, chattering and chattering, breaking the bark with thy beak, and leaving the grub where it was. This is enough to put a saint out of patience.

Shakspeare. The wishes of your worship possess a mysterious influence! I now remember all: —

> And hear the mermaid's song you may,
> As sure as sure can be,
> If you will but follow the sun all day,
> And souse with him into the sea.

Sir Thomas. It must be an idle fellow who would take that trouble; besides, unless he nicked the time he might miss the monster. There be many who are slow to believe that the mermaid singeth.

Shakspeare. Ah, sir! not only the mermaid singeth, but the merman sweareth, as another old song will convince you.

Sir Thomas. I would fain be convinced of God's wonders

in the great deeps, and would lean upon the weakest reed, like unto thee, to manifest his glory. Thou mayest convince me.

Shakspeare, —

A wonderful story, my lasses and lads,
Peradventure you've heard from your grannams or dads,
Of a merman that came every night to woo
The spinster of spinsters, our Catherine Crewe.

But Catherine Crewe
Is now seventy-two,
And avers she hath half forgotten
The truth of the tale, when you ask her about it,
And says, as if fain to deny it or flout it,
"Pooh! the merman is dead and rotten."

The merman came up, as the mermen are wont,
To the top of the water, and then swam upon 't;
And Catherine saw him with both her two eyes, —
A lusty young merman full six feet in size.

And Catherine was frightened,
Her scalp-skin it tightened,
And her head it swam strangely, although on dry land;
And the merman made bold
Eftsoons to lay hold
(*This* Catherine well recollects) of her hand.

But how could a merman, if ever so good,
Or if ever so clever, be well understood
By a simple young creature of our flesh and blood?

Some tell us the merman
Can only speak German,
In a voice between grunting and snoring;
But Catherine says he had learned in the wars
The language, persuasions, and oaths of our tars,
And that even his voice was not foreign.

Yet when she was asked how he managed to hide
The green fishy tail, coming out of the tide
For night after night above twenty,
"You troublesome creatures!" old Catherine replied,
"*In his pocket:* won't that now content ye?"

Sir Thomas. I have my doubts yet. I should have said unto her seriously, "Kate, Kate, I am not convinced." There may be witchcraft or sortilege in it. I would have made it a Star-chamber matter.

Shakspeare. It was one, sir.

Sir Thomas. And now I am reminded by this silly childish song, which after all is not the true mermaid's, thou didst tell me, Silas, that the papers found in the lad's pocket were intended for poetry.

Sir Silas. I wish he had missed his aim, sir, in your park, as he hath missed it in his poetry. The papers are not worth reading; they do not go against him in the point at issue.

Sir Thomas. We must see that, they being taken upon his person when apprehended.

Sir Silas. Let Ephraim read them then: it behooveth not me, a Master of Arts, to con a whelp's whining.

Sir Thomas. Do thou read them aloud unto us, good Master Ephraim.

— Whereupon I took the papers, which young Willy had not bestowed much pains on; and they posed and puzzled me grievously, for they were blotted and scrawled in many places, as if somebody had put him out. These likewise I thought fit, after long consideration, to write better, and preserve, great as the loss of time is when men of business take in hand such unseemly matters. However, they are decenter than most, and not without their moral. For example: —

TO THE OWLET.

Who, O thou sapient saintly bird!
Thy shouted warnings ever heard
    Unbleached by fear?
The blue-faced blubbering imp, who steals
Yon turnips, thinks thee at his heels,
    Afar or near.

The brawnier churl who brags at times
To front and top the rankest crimes, —
    To paunch a deer,
Quarter a priest, or squeeze a wench, —
Scuds from thee, clammy as a tench,
    He knows not where.

For this the righteous Lord of all
Consigns to thee the castle-wall,
    When, many a year,
Closed in the chancel-vault, are eyes
Rainy or sunny at the sighs
    Of knight or peer.

Sir Thomas, when I had ended, said unto me, "No harm herein; but are they over?"

I replied, "Yea, sir!"

"I miss the *posy*," quoth he; "there is usually a lump of sugar, or a smack thereof, at the bottom of the glass. They who are inexperienced in poetry do write it as boys do their copies in the copy-book, — without a flourish at the *finis*. It is only the master who can do this befittingly."

I bowed unto his worship reverentially, thinking of a surety he meant me, and returned my best thanks in set language. But his worship rebuffed them, and told me graciously that he had an eye on another of very different quality; that the plain sense of his discourse might do for me, the subtler was certainly for himself. He added that in his younger days he had heard from a person of great parts, and had since profited by it, that ordinary poets are like adders, — the tail blunt and the body rough, and the whole reptile cold-blooded and sluggish; whereas we, he subjoined, leap and caracole and curvet, and are as warm as velvet and as sleek as satin and as perfumed as a Naples fan in every part of us; and the end of our poems is as pointed as a perch's back-fin, and it requires as much nicety to pick it up as a needle[1] at nine groats the hundred.

Then turning toward the culprit, he said mildly unto him, "Now, why canst thou not apply thyself unto study? Why canst thou not ask advice of thy superiors in rank and wisdom? In a few years, under good discipline, thou mightest rise from the owlet unto the peacock. I know not what pleasant things might not come into the youthful head thereupon. "He was the bird of Venus,[2] goddess of beauty. He flew down (I speak as a poet, and not in my quality of knight and Christian) with half the stars of heaven upon his tail; and his long blue neck doth verily appear a dainty slice out of the solid sky."

Sir Silas smote me with his elbow, and said in my ear, "He wanteth not this stuffing: he beats a pheasant out of the

[1] The greater part of the value of the present work arises from the certain information it affords us on the price of needles in the reign of Elizabeth. Fine needles in her days were made only at Liége, and some few cities in the Netherlands, and may be reckoned among those things which were much dearer than they are now.

[2] Mr. Tooke had not yet published his "Pantheon."

kitchen, to my mind; take him only at the pheasant's size, and don't (upon your life) overdo him. Never be cast down in spirit, nor take it too grievously to heart, if the color be a suspicion of the pinkish: no sign of rawness in that, none whatever. It is as becoming to him as to the salmon; it is as natural to your pea-chick in his best cookery as it is to the finest October morning, moist underfoot, when partridge's and puss's and reynard's scent lies sweetly."

Willy Shakspeare in the mean time lifted up his hands above his ears half a cubit, and taking breath again, said audibly, although he willed it to be said unto himself alone, "Oh that knights could deign to be our teachers! Methinks I should briefly spring up into heaven, through the very chink out of which the peacock took his neck."

Master Silas, who, like myself and the worshipful knight, did overhear him, said angrily, "To spring up into heaven, my lad, it would be as well to have at least one foot upon the ground to make the spring withal. I doubt whether we shall leave thee this vantage."

"Nay, nay! thou art hard upon him, Silas!" said the knight.

I was turning over the other papers taken from the pocket of the culprit on his apprehension, and had fixed my eyes on one, when Sir Thomas caught them thus occupied, and exclaimed, "Mercy upon us! have we more?"

"Your patience, worshipful sir!" said I; "must I forward?"

"Yea, yea," quoth he, resignedly, "we must go through: we are pilgrims in this life."

Then did I read, in a clear voice, the contents of paper the second, being as followeth: —

THE MAID'S LAMENT.

I loved him not; and yet now he is gone
    I feel I am alone.
I checked him while he spoke; yet could he speak,
    Alas! I would not check.
For reasons not to love him once I sought,
    And wearied all my thought
To vex myself and him: I now would give
    My love, could he but live
Who lately lived for me; and when he found
    'T was vain, in holy ground

He hid his face amid the shades of death.
I waste for him my breath
Who wasted his for me; but mine returns,
And this lorn bosom burns
With stifling heat, heaving it up in sleep,
And waking me to weep
Tears that had melted his soft heart: for years
Wept he as bitter tears.
Merciful God!" such was his latest prayer,
"These may she never share!"
Quieter is his breath, his breast more cold,
Than daisies in the mould,
Where children spell, athwart the churchyard gate,
His name and life's brief date.
Pray for him, gentle souls, whoe'er you be,
And oh! pray too for me!

Sir Thomas had fallen into a most comfortable and refreshing slumber ere this lecture was concluded; but the pause broke it, as there be many who experience after the evening service in our parish-church. Howbeit, he had presently all his wits about him, and remembered well that he had been carefully counting the syllables about the time when I had pierced as far as into the middle.

"Young man," said he to Willy, "thou givest short measure in every other sack of the load. Thy uppermost stake is of right length; the undermost falleth off, methinks. Master Ephraim, canst thou count syllables? I mean no offence. I may have counted wrongfully myself, not being born nor educated for an accountant."

At such order I did count; and truly the suspicion was as just as if he had neither been a knight nor a sleeper.

"Sad stuff! sad stuff, indeed!" said Master Silas, "and smelling of popery and wax-candles."

"Ay?" said Sir Thomas, "I must sift that."

"If praying for the dead is not popery," said Master Silas, "I know not what the devil is. Let them pray for us, — they may know whether it will do us any good; we need not pray for them, — we cannot tell whether it will do them any. I call this sound divinity."

"Are our churchmen all agreed thereupon?" asked Sir Thomas.

"The wisest are," replied Master Silas. "There are some lank rascals who will never agree upon anything but upon

doubting. I would not give ninepence for the best gown upon the most thrifty of 'em; and their fingers are as stiff and hard with their pedlery knavish writing, as any bishop's are with chalk-stones won honestly from the gout."

Sir Thomas took the paper up from the table on which I had laid it, and said, after a while, "The man may only have swooned. I scorn to play the critic, or to ask any one the meaning of a word; but, sirrah—"

Here he turned in his chair from the side of Master Silas, and said unto Willy, "William Shakspeare, out of this thraldom in regard to popery I hope, by God's blessing, to deliver thee. If ever thou repeatest the said verses, knowing the man to be to all intents and purposes a dead man, prythee read the censurable line as thus corrected, —

Pray for our Virgin Queen, gentles! whoe'er you be, —

although it is not quite the thing that another should impinge so closely on her skirts. By this improvement, of me suggested, thou mayest make some amends, a syllable or two, for the many that are weighed in the balance and are found wanting."

Then, turning unto me, as being conversant by my profession in such matters, and the same being not very worthy of learned and staid clerks the like of Master Silas, he said, "Of all the youths that did ever write in verse, this one verily is he who hath the fewest flowers and devices. But it would be loss of time to form a border in the fashion of a kingly crown, or a dragon, or a Turk on horseback, out of buttercups and dandelions. Master Ephraim, look at these badgers, with a long leg on one quarter and a short leg on the other! The wench herself might well and truly have said all that matter without the poet, bating the rhymes and metre. Among the girls in the country there are many such *shilly-shallys*, who give themselves sore eyes and sharp eye-water; I would cure them rod in hand."

Whereupon did William Shakspeare say, with great humility, "So would I, may it please your worship, an they would let me."

"Incorrigible sluts! Out upon 'em! and thou art no better than they are," quoth the knight.

Master Silas cried aloud, "No better, marry! they at the worst are but carted and whipped for the edification of the market-folks.[1] Not a squire or parson in the county round but comes in his best to see a man hanged."

"The edification then is higher by a deal," said William, very composedly.

"Troth! is it," replied Master Silas. "The most poisonous reptile has the richest jewel in his head: thou shalt share the richest gift bestowed upon royalty, and shalt cure the king's evil."[2]

"It is more tractable, then, than the Church's," quoth William; and turning his face toward the chair he made an obeisance to Sir Thomas, saying, "Sir, the more submissive my behavior is, the more vehement and boisterous is Master Silas. My gentlest words serve only to carry him toward the contrary quarter, as the south wind bloweth a ship northward."

"Youth," said Sir Thomas, smiling most benignly, "I find, and well indeed might I have surmised, thy utter ignorance of winds, equinoxes, and tides. Consider now a little! With what propriety can a wind be called a south wind if it bloweth a vessel to the north? Would it be a south wind that blew it from this hall into Warwick market-place?"

"It would be a strong one," said Master Silas unto me, pointing his remark, as witty men are wont, with the elbow-pan.

But Sir Thomas, who waited for an answer, and received none, continued, "Would a man be called a good man who tended and pushed on toward evil?"

Shakspeare. I stand corrected. I could sail to Cathay or Tartary[3] with half the nautical knowledge I have acquired in this glorious hall. The Devil impelling a mortal to wrong courses is thereby known to be the Devil. He, on the contrary, who exciteth to good is no devil, but an angel of light, or under the guidance of one. The Devil driveth unto his own home; so doth the south wind; so doth the north wind.

[1] This was really the case within our memory.

[2] It was formerly thought, and perhaps is thought still, that the hand of a man recently hanged being rubbed on the tumor of the king's evil was able to cure it. The crown and the gallows divided the glory of the sovereign remedy.

[3] And yet he never did sail any farther than into Bohemia.

Alas, alas! we possess not the mastery over our own weak minds when a higher spirit standeth nigh and draweth us within his influence.

Sir Thomas. Those thy words are well enough; very well, very good, wise, discreet, judicious beyond thy years. But then that *sailing* comes in an awkward ugly way across me; that *Cathay*, that *Tartarus!* Have a care! Do thou nothing rashly. Mind! an thou stealeth my punt for the purpose, I send the constable after thee or e'er thou art half way over.

Shakspeare. He would make a stock-fish of me an he caught me. It is hard sailing out of his straits, although they be carefully laid down in most parishes, and may have taken them from actual survey.

Sir Silas. Sir, we have bestowed on him already well-nigh a good hour of our time.

— Sir Thomas, who was always fond of giving admonition and reproof to the ignorant and erring, and who had found the seeds (little mustard-seeds, 't is true, and never likely to arise into the great mustard-tree of the Gospel) in the poor lad Willy, did let his heart soften a whit tenderer and kindlier than Master Silas did, and said unto Master Silas, "A good hour of our time! Yea, Silas, and thou wouldst give *him* eternity!"

"What, sir, would you let him go?" said Master Silas. "Presently we shall have neither deer nor dog, neither hare nor coney, neither swan nor heron; every carp from pool, every bream from brook, will be groped for. The marble monuments in the church will no longer protect the leaden coffins; and if there be any ring of gold on the finger of knight or dame, it will be torn away with as little ruth and ceremony as the ring from a butchered sow's snout."

"Awful words, Master Silas," quoth the knight, musing; "but thou mistakest my intentions. I let him not go; howbeit, at worst I would only mark him in the ear, and turn him up again after this warning, peradventure with a few stripes to boot athwart the shoulders, in order to make them shrug a little, and shake off the burden of idleness."

Now I, having seen, I dare not say the innocence, but the innocent and simple manner of Willy, and pitying his tender years, and having an inkling that he was a lad, poor Willy,

whom God had endowed with some parts, and into whose breast he had instilled that milk of loving-kindness by which alone we can be like unto those little children of whom is the household and kingdom of our Lord, I was moved, yea, even unto tears. And now, to bring gentler thoughts into the hearts of Master Silas and Sir Thomas, who in his wisdom deemed it a light punishment to slit an ear or two, or inflict a wiry scourging, I did remind his worship that another paper was yet unread, at least to them, although I had been perusing it.

This was much pleasanter than the former two, and overflowing with the praises of the worthy knight and his gracious lady; and having an echo to it in another voice, I did hope thereby to disarm their just wrath and indignation. It was thus couched: —

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Jesu! what lofty elms are here!
Let me look through them at the clear
Deep sky above, and bless my star
That such a worthy knight's they are!

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Innocent creatures! how those deer
Trot merrily, and romp and rear!

FIRST SHEPHERD.

The glorious knight who walks beside
His most majestic lady bride,

SECOND SHEPHERD.

Under these branches spreading wide,

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Carries about so many cares
Touching his ancestors and heirs,
That came from Athens and from Rome,

SECOND SHEPHERD.

As many of them as are come,

FIRST SHEPHERD.

Nought else the smallest lodge can find
In the vast manors of his mind;
Envying not Solomon his wit,

SECOND SHEPHERD.

No, nor his women, — not a bit;
Being well-built and well-behavèd
As Solomon, I trow, or David.

FIRST SHEPHERD.

And taking by his jewelled hand
The jewel of that lady bland,
He sees the tossing antlers pass
And throw quaint shadows o'er the grass;
While she alike the hour beguiles,
And looks at him and them, and smiles.

SECOND SHEPHERD.

With conscience proof 'gainst Satan's shock,
Albeit finer than her smock,[1]
Marry! her smiles are not of vanity,
But resting on sound Christianity.
Faith you would sware had nail'd[2] her ears on
The book and cushion of the parson.

"Methinks the rhyme at the latter end might be bettered," said Sir Thomas. "The remainder is indited not unaptly. But, young man, never having obtained the permission of my honorable dame to praise her in guise of poetry, I cannot see all the merit I would fain discern in the verses. She ought first to have been sounded; and it being certified that she disapproved not her glorification, then might it be trumpeted forth into the world below."

"Most worshipful knight," replied the youngster, "I never could take it in hand to sound a dame of quality; they are all of them too deep and too practised for me, and have better and abler men about 'em. And surely I did imagine to myself that if it were asked of any honorable man (omitting to speak of ladies) whether he would give permission to be openly praised, he would reject the application as a gross offence. It appeareth to me that even to praise one's self, although it be shameful, is less shameful than to throw a burning coal into

[1] "Smock," formerly a part of female dress, corresponding with "shroud," or what we now call (or lately called) "shirt," of the man's. Fox, speaking of Latimer's burning, says, "Being slipped into his shroud."

[2] Faith nailing the ears is a strong and sacred metaphor. The rhyme is imperfect; Shakspeare was not always attentive to these minor beauties.

the incense-box that another doth hold to waft before us, and then to snift and simper over it with maidenly wishful coyness, as if forsooth one had no hand in setting it a-smoke."

Then did Sir Thomas, in his zeal to instruct the ignorant, and so make the lowly hold up their heads, say unto him, "Nay, but all the great do thus. Thou must not praise them without leave and license. Praise unpermitted is plebeian praise. It is presumption to suppose that thou knowest enough of the noble and the great to discover their high qualities. They alone could manifest them unto thee. It requireth much discernment and much time to enucleate and bring into light their abstruse wisdom and gravely featured virtues. Those of ordinary men lie before thee in thy daily walks; thou mayest know them by converse at their tables, as thou knowest the little tame squirrel that chippeth his nuts in the open sunshine of a bowling-green. But beware how thou enterest the awful arbors of the great, who conceal their magnanimity in the depths of their hearts as lions do."

He then paused; and observing the youth in deep and earnest meditation over the fruits of his experience, as one who tasted and who would fain digest them, he gave him encouragement, and relieved the weight of his musings by kind interrogation: "So then these verses are thine own?"

The youth answered, "Sir, I must confess my fault."

"And who was the shepherd written here 'Second Shepherd,' that had the ill manners to interrupt thee? Methinks in helping thee to mount the saddle he pretty nigh tossed thee over[1] with his jerks and quirks."

Without waiting for any answer, his worship continued his interrogations. "But do you wool-staplers call yourselves by the style and title of shepherds?"

[1] Shakspeare seems to have profited afterward by this metaphor, even more perhaps than by all the direct pieces of instruction in poetry given him so handsomely by the worthy knight. And here it may be permitted the editor to profit also by the manuscript, correcting in Shakspeare what is absolute nonsense as now printed:—

> "*Vaulting* ambition that o'erleaps *itself*,
> And falls on the *other side*."

Other side of what? It should be "its sell." *Sell* is *saddle* in Spenser and elsewhere, from the Latin and Italian.

"Verily, sir, do we; and I trust by right. The last owner of any place is called the master, more properly than the dead and gone who once held it. If that be true (and who doubts it?), we who have the last of the sheep, — namely, the wool and skin, — and who buy all of all the flock, surely may more properly be called shepherds than those idle vagrants who tend them only for a season, selling a score or purchasing a score as may happen."

Here Sir Thomas did pause awhile, and then said unto Master Silas, "My own cogitations, and not this stripling, have induced me to consider and to conclude a weighty matter for knightly scholarship. I never could rightly understand before how Colin Clout, and sundry others calling themselves shepherds, should argue like doctors in law, physic, and divinity. Silas, they were wool-staplers; and they must have exercised their wits in dealing with tithe-proctors and parsons, and moreover with fellows of colleges from our two learned universities, who have sundry lands held under them, as thou knowest, and take the small tithes in kind. Colin Clout, methinks, from his extensive learning might have acquired enough interest with the Queen's Highness to change his name for the better, and furthermore her royal license to carry armorial bearings, in no peril of taint from so unsavory an appellation."

Master Silas did interrupt this discourse, by saying, "May it please your worship, the constable is waiting."

Whereat Sir Thomas said tartly, "And let him wait."[1]

Then to me: "I hope we have done with verses, and are not to be befooled by the lad's nonsense touching mermaids or worse creatures."

Then to Will: "William Shakspeare, we live in a Christian land, — a land of great toleration and forbearance. Threescore carts full of fagots a year are fully sufficient to clear our English air from every pestilence of heresy and witchcraft. It hath not

[1] It has been suggested that this answer was borrowed from Virgil, and goes strongly against the genuineness of the manuscript. The Editor's memory was upon the stretch to recollect the words: the learned critic supplied them, —

"Solum Æneas vocat: *et vocet*, oro."

The Editor could only reply, indeed weakly, that *calling* and *waiting* are not exactly the same, unless when tradesmen rap and gentlemen are leaving town.

alway been so, God wot! Innocent and guilty took their turns before the fire, like geese and capons. The spit was never cold; the cook's sleeve was ever above the elbow. Countrymen came down from distant villages, into towns and cities, to see perverters whom they had never heard of, and to learn the righteousness of hatred. When heretics waxed fewer, the religious began to grumble that God in losing his enemies had also lost his avengers.

"Do not thou, William Shakspeare, dig the hole for thy own stake. If thou canst not make men wise, do not make them merry at thy cost. We are not to be paganized any more. Having struck from our calendars and unnailed from our chapels many dozens of decent saints, with as little compunction and remorse as unlucky lads throw frog-spawn and tadpoles out of stagnant ditches, never let us think of bringing back among us the daintier divinities they ousted. All these are the Devil's imps, beautiful as they appear in what we falsely call works of genius, which really and truly are the Devil's own, — statues more graceful than humanity, pictures more living than life, eloquence that raised single cities above empires, poor men above kings. If these are not Satan's works, where are they? I will tell thee where they are likewise: in holding vain converse with false gods. The utmost we can allow in propriety is to call a knight Phœbus, and a dame Diana. They are not meat for every trencher.

"We must now proceed straightforward with the business on which thou comest before us. What further sayest thou, witness?"

Treen. His face was toward me: I saw it clearly. The graver man followed him into the punt, and said roughly, "We shall get hanged as sure as thou pipest." Whereunto he answered, —

"Naturally, as fall upon the ground
The leaves in winter and the girls in spring."

And then began he again with the mermaid; whereat the graver man clapped a hand before his mouth, and swore he should take her in wedlock, to have and to hold, if he sang another stave. "And thou shalt be her pretty little bridemaid," quoth he gayly to the graver man, chucking him under the chin.

Sir Thomas. And what did Carnaby say unto thee, or what didst thou say unto Carnaby?

Treen. Carnaby said unto me, somewhat tauntingly, "The big squat man that lay upon thy bread-basket like a night-mare is a punt at last, it seems."

"Punt, and more too," answered I. "Tarry awhile, and thou shalt see this punt (so let me call it) lead them into temptation, and swamp them, or carry them to the gallows: I would not stay else.

Sir Thomas. And what didst thou, Joseph Carnaby?

Carnaby. Finding him neither slack nor shy, I readily tarried. We knelt down opposite each other, and said our prayers; and he told me he was now comfortable. "The evil one," said he, "hath enough to mind yonder, — he shall not hurt us." Never was a sweeter night, had there been but some mild ale under it, which any one would have sworn it was made for. The milky way looked like a long drift of hailstones on a sunny ridge.

Sir Thomas. Hast thou done describing?

Carnaby. Yea, an please your worship.

Sir Thomas. God's blessing be upon thee, honest Carnaby! I feared a moon-fall. In our days nobody can think about a plum-pudding but the moon comes down upon it. I warrant ye this lad here hath as many moons in his poems as the Saracens had in their banners.

Shakspeare. I have not hatched mine yet, sir. Whenever I do I trust it will be worth taking to market.

Carnaby. I said all I know of the stars; but Master Euseby can run over half a score and upward, here and there. "Am I right or wrong?" cried he, spreading on the back of my hand all his fingers, stiff as antlers and cold as icicles. "Look up! Joseph, Joseph, there is no Lucifer in the firmament!" I myself did feel queerish and qualmy upon hearing that a star was missing, being no master of gainsaying it; and I abased my eyes and entreated of Euseby to do in like manner. And in this posture did we both of us remain; and the missing star did not disquiet me; and all the others seemed as if they knew us and would not tell of us; and there was peace and pleasantness over sky and earth. And I said to my companion, "How quiet now, good Master Euseby, are all God's creatures in this meadow, because they never pry into such high matters,

but breathe sweetly among the pig-nuts. The only things we hear or see stirring are the glow-worms and dormice, as though they were sent for our edification, — teaching us to rest contented with our own little light, and to come out and seek our sustenance where none molest or thwart us."

Shakspeare. Ye would have it thus, no doubt, when your pockets and pouches are full of gins and nooses.

Sir Thomas. A bridle upon thy dragon's tongue! And do thou, Master Joseph, quit the dormice and glow-worms, and tell us whither did the rogues go.

Carnaby. I wot not after they had crossed the river: they were soon out of sight and hearing.

Sir Thomas. Went they toward Charlecote?

Carnaby. Their first steps were thitherward.

Sir Thomas. Did they come back unto the punt?

Carnaby. They went down the stream in it, and crossed the Avon some fourscore yards below where we were standing. They came back in it, and moored it to the sedges in which it had stood before.

Sir Thomas. How long were they absent?

Carnaby. Within an hour, or thereabout, all the three men returned. Will Shakspeare and another were sitting in the middle, the third punted.

"Remember now, gentles!" quoth William Shakspeare, "the road we have taken is henceforward a footpath forever, according to law."

"How so?" asked the punter, turning toward him.

"Forasmuch as a corpse hath passed along it," answered he.

Whereupon both Euseby and myself did forthwith fall upon our faces, commending our souls unto the Lord.

Sir Thomas. It was then really the dead body that quivered so fearfully upon the water, covering all the punt! Christ deliver us! I hope the keeper they murdered was not Jeremiah. His wife and four children would be very chargeable, and the man was by no means amiss. Proceed! what further?

Carnaby. On reaching the bank, "I never sat pleasanter in my lifetime," said William Shakspeare, "than upon this carcass."

Sir Thomas. Lord have mercy upon us! Thou upon a carcass, at thy years?

And the knight drew back his chair half an ell farther from the table, and his lips quivered at the thought of such inhumanity. "And what said he more, and what did he?" asked the knight.

Carnaby. He patted it smartly, and said, "Lug it out; break it."

Sir Thomas. These four poor children! who shall feed them?

Sir Silas. Sir, in God's name have you forgotten that Jeremiah is gone to Nuneaton to see his father, and that the murdered man is the buck?

Sir Thomas. They killed the buck likewise. But what, ye cowardly varlets! have ye been deceiving me all this time? And thou, youngster, couldst thou say nothing to clear up the case? Thou shalt smart for it. Methought I had lost by a violent death the best servant ever man had; righteous, if there be no blame in saying it, as the prophet whose name he beareth, and brave as the lion of Judah.

Shakspeare. Sir, if these men could deceive your worship for a moment, they might deceive me forever. I could not guess what their story aimed at, except my ruin. I am inclined to lean for once toward the opinion of Master Silas, and to believe it was really the stolen buck on which this William (if indeed there is any truth at all in the story) was sitting.

Sir Thomas. What more hast thou for me that is not enigma or parable?

Carnaby. I did not see the carcass, man's or beast's, may it please your worship, and I have recited and can recite that only which I saw and heard. After the words of lugging out and breaking it, knives were drawn accordingly. It was no time to loiter or linger. We crope back under the shadow of the alders and hazels on the high bank that bordereth Mickle Meadow, and making straight for the public road hastened homeward.

Sir Thomas. Hearing this deposition, dost thou affirm the like upon thy oath, Master Euseby Treen, or dost thou vary in aught essential?

Treen. Upon my oath I do depose and affirm the like, and truly the identical same; and I will never more vary upon aught essential.

Sir Thomas. I do now further demand of thee whether thou knowest anything more appertaining unto this business.

Treen. Ay, verily; that your worship may never hold me for timorsome and superstitious, I do furthermore add that some other than deer-stealers was abroad. In sign whereof, although it was the dryest and clearest night of the season, my jerkin was damp inside and outside when I reached the house-door.

Shakspeare. I warrant thee, Euseby, the damp began not at the outside. A word in thy ear: Lucifer was thy tapster, I trow.

Sir Thomas. Irreverent swine! hast no awe nor shame? Thou hast aggravated thy offence, William Shakspeare, by thy foul-mouthedness.

Sir Silas. I must remind your worship that he not only has committed this iniquity afore, but hath pawed the puddle he made, and relapsed into it after due caution and reproof. God forbid that what he spake against me, out of the gall of his proud stomach, should move me. I defy him, a low ignorant wretch, a rogue and vagabond, a thief and cut-throat, a ——[1] monger and mutton-eater.

Shakspeare. Your worship doth hear the learned clerk's testimony in my behalf. "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings —"

Sir Thomas. Silas, the youth has failings,— a madcap; but he is pious.

Shakspeare. Alas, no, sir! Would I were! But Sir Silas, like the prophet, came to curse and was forced to bless me, even me, a sinner, a mutton-eater!

Sir Thomas. Thou urgedst him. He beareth no ill-will toward thee. Thou knewedst, I suspect, that the blackness in his mouth proceeded from a natural cause.

Shakspeare. The Lord is merciful! I was brought hither in jeopardy; I shall return in joy. Whether my innocence be declared or otherwise, my piety and knowledge will be forwarded and increased; for your worship will condescend, even from the judgment-seat, to enlighten the ignorant where a soul shall be saved or lost! And I, even I, may trespass a moment on

[1] Here the manuscript is blotted; but the probability is, that it was *fish-monger*, rather than *ironmonger*, fishmongers having always been notorious cheats and liars.

your courtesy. I quail at the words *natural cause*. Be there any such?

Sir Thomas. Youth, I never thought thee so staid. Thou hast, for these many months, been represented unto me as one dissolute and light, much given unto mummeries and mysteries, wakes and carousals, cudgel-fighters and mountebanks, and wanton women. They do also represent of thee (I hope it may be without foundation) that thou enactest the parts, not simply of foresters and fairies, girls in the green-sickness and friars, lawyers and outlaws, but likewise, having small reverence for station, of kings and queens, knights and privy-councillors, in all their glory. It hath been whispered moreover, and the testimony of these two witnesses doth appear in some measure to countenance and confirm it, that thou hast at divers times this last summer been seen and heard alone, inasmuch as human eye may discover, on the narrow slip of green-sward between the Avon and the chancel, distorting thy body like one possessed, and uttering strange language, like unto incantation. This however cometh not before me. Take heed! take heed unto thy ways! there are graver things in law even than homicide and deer-stealing.

Sir Silas. And strong against him. Folks have been consumed at the stake for pettier felonies and upon weaker evidence.

Sir Thomas. To that anon.

— William Shakspeare did hold down his head, answering nought. And Sir Thomas spake again unto him, as one mild and fatherly, if so be that such a word may be spoken of a knight and parliament-man. And these are the words he spake: —

"Reason and ruminate with thyself now. To pass over and pretermit the danger of representing the actions of the others, and mainly of lawyers and churchmen, — the former of whom do pardon no offences, and the latter those only against God (having no warrant for more), — canst thou believe it innocent to counterfeit kings and queens? Supposest thou that if the impression of their faces on a farthing be felonious and rope-worthy, the imitation of head and body, voice and bearing, plume and strut, crown and mantle, and everything else that maketh them royal and glorious, be aught less? Perpend,

young man, perpend! Consider who among inferior mortals shall imitate them becomingly? Dreamest thou they talk and act like checkmen at Banbury Fair? How can thy shallow brain suffice for their vast conceptions? How darest thou say, as they do, Hang this fellow, quarter that, flay, mutilate, stab, shoot, press, hook, torture, burn alive? These are royalties. Who appointed thee to such office? The Holy Ghost? He alone can confer it; but when wert thou anointed?"

William was so zealous in storing up these verities that he looked as though he were unconscious that the pouring-out was over. He started, which he had not done before, at the voice of Master Silas; but soon recovered his complacency, and smiled with much serenity at being called low-minded varlet.

"Low-minded varlet!" cried Master Silas, most contemptuously, "dost thou imagine that king calleth king, like thy chums, *filcher* and *fibber*, *whirligig* and *nincompoop?* Instead of this low vulgarity and sordid idleness, ending in nothing, they throw at one another such fellows as thee by the thousand, and when they have cleared the land, render God thanks and make peace."

Willy did now sigh out his ignorance of these matters; and he sighed mayhap too at the recollection of the peril he had run into, and had ne'er a word on the nail.[1]

The bowels of Sir Thomas waxed tenderer and tenderer, and he opened his lips in this fashion: —

"Stripling! I would now communicate unto thee, on finding thee docile and assentaneous, the instruction thou needest on the signification of the words *natural cause,* if thy duty toward thy neighbor had been first instilled into thee."

Whereupon Master Silas did interpose, for the dinner-hour was drawing nigh.

"We cannot do all at once," quoth he. "Coming out of order, it might harm him. Malt before hops, the world over, or the beer muddies."

But Sir Thomas was not to be pricked out of his form even by so shrewd a pricker; and, like unto one who heareth not, he continued to look most graciously on the homely vessel that stood ready to receive his wisdom.

[1] "On the nail" appears to be intended to express "ready payment."

"Thy mind," said he, "being unprepared for higher cogitations, and the groundwork and religious duty not being well rammer-beaten and flinted, I do pass over this supererogatory point, and inform thee rather, that bucks and swans and herons have something in their very names announcing them of knightly appurtenance, and (God forefend that evil do ensue therefrom!) that a goose on the common, or a game-cock on the loft of a cottager or villager, may be seized, bagged, and abducted with far less offence to the laws. In a buck there is something so gainly and so grand, he treadeth the earth with such ease and such agility, he abstaineth from all other animals with such punctilious avoidance, one would imagine God created him when he created knighthood. In the swan there is such purity, such coldness is there in the element he inhabiteth, such solitude of station, that verily he doth remind me of the Virgin Queen herself. Of the heron I have less to say, not having him about me; but I never heard his lordly croak without the conceit that it resembled a chancellor's or a primate's. I do perceive, William Shakspeare, thy compunction and contrition."

Shakspeare. I was thinking, may it please your worship, of the game-cock and the goose, having but small notion of herons. This doctrine of abduction, please your worship, hath been alway inculcated by the soundest of our judges. Would they had spoken on other points with the same clearness! How many unfortunates might thereby have been saved from crossing the Cordilleras![1]

Sir Thomas. Ay, ay! they have been fain to fly the country at last, thither or elsewhere.

— And then did Sir Thomas call unto him Master Silas, and say, "Walk we into the bay-window. And thou mayest come, Ephraim."

And when we were there together, — I, Master Silas, and his worship, — did his worship say unto the chaplain, but oftener looking toward me: "I am not ashamed to avouch that it goeth against me to hang this young fellow, richly as the offence in its own nature doth deserve it; he talketh so reasonably, — not

[1] Perhaps a pun was intended; or possibly it might, in the age of Elizabeth, have been a vulgar term for *hanging*, although we find no trace of the expression in other books.

indeed so reasonably, but so like unto what a reasonable man may listen to and reflect on. There is so much too of compassion for others in hard cases, and something so very near in semblance to innocence itself in that airy swing of light-heartedness about him. I cannot fix my eyes (as one would say) on the shifting and sudden shade-and-shine, which cometh back to me, do what I will, and mazes me in a manner, and blinks me."

At this juncture I was ready to fall upon the ground before his worship, and clasp his knees for Willy's pardon. But he had so many points about him that I feared to discompose 'em, and thus make bad worse. Besides which, Master Silas left me but scanty space for good resolutions, crying, "He may be committed to save time. Afterward he may be sentenced to death, or he may not."

Sir Thomas. 'T were shame upon me were he not; 't were indication that I acted unadvisedly in the commitment.

Sir Silas. The penalty of the law may be commuted, if expedient, on application to the fountain of mercy in London.

Sir Thomas. Maybe, Silas, those shall be standing round the fount of mercy who play in idleness and wantonness with its waters, and let them not flow widely nor take their natural course. Dutiful gallants may encompass it, and it may linger among the flowers they throw into it, and never reach the parched lip on the wayside.

These are homely thoughts, — thoughts from a-field, thoughts for the study and housekeeper's room; but whenever I have given utterance unto them, as my heart hath often prompted me with beatings at the breast, my hearers seemed to bear toward me more true and kindly affection than my richest fancies and choicest phraseologies could purchase.

'T were convenient to bethink thee, should any other great man's park have been robbed this season, no judge upon the bench will back my recommendation for mercy. And indeed how could I expect it? Things may soon be brought to such a pass that their lordships shall scarcely find three haunches each upon the circuit.

"Well, sir," quoth Master Silas, "you have a right to go on in your own way. Make him only give up the girl."

Here Sir Thomas reddened with righteous indignation, and

answered, "I cannot think it! such a stripling, — poor, penniless! It must be some one else."

And now Master Silas did redden in his turn redder than Sir Thomas, and first asked me, "What the devil do you stare at?" And then asked his worship, "Who should it be if not the rogue?" and his lips turned as blue as a blue-bell.

Then Sir Thomas left the window and again took his chair, and having stood so long on his legs, groaned upon it to ease him. His worship scowled with all his might, and looked exceedingly wroth and vengeful at the culprit, and said unto him, "Hark ye, knave! I have been conferring with my learned clerk and chaplain in what manner I may, with the least severity, rid the county (which thou disgracest) of thee."

William Shakspeare raised up his eyes, modestly and fearfully, and said slowly these few words, which, had they been a better and nobler man's, would deserve to be written in letters of gold. I, not having that art nor substance, do therefore write them in my largest and roundest character, and do leave space about 'em, according to their rank and dignity: —

"Worshipful sir! A WORD IN THE EAR IS OFTEN AS GOOD AS A HALTER UNDER IT, AND SAVES THE GROAT."

"Thou discoursest well," said Sir Thomas, "but others can discourse well likewise. Thou shalt avoid: I am resolute."

Shakspeare. I supplicate your honor to impart unto me, in your wisdom, the mode and means whereby I may surcease to be disgraceful to the county.

Sir Thomas. I am not bloody-minded. First, thou shalt have the fairest and fullest examination. Much hath been deposed against thee; something may come forth for thy advantage. I will not thy death; thou shalt not die. The laws have loopholes like castles, both to shoot from and to let folks down.

Sir Silas. That pointed ear would look the better for pairing, and that high forehead can hold many letters.

— Whereupon did William, poor lad, turn deadly pale, but spake not.

Sir Thomas then abated a whit of his severity, and said staidly: "Testimony doth appear plain and positive against thee; nevertheless am I minded and prompted to aid thee myself, in disclosing and unfolding what thou couldst not of

thine own wits, in furtherance of thine own defence. One witness is persuaded and assured of the evil spirit having been abroad, and the punt appeared unto him diversely from what it appeared unto the other."

Shakspeare. If the evil spirit produced one appearance, he might have produced all, with deference to the graver judgment of your worship. If what seemed *punt* was *devil,* what seemed *buck* might have been *devil* too; nay, more easily, the horns being forthcoming. Thieves and reprobates do resemble him more nearly still; and it would be hard if he could not make free with their bodies, when he has their souls already.

Sir Thomas. But, then, those voices! and thou thyself, Will Shakspeare!

Shakspeare. Oh, might I kiss the hand of my deliverer, whose clear-sightedness throweth such manifest and plenary light upon my innocence?

Sir Thomas. How so? What light, in God's name, have I thrown upon it as yet?

Shakspeare. Oh, those voices, those fairies and spirits! whence came they? None can deal with 'em but the Devil, the parson, and witches. And does not the Devil oftentimes take the very form, features, and habiliments of knights and bishops and other good men, to lead them into temptation and destroy them; or to injure their good name, in failure of seduction? He is sure of the wicked: he lets them go their ways out of hand. I think your worship once delivered some such observation, in more courtly guise, which I would not presume to ape. If it was not your worship it was our glorious lady, the Queen, or the wise Master Walsingham, or the great Lord Cecil. I may have marred and broken it, as sluts do a pancake, in the turning.

Sir Thomas. Why, ay, indeed! I had occasion once to remark as much.

Shakspeare. So have I heard in many places; although I was not present when Matthew Atterend fought about it for the honor of Kineton hundred.

Sir Thomas. Fought about it!

Shakspeare. As your honor recollects. Not but on other occasions he would have fought no less bravely for the queen.

Sir Thomas. We must get thee through, were it only for

thy memory,—the most precious gift among the mental powers that Providence hath bestowed upon us. I had half-forgotten the thing myself. Thou mayest in time take thy satchel for London, and aid good old Master Holingshed. We must clear thee, Will! I am slow to surmise that there is blood upon thy hands!

— His worship's choler had all gone down again; and he sat as cool and comfortable as a man sitteth to be shaved. Then called he upon Euseby Treen, and said, "Euseby Treen, tell us whether thou observedst anything unnoticed or unsaid by the last witness."

Treen. One thing only, sir. When they had passed the water, an owlet hooted after them; and methought if they had any fear of God before their eyes they would have turned back, he cried so lustily.

Shakspeare. Sir, I cannot forbear to take the owlet out of your mouth. He knocks them all on the head like so many mice. Likely story! One fellow hears him cry lustily, the other doth not hear him at all.

Carnaby. Not hear him! A body might have heard him at Barford or Sherbourne.

Sir Thomas. Why didst not name him? Canst not answer me?

Carnaby. *He* doubted whether punt were punt; I doubted whether owlet were owlet, after Lucifer was away from the roll-call. We say "speak the truth and shame the Devil;" but shaming him is one thing, your honor, and facing him another! I have heard owlets, but never owlet like him.

Shakspeare. The Lord be praised! All, at last, a-running to my rescue. Owlet, indeed! Your worship may have remembered in an ancient book, — indeed, what book is so ancient that your worship doth not remember it? — a book printed by Dr Faustus.

Sir Thomas. Before he dealt with the Devil?

Shakspeare. Not long before; it being the very book that made the Devil think it worth his while to deal with him.

Sir Thomas. What chapter thereof wouldst thou recall unto my recollection?

Shakspeare. That concerning owls, with the grim print afore it. Dr. Faustus, the wise doctor, who knew other than

owls and owlets, knew the tempter in that form. Faustus was not your man for fancies and figments; and he tells us that to his certain knowledge it was verily an owl's face that whispered so much mischief in the ear of our first parent.

"One plainly sees it," quoth Dr. Faustus, "under that gravity which in human life we call dignity, but of which we read nothing in the Gospel. We despise the hangman, we detest the hanged; and yet, saith Duns Scotus, could we turn aside the heavy curtain, or stand high enough a-tiptoe to peep through its chinks and crevices, we should perhaps find these two characters to stand justly among the most innocent in the drama. He who blinketh the eyes of the poor wretch about to die doeth it out of mercy; those who preceded him, bidding him in the garb of justice to shed the blood of his fellow-man, had less or none. So they hedge well their own grounds, what care they? For this do they catch at stakes and thorns, at quick and rotten—"

Here Master Silas interrupted the discourse of the Devil's own doctor, delivered and printed by him before he was the Devil's, to which his worship had listened very attentively and delightedly. But Master Silas could keep his temper no longer, and cried fiercely, "Seditious sermonizer! hold thy peace, or thou shalt answer for 't before convocation!"

Sir Thomas. Silas, thou dost not approve then the doctrine of this Dr. Duns?

Sir Silas. Heretical rabbi!

Shakspeare. If two of a trade can never agree, yet surely two of a name may.

Sir Silas. Who dares call me heretical; who dares call me rabbi; who dares call me Scotus? Spider! spider! yea, thou hast one corner left. I espy thee, and my broom shall reach thee yet.

Shakspeare. I perceive that Master Silas doth verily believe I have been guilty of suborning the witnesses, at least the last, the best man (if any difference) of the two. No, sir, no. If my family and friends have united their wits and money for this purpose, be the crime of perverted justice on their heads! They injure whom they intended to serve. Improvident men (if the young may speak thus of the elderly)! could they im-

agine to themselves that your worship was to be hoodwinked and led astray?

Sir Thomas. No man shall ever dare to hoodwink me, to lead me astray, — no, nor lead me anywise. Powerful defence! Heyday! Sit quiet, Master Treen! Euseby Treen, dost hear me? Clench thy fist again, sirrah, and I clap thee in the stocks. Joseph Carnaby, do not scratch thy breast nor thy pate before me.

— Now, Joseph had not only done that in his wrath, but had unbuckled his leathern garter, fit instrument for strife and blood, and peradventure would have smitten, had not the knight, with magisterial authority, interposed.

His worship said unto him gravely, "Joseph Carnaby, Joseph Carnaby, hast thou never read the words, *Put up thy sword?*"

"Subornation! your worship," cried Master Joe. "The fellow hath ne'er a shilling in leather or till, and many must go to suborn one like me."

"I do believe it of thee," said Sir Thomas; "but patience, man! patience! he rather tended toward exculpating thee. Ye have far to walk for dinner; ye may depart."

They went accordingly.

Then did Sir Thomas say, "These are hot men, Silas."

And Master Silas did reply unto him, "There are brands that would set fire to the bulrushes in the mill-pool. I know these twain for quiet folks, having coursed with them over Wincott."

Sir Thomas then said unto William, "It behooveth thee to stand clear of yon Joseph, unless when thou mayest call to thy aid the Matthew Atterend thou speakest of. He did then fight valiantly, eh?"

Shakspeare. His cause fought valiantly; his fist but seconded it. He won, — proving the golden words to be no property of our lady's, although her Highness hath never disclaimed them.

Sir Thomas. What art thou saying?

Shakspeare. So I heard from a preacher at Oxford, who had preached at Easter in the chapel-royal of Westminster.

Sir Thomas. Thou! why how could that happen? Oxford! chapel-royal!

Shakspeare. And to whom I said (your worship will forgive my forwardness), "I have the honor, sir, to live within two

measured miles of the very Sir Thomas Lucy who spake that;" and I vow I said it without any hope or belief that he would invite me, as he did, to dine with him thereupon.

Sir Thomas. There be nigh upon three miles betwixt this house and Stratford bridge-end.

Shakspeare. I dropped a mile in my pride and exultation, God forgive me! I would not conceal my fault.

Sir Thomas. Wonderful! that a preacher so learned as to preach before majesty in the chapel-royal should not have caught thee tripping over a whole lawful mile, a good third of the distance between my house and the cross-roads. This is incomprehensible in a scholar.

Shakspeare. God willed that he should become my teacher, and in the bowels of his mercy hid my shame.

Sir Thomas. How camest thou into the converse of such eminent and ghostly men?

Shakspeare. How, indeed! Everything against me.

— He sighed and entered into a long discourse, which Master Silas would at sundry times have interrupted, but that Sir Thomas more than once frowned upon him, even as he had frowned heretofore on young Will, who thus began and continued his narration: —

"Hearing the preacher preach at St. Mary's (for being about my father's business on Saturday, and not choosing to be a-horseback on Sundays, albeit time-pressed, I footed it to Oxford for my edification on the Lord's day, leaving the sorrel with Master Hal Webster of the Tankard and Unicorn), — hearing him preach, as I was saying, before the University in St. Mary's church, and hearing him use moreover the very words that Matthew fought about, I was impatient (God forgive me!) for the end and consummation, and I thought I never should hear those precious words that ease every man's heart, 'Now, to conclude.' However, come they did. I hurried out among the foremost, and thought the congratulations of the other doctors and dons would last forever. He walked sharply off, and few cared to keep his pace, for they are lusty men mostly, and spiteful bad women had breathed[1] in the faces of some among them, or the gowns had got between their legs. For

[1] In that age there was prevalent a sort of cholera, on which Fracastorius, half a century before, wrote a Latin poem, employing the graceful

my part, I was not to be balked; so, tripping on aside him, I looked in his face askance. Whether he misgave, or how, he turned his eyes downward. No matter, have him I would. I licked my lips and smacked them loud and smart, and scarcely venturing to nod, I gave my head such a sort of motion as dace and roach give an angler's quill when they begin to bite. And this fairly hooked him.

"'Young gentleman,' said he, 'where is your gown?'

"'Reverend sir,' said I, 'I am unworthy to wear one.'

"'A proper youth, nevertheless, and mightily well spoken!' he was pleased to say.

"'Your reverence hath given me heart, which failed me,' was my reply. 'Ah, your reverence, those words about the Devil were spicy words; but under favor, I do know the brookside they sprang and flowered by. 'T is just where it runs into Avon; 't is called Hog-brook.'

"'Right,' quoth he, putting his hand gently on my shoulder; 'but if I had thought it needful to say so in my sermon, I should have affronted the seniors of the University, since many claim them, and some peradventure would fain transpose them into higher places, and giving up all right and title to them, would accept in lieu thereof the poor recompense of a mitre.'

"I wished (unworthy wish for a Sunday!) I had Matthew Atterend in the midst of them. He would have given them skulls mitre-fashioned, if mitres are cloven now as we see them on ancient monuments. Matt is your milliner for gentles, who think no more harm of purloining rich saws in a mitre than lane-born boys do of embezzling hazel-nuts in a woollen cap. I did not venture to expound or suggest my thoughts; but feeling my choler rise higher and higher, I craved permission to make my obeisance and depart.

"'Where dost thou lodge, young man?' said the preacher.

nymphs of Homer and Hesiod, somewhat disguised, in the drudgery of pounding certain barks and minerals. An article in the Impeachment of Cardinal Wolsey accuses him of breathing in the king's face, knowing that he was affected with this cholera. It was a great assistant to the Reformation, by removing some of the most vigorous champions that opposed it. In the Holy College it was followed by the *sweating sickness*, which thinned it very sorely; and several even of God's vicegerents were laid under tribulation by it. Among the chambers of the Vatican it hung for ages, and it crowned the labors of Pope Leo XII., of blessed memory, with a crown somewhat uneasy.

"'At the public,' said I, 'where my father customarily lodgeth. There too is a mitre of the old fashion, swinging on the sign-post in the middle of the street.'

"'Respectable tavern enough,' quoth the reverend doctor; 'and worthy men do turn in there, even quality, — Master Davenant, Master Powel, Master Whorwood, aged and grave men. But taverns are Satan's chapels, and are always well attended on the Lord's day, to twit him. Hast thou no friend in such a city as Oxford?'

"'Only the landlady of the Mitre,' said I.

"'A comely woman,' quoth he, 'but too young for business by half. Stay thou with me to-day, and fare frugally, but safely. What may thy name be, and where is thy abode?'

"'William Shakspeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, at your service, sir.'

"'And welcome,' said he; 'thy father ere now hath bought our college wool. A truly good man we ever found him; and I doubt not he hath educated his son to follow him in his paths. There is in the blood of man, as in the blood of animals, that which giveth the temper and disposition. These require nurture and culture. But what nurture will turn flint-stones into garden mould, or what culture rear cabbages in the quarries of Hedington Hill? To be well-born is the greatest of all God's primary blessings, young man, and there are many well-born among the poor and needy. Thou art not of the indigent and destitute, who have great temptations; thou art not of the wealthy and affluent, who have greater still. God hath placed thee, William Shakspeare, in that pleasant island, on one side whereof are the sirens, on the other the harpies, but inhabiting the coasts on the wider continent, and unable to make their talons felt or their voices heard by thee. Unite with me in prayer and thanksgiving for the blessings thus vouchsafed. We must not close the heart when the finger of God would touch it. Enough, if thou sayest only, My soul, praise thou the Lord!'"

Sir Thomas said "Amen!" Master Silas was mute for the moment, but then quoth he, "I can say Amen too, in the proper place."

The knight of Charlecote, who appeared to have been much taken with this conversation, then interrogated Willy: "What further might have been thy discourse with the doctor, — or

did he discourse at all at trencher-time? Thou must have been very much abashed to sit down at table with one who weareth a pure lamb-skin across his shoulder, and moreover a pink hood."

Shakspeare. Faith! was I, your honor, and could neither utter nor gulp.

Sir Thomas. These are good signs. Thou hast not lost all grace.

Shakspeare. With the encouragement of Dr. Glaston —

Sir Thomas. And was it Dr. Glaston?

Shakspeare. Said I not so?

Sir Thomas. The learnedst clerk in Christendom, — a very Friar Bacon! The pope offered a hundred marks in Latin to who should eviscerate or evirate him (poisons very potent, whereat the Italians are handy), so apostolic and desperate a doctor is Dr. Glaston, — so acute in his quiddities, and so resolute in his bearing! He knows the dark arts, but stands aloof from them. Prythee, what were his words unto thee?

Shakspeare. Manna, sir, manna! pure from the desert!

Sir Thomas. Ay, but what spake he; for most sermons are that, and likewise many conversations after dinner?

Shakspeare. He spake of the various races and qualities of men, as before stated, but chiefly on the elect and reprobate, and how to distinguish and know them.

Sir Thomas. Did he go so far?

Shakspeare. He told me that by such discussion he should say enough to keep me constantly out of evil company.

Sir Thomas. See there, see there! and yet thou art come before me! Can nothing warn thee?

Shakspeare. I dare not dissemble nor feign nor hold aught back, although it be to my confusion. As well may I speak at once the whole truth; for your worship could find it out if I abstained.

Sir Thomas. Ay, that I should indeed, and shortly. But, come now, I am sated of thy follies and roguish tricks, and yearn after the sound doctrine of that pious man. What expounded the grave Glaston upon signs and tokens whereby ye shall be known?

Shakspeare. Wonderful things, — things beyond belief! "There be certain men," quoth he —

Sir Thomas. He began well. This promises. But why canst not thou go on?

Shakspeare. "There be certain men who rubbing one corner of the eye do see a peacock's feather at the other, and even fire. We know, William, what that fire is, and whence it cometh. Those wicked men, William, all have their marks upon them, be it only a corn or a wart or a mole or a hairy ear or a toe-nail turned inward. Sufficient, and more than sufficient! He knoweth his own by less tokens. There is not one of them that doth not sweat at some secret sin committed, or some inclination toward it unsnaffled. Certain men are there likewise who venerate so little the glorious works of the Creator that I myself have known them to sneeze at the sun. Sometimes it was against their will, and they would gladly have checked it had they been able; but they were forced to show what they are. In our carnal state we say, What is one against numbers? In another, we shall truly say, What are numbers against one?"

—Sir Thomas did ejaculate, "Amen! Amen!" And then his lips moved silently, piously, and quickly; and then said he, audibly and loudly, "And make us at last true Israelites!" After which he turned to young Willy, and said anxiously, "Hast thou more, lad? Give us it while the Lord strengtheneth."

"Sir," answered Willy, "although I thought it no trouble on my return to the Mitre to write down every word I could remember, and although few did then escape me, yet at this present I can bring to mind but scanty sentences, and those so stray and out of order that they would only prove my incapacity for sterling wisdom, and my incontinence of spiritual treasure."

Sir Thomas. Even that sentence hath a twang of the doctor in it. Nothing is so sweet as humility. The mountains may descend, but the valleys cannot rise. Every man should know himself. Come, repeat what thou canst. I would fain have three or four more heads.

Shakspeare. I know not whether I can give your worship more than one other. Let me try. It was when Dr. Glaston was discoursing on the protection the wise and powerful should afford to the ignorant and weak:—

"In the earlier ages of mankind, your Greek and Latin authors inform you, there went forth sundry worthies, men of

might to deliver, not wandering damsels, — albeit for those likewise they had stowage, — but low-conditioned men, who fell under the displeasure of the higher, and groaned in thraldom and captivity. And these mighty ones were believed to have done such services to poor humanity that their memory grew greater than they, as shadows do than substances at day-fall. And the sons and grandsons of the delivered did laud and magnify those glorious names; and some in gratitude, and some in tribulation, did ascend the hills, which appeared unto them as altars bestrewn with flowers and herbage for Heaven's acceptance. And many did go far into the quiet groves, under lofty trees, looking for whatever was mightiest and most protecting; and in such places did they cry aloud unto the mighty, who had left them, 'Return, return! help us, help us! be blessed! forever blessed!"

"Vain men! but, had they stayed there, not evil. Out of gratitude, purest gratitude, rose idolatry. For the Devil sees the fairest, and soils it.

"In these our days, methinks, whatever other sins we may fall into, such idolatry is the least dangerous. For neither on the one side is there much disposition for gratitude, nor on the other much zeal to deliver the innocent and oppressed. Even this deliverance, although a merit and a high one, is not the highest. Forgiveness is beyond it. Forgive, or ye shall not be forgiven. This ye may do every day; for if ye find not offences, ye feign them, — and surely ye may remove your own work, if ye may remove another's. To rescue requires more thought and wariness: learn then the easier lesson first. Afterward, when ye rescue any from another's violence, or from his own (which oftentimes is more dangerous, as the enemies are within not only the penetrals of his house but of his heart), bind up his wounds before ye send him on his way. Should ye at any time overtake the erring, and resolve to deliver him up, I will tell you whither to conduct him. Conduct him to his Lord and Master, whose household he hath left. It is better to consign him to Christ his Saviour than to man his murderer; it is better to bid him live than to bid him die. The one word our Teacher and Preserver said, the other our enemy and destroyer. Bring him back again, the stray, the lost one; bring him back, not with clubs and cudgels, not with

halberts and halters, but generously and gently, and with the linking of the arm. In this posture shall God above smile upon ye; in this posture of yours he shall recognize again his beloved Son upon earth. Do ye likewise, and depart in peace."

— William had ended, and there was silence in the hall for some time after, when Sir Thomas said: "He spake unto somewhat mean persons, who may do it without disparagement. I look for authority, I look for doctrine, and find none yet. If he could not have drawn us out a thread or two from the coat of an apostle, he might have given us a smack of Augustine, or a sprig of Basil. Our older sermons are headier than these, Master Silas; our new beer is the sweeter and clammier, and wants more spice. The doctor hath seasoned his with pretty wit enough (to do him justice), which in a sermon is never out of place; for if there be the bane, there likewise is the antidote. What dost thou think about it, Master Silas?"

Sir Silas. I would not give ten farthings for ten folios of such sermons.

Shakspeare. These words, Master Silas, will oftener be quoted than any others of thine, but rarely (do I suspect) as applicable to Dr. Glaston. I must stick unto his gown. I must declare that, to my poor knowledge, many have been raised to the bench of bishops for less wisdom, and worse, than is contained in the few sentences I have been commanded by authority to recite. No disparagement to anybody! I know, Master Silas, and multitudes bear witness, that thou above most art a dead hand at a sermon.

Sir Silas. Touch my sermons, wilt dare?

Shakspeare. Nay, Master Silas, be not angered; it is courage enough to hear them.

Sir Thomas. Now, Silas, hold thy peace, and rest contented. He hath excused himself unto thee, throwing in a compliment far above his station, and not unworthy of Rome or Florence. I did not think him so ready. Our Warwickshire lads are fitter for football than courtesies; and, sooth to say, not only the inferior.

— His worship turned from Master Silas toward William, and said, "Brave Willy, thou hast given us our bitters; we are ready now for anything solid. What hast left?"

Shakspeare. Little or nothing, sir.

Sir Thomas. Well, give us that little or nothing.

— William Shakspeare was obedient to the commands of Sir Thomas, who had spoken thus kindly unto him, and had deigned to cast at him from his "lordly dish" (as the Psalmist hath it) a fragment of facetiousness.

Shakspeare. Alas, sir! may I repeat it without offence, it not being doctrine but admonition, and meant for me only?

Sir Thomas. Speak it the rather for that.

Then did William give utterance to the words of the preacher, not indeed in his sermon at St. Mary's, but after dinner: —

"Lust seizeth us in youth, ambition in midlife, avarice in old age; but vanity and pride are the besetting sins that drive the angels from our cradle, pamper us with luscious and most unwholesome food, ride our first stick with us, mount our first horse with us, wake with us in the morning, dream with us in the night, and never at any time abandon us. In this world, beginning with pride and vanity, we are delivered over from tormentor to tormentor, until the worst tormentor of all taketh absolute possession of us forever, seizing us at the mouth of the grave, enchaining us in his own dark dungeon, standing at the door, and laughing at our cries. But the Lord, out of his infinite mercy, hath placed in the hand of every man the helm to steer his course by, pointing it out with his finger, and giving him strength as well as knowledge to pursue it.

"William, William! there is in the moral straits a current from right to wrong, but no reflux from wrong to right, — for which destination we must hoist our sails aloft and ply our oars incessantly, or night and the tempest will overtake us, and we shall shriek out in vain from the billows, and irrecoverably sink."

"Amen!" cried Sir Thomas most devoutly, sustaining his voice long and loud. "Open that casement, good Silas; the day is sultry for the season of the year; it approacheth unto noontide. The room is close, and those blue flies do make a strange hubbub."

Shakspeare. In troth do they, sir; they come from the kitchen, and do savor woundily of roast goose! And, methinks —

Sir Thomas. What bethinkest thou?

Shakspeare. The fancy of a moment, — a light and vain one.

Sir Thomas. Thou relievest me; speak it.

Shakspeare. How could the creatures cast their coarse rank odor thus far, even into your presence? A noble and spacious hall! Charlecote, in my mind, beats Warwick Castle, and challenges Kenilworth.

Sir Thomas. The hall is well enough, — I must say it is a noble hall, a hall for a queen to sit down in. And I stuffed an arm-chair with horse-hair on purpose, feathers over it, swan-down over them again, and covered it with scarlet cloth of Bruges, five crowns the short ell. But her Highness came not hither; she was stopped short; she had a tongue in her ear.

Shakspeare. Where all is spring, all is buzz and murmur.

Sir Thomas. Quaint and solid as the best yew-hedge! I marvel at thee. A knight might have spoken it under favor. They stopped her at Warwick — to see what? two old towers that don't match![1] Charlecote Hall, I could have told her sweet Highness, was built by those Lucies who came over with Julius Cæsar and William the Conqueror, with cross and scallop-shell on breast and beaver. But, honest Willy —

Such were the very words; I wrote them down with two signs in the margent, — one a mark of admiration, as thus (!); the other of interrogation (so we call it), as thus (?).

"But, honest Willy, I would fain hear more," quoth the knight, "about the learned Dr. Glaston. He seemeth to be a man after God's own heart."

Shakspeare. Ay is he! Never doth he sit down to dinner but he readeth first a chapter of the Revelation; and if he tasteth a pound of butter at Carfax, he saith a grace long enough to bring an appetite for a baked bull's ——zle.[2] If this be not after God's own heart, I know not what is.

[1] Sir Thomas seems to have been jealous of these two towers, certainly the finest in England. If Warwick Castle could borrow the windows from Kenilworth, it would be complete.

[2] Another untoward blot! but leaving no doubt of the word. The only doubt is, whether he meant the *muzzle* of the animal itself or one of those leathern muzzles which are often employed to coerce the violence of animals. In besieged cities men have been reduced to such extremities. But the *muzzle* in this place would more properly be called the *blinker*, which is often put upon bulls in pastures when they are vicious.

Sir Thomas. I would fain confer with him, but that Oxford lieth afar off, — a matter of thirty miles, I hear. I might indeed write unto him; but our Warwickshire pens are mighty broad-nibbed, and there is a something in this plaguy ink of ours sadly ropy.

"I fear there is," quoth Willy.

"And I should scorn," continued his worship, "to write otherwise than in a fine Italian character, to the master of a college near in dignity to knighthood."

Shakspeare. Worshipful sir, is there no other way of communicating but by person, or writing, or messages?

Sir Thomas. I will consider and devise. At present I can think of none so satisfactory.

— And now did the great clock over the gateway strike; and Bill Shakspeare did move his lips, even as Sir Thomas had moved his erewhile in ejaculating. And when he had wagged them twice or thrice after the twelve strokes of the clock were over, again he ejaculated with voice also, saying, "Mercy upon us! how the day wears! Twelve strokes! Might I retire, please your worship, into the chapel for about three quarters of an hour, and perform the service [1] as ordained?"

Before Sir Thomas could give him leave or answer, did Sir Silas cry aloud, "He would purloin the chalice, worth forty-eight shillings, and melt it down in the twinkling of an eye, he is so crafty."

But the knight was more reasonable, and said, reprovingly, "There now, Silas, thou talkest widely, and verily in malice, if there be any in thee."

"Try him," answered Master Silas; "I don't kneel where he does. Could he have but his wicked will of me he would chop my legs off, as he did the poor buck's."

Sir Thomas. No, no, no! he hath neither guile nor revenge in him. We may let him have his way, now that he hath taken the right one.

Sir Silas. Popery, sheer popery, strong as hartshorn! Your papists keep these outlandish hours for their Masses and

[1] Let not this countenance the opinion that Shakspeare was a Roman Catholic. His contempt of priests may have originated from the unfairness of Silas. Friars he treats kindly, perhaps in return for somewhat less services than Friar Lawrence's to Romeo.

mummery. Surely we might let God alone at twelve o'clock! Have we no bowels?

Shakspeare. Gracious sir, I do not urge it; and the time is now past by some minutes.

Sir Thomas. Art thou popishly inclined, William?

Shakspeare. Sir, I am not popishly inclined; I am not inclined to pay tribute of coin or understanding to those who rush forward with a pistol at my breast, crying, "Stand, or you are a dead man!" I have but one guide in faith, a powerful, an almighty one. He will not suffer to waste away and vanish the faith for which he died. He hath chosen in all countries pure hearts for its depositaries; and I would rather take it from a friend and neighbor, intelligent and righteous and rejecting lucre, than from some foreigner educated in the pride of cities or in the moroseness of monasteries, who sells me what Christ gave me, — his own flesh and blood. I can repeat by heart what I read above a year agone, albeit I cannot bring to mind the title of the book in which I read it. These are the words: —

"The most venal and sordid of all the superstitions that have swept and darkened our globe may indeed, like African locusts, have consumed the green corn in very extensive regions, and may return periodically to consume it; but the strong unwearied laborer who sowed it hath alway sown it in other places less exposed to such devouring pestilences. Those cunning men who formed to themselves the gorgeous plan of universal dominion were aware that they had a better chance of establishing it than brute ignorance or brute force could supply, and that soldiers and their paymasters were subject to other and powerfuller fears than the transitory ones of war and invasion. What they found in heaven they seized; what they wanted they forged.

"And so long as there is vice and ignorance in the world, so long as fear is a passion, their dominion will prevail; but their dominion is not, and never shall be, universal. Can we wonder that it is so general? Can we wonder that anything is wanting to give it authority and effect, when every learned, every prudent, every powerful, every ambitious man in Europe for above a thousand years united in the league to consolidate it?

"The old dealers in the shambles, where Christ's body is exposed for sale in convenient marketable slices, have not covered with blood and filth the whole pavement. Beautiful usages are remaining still, kindly affections, radiant hopes, and ardent aspirations!

"It is a comfortable thing to reflect — as they do, and as we may do unblamably — that we are uplifting to our Guide and Maker the same incense of the heart, and are uttering the very words, which our dearest friends in all quarters of the earth, nay in heaven itself, are offering to the throne of grace at the same moment.

"Thus are we together through the immensity of space. What are these bodies? Do they unite us? No; they keep us apart and asunder even while we touch. Realms and oceans, worlds and ages, open before two spirits bent on heaven. What a choir surrounds us when we resolve to live unitedly and harmoniously in Christian faith!"

Sir Thomas. Now, Silas, what sayest thou?

Sir Silas. Ignorant fool!

Shakspeare. Ignorant fools are bearable, Master Silas; your wise ones are the worst.

Sir Thomas. Prythee no bandying of loggerheads.

Shakspeare, —

> Or else what mortal man shall say
> Whose shins may suffer in the fray?

Sir Thomas. Thou reasonest aptly and timest well. And surely being now in so rational and religious a frame of mind, thou couldst recall to memory a section, or head or two, of the sermon holden at St. Mary's. It would do thee and us as much good as "Lighten our darkness," or "Forasmuch as it hath pleased;" and somewhat less than three quarters of an hour (may-be less than one quarter) sufficeth.

Sir Silas. Or he hangs without me. I am for dinner in half the time.

Sir Thomas. Silas, Silas! he hangeth not with thee or without thee.

Sir Silas. He thinketh himself a clever fellow; but he (look ye) is the cleverest that gets off.

"I hold quite the contrary," quoth Will Shakspeare, winking

at Master Silas, from the comfort and encouragement he had just received touching the hanging.

And Master Silas had his answer ready, and showed that he was more than a match for poor Willy in wit and poetry. He answered thus: —

"If winks are wit,
Who wanteth it?

Thou hadst other bolts to kill bucks withal. In wit, sirrah, thou art a mere child."

Shakspeare. Little dogs are jealous of children, great ones fondle them.

Sir Thomas. An that were written in the "Apocrypha," in the very teeth of Bel and the Dragon, it could not be truer. I have witnessed it with my own eyes, over and over.

Sir Silas. He will take this for wit likewise, now the arms of Lucy do seal it.

Sir Thomas. Silas, they may stamp wit, they may further wit, they may send wit into good company, but not make it.

Shakspeare. Behold my wall of defence!

Sir Silas. An thou art for walls, I have one for thee from Oxford, pithy and apposite, sound and solid, and trimmed up becomingly, as a collar of brawn with a crown of rosemary, or a boar's head with a lemon in the mouth.

Shakspeare. Egad, Master Silas! those are your walls for lads to climb over, an they were higher than Babel's.

Sir Silas. Have at thee!

Thou art a wall
To make the ball
Rebound from.

Thou hast a back
For beadle's crack
To sound from, to sound from.

The foolishest dolts are the ground-plot of the most wit, as the idlest rogues are of the most industry. Even thou hast brought wit down from Oxford. And before a thief is hanged Parliament must make laws, attorneys must engross them, printers stamp and publish them, hawkers cry them, judges expound them, juries weigh and measure them with offences, then executioners carry them into effect. The farmer hath already sown the

hemp, the rope-maker hath twisted it; sawyers saw the timber, carpenters tack together the shell, grave-diggers delve the earth. And all this truly for fellows like unto thee!

Shakspeare. Whom a God came down from heaven to save!

Sir Thomas. Silas, he hangeth not. William, I must have the heads of the sermon, six or seven of 'em; thou hast whetted my appetite keenly. How! dost duck thy pate into thy hat? Nay, nay, that is proper and becoming at church; we need not such solemnity. Repeat unto us the setting forth at St. Mary's.

— Whereupon did William Shakspeare entreat of Master Silas that he would help him in his ghostly endeavors, by repeating what he called the preliminary prayer, — which prayer I find nowhere in our ritual, and do suppose it to be one of those Latin supplications used in our learned universities, now or erewhile. I am afeard it hath not the approbation of the strictly orthodox, for inasmuch as Master Silas at such entreaty did close his teeth against it, and with teeth thus closed did say, Athanasius-wise, "Go, and be damned!"

Bill was not disheartened, but said he hoped better, and began thus: "'My brethren!' said the preacher, 'or rather let me call you my children, — such is my age confronted with yours, for the most part: my children, then, and my brethren (for here are both), believe me, killing is forbidden.'"

Sir Thomas. This, not being delivered unto us from the pulpit by the preacher himself, we may look into. Sensible man, shrewd reasoner, what a stroke against deer-stealers! how full of truth and ruth! Excellent discourse!

Shakspeare. The last part was the best.

Sir Thomas. I always find it so. The softest of the cheese-cake is left in the platter when the crust is eaten. He kept the best bit for the last, then? He pushed it under the salt, eh? He told thee —

Shakspeare. Exactly so.

Sir Thomas. What was it?

Shakspeare. "Ye shall not kill."

Sir Thomas. How! did he run in a circle like a hare? One of his mettle should break cover and off across the country, like a fox or hart.

Shakspeare. "And yet ye kill time when ye can, and are uneasy when ye cannot."

Whereupon did Sir Thomas say aside unto himself, but within my hearing, "Faith and troth! he must have had a head in at the window here one day or other."

Shakspeare. "This sin crieth unto the Lord."

Sir Thomas. He was wrong there. It is not one of those that cry: mortal sins cry. Surely he could not have fallen into such an error! it must be thine; thou misunderstoodest him.

Shakspeare. Mayhap, sir. A great heaviness came over me; I was oppressed in spirit, and did feel as one awakening from a dream.

Sir Thomas. Godlier men than thou art do often feel the right hand of the Lord upon their heads in like manner. It followeth contrition, and precedeth conversion. Continue.

Shakspeare. "My brethren and children," said the teacher, "whenever ye want to kill time call God to the chase, and bid the angels blow the horn, and thus ye are sure to kill time to your heart's content. And ye may feast another day, and another after that — "

— Then said Master Silas unto me concernedly, "This is the mischief-fullest of all the Devil's imps, to talk in such wise at a quarter past twelve!" But William went straight on, not hearing him: —

" — upon what ye shall in such pursuit have brought home with you. Whereas, if ye go alone, or two or three together, nay, even if ye go in thick and gallant company, and yet provide not that these be with ye, my word for it, and a powerfuller word than mine, ye shall return to your supper tired and jaded, and rest little when ye want to rest most."

"Hast no other head of the doctor's?" quoth Sir Thomas.

"Verily none," replied Willy, "of the morning's discourse, saving the last words of it, which, with God's help, I shall always remember."

"Give us them, give us them!" said Sir Thomas. "He wants doctrine, he wants authority. His are grains of millet, grains for unfledged doves; but they are sound, except the crying. Deliver unto us the last words; for the last of the preacher, as of the hanged, are usually the best."

Then did William repeat the concluding words of the discourse, being these: "As years are running past us, let us throw something on them which they cannot shake off in the dust and hurry of the world, but must carry with them to that great year of all, whereunto the lesser of this mortal life do tend and are subservient."

Sir Thomas, after a pause, and after having bent his knee under the table, as though there had been the church-cushion, said unto us, "Here he spake through a glass, darkly, as blessed Paul hath it."

Then turning toward Willy, "And nothing more?"

"Nothing but the glory," quoth Willy; "at which there is always such a clatter of feet upon the floor, and creaking of benches, and rustling of gowns, and bustle of bonnets, and justle of cushions, and dust of mats, and treading of toes, and punching of elbows from the spitefuller, that one wishes to be fairly out of it, after the scramble for the peace of God is at an end —"

Sir Thomas threw himself back upon his arm-chair, and exclaimed in wonderment, "How!"

Shakspeare. — and in the midst of the service again, were it possible. For nothing is painfuller than to have the pail shaken off the head when it is brim-full of the waters of life, and we are walking staidly under it.

Sir Thomas. Had the learned doctor preached again in the evening, pursuing the thread of his discourse, he might peradventure have made up the deficiencies I find in him.

Shakspeare. He had not that opportunity.

Sir Thomas. The more 's the pity.

Shakspeare. The evening admonition, delivered by him unto the household —

Sir Thomas. What! and did he indeed show wind enough for that? Prythee out with it, if thou didst put it into thy tablets.

Shakspeare. Alack, sir! there were so many Latin words, I fear me I should be at fault in such attempt.

Sir Thomas. Fear not; we can help thee out between us, were there a dozen or a score.

Shakspeare. Bating those Latinities, I do verily think I could tie up again most of the points in his doublet.

Sir Thomas. At him, then! What was his bearing?

Shakspeare. In dividing his matter, he spooned out and apportioned the commons in his discourse as best suited the quality, capacity, and constitution of his hearers. To those in priests' orders he delivered a sort of catechism.

Sir Silas. He catechise grown men! He catechise men in priests' orders, being no bishop, nor bishop's ordinary!

Shakspeare. He did so; it may be at his peril.

Sir Thomas. And what else, for catechisms are baby's pap.

Shakspeare. He did not catechise, but he admonished, the richer gentlemen with gold tassels for their top-knots.

Sir Silas. I thought as much. It was no better in my time. Admonitions fell gently upon those gold tassels, and they ripened degrees as glass and sunshine ripen cucumbers. We priests, forsooth, are catechised! The worst question to any gold tasseller is, "How do you do?" Old Alma Mater coaxes and would be coaxed; but let her look sharp, or spectacles may be thrust upon her nose that shall make her eyes water. Aristotle could make out no royal road to wisdom; but this old woman of ours will show you one, an you tip her. Tilley valley![1] catechise priests, indeed!

Sir Thomas. Peradventure he did it discreetly. Let us examine and judge him. Repeat thou what he said unto them.

Shakspeare. "Many," said he, "are ingenuous, many are devout, some timidly, some strenuously; but nearly all flinch and rear and kick at the slightest touch, or least inquisitive suspicion of an unsound part in their doctrine. And yet, my brethren, we ought rather to flinch and feel sore at our own searching touch, our own serious inquisition into ourselves. Let us preachers, who are sufficiently liberal in bestowing our advice upon others, inquire of ourselves whether the exercise of spiritual authority may not be sometimes too pleasant, tickling our breasts with a plume from Satan's wing, and turning our heads with that inebriating poison which he hath been seen to instil into the very chalice of our salvation. Let us ask ourselves in the closet, whether, after we have humbled

[1] "Tilley valley" was the favorite adjuration of James the Second. It appears in the comedies of Shakspeare.

ourselves before God in our prayers, we never rise beyond the due standard in the pulpit; whether our zeal for the truth be never over-heated by internal fires less holy; whether we never grow stiffly and sternly pertinacious, at the very time when we are reproving the obstinacy of others; and whether we have not frequently so acted as if we believed that opposition were to be relaxed and borne away by self-sufficiency and intolerance. Believe me, the wisest of us have our catechism to learn; and these, my dear friends, are not the only questions contained in it. No Christian can hate, no Christian can malign; nevertheless, do we not often both hate and malign those unhappy men who are insensible to God's mercies? And I fear this unchristian spirit swells darkly, with all its venom, in the marble of our hearts, — not because our brother is insensible to these mercies, but because he is insensible to our faculty of persuasion, turning a deaf ear unto our claim upon his obedience, or a blind or sleepy eye upon the fountain of light, whereof we deem ourselves the sacred reservoirs. There is one more question at which ye will tremble when ye ask it in the recesses of your souls (I do tremble at it, yet must utter it), — Whether we do not more warmly and erectly stand up for God's word because it came from our mouths, than because it came from his? Learned and ingenious men may indeed find a solution and excuse for all these propositions; but the wise unto salvation will cry, 'Forgive me, O my God, if, called by thee to walk in thy way, I have not swept this dust from the sanctuary!'"

Sir Thomas. All this, methinks, is for the behoof of clerks and ministers.

Shakspeare. He taught them what they who teach others should learn and practise. Then did he look toward the young gentlemen of large fortune, and lastly his glances fell upon us poorer folk, whom he instructed in the duty we owe to our superiors.

Sir Thomas. Ay, there he had a host.

Shakspeare. In one part of his admonition he said: "Young gentlemen, let not the highest of you who hear me this evening be led into the delusion (for such it is) that the founder of his family was *originally* a greater or a better man than the lowest here. He willed it, and became it. He must

have stood low; he must have worked hard, and with tools moreover of his own invention and fashioning. He waved and whistled off ten thousand strong and importunate temptations; he dashed the dice-box from the jewelled hand of Chance, the cup from Pleasure's, and trod under foot the sorceries of each; he ascended steadily the precipices of Danger, and looked down with intrepidity from the summit; he overawed Arrogance with Sedateness; he seized by the horn and overleaped low Violence; and he fairly swung Fortune round.

"The very high cannot rise much higher, the very low may; the truly great must have done it.

"This is not the doctrine, my friends, of the silkenly and lawnly religious; it wears the coarse texture of the fisherman, and walks uprightly and straightforward under it. I am speaking now more particularly to you among us upon whom God hath laid the encumbrances of wealth, the sweets whereof bring teasing and poisonous things about you, not easily sent away. What now are your pretensions under sacks of money, or your enjoyments under the shade of genealogical trees? Are they rational? Are they real? Do they exist at all? Strange inconsistency, to be proud of having as much gold and silver laid upon you as a mule hath, and yet to carry it less composedly! The mule is not answerable for the conveyance and discharge of his burden: you are. Stranger infatuation still, to be prouder of an excellent thing done by another than by yourselves, supposing any excellent thing to have actually been done; and, after all, to be more elated on his cruelties than his kindnesses,—by the blood he hath spilt than by the benefits he hath conferred, — and to acknowledge less obligation to a well-informed and well-intentioned progenitor than to a lawless and ferocious barbarian! Would stocks and stumps, if they could utter words, utter such gross stupidity? Would the apple boast of his crab origin, or the peach of his prune? Hardly any man is ashamed of being inferior to his ancestors, although it is the very thing at which the great should blush, if indeed the great in general descended from the worthy. I did expect to see the day, — and although I shall not see it, it must come at last, — when he shall be treated as a madman or an impostor who dares to claim nobility or precedency, and cannot show his family name in the history of his country.

Even he who can show it, and who cannot write his own under it in the same or as goodly characters, must submit to the imputation of degeneracy, from which the lowly and obscure are exempt.

"He alone who maketh you wiser, maketh you greater; and it is only by such an implement that Almighty God himself effects it. When he taketh away a man's wisdom, he taketh away his strength, his power over others, and over himself. What help for him then? He may sit idly and swell his spleen, saying, 'Who is this? Who is that?' and at the question's end the spirit of inquiry dies away in him. It would not have been so if in happier hour he had said within himself, 'Who am I? What am I?' and had prosecuted the search in good earnest.

"When we ask who *this* man is, or who *that* man is, we do not expect or hope for a plain answer; we should be disappointed at a direct, or a rational, or a kind one. We desire to hear that he was of low origin, or had committed some crime, or been subjected to some calamity. Whoever he be, in general we disregard or despise him, unless we discover that he possesseth by nature many qualities of mind and body which he never brings into use, and many accessories of situation and fortune which he brings into abuse every day. According to the arithmetic in practice, he who makes the most idlers and the most ingrates is the most worshipful. But wiser ones than the scorers in this school will tell you how riches and power were bestowed by Providence that generosity and mercy should be exercised: for if every gift of the Almighty were distributed in equal portions to every creature, less of such virtues would be called into the field; consequently there would be less of gratitude, less of submission, less of devotion, less of hope, and in the total, less of content."

— Here he ceased, and Sir Thomas nodded, and said, "Reasonable enough! nay, almost too reasonable! But where are the apostles? Where are the disciples? Where are the saints? Where is hell-fire? Well, patience! we may come to it yet. Go on, Will!"

With such encouragement before him, did Will Shakspeare take breath and continue: "'We mortals are too much accustomed to behold our superiors in rank and station as we behold

the leaves in the forest. While we stand under these leaves, — our protection and refuge from heat and labor, — we see only the rougher side of them, and the gloominess of the branches on which they hang. In the midst of their benefits we are insensible to their utility and their beauty, and appear to be ignorant that if they were placed less high above us, we should derive from them less advantage.' "

Sir Thomas. Ay; envy of superiority made the angels kick and run restive.

Shakspeare. May it please your worship, with all my faults, I have ever borne due submission and reverence toward my superiors.

Sir Thomas. Very right! very scriptural! But most folks do that. Our duty is not fulfilled unless we bear absolute veneration; unless we are ready to lay down our lives and fortunes at the foot of the throne, and everything else at the foot of those who administer the laws under virgin majesty.

Shakspeare. Honored sir, I am quite ready to lay down my life and fortune, and all the rest of me, before that great virgin.

Sir Silas. Thy life and fortune, to wit! What are they worth? A June cob-nut, maggot and all.

Sir Thomas. Silas, we will not repudiate nor rebuff his Magdalen, that bringeth a pot of ointment. Rather let us teach and tutor than twit. It is a tractable and conducible youth, being in good company.

Sir Silas. Teach and tutor! Hold hard, sir. These base varlets ought to be taught but two things, — to bow as beseemeth them to their betters, and to hang perpendicular. We have authority for it, that no man can add an inch to his stature; but by aid of the sheriff, I engage to find a chap who shall add two or three to this whoreson's.[1]

Sir Thomas. Nay, nay, now, Silas! the lad's mother was always held to be an honest woman.

[1] "Whoreson," if we may hazard a conjecture, means the son of a woman of ill-repute. In this we are borne out by the context. It appears to have escaped the commentators on Shakspeare.

"Whoreson," a word of frequent occurrence in the comedies; more rarely found in the tragedies. Although now obsolete, the expression proves that there were (or were believed to be) such persons formerly.

(The Editor is indebted to two learned friends for these two remarks, which appear no less just than ingenious.)

Sir Silas. His mother may be an honest woman for me.

Shakspeare. No small privilege, by my faith, for any woman in the next parish to thee, Master Silas !

Sir Silas. There again ! out comes the filthy runlet from the quagmire that but now lay so quiet with all its own in it.

Shakspeare. Until it was trodden on by the ass that could not leap over it. These, I think, are the words of the fable.

Sir Thomas. They are so.

Sir Silas. What fable ?

Sir Thomas. Tush ! don't press him too hard ; he wants not wit, but learning.

Sir Silas. He wants a rope's end ; and a rope's end is not enough for him, unless we throw in the other.

Sir Thomas. Peradventure he may be an instrument, a potter's clay, a type, a token. I have seen many young men, and none like unto him. He is shallow, but clear ; he is simple, but ingenuous.

Sir Silas. Drag the ford again then ! In my mind he is as deep as the big tankard ; and a mouthful of rough burrage will be the beginning and end of it.

Sir Thomas. No fear of that. Neither, if rightly reported by the youngster, is there so much doctrine in the doctor as we expected. He doth not dwell upon the main : he is worldly ; he is wise in his generation ; he says things out of his own head. Silas, that can't hold ! We want props, — *fulcrums*, I think you called 'em to the farmers ; or was it *stimulums ?*

Sir Silas. Both very good words.

Sir Thomas. I should be mightily pleased to hear thee dispute with that great don.

Sir Silas. I hate disputations. Saint Paul warns us against them. If one wants to be thirsty, the tail of a stockfish is as good for it as the head of a logician. The doctor there at Oxford is in flesh and mettle ; but let him be sleek and gingered as he may, clap me in St. Mary's pulpit, cassock me, lamb-skin me, give me pink for my colors, glove me to the elbow, heel-piece me half an ell high, cushion me before and behind, bring me a mug of mild ale and a rasher of bacon, only just to con over the text withal, — then allow me fair play, and as much of my own way as he had, and the Devil take the hindermost. I am his man at any time.

Sir Thomas. I am fain to believe it. Verily, I do think, Silas, thou hast as much stuff in thee as most men. Our beef and mutton at Charlecote rear other than babes and sucklings. I like words taken, like thine, from black-letter books. They look stiff and sterling, and as though a man might dig about 'em for a week, and never loosen the lightest. Thou hast alway at hand either saint or devil, as occasion needeth, according to the quality of the sinner, and they never come uncalled for. Moreover, Master Silas, I have observed that thy hell-fire is generally lighted up in the pulpit about the dog-days.

— Then turned the worthy knight unto the youth, saying, "'T were well for thee, William Shakspeare, if the learned doctor had kept thee longer in his house, and had shown unto thee the danger of idleness, which hath often led unto deer-stealing and poetry. In thee we already know the one, although the distemper hath eaten but skin-deep for the present; and we have the testimony of two burgesses on the other. The pursuit of poetry, as likewise of game, is unforbidden to persons of condition."

Shakspeare. Sir, that of game is the more likely to keep them in it.

Sir Thomas. It is the more knightly of the two; but poetry hath also her pursuers among us. I myself, in my youth, had some experience that way; and I am fain to blush at the reputation I obtained. His honor, my father, took me to London at the age of twenty; and sparing no expense in my education, gave fifty shillings to one Monsieur Dubois to teach me fencing and poetry in twenty lessons. In vacant hours he taught us also the laws of honor, which are different from ours.

In France you are unpolite unless you solicit a judge or his wife to favor your cause; and you inevitably lose it. In France there is no want of honor where there is no want of courage; you may lie, but you must not hear that you lie. I asked him what he thought then of lying, and he replied, —

"C'est selon."

"And suppose you should overhear the whisper?"

"Ah, parbleu! Cela m'irrite, cela me pousse au bout."

I was going on to remark that a real man of honor could less

bear to lie than to hear it; when he cried, at the words "real man of honor," "Le voilà, Monsieur, le voilà!" and gave himself such a blow on the breast as convinced me the French are a brave people.

He told us that nothing but his honor was left him, but that it supplied the place of all he had lost. It was discovered some time afterward that Monsieur Dubois had been guilty of perjury, had been a spy, and had lost nothing but a dozen or two of tin patty-pans, hereditary in his family, his father having been a cook on his own account.

William, it is well at thy time of life that thou shouldst know the customs of far countries, particularly if it should be the will of God to place thee in a company of players. Of all nations in the world, the French best understand the stage. If thou shouldst ever write for it (which God forbid!), copy them very carefully. Murders on their stage are quite decorous and cleanly. Few gentlemen and ladies die by violence who would not have died by exhaustion. For they rant and rave until their voice fails them, one after another; and those who do not die of it, die consumptive. They cannot bear to see cruelty; they would rather see any image than their own. These are not my observations, but were made by Sir Everard Starkeye, who likewise did remark to Monsieur Dubois that cats, if you hold them up to the looking-glass, will scratch you terribly, and that the same fierce animal, as if proud of its cleanly coat and velvety paw, doth carefully put aside what other animals of more estimation take no trouble to conceal.

"Our people," said Sir Everard, "must see upon the stage what they never could have imagined; so the best men in the world would earnestly take a peep of hell through a chink, whereas the worser would skulk away."

Do not thou be their caterer, William. Avoid the writing of comedies and tragedies. To make people laugh is uncivil, and to make people cry is unkind. And what, after all, are these comedies and these tragedies? They are what, for the benefit of all future generations, I have myself described them, —

> The whimsies of wantons, and stories of dread
> That make the stout-hearted look under the bed.

Furthermore, let me warn thee against the same on account

of the vast charges thou must stand at. We Englishmen cannot find it in our hearts to murder a man without much difficulty, hesitation, and delay. We have little or no invention for pains and penalties; it is only our acutest lawyers who have wit enough to frame them. Therefore it behooveth your tragedy man to provide a rich assortment of them, in order to strike the auditor with awe and wonder. And a tragedy man, in our country, who cannot afford a fair dozen of stabbed males, and a trifle under that mark of poisoned females, and chains enow to moor a whole navy in dock, is but a scurvy fellow at the best. Thou wilt find trouble in purveying these necessaries; and then must come the gimcracks for the second course, — gods, goddesses, fates, furies, battles, marriages, music, and the maypole. Hast thou within thee wherewithal?

"Sir," replied Billy, with great modesty, "I am most grateful for these ripe fruits of your experience. To admit delightful visions into my own twilight chamber is not dangerous nor forbidden. Believe me, sir, he who indulges in them will abstain from injuring his neighbor; he will see no glory in peril, and no delight in strife. The world shall never be troubled by any battles and marriages of mine, and I desire no other music and no other maypole than have lightened my heart at Stratford."

Sir Thomas, finding him well-conditioned and manageable, proceeded: "Although I have admonished thee of sundry and insurmountable impediments, yet more are lying in the pathway. We have no verse for tragedy. One in his hurry hath dropped rhyme, and walketh like unto the man who wanteth the left-leg stocking. Others can give us rhyme indeed, but can hold no longer after the tenth or eleventh syllable. Now, Sir Everard Starkeye, who is a pretty poet, did confess to Monsieur Dubois the potency of the French tragic verse, which thou never canst hope to bring over.

"'I wonder, Monsieur Dubois,' said Sir Everard, 'that your countrymen should have thought it necessary to transport their heavy artillery into Italy. No Italian could stand a volley of your heroic verses from the best and biggest pieces. With these brought into action, you never could have lost the battle of Pavia.'

"Now, my friend Sir Everard is not quite so good a histo-

rian as he is a poet; and Monsieur Dubois took advantage of him.

"'Pardon, Monsieur Sir Everard,' said Monsieur Dubois, smiling at my friend's slip, 'we did not lose the battle of Pavia. We had the misfortune to lose our king, who delivered himself up, as our kings always do, for the good and glory of his country.'

"'How was this?' said Sir Everard, in surprise.

"'I will tell you, Monsieur Sir Everard,' said Monsieur Dubois. 'I had it from my own father, who fought in the battle, and told my mother, word for word. The king, seeing his household troops, being only one thousand strong, surrounded by twelve regiments, the best Spanish troops, amounting to eighteen thousand four hundred and forty-two, although he doubted not of victory, yet thought he might lose many brave men before the close of the day, and rode up instantly to King Charles, and said, "My brother, I am loath to lose so many of those brave men yonder. Whistle off your Spanish pointers, and I agree to ride home with you." And so he did. But what did King Charles? Abusing French loyalty, he made our Francis his prisoner — would you believe it? — and treated him worse than ever badger was treated at the bottom of any paltry stable-yard, putting upon his table beer and Rhenish wine and wild boar.'

"I have digressed with thee, young man," continued the knight, much to the improvement of my knowledge, I do reverentially confess, as it was of the lad's. "We will now," said he, "endeavor our best to sober thee, finding that Dr. Glaston hath omitted it."

"Not entirely omitted it," said William, gratefully; "he did, after dinner, all that could be done at such a time toward it. The doctor could, however, speak only of the Greeks and Romans, and certainly what he said of them gave me but little encouragement."

Sir Thomas. What said he?

Shakspeare. He said, "The Greeks conveyed all their wisdom into their theatre; their stages were churches and parliament-houses, — but what was false prevailed over what was true. They had their own wisdom, — the wisdom of the foolish. Who is Sophocles, if compared to Dr. Hammersley of Oriel;

or Euripides, if compared to Dr. Prichard of Jesus? Without the gospel, light is darkness; and with it, children are giants.

"William, I need not expatiate on Greek with thee, since thou knowest it not, but some crumbs of Latin are picked up by the callowest beaks. The Romans had, as thou findest, and have still, more taste for murder than morality, and as they could not find heroes among them, looked for gladiators. Their only very high poet employed his elevation and strength to dethrone and debase the Deity. They had several others, who polished their language and pitched their instruments with admirable skill; several who glued over their thin and flimsy gaberdines many bright feathers from the wide-spread downs of Ionia and the richly cultivated rocks of Attica.

"Some of them have spoken from inspiration, for thou art not to suppose that from the heathen were withheld all the manifestations of the Lord. We do agree at Oxford that the Pollio of Virgil is our Saviour. True, it is the dullest and poorest poem that a nation not very poetical hath bequeathed unto us; and even the versification, in which this master excelled, is wanting in fluency and sweetness. I can only account for it from the weight of the subject. Two verses, which are fairly worth two hundred such poems, are from another pagan; he was forced to sigh for the Church without knowing her. He saith: —

> 'May I gaze upon thee when my latest hour is come!
> May I hold thy hand when mine faileth me!'

This, if adumbrating the Church, is the most beautiful thought that ever issued from the heart of man; but if addressed to a wanton, as some do opine, is filth from the sink, nauseating and insufferable. William, that which moveth the heart most is the best poetry; it comes nearest unto God, the source of all power."

Sir Thomas. Yea, and he appeareth unto me to know more of poetry than of divinity. Those ancients have little flesh upon the body poetical, and lack the savor that sufficeth. The Song of Solomon drowns all their voices; they seem but whistlers and guitar-players compared to a full-cheeked trumpeter, — they standing under the eaves in some dark lane, he upon a well-caparisoned stallion, tossing his mane and all his

ribbons to the sun. I doubt the doctor spake too fondly of the Greeks; they were giddy creatures, William. I am loath to be hard on them, but they please me not. There are those now living who could make them bite their nails to the quick, and turn green as grass with envy.

Shakspeare. Sir, one of those Greeks, methinks, thrown into the pickle-pot, would be a treasure to the house-wife's young gherkins.

Sir Thomas. Simpleton! simpleton! but thou valuest them justly. Now, attend. If ever thou shouldst hear, at Oxford or London, the verses I am about to repeat, prythee do not communicate them to that fiery spirit Matt Atterend. It might not be the battle of two hundreds, but two counties, — a sort of York and Lancaster war, whereof I would wash my hands. Listen!

— And now did Sir Thomas clear his voice, always high and sonorous, and did repeat from the stores of his memory these rich and proud verses: —

> "Chloe, mean men must ever make mean loves;
> They deal in dog-roses, but I in cloves.
> They are just scorched enough to blow their fingers,
> I am a phœnix downright burnt to cinders."

At which noble conceits, so far above what poor Bill had ever imagined, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and exclaimed, "The world itself must be reduced to that condition before such glorious verses die! *Chloe* and *Clove!* Why sir, Chloe wants but a *v* toward the tail to become the very thing! Never tell me that such matters can come about of themselves. And how truly is it said that we mean men deal in dog-roses! Sir, if it were permitted me to swear on that holy Bible, I would swear I never until this day heard that dog-roses were our provender; and yet did I, no longer ago than last summer, write, not indeed upon a dog-rose, but upon a sweet-brier, what would only serve to rinse the mouth withal after the clove."

Sir Thomas. Repeat the same, youth! We may haply give thee our counsel thereupon.

— Willy took heart, and lowering his voice, which hath much natural mellowness, repeated these from memory: —

"My brier that smelledst sweet
When gentle spring's first heat
Ran through thy quiet veins;
Thou that wouldst injure none,
But wouldst be left alone, —
Alone thou leavest me, and nought of thine remains.

"What! hath no poet's lyre
O'er thee, sweet-breathing brier,
Hung fondly, ill or well?
And yet methinks with thee
A poet's sympathy,
Whether in weal or woe, in life or death, might dwell.

"Hard usage both must bear,
Few hands your youth will rear,
Few bosoms cherish you.
Your tender prime must bleed
Ere you are sweet; but freed
From life, you then are prized. Thus prized are poets too."

Sir Thomas said, with kind encouragement, "He who beginneth so discreetly with a dog-rose, may hope to encompass a damask-rose ere he die."

Willy did now breathe freely. The commendation of a knight and magistrate worked powerfully within him; and Sir Thomas said furthermore, "These short matters do not suit me. Thou mightest have added some moral about life and beauty; poets never handle roses without one. But thou art young, and mayest get into the train."

Willy made the best excuse he could, — and no bad one it was, the knight acknowledged; namely, that the sweet-brier was not really dead, although left for dead.

"Then," said Sir Thomas, "as life and beauty would not serve thy turn, thou mightest have had full enjoyment of the beggar, the wayside, the thieves, and the good Samaritan; enough to tapestry the bridal chamber of an empress."

William bowed respectfully, and sighed.

"Ha! thou hast lost them, sure enough, and it may not be quite so fair to smile at thy quandary," quoth Sir Thomas.

"I did my best the first time," said Willy, "and fell short the second."

"That indeed thou must have done," said Sir Thomas. "It is a grievous disappointment, in the midst of our lamentations for the dead, to find ourselves balked. I am curious to

see how thou couldst help thyself. Don't be abashed · I am ready for even worse than the last."

Bill hesitated, but obeyed: —

"And art thou yet alive?
And shall the happy hive
Send out her youth to cull
Thy sweets of leaf and flower,
And spend the sunny hour
With thee, and thy faint heart with murmuring music lull?

"Tell me what tender care,
Tell me what pious prayer,
Bade thee arise and live:
The fondest-favored bee
Shall whisper nought to thee
More loving than the song my grateful muse shall give."

Sir Thomas looked somewhat less pleased at the conclusion of these verses than at the conclusion of the former; and said gravely, "Young man, methinks it is betimes that thou talkest of having a muse to thyself, or even in common with others. It is only great poets who have muses, — I mean to say who have the right to talk in that fashion. The French, I hear, *Phœbus* it and *Muse-me* it right and left; and boggle not to throw all Nine, together with mother and master, into the compass of a dozen lines or thereabout. And your Italian can hardly do without 'em in the multiplication-table. We Englishmen do let them in quietly, shut the door, and say nothing of what passes. I have read a whole book of comedies, and ne'er a muse to help the lamest."

Shakspeare. Wonderful forbearance! I marvel how the poet could get through.

Sir Thomas. By God's help. And I think we did as well without 'em, for it must be an unabashable man that ever shook his sides in their company. They lay heavy restraint both upon laughing and crying. In the great master Virgil of Rome they tell me they come in to count the ships, and having cast up the sum total, and proved it, make off again. Sure token of two things: first, that he held 'em dog cheap; secondly, that he had made but little progress (for a Lombard born) in book-keeping at double entry. He, and every other great genius, began with small subject-matters, — gnats and the like. I myself,

similar unto him, wrote upon fruit. I would give thee some copies for thy copying, if I thought thou wouldst use them temperately, and not render them common, as hath befallen the poetry of some among the brightest geniuses. I could show thee how to say new things, and how to time the same. Before my day, nearly all the flowers and fruits had been gathered by poets, old and young, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall: roses went up to Solomon, apples to Adam, and so forth. Willy, my brave lad, I was the first that ever handled a quince, I 'll be sworn. Hearken!

Chloe! I would not have thee wince
That I unto thee send a quince.
I would not have thee say unto 't
"Begone!" and trample 't under foot,
For, trust me, 't is no fulsome fruit.
It came not out of mine own garden,
But all the way from Henly in Arden,
Of an uncommon fine old tree
Belonging to John Asbury.
And if that of it thou shalt eat
'T will make thy breath e'en yet more sweet;
As a translation here doth show,
"On fruit-trees by Jean Mirabeau."
The frontispiece is printed so.
But eat it with some wine and cake,
Or it may give the belly-ache.[1]
This doth my worthy clerk indite,
I sign,
Sir Thomas Lucy, Knight.

Now, Willy, there is not one poet or lover in twenty who careth for consequences. Many hint to the lady what to do; few what not to do, — although it would oftentimes, as in this case, go to one's heart to see the upshot.

"Ah, sir!" said Bill, in all humility, "I would make bold to put the parings of that quince under my pillow for sweet dreams and insights, if Dr. Glaston had given me encouragement to continue the pursuit of poetry. Of a surety it would bless me with a bedful of churches and crucifixions, duly adumbrated."

Whereat Sir Thomas, shaking his head, did inform him, "It

[1] "Belly-ache," a disorder once not uncommon in England. Even the name is now almost forgotten; yet the elder of us may remember at least the report of it, and some perhaps even the complaint itself, in our school-days. It usually broke out about the cherry season; and, in some cases, made its appearance again at the first nutting.

was in the golden age of the world, as pagans call it, that poets of condition sent fruits and flowers to their beloved, with posies fairly penned. We in our days have done the like. But manners of late are much corrupted on the one side, if not on both. Willy, it hath been whispered that there be those who would rather have a piece of brocade or velvet for a stomacher than the touchingest copy of verses, with a bleeding heart at the bottom."

Shakspeare. Incredible!

Sir Thomas. 'T is even so!

Shakspeare. They must surely be rotten fragments of the world before the flood, saved out of it by the Devil.

Sir Thomas. I am not of that mind. Their eyes, mayhap, fell upon some of the bravery cast ashore from the Spanish Armada. In ancienter days, a few pages of good poetry out-valued a whole ell of the finest Genoa.

Shakspeare. When will such days return?

Sir Thomas. It is only within these few years that corruption and avarice have made such ghastly strides. They always did exist, but were gentler. My youth is waning, and has been nigh upon these seven years, I being now in my forty-eighth.

Shakspeare. I have understood that the god of poetry is in the enjoyment of eternal youth; I was ignorant that his sons were.

Sir Thomas. No, child; we are hale and comely, but must go the way of all flesh.

Shakspeare. Must it, can it be?

Sir Thomas. Time was, my smallest gifts were acceptable, as thus recorded: —

From my fair hand, oh will ye, will ye
Deign humbly to accept a gilly-
    Flower for thy bosom, sugared maid?

Scarce had I said it, ere she took it,
And in a twinkling, faith! had stuck it
    Where e'en proud knighthood might have laid.

— William was now quite unable to contain himself, and seemed utterly to have forgotten the grievous charge against him, to such a pitch did his joy o'erleap his jeopardy.

Master Silas, in the mean time was much disquieted; and

first did he strip away all the white feather from every pen in the ink-pot, and then did he mend them, one and all, and then did he slit them with his thumb-nail, and then did he pare and slash away at them again, and then did he cut off the tops; until at last he left upon them neither nib nor plume, nor enough of the middle to serve as quill to a virginal. It went to my heart to see such a power of pens so wasted, — there could not be fewer than five. Sir Thomas was less wary than usual, being overjoyed; for great poets do mightily affect to have little poets under them, and little poets do forget themselves in great company, — as fiddlers do, who *hail-fellow-well-met* even with Lords.

Sir Thomas did not interrupt our Bill's wild gladness. I never thought so worshipful a personage could bear so much. At last he said unto the lad: "I do bethink me if thou hearest much more of my poetry and the success attendant thereon, good Dr. Glaston would tear thy skirt off ere he could drag thee back from the occupation."

Shakspeare. I fear me, for once, all his wisdom would sluice out in vain.

Sir Thomas. It was reported to me that when our virgin Queen's Highness (her Dear Dread's[1] ear not being then poisoned) heard these verses, she said before her courtiers, to the sore travail of some and heart's content of others, "We need not envy our young cousin James of Scotland his ass's bite of a thistle, having such flowers as these gilliflowers on the chimney-stacks of Charlecote." I could have told her Highness that all this poetry, from beginning to end, was real matter of fact, well and truly spoken by mine own self. I had only to harness the rhymes thereunto, at my leisure.

Shakspeare. None could ever doubt it. Greeks and Trojans may fight for the quince; neither shall have it —

While a Warwickshire lad
Is on earth to be had,
With a wand to wag
On a trusty nag.
He shall keep the lists
With cudgel or fists;
And black shall be whose eye
Looks evil on Lucy.

[1] Sir Thomas borrowed this expression from Spenser.

Sir Thomas. Nay, nay, nay! do not trespass too soon upon heroics. Thou seest thou canst not hold thy wind beyond eight lines. What wouldst thou do under the heavy mettle that should have wrought such wonders at Pavia, if thou findest these petards so troublesome in discharging? Surely the good doctor, had he entered at large on the subject, would have been very particular in urging this expostulation.

Shakspeare. Sir, to my mortification I must confess that I took to myself the counsel he was giving to another, — a young gentleman who from his pale face, his abstinence at table, his cough, his taciturnity, and his gentleness, seemed already more than half poet. To him did Dr. Glaston urge, with all his zeal and judgment, many arguments against the vocation; telling him that even in college he had few applauders, being the first and not the second or third, who always are more fortunate; reminding him that he must solicit and obtain much interest with men of rank and quality before he could expect their favor, and that without it the vein chilled, the nerve relaxed, and the poet was left at next door to the bellman. "In the coldness of the world," said he, "in the absence of ready friends and adherents to light thee upstairs to the richly tapestried chamber of the Muses, thy spirits will abandon thee, thy heart will sicken and swell within thee; overladen, thou wilt make, O Ethelbert! a slow and painful progress, and ere the door open, sink. Praise giveth weight unto the wanting, and happiness giveth elasticity unto the heavy. As the mightier streams of the unexplored world, America, run languidly in the night,[1] and await the sun on high to contend with him in strength and grandeur, so doth genius halt and pause in the thraldom of outspread darkness, and move onward with all his vigor then only when creative light and jubilant warmth surround him."

Ethelbert coughed faintly; a tinge of red the size of a rosebud colored the middle of his cheek, and yet he seemed not to be pained by the reproof. He looked fondly and affectionately at his teacher, who thus proceeded: —

"My dear youth, do not carry the stone of Sisyphus on thy shoulder to pave the way to disappointment. If thou writest but indifferent poetry, none will envy thee and some will praise

[1] Humboldt notices this.

thee; but Nature in her malignity hath denied unto thee a capacity for the enjoyment of such praise. In this she hath been kinder to most others than to thee: we know wherein she hath been kinder to thee than to most others. If thou writest good poetry, many will call it flat, many will call it obscure, many will call it inharmonious, — and some of these will speak as they think; for as in giving a feast to great numbers it is easier to possess the wine than to procure the cups, so happens it in poetry, — thou hast the beverage of thy own growth, but canst not find the recipients. What is simple and elegant to thee and me, to many an honest man is flat and sterile; what to us is an innocently sly allusion, to as worthy a one as either of us is dull obscurity; and that moreover which swims upon our brain, and which throbs against our temples, and which we delight in sounding to ourselves when the voice has done with it, touches their ear, and awakens no harmony in any cell of it. Rivals will run up to thee and call thee a plagiary; and rather than that proof should be wanting, similar words to some of thine will be thrown in thy teeth out of Leviticus and Deuteronomy.

"Do you desire calm studies, do you desire high thoughts, — penetrate into theology. What is nobler than to dissect and discern the opinions of the gravest men upon the subtlest matters? And what glorious victories are those over infidelity and scepticism? How much loftier, how much more lasting in their effects, than such as ye are invited unto by what this ingenious youth hath contemptuously and truly called

'The swaggering drum, and trumpet hoarse with rage.'

And what a delightful and edifying sight it is to see hundreds of the most able doctors, all stripped for the combat, each closing with his antagonist, and tugging and tearing, tooth and nail, to lay down and establish truths which have been floating in the air for ages, and which the lower order of mortals are forbidden to see, and commanded to embrace. And then the shouts of victory! and then the crowns of amaranth held over their heads by the applauding angels! Besides, these combats have other great and distinct advantages. Whereas in the carnal, the longer ye contend the more blows do ye receive, in these against Satan, the more fiercely and pertinaciously ye drive

at him the slacker do ye find him; every good hit makes him redden and rave with anger, but diminishes its effect.

"My dear friends, who would not enter a service in which he may give blows to his mortal enemy, and receive none; and in which not only the eternal gain is incalculable, but also the temporal at four-and-twenty may be far above the emolument of generals, who before the priest was born had bled profusely for their country, established her security, brightened her glory, and augmented her dominions?"

— At this pause did Sir Thomas turn unto Sir Silas, and asked, "What sayest thou, Silas?"

Whereupon did Sir Silas make answer: "I say it is so, and was so, and should be so, and shall be so. If the queen's brother had not sopped the priests and bishops out of the Catholic cup, they could have held the Catholic cup in their own hands, instead of yielding it into his. They earned their money: if they sold their consciences for it, the business is theirs, not ours. I call this facing the Devil with a vengeance. We have their coats, no matter who made 'em; we have 'em, I say, and we will wear 'em; and not a button, tag, or tassel, shall any man tear away."

Sir Thomas then turned to Willy, and requested him to proceed with the doctor's discourse, who thereupon continued:

"'Within your own recollection, how many good, quiet, inoffensive men, unendowed with any extraordinary abilities, have been enabled, by means of divinity, to enjoy a long life in tranquillity and affluence?'

"Whereupon did one of the young gentlemen smile, and on small encouragement from Dr. Glaston to enounce the cause thereof, he repeated these verses, which he gave afterward unto me: —

"'In the names on our books
Was standing Tom Flooke's,
Who took in due time his degrees;
Which when he had taken,
Like Ascham or Bacon,
By night he could snore, and by day he could sneeze.

"'Calm, pithy, pragmatical,[1]
Tom Flooke he could at a call

[1] "Pragmatical" here means only "precise."

Rise up like a hound from his sleep;
And if many a quarto
He gave not his heart to,
If pellucid in lore, in his cups he was deep.

"'He never did harm,
And his heart might be warm,
For his doublet most certainly was so:
And now has Tom Flooke
A quieter nook
Than ever had Spenser or Tasso.

"'He lives in his house
As still as a mouse
Until he has eaten his dinner;
But then doth his nose
Outroar all the woes
That encompass the death of a sinner.

"'And there oft has been seen
No less than a dean
To tarry a week in the parish,
In October and March,
When deans are less starch,
And days are less gleamy and garish.

"'That Sunday Tom's eyes
Looked alway more wise,
He repeated more often his text;
Two leaves stuck together
(The fault of the weather),
And—*the rest ye shall hear in my next.*

"'At mess he lost quite
His small appetite,
By losing his friend the good dean:
The cook's sight must fail her!
The eggs sure are staler!
The beef too! Why, what can it mean?

"'He turned off the butcher;
To the cook, could he clutch her,
What his choler had done there's no saying—
'T is verily said
He smote low the cock's head,
And took other pullets for laying.'"

"On this being concluded, Dr. Glaston said he shrewdly suspected an indigestion on the part of Mr. Thomas Flooke, caused by sitting up late and studying hard with Mr. Dean; and he protested that theology itself should not carry us into

the rawness of the morning air, particularly in such critical months as March and October, in one of which the sap rises, in the other sinks, and there are many stars very sinister."

— Sir Thomas shook his head, and declared he would not be uncharitable to rector or dean or doctor, but that certain surmises swam uppermost. He then winked at Master Silas, who said incontinently, —

"You have it, Sir Thomas! The blind buzzards, with their stars and saps!"

"Well, but Silas, you yourself have told us over and over again, in church, that there are *arcana*."

"So there are; I uphold it!" replied Master Silas; "but a fig for the greater part, and a fig-leaf for the rest! As for these signs, they are as plain as any page in the Revelation."

Sir Thomas, after short pondering, said scoffingly: "In regard to the rawness of the air having any effect whatsoever on those who discourse orthodoxically on theology, it is quite as absurd as to imagine that a man ever caught cold in a Protestant church. I am rather of opinion that it was a judgment on the rector for his evil-mindedness toward the cook, the Lord foreknowing that he was about to be wilful and vengeful in that quarter. It was however more advisedly that he took other pullets, on his own view of the case, although it might be that the same pullets would suit him again as well as ever when his appetite should return; for it doth not appear that they were loath to lay, but laid somewhat unsatisfactorily.

"Now, youth," continued his worship, "if in our clemency we should spare thy life, study this higher elegiacal strain which thou hast carried with thee from Oxford; it containeth, over and above an unusual store of biography, much sound moral doctrine for those who are heedful in the weighing of it. And what can be more affecting than —

'At mess he lost quite
His small appetite,
By losing his friend the good dean'?

And what an insight into character! Store it up, store it up! *Small appetite*, particular; *good dean*, generic."

Hereupon did Master Silas jerk me with his indicative joint, the elbow to wit, and did say in my ear: "He means *deanery*.

Give me one of those bones so full of marrow, and let my lord bishop have all the meat over it and welcome. If a dean is not on his stilts, he is not on his stumps; he stands on his own ground, — he is a *noli-me-tangeretarian.*"

"What art thou saying of those sectaries, good Master Silas?" quoth Sir Thomas, not hearing him distinctly.

"I was talking of the dean," replied Master Silas. "He was the very dean who wrote and sang that song called the 'Two Jacks.'"

"Hast it?" asked he.

Master Silas shook his head, and trying in vain to recollect it, said at last, "After dinner it sometimes pops out of a filbert-shell in a crack; and I have known it float on the first glass of Herefordshire cider. It also hath some affinity with very stiff and old bottled beer; but in a morning it seemeth unto me like a remnant of over-night."

"Our memory waneth, Master Silas," quoth Sir Thomas, looking seriously. "If thou couldst repeat it, without the grimace of singing, it were not ill."

Master Silas struck the table with his fist, and repeated the first stave angrily; but in the second he forgot the admonition of Sir Thomas, and did sing outright, —

"Jack Calvin and Jack Cade,
Two gentles of one trade, —
Two tinkers, —
Very gladly would pull down
Mother Church and Father Crown,
And would starve or would drown
Right thinkers.

Honest man! honest man!
Fill the can, fill the can,
They are coming! they are coming! they are coming!
If any drop be left,
It might tempt 'em to a theft —
Zooks! 't was only the ale that was humming."

"In the first stave, gramercy! there is an awful verity," quoth Sir Thomas; "but I wonder that a dean should let his skewer slip out and his fat catch fire so wofully in the second. Light stuff, Silas, fit only for ale-houses."

Master Silas was nettled in the nose, and answered, "Let

me see the man in Warwickshire, and in all the counties round, who can run at such a rate with so light a feather in the palm of his hand. I am no poet, thank God! but I know what folks can do, and what folks cannot do."

"Well, Silas," replied Sir Thomas, "after thy thanksgiving for being no poet, let us have the rest of the piece."

"The rest!" quoth Master Silas. "When the ale hath done with its humming, it is time, methinks, to dismiss it. Sir, there never was any more: you might as well ask for more after Amen or the See of Canterbury."

Sir Thomas was dissatisfied, and turned off the discourse; and peradventure he grew more inclined to be gracious unto Willy from the slight rub his chaplain had given him, were it only for the contrariety. When he had collected his thoughts, he was determined to assert his supremacy on the score of poetry.

"Deans, I perceive, like other quality," said he, "cannot run on long together. My friend, Sir Everard Starkeye, could never over-leap four bars. I remember but one composition of his, on a young lady who mocked at his inconsistency in calling her sometimes his Grace and at other times his Muse, —

'My Grace shall Fanny Carew be,
While here she deigns to stay;
And (ah, how sad the change for me!)
My Muse when far away!'

And when we laughed at him for turning his back upon her after the fourth verse, all he could say for himself was, that he would rather a game at *all fours* with Fanny, than *ombre* and *picquet* with the finest furbelows in Christendom. Men of condition do usually want a belt in the course."

Whereunto said Master Silas, "Men out of condition are quite as liable to lack it, methinks."

"Silas, Silas," replied the knight, impatiently, "prythee keep to thy divinity, thy stronghold upon Zion; thence none that faces thee can draw thee without being bitten to the bone. Leave poetry to me!"

"With all my heart," quoth Master Silas; "I will never ask a belt from her, until I see she can afford to give a shirt. She has promised a belt indeed, not one however that doth much

improve the wind to this lad here, and will keep her word; but she was forced to borrow the pattern from a Carthusian friar, and somehow it slips above the shoulder."

"I am by no means sure of that," quoth Sir Thomas. "He shall have fair play. He carrieth in his mind many valuable things, whereof it hath pleased Providence to ordain him the depositary. He hath laid before us certain sprigs of poetry from Oxford trim as pennyroyal, and larger leaves of household divinity the most mildly-savored, — pleasant in health, and wholesome in sickness."

"I relish not such mutton-broth divinity," said Master Silas. "It makes me sick in order to settle my stomach."

"We may improve it," said the knight; "but first let us hear more."

Then did William Shakspeare resume Dr. Glaston's discourse.

"'Ethelbert, I think thou walkest but little; otherwise I should take thee with me, some fine fresh morning, as far as unto the first hamlet on the Cherwell. There lies young Wellerby, who the year before was wont to pass many hours of the day poetizing amid the ruins of Godstow nunnery. It is said that he bore a fondness toward a young maiden in that place, — formerly a village, now containing but two old farm-houses. In my memory there were still extant several dormitories. Some love-sick girl had recollected an ancient name, and had engraven on a stone with a garden-nail, which lay in rust near it, —

POORE ROSAMUND.

I entered these precincts, and beheld a youth of manly form and countenance washing and wiping a stone with a handful of wet grass; and on my going up to him and asking what he had found, he showed it to me. The next time I saw him was near the banks of the Cherwell. He had tried, it appears, to forget or overcome his foolish passion, and had applied his whole mind unto study. He was foiled by his competitor; and now he sought consolation in poetry. Whether this opened the wounds that had closed in his youthful breast, and malignant Love in his revenge poisoned it; or whether the disappointment he had experienced in finding others preferred

to him, first in the paths of fortune, then in those of the muses, — he was thought to have died broken-hearted.

"'About half a mile from St. John's College is the termination of a natural terrace, with the Cherwell close under it, in some places bright with yellow and red flowers glancing and glowing through the stream, and suddenly in others dark with the shadows of many different trees, in broad overbending thickets, and with rushes spear-high, and party-colored flags.

"'After a walk in midsummer the immersion of our hands into the cool and closing grass is surely not the least among our animal delights. I was just seated, and the first sensation of rest vibrated in me gently, as though it were music to the limbs, when I discovered by a hollow in the herbage that another was near. The long meadow-sweet and blooming burnet half concealed from me him whom the earth was about to hide totally and forever. "Master Batchelor," said I, "it is ill sleeping by the water-side."

"'No answer was returned. I arose, went to the place, and recognized poor Wellerby. His brow was moist, his cheek was warm. A few moments earlier and that dismal lake whereunto and wherefrom the waters of life, the buoyant blood, ran no longer, might have received one vivifying ray reflected from my poor casement. I might not indeed have comforted, — I have often failed; but there is one who never has, and the strengthener of the bruised reed should have been with us.

"'Remembering that his mother did abide one mile farther on, I walked forward to the mansion, and asked her what tidings she lately had received of her son. She replied that, having given up his mind to light studies, the fellows of the college would not elect him. The master had warned him beforehand to abandon his selfish poetry, take up manfully the quarterstaff of logic and wield it for St. John's, come who would into the ring. "'We want our man,' said he to me, 'and your son hath failed us in the hour of need. Madam, he hath been foully beaten in the schools by one he might have swallowed, with due exercise.' I rated him, told him I was poor, and he knew it. He was stung, and threw himself upon my neck and wept. Twelve days have passed since, and only three rainy ones. I hear he has been seen upon the knoll

yonder, but hither he hath not come. I trust he knows at last the value of time, and I shall be heartily glad to see him after this accession of knowledge. Twelve days, it is true, are rather a chink than a gap in time; yet, O gentle sir, they are that chink which makes the vase quite valueless. There are light words which may never be shaken off the mind they fall on. My child, who was hurt by me, will not let me see the marks." "Lady," said I, "none are left upon him. Be comforted, thou shalt see him this hour. All that thy God hath not taken is yet thine."

"'She looked at me earnestly, and would have then asked something, but her voice failed her. There was no agony, no motion, save in the lips and cheeks. Being the widow of one who fought under Hawkins, she remembered his courage and sustained the shock, saying calmly, "God's will be done! I pray that he find me as worthy as he findeth me willing to join them."

"'Now, in her unearthly thoughts she had led her only son to the bosom of her husband; and in her spirit (which often is permitted to pass the gates of death with holy love) she left them both with their Creator.

"'The curate of the village sent those who should bring home the body; and some days afterward he came unto me, beseeching me to write the epitaph. Being no friend to stone-cutter's charges, I entered not into biography, but wrote these few words: —

JOANNES WELLERBY
LITERARUM QUÆSIVIT GLORIAM,
VIDET DEI.'"

"Poor tack, poor tack!" sourly quoth Master Silas. "If your wise doctor could say nothing more about the fool, who died like a rotten sheep among the darnels, his Latin might have held out for the father, and might have told people he was as cool as a cucumber at home, and as hot as pepper in battle. Could he not find room enough on the whinstone to tell the folks of the village how he played the devil among the dons, burning their fingers when they would put thumbscrews upon us, punching them in the weasand as a blacksmith punches a horse-shoe, and throwing them overboard like bilgewater?

Has Oxford lost all her Latin? Here is no *capitani filius;* no more mention of family than a Welshman would have allowed him; no *hic jacet;* and, worse than all, the devil a tittle of *spe redemptionis* or *anno Domini*."

"Willy," quoth Sir Thomas, "I shrewdly do suspect there was more, and that thou hast forgotten it."

"Sir," answered Willy, "I wrote not down the words, fearing to mis-spell them, and begged them of the doctor when I took my leave of him on the morrow; and verily he wrote down all he had repeated. I keep them always in the tin-box in my waistcoat-pocket, among the eel-hooks, on a scrap of paper a finger's length and breadth, folded in the middle to fit. And when the eels are running, I often take it out and read it before I am aware. I could as soon forget my own epitaph as this."

"Simpleton!" said Sir Thomas, with his gentle compassionate smile; "but thou hast cleared thyself."

Sir Silas. I think the doctor gave one idle chap as much solid pudding as he could digest, with a slice to spare for another.

Shakspeare. And yet after this pudding the doctor gave him a spoonful of custard, flavored with a little bitter, which was mostly left at the bottom for the other idle chap.

— Sir Thomas not only did endure this very good-naturedly, but deigned even to take in good part the smile upon my countenance, as though he were a smile-collector, and as though his estate were so humble that he could hold his laced-bonnet (in all his bravery) for bear and fiddle.

He then said unto Willy, "Place likewise this custard before us."

"There is but little of it; the platter is shallow," replied he; "'t was suited to Master Ethelbert's appetite. The contents were these: —

"'The things whereon thy whole soul brooded in its innermost recesses, and with all its warmth and energy, will pass unprized and unregarded, not only throughout thy lifetime, but long after. For the higher beauties of poetry are beyond the capacity, beyond the vision, of almost all. Once perhaps in half a century a single star is discovered, then named and registered, then mentioned by five studious men to five more;

at last some twenty say, or repeat in writing, what they have heard about it. Other stars await other discoveries. Few and solitary, and wide asunder, are those who calculate their relative distances, their mysterious influences, their glorious magnitude, and their stupendous height. 'T is so, believe me, and ever was so, with the truest and best poetry. Homer, they say, was blind: he might have been ere he died. That he sat among the blind we are sure. Happy they who, like this young lad from Stratford, write poetry on the saddle-bow when their geldings are jaded, and keep the desk for better purposes.'

"The young gentlemen, like the elderly, all turned their faces toward me, to my confusion, so much did I remark of sneer and scoff at my cost. Master Ethelbert was the only one who spared me. He smiled and said: 'Be patient! From the higher heavens of poetry, it is long before the radiance of the brightest star can reach the world below. We hear that one man finds out one beauty, another man finds out another, placing his observatory and instruments on the poet's grave. The worms must have eaten us before it is rightly known what we are. It is only when we are skeletons that we are boxed and ticketed and prized and shown. Be it so! I shall not be tired of waiting.'"

"Reasonable youth!" said Sir Thomas; "yet both he and Glaston walk rather *a-straddle*, methinks. They might have stepped up to thee more straightforwardly, and told thee the trade ill suiteth thee, having little fire, little fantasy, and little learning. Furthermore that one poet, as one bull, sufficeth for two parishes; and that where they are stuck too close together they are apt to fire, like hay-stacks. I have known it myself; I have had my malignants and scoffers."

Shakspeare. I never could have thought it.

Sir Thomas. There again! Another proof of thy inexperience.

Shakspeare. Matt Atterend! Matt Atterend! where wert thou sleeping?

Sir Thomas. I shall now from my own stores impart unto thee what will avail to tame thee, showing the utter hopelessness of standing on that golden weathercock which supporteth but one at a time.

The passion for poetry wherewith Monsieur Dubois would

have inspired me, as he was bound to do, being paid beforehand, had cold water thrown upon it by that unlucky one, Sir Everard. He ridiculed the idea of male and female rhymes, and the necessity of trying them as rigidly by the eye as by the ear, — saying to Monsieur Dubois that the palate, in which the French excel all mortals, ought also to be consulted in their acceptance or rejection. Monsieur Dubois told us that if we did not wish to be taught French verse, he would teach us English. Sir Everard preferred the Greek; but Monsieur Dubois would not engage to teach the mysteries of that poetry in fewer than thirty lessons, having (since his misfortunes) forgotten the letters and some other necessaries.

The first poem I ever wrote was in the character of a shepherd, to Mistress Anne Nanfan, daughter of Squire Fulke Nanfan, of Worcestershire, at that time on a visit to the worshipful family of Compton at Long Compton. We were young creatures, — I but twenty-four and seven months (for it was written on the 14th of May), and she well-nigh upon a twelvemonth younger. My own verses (the first) are neither here nor there; indeed they were imbedded in solid prose, like lampreys and ram's-horns in our limestone, and would be hard to get out whole. What they are may be seen by her answer, all in verse: —

Faithful shepherd! dearest Tommy!
I have received the letter from ye,
And mightily delight therein.
But mother, *she* says, "Nanny! Nanny!
How, being staid and prudent, can ye
Think of a man, and not of sin?"

Sir Shepherd! I held down my head,
And "*Mother! fie for shame!*" I said.
All I could say would not content her;
Mother she would forever harp on 't,
A man 's no better than a sarpent,
And not a crumb more innocenter."

I know not how it happeneth, but a poet doth open before a poet, albeit of baser sort. It is not that I hold my poetry to be better than some other in time past; it is because I would show thee that I was virtuous and wooed virtuously, that I repeat it. Furthermore, I wished to leave a deep impression on the mother's mind that she was exceedingly wrong in doubting my innocence.

Shakspeare. Gracious Heaven ! and was this too doubted ?

Sir Thomas. May be not ; but the whole race of men, the whole male sex, wanted and found in me a protector. I showed her what I was ready to do.

Shakspeare. Perhaps, sir, it was for that very thing that she put the daughter back and herself forward.

Sir Thomas. I say not so, but thou mayest know as much as befitteth, by what follows : —

Worshipful lady ! honored madam !
I at this present truly glad am
    To have so fair an opportunity
Of saying I would be the man
To bind in wedlock Mistress Anne,
    Living with her in holy unity.

And for a jointure I will gi'e her
A good two hundred pounds a-year •
    Accruing from my landed rents,
Whereof see t'other paper, telling
Lands, copses, and grown woods for felling,
    Capons, and cottage tenements, —

And who must come at sound of horn,
And who pays but a barley-corn,
    And who is bound to keep a whelp,
And what is brought me for the pound,
And copyholders which are sound,
    And which do need the leech's help.

And you may see in these two pages
Exact their illnesses and ages,
    Enough (God willing) to content ye :
Who looks full red, who looks full yellow,
Who plies the mullein, who the mallow,
    Who fails at fifty, who at twenty.

Jim Yates must go ! He 's one day very hot
And one day ice ; I take a heriot ;
    And poorly, poorly 's Jacob Burgess :
The doctor tells me he has poured
Into his stomach half his hoard
    Of anthelminticals and purges.

Judith, the wife of Ebenezer
Fillpots, won't have him long to tease her ;
    Fillpots blows hot and cold like Jim,
And, sleepless lest the boys should plunder
His orchard, he must soon knock under ;
    Death has been looking out for him.

He blusters; but his good yard-land
Under the church, his ale-house, and
    His Bible, which he cut in spite,
Must all fall in; he stamps and swears
And sets his neighbors by the ears —
    Fillpots! thy saddle sits not tight!

Thy epitaph is ready: "*Here*
Lies one whom all his friends did fear
    More than they ever feared the Lord;
In peace he was at times a Christian;
In strife what stubborner Philistian!
    Sing, sing his psalm with one accord."

And the brave lad who sent the bluff
Olive-faced Frenchman (sure enough)
    Screaming and scouring like a plover,
Must follow; him I mean who dashed
Into the water, and then thrashed
    The cullion past the town of Dover.

But first there goes the blear old dame
Who nursed me; you have heard her name
    (No doubt) at Compton, — Sarah Salways;
There are twelve groats at once, beside
The frying-pan in which she fried
    Her pancakes.

Madam, I am always (etc.),
Sir Thomas Lucy, Knight.

I did believe that such a clear and conscientious exposure of my affairs would have brought me a like return. My letter was sent back to me with small courtesy. It may be there was no paper in the house, or none equalling mine in whiteness. No notice was taken of the rent-roll; but between the second and third stanza these four lines were written, in a very fine hand: —

"Most honored knight, Sir Thomas! two
For merry Nan will never do;
Now, under favor let me say 't,
She will bring more herself than that."

I have reason to believe that the worthy lady did neither write nor countenance the same, perhaps did not ever know of them. She always had at her elbow one who jogged it when he listed, and although he could not overrule the daughter, he took especial care that none other should remove her from his tutelage, even when she had fairly grown up to woman's estate.

Now, after all this condescension and confidence, promise me, good lad, promise that thou wilt not edge and elbow me. Never let it be said, when people say, "Sir Thomas was a poet when he willed it; so is Bill Shakspeare!" It beseemeth not that our names do go together cheek by jowl in this familiar fashion, like an old beagle and a whelp, in couples, where if the one would, the other would not.

Sir Silas. Sir, while these thoughts are passing in your mind, remember there is another pair of couples out of which it would be as well to keep the cur's neck.

Sir Thomas. Young man, dost thou understand Master Silas?

Shakspeare. But too well. Not those couples in which it might be apprehended that your worship and my unworthiness should appear too close together; but those sorrowfuller which peradventure might unite Master Silas and me in our road to Warwick and upward. But I resign all right and title unto these as willingly as I did unto the other, and am as ready to let him go alone.

Sir Silas. If we keep wheeling and wheeling, like a flock of pigeons, and rising again when we are within a foot of the ground, we shall never fill the craw.

Sir Thomas. Do thou then question him, Silas.

Sir Silas. I am none of the quorum; the business is none of mine.

—Then Sir Thomas took Master Silas again into the bay-window, and said softly, "Silas, he hath no inkling of thy meaning; the business is a ticklish one; I like not overmuch to meddle and make therein."

Master Silas stood dissatisfied awhile, and then answered, "The girl's mother, sir, was housemaid and sempstress in your own family, time back, and you thereby have a right over her unto the third and fourth generation."

"I may have, Silas," said his worship; "but it was no longer than four or five years agone that folks were fain to speak maliciously of me for only finding my horse in her hovel."

Sir Silas looked red and shiny as a ripe strawberry on a Snitterfield tile, and answered somewhat peevishly, "The same folks, I misgive me, may find the rogue's there any night in the week."

Whereunto replied Sir Thomas mortifiedly, "I cannot think it, Silas, I cannot think it." And after some hesitation and disquiet, — "Nay, I am resolved I will not think it; no man, friend or enemy, shall push it into me."

"Worshipful sir," answered Master Silas, "I am as resolute as any one in what I would think and what I would not think, and never was known to fight dunghill in either cockpit. Were he only out of the way, she might do her duty; but what doth she now? She points his young beard for him, persuading him it grows thicker and thicker, blacker and blacker; she washes his ruff, stiffens it, plaits it, tries it upon his neck, removes the hair from under it, pinches it with thumb and forefinger, pretending that he hath moiled it, puts her hand all the way round it, *setting it to rights*, as she calleth it — Ah, Sir Thomas, a louder whistle than that will never call her back again when she is off with him."

Sir Thomas was angered, and cried tartly, "Who whistled, I would know?"

Master Silas said submissively, "Your honor, as wrongfully I fancied."

"Wrongfully, indeed, and to my no small disparagement and discomfort," said the knight, verily believing that he had not whistled; for deep and dubious were his cogitations. "I protest," went he on to say, "I protest it was the wind of the casement; and if I live another year I will put a better in the place of it. Whistle, indeed! For what? I care no more about her than about an unfledged cygnet, — a child,[1] a chicken, a mere kitten, a crab-blossom in the hedge."

The dignity of his worship was wounded by Master Silas unaware, and his wrath again turned suddenly upon poor William: —

"Hark ye, knave! hark ye again, ill-looking stripling, lanky from vicious courses! I will reclaim thee from them; I will do what thy own father would and cannot. Thou shalt follow his business."

"I cannot do better, may it please your worship," said the lad.

[1] She was then twenty-eight years of age. Sir Thomas must have spoken of her from earlier recollections. Shakspeare was in his twentieth year.

"It shall lead thee unto wealth and respectability," said the knight, somewhat appeased by his ready compliancy and low gentle voice. "Yea, but not here; no witches, no wantons [this word fell gravely and at full length upon the ear], no spells hereabout. Gloucestershire is within a measured mile of thy dwelling. There is one at Bristol, formerly a parish-boy, or little better, who now writeth himself 'gentleman' in large round letters, and hath been elected, I hear, to serve as burgess in Parliament for his native city, — just as though he had eaten a capon or turkey-poult in his youth, and had actually been at grammar-school and college. When he began, he had not credit for a goat-skin; and now, behold ye! this very coat upon my back did cost me eight shillings the dearer for him, he bought up wool so largely."

Shakspeare. May it please your worship, if my father so ordereth, I go cheerfully.

Sir Thomas. Thou art grown discreet and dutiful. I am fain to command thy release, taking thy promise on oath, and some reasonable security, that thou wilt abstain and withhold in future from that idle and silly slut, that sly and scoffing giggler, Hannah Hathaway, with whom, to the heartache of thy poor worthy father, thou wantonly keepest company.

— Then did Sir Thomas ask Master Silas Gough for the Book of Life, bidding him deliver it into the right hand of Billy, with an eye upon him that he touch it with both lips, — it being taught by the Jesuits, and caught too greedily out of their society and communion, that whoso toucheth it with one lip only, and thereafter sweareth falsely, cannot be called a perjurer, since perjury is breaking an oath. But breaking half an oath, as he doth who toucheth the Bible or crucifix with one lip only, is no more perjury than breaking an eggshell is breaking an egg, the shell being a part, and the egg being an integral.

William did take the Holy Book with all due reverence the instant it was offered to his hand. His stature seemed to rise therefrom as from a pulpit, and Sir Thomas was quite edified.

"Obedient and conducible youth!" said he. "See there, Master Silas! What hast thou now to say against him? Who sees farthest?"

"The man from the gallows is the most likely, bating his

nightcap and blinker," said Master Silas, peevishly. "He hath not outwitted me yet."

"He seized upon the Anchor of Faith like a martyr," said Sir Thomas; "and even now his face burns red as elder-wine before the gossips."

Shakspeare. I await the further orders of your worship from the chair.

Sir Thomas I return and seat myself.

— And then did Sir Thomas say with great complacency and satisfaction in the ear of Master Silas, "What civility and deference and sedateness of mind, Silas!"

But Master Silas answered not.

Shakspeare. Must I swear, sir?

Sir Thomas. Yea, swear; be of good courage! I protest to thee, by my honor and knighthood, no ill shall come unto thee therefrom. Thou shalt not be circumvented in thy simpleness and inexperience.

— Willy, having taken the Book of Life, did kiss it piously, and did press it unto his breast, saying, "Tenderest love is the growth of my heart, as the grass is of Alvescote mead. May I lose my life or my friends, or my memory or my reason; may I be viler in my own eyes than those men are —"

Here he was interrupted most lovingly by Sir Thomas, who said unto him, "Nay, nay, nay! poor youth, do not tell me so! They are not such very bad men; since thou appealest unto Cæsar, — that is, unto the judgment-seat."

Now, his worship did mean the two witnesses, Joseph and Euseby; and, sooth to say, there be many worse. But William had them not in his eye; his thoughts were elsewhere, as will be evident, for he went on thus: —

"— if ever I forget or desert thee, or ever cease to worship[1] and cherish thee, my Hannah!"

Sir Silas. The madman! the audacious, desperate, outrageous villain! Look ye, sir, where he flung the Holy Gospel! Behold it on the holly and box-boughs in the chimney-place, spreaden all abroad, like a lad about to be whipped!

[1] It is to be feared that his taste for venison outlasted that for matrimony, spite of this vow.

Sir Thomas. Miscreant knave! I will send after him forthwith! Ho, there! is the caitiff at hand, or running off?

—Jonas Greenfield the butler did budge forward after a while, and say, on being questioned, "Surely, that was he! Was his nag tied to the iron gate at the lodge, Master Silas?"

"What should I know about a thief's nag, Jonas Greenfield?"

"And didst thou let him go, Jonas, even thou?" said Sir Thomas. "What, are none found faithful?"

"Lord love your worship!" said Jonas Greenfield; "a man of threescore and two may miss catching a kite upon wing. Fleetness doth not make folks the faithfuller, or that youth yonder beats us all in faithfulness. Look, he darts on like a greyhound whelp after a leveret. He, sure enough, it was! I now remember the sorrel mare his father bought of John Kinderley last Lammas, swift as he threaded the trees along the park. He must have reached Wellesbourne ere now at that gallop, and pretty nigh Walton-hill."

Sir Thomas. Merciful Christ! grant the country be rid of him forever! What dishonor upon his friends and native town! A reputable wool-stapler's son turned gypsy and poet for life.

Sir Silas. A Beelzebub! he spake as bigly and fiercely as a soaken yeoman at an election feast,—this obedient and conducible youth!

Sir Thomas. It was so written. Hold thy peace, Silas!

Post-Scriptum

BY ME, EPHRAIM BARNETT.

TWELVE days are over and gone since William Shakspeare did leave our parts. And the spinster, Hannah Hathaway, is in sad doleful plight about him; forasmuch as Master Silas Gough went yesterday unto her, in her mother's house at Shottery, and did desire both her and her mother to take heed and be admonished that if ever she, Hannah, threw away one thought after the runagate William Shakspeare, he should swing.

The girl could do nothing but weep; while as the mother did give her solemn promise that her daughter should never more think about him all her natural life, reckoning from the moment of this her promise.

And the maiden, now growing more reasonable, did promise the same. But Master Silas said, "I doubt you will, though."

"No," said the mother, "I answer for her she shall not think of him, even if she sees his ghost."

Hannah screamed and swooned, the better to forget him. And Master Silas went home easier and contenteder. For now all the worst of his hard duty was accomplished; he having been, on the Wednesday of last week, at the speech of Master John Shakspeare, Will's father, to inquire whether the sorrel mare was his. To which question the said Master John Shakspeare did answer, "Yea."

"Enough said!" rejoined Master Silas. "Horse-stealing is capital. We shall bind thee over to appear against the culprit, as prosecutor, at the next assizes."

May the Lord in his mercy give the lad a good deliverance, if so be it be no sin to wish it!

OCTOBER 1, A. D. 1582.
LAUS DEO.
E. B.

MINOR PROSE PIECES.

MINOR PROSE PIECES.

I. OPINIONS ON CÆSAR, CROMWELL, MILTON, AND BONAPARTE.

No person has a better right than Lord Brougham to speak contemptuously of Cæsar, of Cromwell, and of Milton. Cæsar was the purest and most Attic writer of his country, and there is no trace of intemperance, in thought or expression, throughout the whole series of his hostilities. He was the most generous friend, he was the most placable enemy; he rose with moderation, and he fell with dignity. Can we wonder then at Lord Brougham's unfeigned antipathy and assumed contempt? Few well-educated men are less able to deliver a sound opinion of style than his lordship; and perhaps there are not many of our contemporaries who place a just value on Cæsar's, dissimilar as it is in all its qualities to what they turn over on the sofa-table. There is calmness, there is precision, there is a perspicuity which shows objects in their proper size and position; there is strength without strain, and superiority without assertion. I acknowledge my preference of his style, and he must permit me to add Cicero's, to that which he considers the best of all, — namely, his own; and he must pardon me if I entertain an early predilection for easy humor over hard vulgarity, and for graceful irony over intractable distortion. I was never an admirer, even in youth, of those abrupt and splintery sentences which, like many coarse substances, sparkle only when they are broken, and are looked at only for their sharpnesses and inequalities.

Cæsar and Cromwell are hung up in the same wicker basket, as an offering to the warrior God of our formidable Celt's idol-

atry. Cromwell was destitute of all those elegancies which adorned the Roman dictator, but he alone possessed in an equal degree all those which insure the constancy of Fortune. Both were needful, — one against an unjust and reckless aristocracy whose leader had declared that he would follow up the steps of Sulla, and cover the fields of Italy with slaughter; the other, to rescue the most religious and most conscientious of his countrymen from the persecution of an unchristian and intolerant episcopacy, and the bravest friends of ancient freedom from torture, from mutilation, and from solitude and death in pestilential jails. Were such the deeds of Charles? Yes; but before an infallible Church had commanded us to worship him among the martyrs. Among? no, not among, — above, and to the exclusion of all the rest. This was wanting as the finishing stroke of our Reformation. And was Cromwell then pure? Certainly not; but he began in sincerity, and he believed to the last that every accession of power was an especial manifestation of God's mercy. Fanaticism hath always drawn to herself such conclusions from the Bible. Power made him less pious, but more confident. God had taken him by the hand at first, and had now let him walk by himself: to show how he could walk, he strode. Religion, in the exercise of power, is more arbitrary, more intolerant, and more cruel than monarchy; and the sordid arrogance of Presbyterianism succeeded to the splendid tyranny of Episcopacy. The crozier of Laud was unbroken; those who had been the first in cursing it, seized and exercised it: it was to fall in pieces under the sword of Cromwell. To him alone are we indebted for the establishment of religious liberty. If a Vane and a Milton have acknowledged the obligation, how feeble were the voices of all men living, if the voices of all men living were raised against it. Of our English rulers Oliver holds the next place to Alfred; and it would be unjust and ignominious to station him merely on a level with the most intelligent, the most energetic, and the most patriotic of succeeding kings. He did indeed shed blood; but the blood he shed was solely for his country, although without it he never would have risen to the Protectorate. The same cannot be said of Cæsar; nor of that extraordinary personage whom some of his flatterers place beside, and some before him.

The first campaigns of Bonaparte were admirably conducted, and honor and glory in the highest degree are due to him for abstaining from the plunder of Italy. It would be ungenerous to seize the obvious idea that by his vivid imagination he probably saw in the land of his forefathers his future realm, without any such hope regarding France, and was desirous of winning those golden opinions which bear so high an interest. But Egypt seems to be the country in which the renown of conquerors is destined to be tarnished. The latent vices of the Persian, of the Macedonian, of Pompey, of Julius, of Antonius, of Octavius, shot up here and brought forth fruits after their kind. It was here also that the eagle eye of Bonaparte was befilmed; here forty thousand of the best troops in the world were defeated under his guidance, and led captive after his desertion. He lost Hayti, which he attempted to recover by force; he lost Spain, which he attempted to seize by perfidy. And what generosity or what policy did he display with Toussaint l'Ouverture, or with Ferdinand? Imprisonment and a miserable death befell the braver. Is there a human heart that swells not at the deliberate murder of the intrepid and blameless Hofer? I say nothing of Palm; I say nothing of D'Enghein: even in such atoms as these he found room enough for the perpetration of a crime. They had indeed friends to mourn for them, but they were not singly worth whole nations; their voices did not breathe courage into ten thousand breasts; children were not carried into churches to hear their names uttered with God's. If they had virtues, those virtues perished with them: Hofer's will ring eternally on every mountain and irradiate every mine of Tyrol; Universal Man, domestic, political, and religious, will be the better for him. When he was led to slaughter in Mantua, some of those Italian soldiers who had followed Bonaparte in his earliest victories shed tears. The French themselves, from the drummer on the platform to the governor in the citadel, thought of the cause that first united them in arms, and knew that it was Hofer's. Bonaparte could no more pardon bravery in his enemy than cowardice in his soldier. No expression was too virulent for Hofer, for Sir Sydney Smith, or for any who had foiled him; he spoke contemptuously of Kleber, maliciously of Hoche; he could not even refrain from an unmanly triumph on the death of the weak

Moreau. If this is greatness, he certainly did not inherit it from any great man on record. Sympathy with men at large is not among their attributes, but sympathy with the courageous and enterprising may be found in all of them, and sometimes a glance has fallen from them so low as on the tomb of the unfortunate. The inhumanity of Napoleon was certainly not dictated by policy, whose dictates, rightly understood, never point in that direction. It is unnecessary to discuss what instruction he received in his military school, after which he had small leisure for any unconnected with his profession. And so little was his regard for literature in others, that he drove out of France the only person in that country[1] who had attained any eminence in it. His "Catechism" was adapted to send back the rising generation to the Middle Ages.

But let us consider that portion of his policy which he studied most, and on which he would have founded his power and looked forward to the establishment of his dynasty. He repudiated the woman who attached to him the best of all parties, by the sweetness of her temper and the activity of her beneficence; and he married into the only family proscribed by the prejudices of his nation. He soon grew restless with peace, and uneasy under the weight of his acquisitions. No public man, not Pitt himself, ever squandered such prodigious means so unprofitably. Anxious to aggrandize his family, could he not have given the whole of Italy to one brother, leaving Spain as his privy purse in the hands of its imbecile Bourbon? Could he not have given Poland and Polish Prussia to the King of Saxony, and have placed an eternal barrier between France and Russia? The Saxon dominions, with Prussian Silesia, would have recompensed Austria for the session of the Venetian territories on the West of the Tagliamento. I do not suggest these practicabilities as fair dealings toward nations: I suggest them only as suitable to the interests of Napoleon, who shook and threw nations as another gamester shakes and throws dice. Germany should have been broken up into its old Hanse towns and small principalities.

With such arrangements, all feasible at one time or other, France would have been unassailable. Instead of which, her ruler fancied it necessary to make an enemy of Russia. Had

[1] Madame de Staël.

it been so, he might have profited by the experience of all who had ever invaded the interior of that country. The extremities of the Muscovite empire are easily broken off, by lying at so great a distance from the trunk; added to which, they all are grafts, imperfectly granulated on an uncongenial stock, and with the rush-bound cement fresh and friable about them. Moscow never could be long retained by any hostile forces; subsistence would be perpetually cut off and carried away from them by hostile tribes, assailing and retreating as necessity might demand, and setting fire to the harvests and the forests. The inhabitants of that city, especially the commercial body and the ancient nobility, would have rejoiced at the demolition of Petersburg which nothing could prevent, the ports of the Baltic being in the hands of Bonaparte, and Dantzic containing stores of every kind, sufficient for an army the most numerous that ever marched upon the earth. For the Asiatic have contained, in all ages, less than a fifth of fighting men, the rest being merchants, husbandmen, drovers, artisans, and other followers of the camp. The stores had been conveyed by the coast, instead of employing two-thirds of the cavalry; and the King of Sweden had been invited to take possession of a fortress (for city there would have been none) protecting a province long under his crown, and reluctantly torn away from it. No man ever yet obtained the lasting renown of a consummate general who committed the same mistakes as had been committed in the same position by those before him; who suffered great reverses by great improvidence; who never rose up again after one discomfiture; or who led forth army upon army fruitlessly. Napoleon, in the last years of his sovereignty, fought without aim, vanquished without glory, and perished without defeat.

Did Gustavus Adolphus, did Frederick, did Washington, ever experience a great reverse by committing a great imprudence? For on this main question rests the solid praise of generalship. Bonaparte, after affronting every potentate of every dimension by the rudeness of his nature and the insolence of his domination, left to every one of them sufficient power to retaliate. Surely, he must have read his Machiavelli upside-down! A king should never be struck unless in a vital part. Cromwell, with many scruples, committed not this mistake; Bonaparte, with none, committed it. The shadow of Cromwell's name

overawed the most confident and haughty. He intimidated Holland, he humiliated Spain, and he twisted the supple Mazarine, the ruler of France, about his finger. All those nations had then attained the summit of their prosperity; all were unfriendly to the rising power of England; all trembled at the authority of that single man who coerced at once her aristocracy, her priesthood, and her factions. No agent of equal potency and equal moderation had appeared upon earth before. He walked into a den of lions, and scourged them growling out; Bonaparte was pushed into a menagerie of monkeys, and fainted at their grimaces. His brother's bell and Oudinot's grenadiers frightened them off and saved him. Meteors look larger than fixed stars, and strike with more admiration the beholder. Those who know not what they are, call them preternatural. They venerate in Bonaparte what they would ridicule in a gypsy on the roadside, — his lucky and unlucky days, his ruling star, his ascendant. They bend over his emetic with gravity, and tell us that poison has no power over him. Nevertheless, the very men who owed their fortunes to him found him incompetent to maintain them in security. In the whole of Europe there was one single great man opposed to him, wanting all the means of subsistence for an army, and thwarted in all his endeavors by those for whose liberation he fought. His bugles on the Pyrenees dissolved the trance of Europe. He showed the world that military glory may be intensely bright without the assumption of sovereignty, and that history is best occupied with it when she merely transcribes his orders and despatches. Englishmen will always prefer the true and modest to the false and meretricious; and every experienced eye will estimate a Vatican fresco more highly than a staircase transparency. Rudeness, falsehood, malignity, and revenge have belonged in common to many great conquerors, but never to one great man. Cromwell had indulged in the least vile of these; but on his assumption of power he recollected that he was a gentleman. No burst of rage, no sally of ribaldry, no expression of contemptuousness, was ever heard from the Lord Protector. He could subdue or conciliate or spell-bind the master-spirits of his age; but it is a genius of a far different order that is to seize and hold futurity: it must be such a genius as Shakspeare's

or Milton's. No sooner was Cromwell in his grave, than all he had won for himself and for his country vanished.

If we must admire the successful, however brief and hollow the advantages of their success, our admiration is not due to those whose resources were almost inexhaustible, and which nothing but profligate imprudence could exhaust, but to those who resisted great forces with means apparently inadequate, — such as Kosciusko and Hofer, Hannibal and Sertorius, Alexander and Cæsar, Charles of Sweden and Frederick of Prussia. Above all these, and indeed above all princes, stands high Gustavus Adolphus, one of whose armies in the space of six weeks had seen the estuary of the Elbe and the steeples of Vienna; another, if a fever had not wasted it on the Lake of Como, would within less time have chanted Luther's Hymn in St. Peter's. But none of these potentates had attempted the downfall or the disgrace of England. Napoleon, on the contrary, stood at the head of that confederacy whose orators were consulting the interests of France in the British Parliament. He has left to the most turbulent and unprincipled of them a very memorable lesson. The schoolmaster is abroad in the guise of Bonaparte. He reminds them how, when his hands were full, they dropped what they held by grasping at what they could not hold; how he made enemies of those who might have been neutrals or friends; how he was driven out by weaker men than himself; and how he sank at last the unpitied victim of disappointed ambition. Lord Brougham will not allow us to contemplate greatness at our leisure; he will not allow us, indeed, to look at it for a moment. Cæsar must be stripped of all his laurels and left bald; or some rude soldier, with bemocking gestures, must be thrust before his triumph. If he fights, he does not know how to hold his sword; if he speaks, he speaks vile Latin. I wonder that Cromwell fares no better, if, signal as were his earlier services to his country, he lived a hypocrite and died a traitor. Milton is indeed less pardonable. He adhered, through good report and through evil report (and there was enough of both), to those who had asserted liberty of conscience, and who alone were able to maintain it.

But an angry cracked voice is now raised against that eloquence —

"Of which all Europe rang from side to side."

I shall make only a few remarks on Milton's English, and a few preliminary on the importance of style in general, which none understood better than he. The greater part of those who are most ambitious of it are unaware of all its value. Thought does not separate man from the brutes, — for the brutes think; but man alone thinks beyond the moment and beyond himself. Speech does not separate them, — for speech is common to all perhaps, more or less articulate, and conveyed and received through different organs in the lower and more inert. Man's thought, which seems imperishable, loses its form, and runs along from proprietor to impropriator, like any other transitory thing, unless it is invested so becomingly and nobly that no successor can improve upon it by any new fashion or combination. For want of dignity or beauty, many good things are passed and forgotten; and much ancient wisdom is overrun and hidden by a rampant verdure, succulent but unsubstantial. It would be invidious to bring forward proofs of this out of authors in poetry and prose, now living or lately dead. A distinction must, however, be made between what falls upon many like rain, and what is purloined from a cistern or a conduit belonging to another man's house. There are things which were another's before they were ours, and are not the less ours for that; not less than my estate is mine because it was my grandfather's. There are features, there are voices, there are thoughts, very similar in many; and when ideas strike the same chord in any two with the same intensity, the expression must be nearly the same. Let those who look upon style as unworthy of much attention, ask themselves how many, in proportion to men of genius, have excelled in it. In all languages, ancient and modern, are there ten prose-writers at once harmonious, correct, and energetic? Harmony and correctness are not uncommon separately, and force is occasionally with each; but where, excepting in Milton, where, among all the moderns, is energy to be found always in the right place? Even Cicero is defective here, and sometimes in the most elaborate of his orations. In the time of Milton it was not customary for men of abilities to address to the people at large what might inflame their passions; the appeal was made to the serious, to the well-informed, to the learned, and was made in the language of

their studies. The phraseology of our Bible, on which no subsequent age has improved, was thought to carry with it solemnity and authority; and even when popular feelings were to be aroused to popular interests, the language of the prophets was preferred to the language of the vulgar. Hence, amid the complicated antagonisms of war there was more austerity than ferocity. The gentlemen who attended the court avoided the speech as they avoided the manners of their adversaries. Waller, Cowley, and South were resolved to refine what was already pure gold, and inadvertently threw into the crucible many old family jewels, deeply enchased within it. Eliot, Pym, Selden, and Milton reverenced their father's house, and retained its rich language unmodified. Lord Brougham would make us believe that scarcely a sentence in Milton is easy, natural, and vernacular. Nevertheless, in all his dissertations there are many which might appear to have been written in our days, if indeed any writer in our days were endowed with the same might and majesty. Even in his "Treatise on Divorce," where the Bible was most open to him for quotations, and where he might be the most expected to recur to the grave and antiquated, he has often employed, in the midst of theological questions and juridical formularies, the plainest terms of his contemporaries. Even his arguments against prelacy, where he rises into poetry like the old prophets, and where his ardent words assume in their periphery the rounded form of verse, there is nothing stiff or constrained. I remember a glorious proof of this remark, which I believe I have quoted before, but no time is lost by reading it twice: —

> "— But when God commands to take the trumpet,
> And blow a dolorous or thrilling blast,
> It rests not with man's will what he shall say,
> Or what he shall conceal."

Was ever anything more like the inspiration it refers to? Where is the harshness in it; where is the inversion?

The style usually follows the conformation of the mind. Solemnity and stateliness are Milton's chief characteristics. Nothing is less solemn, less stately, less composed, or less equable than Lord Brougham's. When he is most vivacious, he shows it by twitches of sarcasm; and when he springs highest, it is from agony. He might have improved his man-

ner by recurring to Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, equally discontented politicians; but there was something of high breeding in their attacks, and more of the rapier than of the bludgeon. Brougham found their society uncongenial to him, and trundled home in preference the sour quarter-cask of Smollett. Many acrid plants throw out specious and showy flowers; few of these are to be found in his garden. What then has he? I will tell you what he has, — more various and greater talents than any other man ever was adorned with, who had nothing of genius and little of discretion. He has exhibited a clear compendious proof that a work of extraordinary fiction may be elaborated in the utter penury of all those qualities which we usually assign to imagination. Between the language of Milton and Brougham there is as much difference as between an organ and a bagpipe. One of these instruments fills, and makes to vibrate, the amplest, the loftiest, the most venerable edifices, and accords with all that is magnificent and holy; the other is followed by vile animals in fantastical dresses and antic gestures, and surrounded by the clamorous and disorderly.

II. INSCRIPTION FOR A STATUE AT ST. IVES.

OLIVER CROMWELL,
a good son, a good husband, a good father,
a good citizen, a good ruler
both in war and peace,
was born in this town.
To know his publick acts,
open the History of England,
where it exhibits in few pages
(alas too few!)
the title of Commonwealth.

III. SIR ROBERT PEEL, AND MONUMENTS TO PUBLIC MEN.

Statues are now rising in every quarter of our metropolis, and mallet and chisel are the chief instruments in use. Whatever is conducive to the promotion of the arts ought undoubtedly to be encouraged; but love in this instance, quite as much as in any, ought neither to be precipitate nor blind. A true lover of his country should be exempted from the pain of blushes when a foreigner inquires of him, "Whom does this statue represent; and for what merits was it raised?" The defenders of their country, not the dismemberers of it, should be first in honor; the maintainers of the laws, not the subverters of them, should follow next. I may be asked by the studious, the contemplative, the pacific, whether I would assign a higher station to any public man than to a Milton and a Newton. My answer is plainly and loudly, Yes! But the higher station should be in streets, in squares, in Houses of Parliament, — such are their places: our vestibules and our libraries are best adorned by poets, philosophers, and philanthropists. There is a feeling which street-walking and public-meeting men improperly call "loyalty;" a feeling intemperate and intolerant, smelling of dinner and wine and toasts, which swells their stomachs and their voices at the sound of certain names reverberated by the newspaper press. As little do they know about the proprietary of these names as pot-wallopers know about the candidates at a borough election, and are just as vociferous and violent. A few days ago I received a most courteous invitation to be named on a committee for erecting a statue to Jenner. It was impossible for me to decline it; and equally was it impossible to abstain from the observations which I am now about to state. I recommended that the statue should be placed before a public hospital, expressing my sense of impropriety in confounding so great a benefactor

of mankind, in any street or square or avenue, with the Dismemberer of America and his worthless sons. Nor would I willingly see him among the worn-out steam-engines of parliamentary debates. The noblest parliamentary men who had nothing to distribute, not being ministers, are without statues. The illustrious Burke, the wisest, excepting Bacon, who at any time sat within the people's house; Romilly, the sincerest patriot of his day; Huskisson, the most intelligent in commercial affairs, — have none. Peel has become popular, not by his incomparable merits, but by his untimely death. Shall we never see the day when Oliver and William mount the chargers of Charles and George, and when a royal swindler is superseded by the purest and most exalted of our heroes, Blake?

Now the fever hath somewhat subsided which came over the people from the grave of Sir Robert Peel, there is room for a few observations on his decease and on its consequences. All public writers, I believe, have expatiated on his character, comparing him with others who within our times have occupied the same position. My own opinion has invariably been that he was the wisest of all our statesmen; and certainly, though he found reason to change his sentiments and his measures, he changed them honestly, well weighed, always from conviction, and always for the better. He has been compared, and seemingly in no spirit of hostility or derision, with a Castlereagh, a Perceval, an Addington, a Canning. Only one of these is worthy of notice; namely, Canning, whose brilliancy made his shallowness less visible, and whose graces of style and elocution threw a veil over his unsoundness and lubricity. Sir Robert Peel was no satirist or epigrammatist, — he was only a statesman in public life, only a virtuous and friendly man in private; *par negotiis, nec supra.* Walpole alone possessed his talents for business. But neither Peel nor his family were enriched from the spoils of his country; Walpole spent in building and pictures more than double the value of his hereditary estate, and left the quadruple to his descendants.

Dissimilar from Walpole, and from commoner and coarser men who occupied the same office, Peel forbade that a name which he had made illustrious should be degraded and stigmatized by any title of nobility; for he knew that all those titles

had their origin and nomenclature from military services, and belong to military men, like their epaulets and spurs and chargers. They sound well enough against the sword and helmet, strangely in law-courts and cathedrals; but reformer as he was, he could not reform all this, — he could only keep clear of it in his own person.

I now come to the main object of my letter.

Subscriptions are advertised for the purpose of raising monuments to Sir Robert Peel, and a motion has been made in Parliament for one in Westminster Abbey at the public expense. Whatever may be the precedents, surely the house of God should contain no object but such as may remind us of His presence and our duty to Him. Long ago I proposed that *ranges* of statues and busts should commemorate the great worthies of our country. All the lower parts of our National Gallery might be laid open for this purpose. Even the best monuments in Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's are deformities to the edifice. Let us not continue this disgrace. Deficient as we are in architects, we have many good statuaries, and we might well employ them on the statues of illustrious commanders and the busts of illustrious statesmen and writers. Meanwhile our cities, and especially the commercial, would, I am convinced, act more wisely, and more satisfactorily to the relict of the deceased, if instead of statues they erected schools and almshouses, with an inscription to his memory.

We glory in about sixty whose busts and statues may occupy what are now the "deep solitudes and awful cells" in our National Gallery. Our literary men of eminence are happily more numerous than the political or the warlike, or both together. There is only one class of them which might be advantageously excluded, namely, the theological; and my reasons are these. First, their great talents were chiefly employed on controversy; secondly, and consequently, their images would excite dogmatical discord, every sect of the Anglican Church and every class of Dissenters complaining of undue preferences. Painture and sculpture lived in the midst of corruption, lived throughout it, and seemed indeed to draw vitality from it, as flowers the most delicate from noxious air; but they collapsed at the searching breath of free inquiry, and could not abide persecution. The torch of philosophy never

kindled the suffocating fagot, under whose smoke Theology was mistaken for Religion. Theology had, until now, been speculative and quiescent; she abandoned to Philosophy these humbler qualities: instead of allaying and dissipating, as Philosophy had always done, she excited and she directed animosities. Oriental in her parentage, and keeping up her wide connections in that country, she acquired there all the artifices most necessary to the furtherance of her designs: among the rest was ventriloquism, which she quite perfected, making her words seem to sound from above and from below and from every side around. Ultimately, when men had fallen on their faces at this miracle, she assumed the supreme power. Kings were her lackeys, and nations the dust under her palfrey's hoof. By her sentence Truth was gagged, scourged, branded, cast down on the earth in manacles; and Fortitude, who had stood at Truth's side, was fastened with nails and pulleys to the stake. I would not revive by any images, in the abode of the graceful and the gentle Arts, these sorrowful reminiscences. The vicissitudes of the world appear to be bringing round again the spectral past. Let us place great men between it and ourselves, — they are all tutelar; not the warrior and the statesman only; not only the philosopher; but also the historian who follows them step by step, and the poet who secures us from peril and dejection by his counter-charm. Philosophers in most places are unwelcome; but there is no better reason why Shaftesbury and Hobbes should be excluded from our gallery than why Epicurus should have been from Cicero's, or Zeno from Lucullus's.

Of our sovereigns, I think Alfred, Cromwell, and William III. alone are eligible; and they, because they opposed successfully the subverters of the laws. Three viceroys of Ireland will deservedly be placed in the same receptacle, — Sir John Perrot, Lord Chesterfield, and (in due time) the last lord-deputy; one Speaker, one only, of the Parliament, — he without whom no Parliament would be now existing; he who declared to Henry IV. that until all public grievances were removed, no subsidy should be granted. The name of this Speaker may be found in Rapin. English historians talk about facts, forgetting men.

Admirals and generals are numerous and conspicuous.

Drake, Blake, Rodney, Jervis, Nelson, Collingwood; the subduer of Algiers beaten down for the French to occupy; and the defender of Acre, the first who defeated, discomfited, routed, broke, and threw into shameful flight Bonaparte. Our generals are Marlborough, Peterborough, Wellington, and that successor to his fame in India who established the empire that was falling from us, who achieved in a few days two arduous victories, who never failed in any enterprise, who accomplished the most difficult with the smallest expenditure of blood, who corrected the disorders of the military, who gave the soldier an example of temperance, the civilian of simplicity and frugality, and whose sole (but exceedingly great) reward was the approbation of our greatest men.

With these come the statesmen of the Commonwealth, the students of Bacon, the readers of Philip Sidney, the companions of Algernon, the precursors of Locke and Newton. Opposite to them are Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton; lower in dignity, Dryden, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Cowper, Keats, Scott, Burns, Shelley, Southey, Byron, Wordsworth; the author of "Hohenlinden" and the "Battle of the Baltic;" and the glorious woman who equalled these two animated works in her "Ivan" and "Casabianca." Historians have but recently risen up among us; and long be it before, by command of Parliament, the chisel grates on the brow of a Napier, a Grote, and a Macaulay!

IV. TO CORNELIUS AT MUNICH.

On coming to England, and on looking at the Cartoons exhibited for decorating the Houses of Parliament, you will wonder, Cornelius, that the most important facts and most illustrious men have been overlooked. The English are certainly less sensitive to national glory than to party politics, to past achievements than to passing celebrity. Wilkes excited more enthusiasm than Hampden. It appears to be certain that the Protector Cromwell will be expunged from the pictorial history of the nation, — of that nation which he raised to the summit of political power. It is contended that he usurped his authority. We will not argue the point, nor take the trouble to demonstrate that the greatest and best princes in many countries have been usurpers. Without great services none of them could ever have been invested with sufficient power to assume the first dignity of the State. William of Normandy was manifestly a usurper; and if breaking the direct line of succession is usurpation, so was William the Third. Henry the Fourth and Henry the Seventh were usurpers also, yet their reigns were signally beneficial to their people. And to Richard the Third, whatever may have been his crimes in the ascent to sovereignty, the nation at large is perhaps more indebted for provident statutes of perdurable good than to any other of her kings. But the glory of them all is cast into obscurity by Cromwell. He humbled in succession the dominant powers of Europe, at a time when they were governed by the ablest men and had risen to the zenith of their prosperity. Spain, France, Holland, crouched before him; and the soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, the greatest king the world ever beheld, thought he had risen from the grave to accomplish the delivery of nations. For how little, in comparison, is France indebted to Napoleon! Yet both king and people are united in raising

a monument to his memory. Compare the posthumous honors conferred by the two great nations on the two great men. The body of the one is brought back from the extremities of the ocean, to be venerated by a people he had reduced to servitude; the body of the other was treated as the vilest malefactor's, in the midst of a nation he had vindicated from double slavery, — the slavery of a lawless prince and an intolerant priesthood. It is enough for Frenchmen that Napoleon had once humbled the enemies of France. We, who judge more calmly, judge that whatever he did was done for the advancement of his power and the perpetuation of his dynasty. He had the quickest and the shortest sight of all men living, and his arrogance brought into France the nations that subdued her. Different in all these points was Oliver. Never was man more bravely humane or more tranquilly energetic. He stood above fear, above jealousy, above power; he was greater than all things but his country.

The English are erecting a column and statue to Nelson. No such monument has been raised to Blake, because he fought for a country without a king at the head of it. This courageous and virtuous man abstained from party and from politics, and would have defended his country even under the king who sold her. No action of Nelson himself is more glorious than the action of Blake at Cadiz, and his character on every side is without a stain; but in England the authorities and the Arts neglect him.

"Caret quia *rege* sacro."

In the list of the committee which is to decide on fit subjects for painting the Houses of Parliament you will find the name of Eastlake, a good painter and a good scholar; and of Rogers, endowed with every quality of a gentleman, and with an exquisite judgment in everything relating to literature and the fine arts. Yet I doubt if either of them would not prefer an allegory in the "Faery Queen," or a witchery in "Faust," for a decoration of the Chambers, if highly picturesque, to the most appropriate scene in parliamentary annals if less so. English history, in fact, is now represented without living figures, and worked by machinery. We see the events, and wonder where are the actors. The later historians keep them

carefully out of sight, and make their own voices suffice for all within the boxes they exhibit.

The histories of other nations are alive with human agents; the earth moves and heaves with their energies; we see not only the work they have done, but we see them doing it. Whereas, in our own sandy deserts, the only things astir are small animals intent on their burrows, or striving to possess a knot of fresh herbage. All beyond is indistinct: if ever we come to it, we find only scanty eminences, under which are evanescent features and weightless bones; we trample them down, and walk back again.

V. THE QUARTERLY REVIEW.

THE "Quarterly Review" for December, 1849, was shown to me this morning, for the sake of a note on page 130. A reviewer comes valiantly forth in his obscurity, and strikes at me in the bottom of a page, without provocation and without aim. Nothing of mine was in question; the subject was utterly remote. Rabid animals run straight — could not this? Is he blind? Apparently. The "Quarterly" would prolong its painful struggles for existence by clinging to my name.

Speaking of the Duke of Wellington's Dispatches, the reviewer observes: "When French people could not resist the evidence of all great gifts and noble qualities with which that record was filled; when they owned that it would not do to persist in their old vein of disparagement now the world had before it that series of writings in which it was impossible to say whether one should admire most, the range of knowledge, reflection, sense, and wisdom, or the unaffected display of every manly, modest, and human feeling under an almost infinite variety of circumstances, and all conveyed in language of such inimitable simplicity, so thoroughly the style becoming a captain and statesman of the most illustrious class, — when this was the result in France, the home faction saw it was time to consider the matter, and they undoubtedly showed, and have continued to show, proper signs of repentance. The exceptions are very few. Here in England we know of none at all in what can be called society; of none in the periodical press, beyond its very lowest disgraces. Among authors," etc.

It would be well if the writer of this verbose and rambling note had attempted, at least, the "inimitable simplicity" which he has been taught by some wiser authority to commend. No man ever praised more unreservedly or more heartily the Duke of Wellington's style, honesty, wisdom, and achievements than I have always done; and though his Grace may care little for

such commendations, he will probably, if ever he hears of them, set them somewhere apart from the "Quarterly" reviewers.

The reviewer proceeds to number me among the *home faction.* Certainly I never was "at home" in it, and never knew where its home was. I never was at a public dinner, at a club, or hustings; I never influenced or attempted to influence a vote, yet many (and not only of my own tenants) have asked me to whom they should give theirs. If the reviewer is desirous of obtaining any favor from the Duke of Wellington, let me assure him that the safest way is by descending from flattery to truth. Even the duke (as future ages, like the present, will call him) could not make his actions greater than they are; they can only be diminished, as the steps of holy places, by the grovelling knees and importunate kisses of fanatic worshippers. When I commend the conciseness, the manliness, the purity of the duke's style, it is not, as it must be in the reviewer, from hearsay and tradition. Let him also be taught, and repeat with less ostentation and more reverence, that far above the faded flowers wherewith his puny hands have bestrewn the great man's road, our deliverer has confirmed the religious (more than all the theologians in the country) in the belief that there is a superintending and a ruling Power, under which, and by whose especial guidance, a single arm can scatter myriads of the powerful, and raise up prostrate nations.

I must now mount again the "bad eminence" on which it hath pleased this gentleman to place me. "Among authors *of* books *of* any sort *of* note," he continues, "verse or prose, we recollect *of* none, unless Mr. W. Savage Landor, who however clings with equal pertinacity to his ancient abuse of Bonaparte as a 'blockhead and a coward,' of Byron as a 'rhymer wholly devoid of genius or wit,' of Pitt as a 'villain,' of Fox as a 'scoundrel,' of Canning as a 'scamp,' and so on."

Now, I appeal to you and to every man who, however negligently or however malignantly, has read my writings, whether my education and habits of life have permitted me such language. It is such as no gentleman could either have used or have attributed to another. Even if the phrases were reduced to synonymes of more decorum, the falsehood of the statement

would remain. I have never called Bonaparte a "blockhead" or a "coward." I would not call by such a name even the writer of this criticism. Bonaparte committed many gross errors, some in polity, some in war, — greater indeed and more numerous than any leader of equal eminence. He lost three great armies; he abandoned three in defeat.

It is curious that the "Quarterly Review" should rail against my opinion on Bonaparte, when the only man of genius connected with it, Southey, far exceeded me in hostility to that sanguinary and selfish despot. His laws against the press were more numerous and more stringent than ever had existed in any country, and alienated from him every true friend of liberty and letters. His cruelty to Toussaint L'Ouverture (omitting an infinitude of others) was such as Charles IX. would have discountenanced, and such as could hardly have been perpetrated by his compatriot Eccellino. His miscalculations in Syria, in Egypt, in Spain, in Germany, in Russia, where an open road to conquest lay before him along the Baltic, will supplant in another age the enthusiasm that now supports him. It is singular that a "Quarterly" reviewer should assail me for joining all his leaders in hostility to this destroyer; and scarcely is it less so that I should continue on terms of intimacy with many the most prominent of his admirers. Throughout life it has been my good fortune to enjoy the unbroken and unaltered friendship of virtuous and illustrious men whose political opinions have been adverse. If it is any honor, it has been conferred on me to have received from Napoleon's heir the literary work he composed in prison, well knowing as he did, and expressing his regret for, my sentiments on his uncle. The explosion of the first cannon against Rome threw us apart forever.

Of Byron I never have spoken as a "mere rhymer;" I never have represented him as destitute of genius or of wit. He had much of both, with much energy, not always well applied. Lord Malmesbury has informed us that Mr. Pitt entered into the war against France contrary to his own opinion, to gratify the king. If so, the word "villain" would carry with it too feeble a sound for me to employ it even in the company of such persons as my critic, supposing me ever to have been conversant in such. My intimacy with the friends and near

relatives of Mr. Fox would have certainly closed my lips against the utterance of the appellation of "scoundrel" in regard to him. He had more and warmer friends than any statesman upon record; he was ingenuous, liberal, learned, philosophical; he was the delight of social life, the ornament of domestic. Mr. Fox was a man of genius, and (what in the present day is almost as rare) a gentleman. Specimens of either character may never have fallen in the reviewer's way; and if peradventure they should have, probably it was not very closely, and his inexperience may easily have mistaken them. Reverence for the unknown, or for the dimly seen, may indeed be common to the vulgar; but here is an instance that it is by no means universal.

Mr. Canning was a graceful writer both in poetry and prose; he had also the gift of eloquence in debate. His conduct toward his colleague in the Administration lost him all his popularity, which was not recovered by his asking an office from the minister he had traduced and fought. The word "scamp" was applied to Mr. Canning by the late Lord Yarmouth, who certainly ought to have known its full signification. It was on the morning when, second to Lord Castlereagh, he saved Mr. Canning's life, desiring his cousin to give "the scamp a chance" by taking into the field, not his own well-tried pistols, but those which Lord Yarmouth had brought with him and laid upon the table. This account I received from the only other person then present, and now living. But whatever I may continue to think of Mr. Canning, I prefer a phraseology somewhat circuitous to a monosyllable better adapted to the style and temper of the reviewer than to mine.

Few writers have been less obnoxious to rudeness and impertinence than I have been; and I should abstain from noticing them now, had they been unaccompanied by a misrepresentation of my manners and a forgery of my words. These are grave offences, such as public justice takes out of private hands. I remember a fable of Phædrus, in which a mischievous youth cast a pebble at a quiet wayfarer, who, instead of resentment or remonstrance, advises him to perform the same exploit on a dignitary then coming up. I am quieter than the dignitary, and even than the quiet man. Instead of sending to the cross or to the whipping-post the mischievous

youth who passes over the road to cast his pebble at me, although I might not perhaps beg him off from the latter inflictions, I would entreat his employer, the moment I could learn the editor's name, to continue the payment of his wages, and to throw in an additional trifle for his (however ill-directed) originality. I suspect he will neither be so graceful nor so proud as he might be on obtaining this notice. Could he have hoped it? But thus is extracted from the dryest and hardest lichen in the coldest regions, where men are the most diminutive, a nutritious sustenance often remedial in a low disease.

VI. A STORY OF SANTANDER.

Don Luis Cabeza-de-Moro was a widower, with two sons, Antonio and Ignacio. His younger brother, named also Ignacio, had married a rich heiress in the island of Cuba, — both of whom died, leaving an only daughter, seven years old, to the guardianship of Don Luis, and intimating a wish, and providing by will and testament, that Iñes in due time should espouse her cousin Ignacio.

Don Luis was rejoiced at the injunction, — for he disliked his elder son from the cradle. This was remarkable, especially as his lady, the Doña Pedrila, had continued long without offspring, and Antonio was her first-born; besides which, there were mysteries and signs and tokens such as ought to have taught him better. His whole household were amazed and edified and awed at the result of supplications which, after four years of fruitless marriage, had produced this blessing; and the "Moor's head," the blazon of the family, was displayed by them with greater pride than ever in the balcony of the ancient mansion-house. About a year before this event, an Irish ensign had entered the service of Spain. Leave of absence was given him to visit his maternal uncle, the dean of Santander, near which city was the residence of Don Luis. Subsequently, Doña Pedrila saw him so often, and was so impressed by his appearance, that it was reported in the family, and the report was by no means discouraged by the dean, that Ensign Lucius O'Donnell, now entitled Don Lucio, had been dreamt of by Doña Pedrila, not once only, or occasionally, but on the three successive vigils of the three glorious saints who were more especially the patrons of the house. Under the impression of these dreams, there was a wonderful likeness of the infant to Don Lucio, which Don Luis was the first to perceive, and the last to communicate. It extended to the color of the hair and of the eyes. Surely it ought to have rendered a

reasonable man more pious and paternal, but it produced quite a contrary effect. He could hardly endure to hear the three glorious saints mentioned; and whenever he uttered their names, he elongated the syllables with useless emphasis and graceless pertinacity. Moreover, in speaking of the child to its numerous admirers, he swore that the creature was ugly and white-blooded. Within two more years Doña Pedrila bore another son to him, and died. This son, Ignacio, came into the world a few months before his cousin Iñes, and the fathers were confident that the union of two such congenial names would secure the happiness of the children and of their posterity.

Before Antonio had completed quite eleven years he was sent for his education to Salamanca, not as a collegian, but as a pupil under an old officer, a friend of Don Luis, who being somewhat studious had retired to end his days in that city. Here the boy, although he made no unsatisfactory progress in polite literature, engaged more willingly with his tutor in manly exercises, likewise in singing and playing on the guitar. He was never invited home for three entire years; but Ignacio, who was of the mildest temper and kindest disposition, remembering the playfulness and fondness of Antonio, united his entreaties with those of Iñes that he might return. Don Luis, in reply, threw a leg over a knee.

"Uncle," said Iñes, "he cannot ride on that knee all the way from Salamanca; send my mule for him, saddle, bridle, and ropes, and the little bit of gilt leather for the crupper, from the shrine of blessed Saint Antonio, his patron no less than the patron of mules and horses. Ignacio says we must have him; and have him we will, if prayers and masses go for anything. Cannot we sing, cannot we play? What would you wish for his studies, — heresy, magic, freemasonry, chemistry, necromancy? We want him, dear uncle; we want him sadly with us. You always give us what we ask for in reason. Come now, a kiss, uncle, and then the mule out of the stable. Come, we will help you to write the letter, as you are somewhat out of practice, and I know how to fold one up, after a trial or two."

No one could resist this appeal: Antonio was sent for. He returned in raptures. On his first entrance the lively eyes of

Iñes, full of curiosity, were bent toward him; but he regarded her not. He threw his arms around Ignacio, lifted him off the ground, set him down again, gazed on his face, and burst suddenly into tears.

"Ignacio, my Ignacio, how light you are! how thin, how pallid, how weak!"

Don Luis looked on, and muttered something inaudible. Antonio, fearful of having offended his worthy genitor by neglect of duty, sprang from his dejection, clasped the waist of Don Luis, and then falling at his feet, asked his blessing. Don Luis with bitter composure prayed the three saints to bestow it, as they might well do, he said, on the young Señor Don Antonio now before them. The boy kissed his hand and thanked him fervently; and now, in his inconsiderate joyousness, another spring forward; but he stopped in the midst of it, and instead of running up at once to Iñes, who bit her lip and pinched her veil, he turned again to Ignacio, and asked him in a whisper whether cousins were forced to kiss after an absence of only three years. "Certainly not," replied Ignacio. But Iñes came up, and pouting a little gave him her hand spontaneously, and helped him moreover to raise it to his lips, saying, as he blushed at it, "You simpleton! you coward!"

Antonio bore "simpleton" pretty well; "coward" amused him, and gave him spirit. He seized her hand afresh, and kept it within his, although she pushed the other against his breast, — the little hand, with its five arches of pink-polished nails half hidden in his waistcoat; the little hand sprouting forth at him, soft and pulpy as that downy bud which swells and bursts into the vine-leaf.

Antonio never saw in her any other object than the betrothed of his brother, and never was with her so willingly as with him. Nor indeed did Iñes care much about Antonio, but wished he could be a little more attentive and polite, and sing in a chamber as willingly as in a chestnut-tree. After six weeks Don Luis observed that Antonio was interrupting the studies of Ignacio and neglecting his own. Accordingly he was sent back to Salamanca, where he continued five whole years without recall. At this time the French armies had invaded Spain; the old officer, Don Pablo Espinosa, who directed the studies of Antonio, wrote to his father that the gallant youth, now in

his twentieth year, desired to be enrolled in the regiment of the province, next to himself, as a volunteer and a private. In the fulness of joy Don Luis announced these tidings to Ignacio and Iñes. They both turned pale; both threw themselves on the floor before him, entreating and imploring him to forbid it. Their supplications and their tears for many days were insufficient to mollify Don Luis. By this time a large division of the French army had surrendered, and insurrection was universal. Don Pablo was constrained, by three urgent letters, — of which the father's was, however, the least so, — to leave his pupil at the university; he himself took the field, and perished in the first battle. Antonio, disappointed in his hopes of distinction, swore to avenge his tutor's death and his country's honor. His noble person, his extraordinary strength, his eloquent tongue, his unquestioned bravery, soon placed him at the head of many students, and he was always the first to advise and execute the most difficult and dangerous enterprises.

Toward the north of Spain the enemy had rallied, and had won, indeed, the battle of Rio Seco, but within a month were retreating in all directions. Antonio, bound by no other duties than those of a volunteer, acceded at last to the earnest and repeated wishes of his brother and cousin that he would in this interval return to them. Don Luis said he would be a madman wherever he was, but might return if he liked it, both he and his guitar. On the first of August, 1808, the visitor passed again the threshold of his native home. Covered as he was with dust, he entered the apartment where the family were seated. The sun was setting, and the supper had just been taken off the table, excepting two small flasks of red and white wine, part of a watermelon, and some pomegranates. In fact, more was remaining than had been eaten or removed, not reckoning a radish of extraordinary length and tenuity, which the Señorita Iñes was twisting round her thumb. It was no waste; there was not any use for it; many things in the house were better to mend harness with. Moreover, on the sideboard there were sundry yellow peaches, of such a size, weight, and hardness that only a confident and rash invader would traverse the country in the season of their maturity, unless he had collected the most accurate information that powder was deficient in the arsenals.

At the dusty apparition, at the beard and whiskers never seen before, at the broad and belted shoulder, at the loud-spurred boot, at the long and hurried stride toward the party, Don Luis stared; Don Ignacio stared; Doña Iñes cast her eyes on the ground and said, "'T is he!" The brother, whether he heard her or not, repeated the words "'T is he!" and rushed into his arms. Don Luis himself rose slowly from his chair, and welcomed him. Iñes was the nearest to him, and seemed abashed.

"My cousin," said Antonio, bending down to her, "I have yet to remove in part the name of coward," and lifting her hand from her apron, he kissed the extremities of her fingers. "Brother, one more embrace, and then for those pomegranates; I am thirsty to death. God be with you, my dear, kind, honored father! You look upon me with more than usual, and much more than merited, affection." Don Luis did indeed regard him with much complacency. "I must empty those two flasks, my beloved father, to your health." So saying, he poured the contents of one into a capacious beaker, with about the same quantity of water, and swallowed it at a draught.

"What lady have you engulfed with that enormous gasp?" asked Iñes, with timid shyness; "will she never rise up, do you think, in judgment against you?"

"Pray mix me the flask near you," said he, "in like manner as the last, and then perhaps I may answer you, my sweet cousin; but tell me, Iñes, whether I did not rasp your nails with my thirsty and hard lips?"

"Yes, and with that horrid brake above," said she, pouring out the wine and water, and offering it.

Don Luis all this time had kept his eyes constantly on his son, and began to prognosticate in him a valiant defender; then discovered, first in one feature, afterward in another, a resemblance to himself; and lastly, he was persuaded in his own mind that he had been prejudiced and precipitate when he was younger. The spirit of hospitality was aroused by paternal love; he gave orders for a fowl to be killed instantaneously, even the hen on her nest rather than none, although the omelet might be thinner for it on the morrow. Such was the charm the gallant and gay Antonio breathed about the house. He

was peculiarly pleased and gratified by the suavity of his father; not that he ever had doubted of his affection, but he had fancied that his own boisterous manners had rendered him less an object of solicitude. He had always been glad to see it bestowed on his brother, whose delicate health and sensitive nature so much required it.

No house in Spain, where few were happy then, contained four happier inmates. Ignacio, it is true, became thinner daily, and ceased after a time to join in the morning walks of his brother and Iñes; but he was always of the party when, returning from the siesta, they took up their guitars, and tuned each other's.

Were there ever two comely and sensitive young persons, possessing sweet voices, exercising them daily together, bending over the same book, expressing the same sentiment in its most passionate accents, — were they ever long exempt from the gentle intrusion of one sweet stranger? Neither Iñes nor Antonio was aware of it; both would have smiled in the beginning, and both would have afterward been indignant at any such surmise. But revolutions in States effect no revolutions in nature. The French, who changed everything else, left the human heart as they found it. Ignacio feared, but said nothing. Antonio too, although much later, was awakened to the truth, and determined on departure. And now Ignacio was ashamed and grieved at his suspicions, and would have delayed his brother, who dissembled his observation of them; but the poor youth's health, always slender, had given way under them. For several days he had taken to his bed; fever had seized him, and had been subdued. But there is a rose which Death lays quietly on the cheek of the devoted, before the poppy sheds on it its tranquillizing leaves: it had settled immovably in the midst of Ignacio's smiles, — smiles tranquilly despondent. Seldom did Antonio leave his bedside, but never had he yet possessed the courage to inquire the cause of those sighs and tears, which burst forth in every moment of silence, and then only. At length however he resolved on it, that he might assure him the more confidently of his recovery, having first requested Iñes that, whenever he was absent, she would supply his place.

"Cannot we go together?" said she, disquieted.

"No, señora!" answered he, with stern sadness, "we can-

not. You owe this duty to the companion of your girlhood, to the bequeathed of your parents, to your betrothed."

At that word sudden paleness overspread her countenance; her lips, which never before had lost their rich color, faded and quivered. No reply could pass them, had any been ready; even the sigh was drawn suddenly back, — not one escaped. In all that was visible she was motionless. But now with strong impulse she pressed both palms against her bosom, and turned away. The suddenness and the sound struck terror into the heart of Antonio. He laid his hand on her shoulder, and looked into her face. Tears glittered on the folds of the long black veil; and they were not the tears of Iñes. But now she also shed them. Alas! from how many and from what distant sources do they flow!

Iñes went; she sobbed at the door, but she went. No song that evening, no book, no romance of love, no narrative of war: the French were as forgotten as the Moors.

Morning rose fresh and radiant; but the dim lavender on each side of the narrow pathway had all its dew upon it; the cistus was opening its daily flowers, with no finger to press down and attempt to smoothen the crumpled leaves; none to apply its viscous cup in playful malice against the trim ornament of a smiling lip. Nobody thought of looking for the large green lizard on the limestone by the twisted rosemary-bush, covered with as many bees as blossoms, and uprearing as many roots as branches above the prostrate wall. Nobody thought of asking, "Did you ever know any creature who panted so quickly as that foolish lizard? — I mean in battle." Nobody met the inquiry with, "Did you ever hear of any one who felt anything a little, a very little like it, at the cembalo?"

Antonio, at this early hour, was seated on the edge of his brother's bed, asking him, with kind dissimulation, what reason he could possibly have to doubt Iñes' love and constancy.

"At first," replied Ignacio, "she used to hold my hand, to look anxiously in my face, and to wipe away her tears that she might see it the more distinctly in this darkened chamber. Now she has forgotten to take my hand; she looks as often into my face, but not anxiously, not even inquiringly; she lets her tears rise and dry again; she never wipes them away,

and seldom hides them. This at least is a change in her; perhaps no favorable one for me."

Antonio thus answered him: "Ignacio, if we would rest at all, we must change our posture in grief as in bed. The first moments are not like the second, nor the second like the last. Be confident in her; be confident in me: within two hours you shall, I promise you, whether you will or not. Farewell, my beloved brother! You are weary; close but your eyes for sleep, and sleep shall come. I will not awaken you, even with glad tidings."

Folding his arms, he left the chamber with a firm step. Within two hours he entered it again; but how? Hateful as monastic life had ever appeared to him, ridiculous as he daily in Salamanca had called its institutions, indifferent and incredulous as he lately had become to many articles of the faith, having been educated under the tuition of a soldier,—so free in his opinions as once to have excited the notice and questionings of the Inquisition,—he went resolutely forth at daybreak, and prevailed on the superior of a monastic order to admit him into it at once, as its sworn defender. He returned in the vestments of that order, and entered the bedchamber in silence. His brother had slept, and was yet sleeping. He gently undrew the curtain, and stood motionless. Ignacio at last moved his elbow, and sighed faintly; he then rested on it a little, and raised his cheek higher on the pillow: it had lost the gift of rest, its virtues were departed from it; there was no cool part left. He opened his eyes and looked toward Antonio; then closed them, then looked again.

"Ignacio!" said Antonio, softly, "you see me; it is me you see, Ignacio!"

The sick exhausted youth sighed again, and closing his hands, raised them as if in prayer. This movement fully awakened him. He now opened his eyes in wonder on his brother, who pressed those raised hands within his, and kissed that brow which the fever had shortly left. Ignacio sighed deeply and sank back again. The first words he uttered afterward were these:—

"Oh, Antonio! why could you not have waited,—impetuous, impatient Antonio? I might have seen you both from Paradise; I might have blest you from thence,—from thence I might indeed. O God! O Virgin! O Mary, pure and true!

pardon my ingratitude! Should love ever bear that bitter fruit? Forbid it, O host of Heaven! forbid it! it must not be."

"Brother, speak not so; it is accomplished," said Antonio; "and now can you doubt your bride?"

Iñes at this moment rushed into the chamber. She knew the stately figure, she knew the lofty head, although tonsured; she screamed and fainted. Antonio drew her forth by the arm, and when she recovered her senses, thus addressed her: —

"Cousin, my heart reproaches me for having loved you. If yours (how incomparably less guilty!) should haply feel some compunction, not indeed at what is past, but at what you see," and he extended his large mantle to his arm's length, "return from the unworthy to the worthy; from him who renounces the world to him whose world you are. Now, Iñes, now we can with unabashed front go together into his chamber."

"I will tend him," said she, "day and night; I will follow him to the grave; I will enter it with him, — yes, and even that chamber, while he suffers in it, I will enter." She paused awhile, then continued: "Antonio, oh, Antonio! you have never loved. They tell us none can love twice. That is false; but this is true, — we can never love twice the same object."

Antonio stood mute with wonder at the speech of this innocent girl, retired alike from society and unbeguiled by books. Little had he considered how strong a light is sometimes thrown on the intellect, what volumes of thought are expanded and made clearly legible, by the first outflaming of the passions. And yet Antonio should have known it; for in the veins of Antonio one half was blood, the other half was fire. While with eyes fixed on the ground he stood yet before her, who perhaps was waiting for his reply, she added briefly, —

"Let me repair my fault as well as may be. You shall see me no more. Leave, me sir!"

Antonio did leave her. In a fortnight the gentle spirit of Ignacio had departed.

The French armies had again defeated the Spanish, penetrated to Santander, laid waste all the country around, and demolished the convent in which Iñes had taken refuge. Some women in Spanish cities were heroines; in Spanish convents, if any became so, the heroism was French.

They who have visited Santander will remember the pointed hill on the northwest of the city, looking far over the harbor, the coast, and the region of La Mancha. Even while the enemy was in possession of the place, a solitary horseman was often seen posted on this eminence, and many were the dead bodies of French soldiers found along the roads on every side under it. Doubtless, the horseman had strong and urgent reasons for occupying a position so exposed to danger. It was Antonio. He had heard that Iñes, after the desecration of the convent, had been carried back by the invaders into Santander.

Early in October, the officers of the garrison made parties with the ladies of the city to enjoy the vintage in its vicinity. One morning a peasant boy employed by Antonio, ran breathless up to him on the mountain side, saying, as soon as he could say it, —

"Illustrious señor, the Señora Iñes and the other señoras, and an officer and a soldier, all French, are coming; and only a mile behind are many more."

"I have watched them," replied Antonio, "and shall distinguish them presently." He led his horse close behind a high wagon, laden with long and narrow barrels of newly gathered grapes standing upright in it, and then tied his bridle to the bar which kept them in their position. Only one horse could pass it at a time. Iñes was behind; the officer was showing her the way, and threatening both vintagers and mules for their intractability. Antonio sprang forward, seized him by the collar, and threw him under them, crying to Iñes: "Fly into the mountains with me! not a moment is to be lost! Pass me: he is out of the way. Fly! fly! Distrust my sanctity, but trust my honor, O Iñes of Ignacio!"

Iñes drew in her bridle, turned her face aside, and said irresolutely, "I cannot! oh, I cannot! I am — I am —"

She could not utter what she was: perhaps the sequel may in part reveal it. Scarcely had she spoken the last words, before she leaped down from her saddle, and hung with her whole weight on Antonio's arm, in which the drawn sword was uplifted over the enemy, and waiting only until he could rise upon his feet again, and stand upon his defence. He was young, as was discernible even through the dense forest of continuous hair which covered all but nose and forehead. Roughly and with

execrations did he thrust Iñes away from him, indignant at her struggles for his protection. Before the encounter (for which both were eager) could begin, the private had taken his post behind an ilex at the back of Antonio, and discharged his musket. Gratitude, shame, love perhaps too, hurried Iñes to his help. She fell on her knees to raise him. Gently, with open palm and quivering fingers, he pushed her arm away from him, and turning with a painful effort quite round, pressed his brow against the wayside sward. The shepherd dogs in the evening of that sultry day tried vainly to quench their thirst, as they often had done in other human blood, in the blood also of Antonio: it was hard, and they left it. The shepherds gave them all the bread they carried with them, and walked home silently.

VII. THE DEATH OF HOFER.

I PASSED two entire months in Germany, and like the people. On my way I saw Waterloo, — an ugly table for an ugly game. At Innspruck I entered the church in which Andreas Hofer is buried. He lies under a plain slab, on the left, near the door. I admired the magnificent tomb of bronze in the centre, surrounded by heroes, real and imaginary. They did not fight, tens against thousands; they did not fight for wives and children, but for lands and plunder, — therefore they are heroes! My admiration for these works of art was soon satisfied, which perhaps it would not have been in any other place. Snow mixed with rain was falling, and was blown by the wind upon the tomb of Hofer. I thought how often he had taken advantage of such weather for his attacks against the enemies of his country, and I seemed to hear his whistle in the wind. At the little village of Landro (I feel a whimsical satisfaction in the likeness of the name to mine) the innkeeper was the friend of this truly great man, — the greatest man that Europe has produced in our days, excepting his true compeer, Kosciusko. Andreas Hofer gave him the chain and crucifix he wore three days before his death. You may imagine this man's enthusiasm, who because I had said that Hofer was greater than king or emperor, and had made him a present of small value as the companion and friend of that harmless and irreproachable hero, took this precious relic from his neck and offered it to me.

By the order of Bonaparte, the companions of Hofer, eighty in number, were chained, thumbscrewed, and taken out of prison in couples to see him shot. He had about him one thousand florins in paper currency, which he delivered to his confessor, requesting him to divide it impartially among his unfortunate countrymen. The confessor, an Italian who spoke German, kept it, and never gave relief from it to any of them, most of whom were suffering, not only from privation of wholesome

air, to which, among other privations they never had been accustomed, but also from scantiness of nourishment and clothing. Even in Mantua, where as in the rest of Italy sympathy is both weak and silent, the lowest of the people were indignant at the sight of so brave a defender of his country led into the public square to expiate a crime unheard of for many centuries in their nation. When they saw him walk forth, with unaltered countenance and firm step before them; when, stopping on the ground which was about to receive his blood, they heard him with unfaltering voice commend his soul and his country to the Creator, and as if still under his own roof (a custom with him after the evening prayer), implore a blessing for his boys and his little daughter, and for the mother who had reared them up carefully and tenderly thus far through the perils of childhood; finally, when in a lower tone, but earnestly and emphatically, he besought pardon from the Fount of Mercy for her brother, his betrayer, — many smote their breasts aloud; many, thinking that sorrow was shameful, lowered their heads and wept; many, knowing that it was dangerous, yet wept too. The people remained upon the spot an unusual time; and the French, fearing some commotion, pretended to have received an order from Bonaparte for the mitigation of the sentence, and publicly announced it. Among his many falsehoods, any one of which would have excluded him forever from the society of men of honor, this is perhaps the basest; as indeed of all his atrocities the death of Hofer, which he had ordered long before and appointed the time and circumstances, is that which the brave and virtuous will reprobate the most severely. He was urged by no necessity, he was prompted by no policy; his impatience of courage in an enemy, his hatred of patriotism and integrity in all, of which he had no idea himself and saw no image in those about him, outstripped his blind passion for fame, and left him nothing but power and celebrity.

The name of Andreas Hofer will be honored by posterity far above any of the present age, and together with the most glorious of the last, — Washington and Kosciusko. For it rests on the same foundation, and indeed on a higher basis. In virtue and wisdom their coequal, he vanquished on several occasions a force greatly superior to his own in numbers and in discipline, by the courage and confidence he inspired, and

by his brotherly care and anxiety for those who were fighting at his side. Differently, far differently, ought we to estimate the squanderers of human blood, and the scorners of human tears. *We* also may boast of *our* great men in a cause as great, — for without it they could not be so. We may look back upon our Blake, whom the prodigies of a Nelson do not eclipse, — nor would he have wished (such was his generosity) to obscure it. Blake was among the founders of freedom; Nelson was the vanquisher of its destroyers; Washington was both; Kosciusko was neither; neither was Hofer. But the aim of all five was alike; and in the armory of God are suspended the arms the last two of them bore, — suspended for success more signal and for vengeance more complete.

I am writing this from Venice, which is among cities what Shakspeare is among men. He will give her immortality by his works, which neither her patron saint could do nor her surrounding sea.

VIII. A VISION.

Blessed be they who erected temples to the ancient Gods! Mistaken they may have been, but they were pious and they were grateful. The deities of Olympus, although no longer venerated, have thrown open both to the enthusiastic and to the contemplative many a lofty view beyond the sterile eminences of human life, and have adorned every road of every region with images of grandeur and of grace. Never are they malignant or indifferent to the votary who has abandoned them; and I believe there is no record of any appearing by night with frowns and threats, but on the contrary I know from my own experience that neither time nor neglect has worn the celestial smile off their placid countenances. An instance of this fact I am now about to relate.

Let me begin by observing that my eyes, perhaps by an imprudent use of them, grow soon weary with reading, even while curiosity and interest have lost little or nothing of excitement. A slumber of a few minutes is sufficient to refresh them, during which time I often enjoy the benefit of a dream; and what is, I believe, remarkable and singular, it usually takes a direction far wide of the studies on which I had been engaged. On one occasion perhaps it might have been that — pushing my book away from me to the middle of the table — the last object I saw was a picture by Swaneveldt, on the left of which there is a temple; for a temple, sure enough, stood before me in my dream. Beside it ran a river, and beyond it rose a mountain, each sensible alike of the sky that glowed above. So far the picture and the dream were in accordance. But the dream's temple was entirely its own; it had no sheep nor shepherd near it as the picture had, and although dreams are apt to take greater liberties than pictures do, yet in the picture there was an autumnal tree by the side of a summer tree, — the one of rich yellow, the other of deep green. In

the dream I remember nothing of the kind; yet I verily think I remember every particle of it. I remember a cool and gentle hand conducting me over some narrow planks thrown across a deep channel of still water. I remember the broad leaves underneath us, and how smooth, how quiet, how stainless. I remember we tarried here awhile, not leaning on the rail, for there was none, but tacitly agreeing to be mistaken in what we reciprocally were leaning on. At length we passed onward by the side of a cottage in ruins, with an oven projecting from it at the gable-end; on the outside of its many-colored arch were gilliflowers growing in the crevices; very green moss, in rounded tufts and blossoming, had taken possession of its entrance; and another plant, as different as possible, was hanging down from it, so long and slender and flexible that a few bees as they alighted on it shook it. Suddenly I stumbled; my beautiful guide blushed deeply, and said,—

"Do you stumble at the first step of the temple? What an omen!"

I had not perceived that we had reached any temple; but now, abashed at the reproof, I looked up and could read the inscription, although the letters were ancient, for they were deeply and well engraven. "Sacred to Friendship" were the words, in Greek. The steps were little worn, and retained all their smoothness and their polish. After so long a walk as I had taken I doubt whether I should have ascended them without the hand that was offered me. In the temple I beheld an image, of a marble so purely white that it seemed but recently chiselled. I walked up to it and stood before it. The feet were not worn as the feet of some images are by the lips of votaries; indeed, I could fancy that scarcely the tip of a finger had touched them, and I felt pretty sure that words were the only offerings, and now and then a sigh at a distance. Yet the longer I gazed at it the more beautiful did it appear in its color and proportions; and turning to my companion, who, I then discovered, was looking at me,—

"This image," said I, "has all the features and all the attributes of Love, excepting the bow, quiver, and arrows."

"Yes," answered she smiling; "all excepting the mischievous. It has all that the wiser and better of the ancients attributed to him. But do you really see no difference?"

"Again I raised my eyes, and after a while I remarked that the figure was a female, very modest, very young, and little needing the zone that encompassed her. I suppressed this portion of my observations, innocent as it was, and only replied, —

"I see that the torch is borne above the head, and that the eyes are uplifted in the same direction."

"Do you remember," said she, "any image of Love in this attitude?"

"It might be," I answered; "and with perfect propriety."

"Yes; it both might and should be," said she. "But," she continued, "we are not here to worship Love, or to say anything about him. Like all the other blind, he is so quick at hearing, and above all others, blind or sighted, he is so ready to take advantage of the slightest word, that I am afraid he may one day or other come down on us unaware. He has been known before now to assume the form of Friendship, making sad confusion. Let us deprecate this, bending our heads devoutly to the Deity before us."

Was it a blush, or was it the sun of such a bright and genial day, that warmed my cheek so vividly while it descended in adoration; or could it be, by any chance of casualty, that the veil touched it through which the breath of my virgin guide had been passing? Whatever it was, it awakened me. Again my eyes fell on the open book, — to rest on it, not to read it; and I neither dreamed nor slumbered a second time that day.

IX. THE DREAM OF PETRARCA.

When I was younger I was fond of wandering in solitary places, and never was afraid of slumbering in woods and grottoes. Among the chief pleasures of my life, and among the commonest of my occupations, was the bringing before me such heroes and heroines of antiquity, such poets and sages, such of the prosperous and of the unfortunate, as most interested me by their courage, their wisdom, their eloquence, or their adventures. Engaging them in the conversation best suited to their characters, I knew perfectly their manners, their steps, their voices; and often did I moisten with my tears the models I had been forming of the less happy. Great is the privilege of entering into the studies of the intellectual; great is that of conversing with the guides of nations, the movers of the mass, the regulators of the unruly will, stiff in its impurity, and rash against the finger of the Almighty Power that formed it, — but give me rather the creature to sympathize with; apportion me the sufferings to assuage. Allegory had few attractions for me; believing it to be the delight in general of idle, frivolous, inexcursive minds, in whose mansions there is neither hall nor portal to receive the loftier of the passions. A stranger to the affections, she holds a low station among the handmaidens of Poetry, being fit for little but an apparition in a mask. I had reflected for some time on this subject, when, wearied with the length of my walk over the mountains, and finding a soft old mole-hill covered with gray grass by the way-side, I laid my head upon it, and slept. I cannot tell how long it was before a species of dream, or vision, came over me.

Two beautiful youths appeared beside me. Each was winged, but the wings were hanging down, and seemed ill adapted to flight. One of them, whose voice was the softest I ever heard, looking at me frequently, said to the other, "He is under my guardianship for the present; do not awaken him with that feather." Methought, on hearing the whisper, I saw something like the feather of an arrow, and then the arrow

itself, the whole of it, even to the point, although he carried it in such a manner that it was difficult at first to discover more than a palm's length of it; the rest of the shaft (and the whole of the barb) was behind his ankles.

"This feather never awakens any one," replied he, rather petulantly; "but it brings more of confident security and more of cherished dreams than you, without me, are capable of imparting."

"Be it so," answered the gentler; "none is less inclined to quarrel or dispute than I am. Many whom you have wounded grievously call upon me for succor; but so little am I disposed to thwart you, it is seldom I venture to do more for them than to whisper a few words of comfort in passing. How many reproaches, on these occasions, have been cast upon me for indifference and infidelity! Nearly as many, and nearly in the same terms, as upon you."

"Odd enough, that we, O Sleep! should be thought so alike!" said Love, contemptuously. "Yonder is he who bears a nearer resemblance to you: the dullest have observed it."

I fancied I turned my eyes to where he was pointing, and saw at a distance the figure he designated. Meanwhile the contention went on uninterruptedly. Sleep was slow in asserting his power or his benefits. Love recapitulated them, but only that he might assert his own above them. Suddenly he called on me to decide, and to choose my patron. Under the influence first of the one, then of the other, I sprang from repose to rapture, I alighted from rapture on repose, and knew not which was sweetest. Love was very angry with me, and declared he would cross me throughout the whole of my existence. Whatever I might on other occasions have thought of his veracity, I now felt too surely the conviction that he would keep his word. At last, before the close of the altercation, the third Genius had advanced, and stood near us. I cannot tell how I knew him, but I knew him to be the Genius of Death. Breathless as I was at beholding him, I soon became familiar with his features. First they seemed only calm; presently they grew contemplative, and lastly beautiful: those of the Graces themselves are less regular, less harmonious, less composed. Love glanced at him unsteadily, with a counte-

nance in which there was somewhat of anxiety, somewhat of disdain; and cried, "Go away! go away! Nothing that thou touchest, lives."

"Say, rather, child," replied the advancing form, and advancing grew loftier and statelier, — "say rather that nothing of beautiful or of glorious lives its own true life until my wing hath passed over it."

Love pouted, and rumpled and bent down with his forefinger the stiff short feathers on his arrow-head, but replied not. Although he frowned worse than ever, and at me, I dreaded him less and less, and scarcely looked toward him. The milder and calmer Genius, the third, in proportion as I took courage to contemplate him, regarded me with more and more complacency. He held neither flower nor arrow, as the others did; but throwing back the clusters of dark curls that overshadowed his countenance, he presented to me his hand, openly and benignly. I shrank on looking at him so near; and yet I sighed to love him. He smiled, not without an expression of pity, at perceiving my diffidence, my timidity, — for I remembered how soft was the hand of Sleep, how warm and entrancing was Love's. By degrees I grew ashamed of my ingratitude; and turning my face away, I held out my arms, and felt my neck within his. Composure allayed all the throbbings of my bosom, the coolness of freshest morning breathed around, the heavens seemed to open above me, while the beautiful cheek of my deliverer rested on my head. I would now have looked for those others; but knowing my intention by my gesture he said consolatorily, "Sleep is on his way to the earth, where many are calling him; but it is not to them he hastens, for every call only makes him fly farther off. Sedate and grave as he looks, he is nearly as capricious and volatile as the more arrogant and ferocious one."

"And Love," said I, "whither is he departed? If not too late, I would propitiate and appease him."

"He who cannot follow me, he who cannot overtake and pass me," said the Genius, "is unworthy of the name, the most glorious in earth or heaven. Look up! Love is yonder, and ready to receive thee."

I looked. The earth was under me: I saw only the clear blue sky, and something brighter above it.

X. PARABLE OF ASABEL.

CHAPTER I.

Asabel in his youth had been of those who place their trust in God, and he prospered in the land, and many of his friends did partake of his prosperity. After a length of years it came to pass that he took less and less delight in the manifold gifts of God, for that his heart grew fat within him, and knew not any work-day for its work; nor did thankfulness enter into it, as formerly, to awake the sluggard.

Nevertheless did Asabel praise and glorify the Almighty both morning and evening, and did pray unto Him for the continuance and increase of His loving mercies, and did call himself, as the godly are wont to do, miserable sinner, and leper and worm and dust. And all men did laud Asabel, inasmuch as, being clothed in purple and smelling of spikenard, he was a leper and worm and dust. And many did come from far regions to see that dust and that worm and that leper, and did marvel at him, and did bow their heads, and did beseech of God that they might be like unto him. But God inclined not his ear; and they returned unto their own country.

CHAPTER II.

And behold it came to pass that an angel from above saw Asabel go forth from his house. And the angel did enter, and did seat himself on the seat of Asabel.

After a while, a shower fell in sunny drops upon the plane-tree at the gate, and upon the hyssop thereby, and over the field nigh unto the dwelling. Whereupon did Asabel hasten him back; and coming into the doorway he saw another seated upon his seat, who arose not before him, but said only, "Peace be unto thee!"

Asabel was wroth, and said, "Lo! the rain abateth, the sun shineth through it; if thou wilt eat bread, eat; if thou wilt drink water, drink; but having assuaged thy hunger and thy thirst, depart!"

Then said the angel unto Asabel, "I will neither eat bread nor drink water under thy roof, O Asabel! forasmuch as thou didst send therefrom the master whom I serve."

And now the wrath of Asabel waxed hotter, and he said, "Neither thy master nor the slave of thy master have I sent away, not knowing nor having seen either."

Then rose the angel from the seat, and spake: "Asabel, Asabel! thy God hath filled thy house with plenteousness. Hath he not verily done this and more unto thee?"

And Asabel answered him, and said: "Verily the Lord my God hath done this and more unto his servant; blessed be his name forever!"

Again spake the angel: "He hath given thee a name among thy people; and many by his guidance have come unto thee for counsel and for aid."

"Counsel have I given, aid also have I given," said Asabel; "and neither he who received it nor he who gave it, hath repented himself thereof."

Then answered the angel: "The word that thou spakest is indeed the true word. But answer me in the name of the Lord thy God. Hath not thy soul been farther from him as thy years and his benefits increased? The more wealth and the more wisdom (in thy estimation of it) he bestowed upon thee, hast thou not been the more proud, the more selfish, the more disinclined to listen unto the sorrows and wrongs of men?"

And Asabel gazed upon him, and was angered that a youth should have questioned him, and thought it a shame that the eyes of the young should see into the secrets of the aged; and stood reproved before him.

But the angel took him by the hand and spake thus: "Asabel, behold the fruit of all the good seed thy God hath given thee, — pride springing from wealth, obduracy from years, and from knowledge itself uncontrollable impatience and inflexible perversity. Couldst thou not have employed these things much better? Again I say it, thou hast driven out the God that

dwelt with thee ; that dwelt within thy house, within thy breast ; that gave thee much for thyself, and intrusted thee with more for others. Having seen thee abuse, revile, and send him thus away from thee, what wonder that I, who am but the lowest of his ministers, and who have bestowed no gifts upon thee, should be commanded to depart ! "

Asabel covered his eyes, and when he raised them up again, the angel no longer was before him. "Of a truth," said he, and smote his breast, "it was the angel of the Lord." And then did he shed tears. But they fell into his bosom, after a while, like refreshing dew, bitter as were the first of them ; and his heart grew young again, and felt the head that rested on it ; and the weary in spirit knew, as they had known before, the voice of Asabel.

Thus wrought the angel's gentleness upon Asabel, even as the quiet and silent water wins itself an entrance where tempest and fire pass over. It is written that other angels did look up with loving and admiration into the visage of this angel on his return ; and he told the younger and more zealous of them, that, whenever they would descend into the gloomy vortex of the human heart, under the softness and serenity of their voice and countenance its turbulence would subside. "Beloved ! " said the angel, "there are portals that open to the palm-branches we carry, and that close at the flaming sword."

XI. JERIBOHANIAH.

Jeribohaniah sat in his tent, and was grieved and silent, for years had stricken him. And behold there came and stood before him a man who also was an aged man, who howbeit was not grieved, neither was he silent. Nevertheless, until Jeribohaniah spake unto him, spake not he.

But Jeribohaniah had always been one of ready speech; nor verily had age minished his words, nor the desire of his heart to question the stranger. Wherefore uttered he first what stirred within him, saying, "Methinks thou comest from a far country: now what country may that be whence thou comest?"

And the stranger named by name the country whence his feet, together with the staff of his right hand, had borne him.

"Bad, exceeding bad, and stinking in our nostrils," said Jeribohaniah, "is that country! Nevertheless mayest thou enter and eat within my tent, and welcome, seeing that thy scrip hangeth down to thy girdle, round and large as hangeth the gourd in the days of autumn; and it is fitting and right that if I give unto thee of mine, so likewise thou of thine, in due proportion, give unto me; and the rather, forasmuch as my tent containeth few things within it, and thy wallet (I guess) abundant."

Whereupon did Jeribohaniah step forward, and strive to touch with his right hand the top of the wallet, and the bottom with his left. But the stranger drew back therefrom, saying, "Nay."

Then Jeribohaniah waxed wroth, and would have smitten the stranger at the tent, asking him in his indignation why he drew back, and wherefore he withheld the wallet from the most just, the most potent, the most intelligent, and the most venerable of mankind! Whereupon the stranger answered him and said, "Far from thy servant be all strife and wrangling, all

doubt and suspicion. Verily he hath much praised thee, even until this day, unto those among whom he was born and abided. And when some spake evil of thee and of thine, then did thy servant, even I who stand before thee, say unto them, 'Tarry! I will myself go forth unto Jeribohaniah, and see unto his ways, and report unto ye truly what they be.'"

"And now I guess," quoth Jeribohaniah, "thou wouldst return and tell them the old story, — how I and my children have lusted after the goods of other men, and have taken them. Now, we only took the goods, — the men took we not; yet so rebellious and ungrateful were they that we were fain to put them to the edge of the sword. And thus did we. And lest another such generation of vipers should spring up in the wilderness beyond them, we sent onward just men, who should turn and harrow the soil, and put likewise to the edge of the sword such as would hinder us in doing what is lawful and right; namely, that which our wills ordained. To prevent such an extremity, our prudence and humanity led us, under God, to detain the silver and gold intrusted to us by the most suspicious and spiteful of our enemies. And now thou art admitted into my confidence, lay down thy scrip, and eat and drink freely."

"Pleaseth it thee," replied the stranger, "that I carry back unto my own country what thou hast related unto me as seeming good in thine eyes?"

"Carry back what thou wilt," calmly said Jeribohaniah, "save only that which my sons, whose long shadows are now just behind thee, may hold back."

Scarcely had he spoken when the sons entered the tent, and, occupying all the seats, bade the stranger be seated and welcome. Venison brought they forth in deep dishes; wine also poured they out, and they drank unto his health. And when they had wiped their lips with the back of the hand, which the Lord in his wisdom had made hairy for that purpose, they told the stranger that other strangers had blamed curiosity in their kindred; and that they might not be reproved for it, they would ask no questions as to what might peradventure be contained within the scrip, but would look into it at their leisure.

Jeribohaniah told his guest that they were wild lads, and

would have their way. He then looked more gravely and seriously, saying, —

"Everything in this mortal life ends better than we short-sighted creatures could have believed or hoped. Providence hath sent us back those boys purely that thy mission might be accomplished. Unless they had come home in due time, how little wouldst thou have had to relate to thy own tribe concerning us, save only what others, envying our probity and prosperity, and far behind us in wisdom and enterprise, have discoursed about, year after year?"

CRITICISMS

ON

THEOCRITUS, CATULLUS, AND PETRARCA.

CRITICISMS.

THE IDYLS OF THEOCRITUS.

Within the last half-century the Germans have given us several good editions of Theocritus. That of Augustus Meinekius, to which the very inferior and very different poems of Bion and Moschus are appended, is among the best and the least presuming. No version is added; the notes are few and pertinent, never pugnacious, never prolix. In no age, since the time of Aristarchus or before, has the Greek language been so profoundly studied, or its poetry in its nature and metre so perfectly understood, as in ours. Neither Athens nor Alexandria saw so numerous or so intelligent a race of grammarians as Germany has recently seen contemporary. Nor is the society diminished, nor are its labors relaxed at this day. Valckenaer, Schrieber, Schaeffer, Kiesling, Wuesteman, are not the only critics and editors who, before the present one, have bestowed their care and learning on Theocritus.

Doubts have long been entertained upon the genuineness of several among his Idyls. But latterly a vast number, even of those which had never been disputed, have been called in question by Ernest Reinhold, in a treatise printed at Jena in 1819. He acknowledges the first eleven, the thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, and eighteenth. Against the arbitrary ejection of the remainder rose Augustus Wissowa in 1828. In his "Theocritus Theocritœus," vindicating them from suspicion, he subjoins to his elaborate criticism a compendious index of ancient quotations, in none of which is any doubt entertained of their authenticity. But surely it requires no force of argument, no call for extraneous help, to subvert the feeble

position, that, because the poet wrote his Pastorals mostly in his native dialect (the Doric), he can never have written in another. If he composed the eighteenth Idyl in the Æolic, why may he not be allowed the twelfth and twenty-second in the Ionic? Not, however, that in the twelfth he has done it uniformly: the older manuscripts of this poem contain fewer forms of that dialect than were afterward foisted into it, for the sake of making it all of a piece. It is easy to believe that the Idyls he wrote in Sicily were Doric, with inconsiderable variations, and that he thought it more agreeable to Hiero, whose favor he was desirous of conciliating. But when he retired from Sicily to the court of Ptolemy, where Callimachus and Apollonius and Aratus were residing, he would not on every occasion revert to an idiom little cultivated in Egypt. Not only to avoid the charge of rivalry with the poets who were then flourishing there, but also from sound judgment, he wrote heroic poetry in Homeric verse, — in verse no less Ionic than Homer's own; indeed, more purely so.

Thirty of his poems are entitled Idyls, — in short all but the Epigrams, however different in length, in subject, and in metre. But who gave them this appellation, or whence was it derived? We need go up no higher than to εἶδος for the derivation, and it is probable that the poet himself supplied the title. But did he give it to all his compositions, or even to all those (excepting the Epigrams) which are now extant? We think he did not, although we are unsupported in our opinion by the old scholiast who wrote the arguments. "The poet," says he, "did not wish to specify his pieces but *ranged them all under one title*." We believe that he ranged what he thought the more important and the more epic under this category, and that he omitted to give any separate designation to the rest, prefixing to each piece (it may be) its own title. Nay, it appears to us not at all improbable that those very pieces which we moderns call more peculiarly Idyls, were not comprehended by him in this designation. We believe that εἰδύλλιον means a *small image of something greater*, and that it was especially applied at first to his short poems of the heroic cast and character. As the others had no genuine name denoting their quality, but only the names of the interlocutors or the subjects (which the ancient poets, both Greek and Roman, oftener omitted), they

were all after a while comprehended in a mass within one common term. That the term was invented long after the age of Theocritus, is the opinion of Heine and of Wissowa; but where is the proof of the fact, or foundation for the conjecture? Nobody has denied that it existed in the time of Virgil; and many have wondered that he did not thus entitle his Bucolics, instead of calling them Eclogues. And so indeed he probably would have done, had he believed that Theocritus intended any such designation for his Pastorals. But neither he nor Calpurnius, nor Nemesian, called by the name of Idyl their bucolic poems; which they surely would have done if, in their opinion or in the opinion of the public, it was applicable to them. It was not thought so when literature grew up again in Italy, and when the shepherds and shepherdesses recovered their lost estates in the provinces of poetry, under the patronage of Petrarca, Boccaccio, Pontanus, and Mantuanus.

Eobanus Hessus, a most voluminous writer of Latin verses, has translated much from the Greek classics, and among the rest some pieces from Theocritus. From time to time we have spent several hours of idleness over his pages; but the farther we proceeded, whatever was the direction, the duller and drearier grew his unprofitable pine-forest, the more wearisome and disheartening his flat and printless sands. After him, Bruno Sidelius, another German, was the first of the moderns who conferred the name of Idyl on their Bucolics. As this word was enlarged in its acceptation, so was another in another kind of poetry; namely, the Pæan, which at first was appropriated to Apollo and Artemis, but was afterward transferred to other deities. Servius, on the first Æneid, tells us that Pindar not only composed one on Zeus of Dodona, but several in honor of mortals. The same may be said ot the Dithyrambic. Elegy too, in the commencement, was devoted to grief exclusively, like the *nœniæ* and *threnæ*. Subsequently it embraced a vast variety of matters, some of them ethic and didactic; some the very opposite to its institution, inciting to war and patriotism, for instance those of Tyrtæus; and some to love and licentiousness, in which Mimnermus has been followed by innumerable disciples to the extremities of the earth.

Before we inspect the Idyls of Theocritus, one by one, as we intend to do, it may be convenient in this place to recapitulate

what little is known about him. He tells us, in the epigraph to them, that there was another poet of the same name, a native of Chios, but that he himself was a Syracusan of low origin, son of Praxagoras and Philina. He calls his mother περικλειτή (illustrious), evidently for no other reason than because the verse required it. There is no ground for disbelieving what he records of his temper,— that he never was guilty of detraction. His exact age is unknown, and unimportant. One of the Idyls is addressed to the younger Hiero, another to Ptolemy Philadelphus. The former of these began his reign in the one hundred and twenty-sixth Olympiad, the latter in the one hundred and twenty-third. In the sixteenth Idyl the poet insinuates that the valor of Hiero was more conspicuous than his liberality; on Ptolemy he never had reason to make any such remark. Among his friends in Egypt was Aratus, of whom Cicero and Cæsar thought highly, and of whose works both of them translated some parts. Philetus the Coan was another; and his merit must also have been great, for Propertius joins him with Callimachus, and asks permission to enter the sacred grove of poetry in their company, —

> "Callimachi manes et Coi sacra Philetæ!
> In vestrum quæso me sinite ire nemus."

It appears, however, that Aratus was more particularly and intimately Theocritus's friend. To him he inscribes the sixth Idyl, describes his loves in the seventh, and borrows from him the religious exordium of the seventeenth. After he had resided several years in Egypt, he returned to his native country, and died there.

We now leave the man for the writer, and in this capacity we have a great deal more to say. The poems we possess from him are only a part, although probably the best, of what he wrote. He composed hymns, elegies, and iambics. Hermann, in his dissertation on hexameter verse, expresses his wonder that Virgil, in the Eclogues, should have deserted the practice of Theocritus in its structure; and he remarks, for instance, the first in the first Idyl,—

> Ἁδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἁ πίτυς . . . αἰπόλε τῆνα.

This pause, however, is almost as frequent in Homer as in Theocritus; and it is doubtful to us, who indeed have not

counted the examples, whether any other pause occurs so often in the Iliad. In reading this verse, we do not pause after πίτυς, but after ψιθύρισμα; but in the verses which the illustrious critic quotes from Homer the pause is precisely in that place,—

Πόντῳ μὲν τὰ πρῶτα κορύσσεται . . . αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα
Χέρσῳ ῥηγνύμενον μεγάλα βρέμει . . . ἀμφὶ δέ τ' ἄκρας.

Although the pause is greatly more common in the Greek hexameter than in the Latin, yet Hermann must have taken up Virgil's Eclogues very inattentively in making his remark. For that which he wonders the Roman has imitated so sparingly from the Syracusan occurs quite frequently enough in Virgil, and rather too frequently in Theocritus. It may be tedious to the inaccurate and negligent; it may be tedious to those whose reading is only a species of dissipation, and to whom ears have been given only as ornaments; nevertheless, for the sake of others, we have taken some trouble to establish our position in regard to the Eclogues, and the instances are given below: —

Ecl. I, containing 83 verses.

Namque erit ille mihi semper deus . . .
Non equidem invideo, miror magis . . .
Ite meæ, felix quondam, pecus . . .

Ecl. II. 73 verses.

Atque superba pati fastidia . . .
Cum placidum ventis staret mare . . .
Bina die siccant ovis ubera . . .
Heu, heu! quid volui misero mihi . . .

Ecl. III. 111 verses.

Dic mihi, Damœta, cujum pecus . . .
Infelix, O semper oves pecus . . .
Et, si non aliquâ nocuisses . . .
Si nescis, meus ille caper fuit . . .
Bisque die numerant ambo pecus . . .
Parta meæ Veneri sunt munera . . .
Pollio et ipse facit nova carmina . . .
Parcite, oves, nimium procedere . . .

Ecl. V. 90 verses.

Sive antro potius succedimus . . .
Frigida, Daphni, boves ad flumina . . .

Quale sopor fessis in gramine . . .
Hæc eadem docuit cujum pecus . . .

Ecl. VI. 86 verses.

Cum canerem reges et prælia . . .
Ægle Naïadum pulcherrima . . .
Carmina quæ vultis cognoscite . . .
Aut aliquam in magno sequitur grege . . .
Errabunda bovis vestigia . . .
Quo cursu deserta petiverit . . .

Ecl. VII. 70 verses.

Ambo florentes ætatibus . . .
Vir gregis ipse caper deerraverat . . .
Aspicio ; ille ubi me contra videt . . .
Nymphæ noster amor Lebethrides
Quale meo Codro concedite . . .
Setosi caput hoc apri tibi . . .
Ite domum pasti, si quis pudor . . .
Aut si ultra placitum laudârit . . .
Si fœtura gregem suppleverit . . .
Solstitium pecori defendite . . .
Populus Alcidæ gratissima . . .
Fraxinus in sylvis pulcherrima.

Ecl. VIII. 109 verses.

Sive oram Illyrici legis æquoris . . .
A te principium, tibi desinet . . .
Carmina cœpta tuis, atque hac sine . . .
Nascere præque diem veniens age . . .
Omnia vel medium fiant mare . . .
Desine Mænalios jam desine . . .
Ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina . . .
Transque caput jace ; ne respexeris . . .

Ecl. IX. 67 verses.

Heu cadit in quemquam tantum scelus . . .
Tityre dum redeo, brevis est via . . .
Et potum pastas age Tityre . . .
Pierides, sunt et mihi carmina . . .
Omnia fert ætas, animum quoque . . .
Nunc oblita mihi tot carmina . . .
Hinc adeo media est nobis via . . .
Incipit apparere Bianoris . . .

Ecl. X. 77 verses.

Nam neque Parnassi, vobis juga . . .
Omnes unde amor iste rogant tibi . . .

Instances of the cadence are not wanting in the Æneid. The fourth book, the most elaborate of all, exhibits them, —

> " Tempora, quis rebus dexter modus " . . .

And again in the last lines, with only one interposed, —

> " Devolat, et supra caput adstitit . . .
> Sic ait et dextra crinem secat."

In Theocritus it is not this usage which is so remarkable; it is the abundance and exuberance of dactyls. They hurry on one after another, like the waves of a clear and rapid brook in the sunshine, reflecting all things the most beautiful in Nature, but not resting upon any.

Idyl I. Of all the poetry in all languages, that of Theocritus is the most fluent and easy; but if only this Idyl were extant, it would rather be memorable for a weak imitation of it by Virgil and a beautiful one by Milton, than for any great merit beyond the harmony of its verse. Indeed, it opens with such sounds as Pan himself in a prelude on his pipe might have produced. The dialogue is between Thyrsis and a goatherd. Here is much of appropriate description; but it appears unsuitable to the character and condition of a goatherd to offer so large a reward as he offers for singing a song. "If you will sing as you sang in the contest with the Libyan shepherd Chromis, I will reward you with a goat, mother of two kids, which goat you may milk thrice a day; for though she suckles two kids, she has milk enough left for two pails."

We often hear that such or such a thing "is not worth an old song." Alas, how very few things are! What precious recollections do some of them awaken! What pleasurable tears do they excite! They purify the stream of life; they can delay it on its shelves and rapids; they can turn it back again to the soft moss amidst which its sources issue.

But we must not so suddenly quit the generous goatherd; we must not turn our backs on him for the sake of indulging in these reflections. He is ready to give not only a marvellously fine goat for the repetition of a song, but a commodity of much higher value in addition, — a deep capacious cup of the most elaborate workmanship, carved and painted in several compartments. Let us look closely at these.

The first contains a woman in a veil and fillet; near her are two young suitors who throw fierce *words* one against the other: she never minds them, but smiles upon each alternately. Surely no cup, not even a magical one, could express all this! But they continue to carry on their ill-will.

In the next place is an old fisherman on a rock, from which he is hauling his net. Not far from him is a vineyard, laden with purple grapes. A little boy is watching them near the boundary-hedge, while a couple of foxes are about their business, — one walking through the rows of vines, picking out the ripe grapes as he goes along; the other devising mischief to the boy's wallet, and declaring on the word of a fox that he will never quit the premises until he has captured the breakfast therein deposited.

The song is deferred no longer, — and a capital song it is; but the goatherd has well paid the piper. It is unnecessary to transcribe the verses which Virgil and Milton have imitated:

> "Nam neque Parnassi vobis juga nam neque Pindi
> Ulla moram facere, neque Aonia Aganippe."

Virgil himself, on the present occasion, was certainly not detained in any of these places. Let us try whether we cannot come toward the original with no greater deviation, and somewhat less dulness: —

> "Where were ye, O ye nymphs, when Daphnis died?
> For not on Pindus were ye, nor beside
> Penëus in his softer glades, nor where
> Acis might well expect you, once your care.
> But neither Acis did your steps detain,
> Nor strong Anapus rushing forth amain,
> Nor high-browed Etna with her forest chain."

Harmonious as are the verses of Theocritus, the Greek language itself could not bear him above Milton in his "Lycidas." He had the good sense to imitate the versification of Tasso's "Aminta," employing rhyme where it is ready at hand, and permitting his verses to be longer or shorter, as may happen. They are never deficient in sweetness, taken separately, and never at the close of a sentence disappoint us. However, we cannot but regret the clashing of irreconcilable mythologies. Neither in a poem nor in a picture do we see willingly the Nymphs and the Druids together; Saint Peter comes even more

inopportunely; and although in the midst of such scenery we may be prepared against wolves with their own heads and "maws" and "privy paws," yet we deprecate them when they appear with a bishop's: they are then an over-match for us. The ancients could not readily run into such errors; yet something of a kind not very dissimilar may be objected to Virgil, —

> "Venit Apollo,
> 'Galle, quid insanis?' inquit."

When the poet says, "Cynthius aurem vellit et admonuit," we are aware that it is merely a form of phraseology; but among those who in Virgil's age believed in Apollo, not one believed that he held a conversation with Gallus. The time for these familiarities of gods with mortals had long been over, —

> "Nec se contingi patiuntur lumine claro."

There was only one of them who could still alight without suspicion among the poets. Phœbus had become a mockery, a by-word; but there never will be a time probably when Love shall lose his personality, or be wished out of the way if he has crept into a poem. But the poem must be a little temple of his own, admitting no other occupant or agent besides himself and (at most) two worshippers.

To return to this first Idyl. Theocritus may be censured for representing a continuity of action in one graven piece, where the girl smiles on two young men alternately. But his defence is ready. He would induce the belief that on looking at the perfection of the workmanship we must necessarily know not only what is passing, but also what is past and what is to come. We see the two foxes in the same spirit, and enter into their minds and machinations. We swear to the wickedest of the two that we will keep his secret, and that we will help him to the uttermost of our power when he declares that he (*φατι*) will have the boy's breakfast. Perhaps we might not be so steadily his partisan, if the boy himself were not meditating an ill turn to another creature. He is busy in making a little cage for the cicala. Do we never see the past and the future in the pictures of Edwin Landseer, who exercises over all the beasts of the field and fowls of the air an undivided and unlimited dominion, *καὶ νόον ἔγνω*?

We shall abstain, as far as may be, in this review from verbal criticism, for which the judicious editor, after many other great scholars, has left but little room; but we cannot consent with him to omit the hundred and twentieth verse, merely because we find it in the fifth Idyl, nor because he tells us it is rejected in the best editions. Verses have been repeated both by Lucretius and by Virgil. In the present case the sentence without it seems obtruncated, and wants the peculiar rhythm of Theocritus, which is complete and perfect with it. In the last two verses are αἵδε χίμαιραι Οὐ μὴ σκιρτάσητε. Speaking *to* the she-goats he could not well say αἱ, which could only be said in speaking *of* them. Probably the right reading is ὧδε, although we believe there is no authority for it. The repetition of that word is graceful, and adds to the sense. "Come hither, Kissaitha! milk this one; but, you others, do not leap about *here*, lest, etc." The poet tells us he will hereafter sing more sweetly: it is much to say; but he will keep his promise. He speaks in the character of Thyrsis. When the goatherd gives the cup to the shepherd he wishes his mouth to be filled with honey and with the honey-*comb!*

Idyl II. is a monologue, and not bucolic. Cimætha, an enchantress, is in love with Delphis. The poem is curious, containing a complete system of incantation as practised by the Greeks. Out of two verses, by no means remarkable, Virgil has framed some of the most beautiful in all his works. Whether the Idyl was in this particular copied from Apollonius, or whether he in the Argonautics had it before him, is uncertain. Neither of them is so admirable as, —

> "Sylvæque et sæva quierant
> Æquora.
> At non infelix animi Phœnissa; neque unquam
> Solvitur in somnos, *oculisve aut pectore noctem*
> *Accipit:* ingeminant curæ, rursusque resurgens
> Sævit amor.
>
> The woods and stormy waves were now at rest,
> But not the hapless Dido; never sank
> She into sleep, never received she night
> Into her bosom; grief redoubled grief,
> And love sprang up more fierce the more repressed."

Idyl III. A goatherd, whose name is not mentioned, declares his love, with prayers and expostulations, praises and re-

proaches, to Amaryllis. The restlessness of passion never was better expressed. The tenth and eleventh lines are copied by Virgil, with extremely ill success: —

> "*Quod potui*, puero *sylvestri* ex arbore *lecta*
> Aurea mala decem misi, cras altera mittam."

How poor is *quod potui!* and what a *selection* (lecta) is that of crabs! moreover, these were *sent* as a present (misi), and not offered in person. There is not even the action, such as it is, but merely the flat relation of it. Instead of a narration about sending these precious crabs, and the promise of as many more on the morrow, here in Theocritus the attentive lover says, "Behold! I bring you ten apples. I gathered them myself from the tree whence you desired me to gather them; to-morrow I will bring you more. Look upon my soul-tormenting grief! I wish I were a bee that I might come into your grotto, penetrating through the ivy and fern, however thick about you." Springing up and away from his dejection and supplication, he adds wildly, —

> Νῦν ἔγνων τὸν Ἔρωτα: βαρὺς θεὸς ἦ ῥα λέαινας
> Μασδὸν ἐθήλαζε, δρυμῷ δέ μιν ἔτρεφε μάτηρ.[1]

> Now know I Love, a cruel God, who drew
> A lioness's teat, and in the forest grew.

Virgil has amplified the passage to no purpose: —

> "Nunc scio quid sit amor; duris in cotibus illum
> Ismarus aut Rhodope aut extremi Garamantes
> Nec *generis* nostri puerum nec *sanguinis* edunt."

Where is the difference of meaning here between *genus* and *sanguis?* And why all this bustle about Ismarus and Rhodope and the Garamantes? A lioness in an oak-forest stands in place of them all, and much better. Love being the deity, not the passion, *qui* would have been better than *quid*, both in propriety and in sound. There follows, —

> "Alter ab undecimo jam tum me ceperat annus."

[1] We have given, not the Editor's, but our own punctuation: none after θεός; for if there were any in that place, we should have wished the words were βαρὺν θεόν.

This is among the most faulty expressions in Virgil. The words "jam tum me" sound woodenly; and "me ceperat annus" is scarcely Latin. Perhaps the poet wrote *mihi*, abbreviated to *mi*, — *mihi cœperat annus*. There has been a doubt regarding the exact meaning; but this should raise none. The meaning is, "I was entering my *thirteenth* year." "*Unus* ab undecimo" would be the twelfth; of course "*alter* ab undecimo" must be the thirteenth.

Virgil is little more happy in his translations from Theocritus than he is in those from Homer. It is probable that they were only school exercises, — too many, and in his opinion, too good to be thrown away. J. C. Scaliger, zealous for the great Roman poet, gives him the preference over Homer in every instance where he has copied him. But in fact there is nowhere a sentence, and only a single verse anywhere, in which he rises to an equality with his master. He says of Fame, —

> "Ingrediturque solo et caput inter sidera condit."

The noblest verse in the Latin language.

Idyl IV. "Battus and Corydon." [1] The greater part is tedious; but at verse thirty-eight begins a tender grief of Battus on the death of his Amaryllis. Corydon attempts to console him: "You must be of good courage, my dear Battus! Things may go better with you another day." To which natural and brief reflection we believe all editions have added two verses as spoken by Corydon. Nevertheless we suspect that Theocritus gave the following one to Battus, and that he says in reply, or rather in refutation, "There are hopes in the living, but the dead leave us none." Then says Corydon, "The skies are sometimes serene and sometimes rainy." Battus is comforted; he adds but *θαρσέω*, for he perceives on a sudden that the calves are nibbling the olives. Good Battus has forgotten at once all his wishes and regrets for Amaryllis, and would rather

[1] The close of verse thirty-one is printed *ἅ τε Ζάκυνθος*; in other editions ἃ Ζάκυνθος. Perhaps both are wrong. The first syllable of Ζάκυνθος is short, which is against the latter reading; and *τε* would be long before Z, which is against the former. Might not a shepherd who uses the Doric dialect have said *Δάκυνθος*? We have heard of a coin inscribed *Δακυνθίων*. In Virgil we read *nemorosa Zacynthos*; but it seems impossible that he should have written the word with a Z.

have a stout cudgel. His animosity soon subsides, however, and he asks Corydon an odd question about an old shepherd, which Corydon answers to his satisfaction and delight.

IDYL V. Comatas, a goatherd, and Lacon, a shepherd, accuse each other of thievery. They carry on their recriminations with much spirit; but the beauty of the verses could alone make the contest tolerable. After the fortieth are several which Virgil has imitated with little honor to his selection. Theocritus, always harmonious, is invariably the most so in description. This is, however, too long continued in many places; but here we might wish it had begun earlier and lasted longer. Lacon says, —

> "Sweeter beneath this olive will you sing,
> By the grove-side and by the running spring,
> Where grows the grass in bedded tufts, and where
> The shrill cicada shakes the slumberous air."

This is somewhat bolder than the original will warrant, but not quite so bold as Virgil's "*rumpunt arbusta* cicadæ." It is followed by what may be well in character with two shepherds of Sybaris, but what has neither pleasantry nor novelty to recommend it; and the answer would have come with much better grace uninterrupted. Comatas, after reminding Lacon of a very untoward action in which both were implicated, thus replies: —

> "I will not thither: cypresses are here,
> Oaks, and two springs that gurgle cool and clear;
> And bees are flying for their hives, and through
> The shady branches birds their talk pursue."

They both keep their places, and look out for an arbitrator to decide on the merit of their songs. Morson, a woodman, is splitting a tree near them, and they call him. There is something very dramatic in their appeal, and in the objurgation that follows. The contest is carried on in extemporary verses, two at a time. After several, Comatas says, "All my she-goats, excepting two, are bearers of twins; nevertheless, a girl who sees me among them says, 'Unfortunate creature! do you milk them all yourself?'" Lacon, as the words now stand, replies, "Pheu! pheu!" an exclamation which among the tragedians expresses grief and anguish, but which here signifies "Psha,

psha." Now, it is evident that Comatas had attempted to make Lacon jealous, by telling him how sorry the girl was that he should milk the goats himself without anybody to help him. Lacon in return is ready to show that he also had his good fortune. There is reason therefore to suspect that the name *Λάκων* should be *Δάμων*, because from all that precedes we may suppose that Lacon was never possessed of such wealth, and that Comatas would have turned him into ridicule if he had boasted of it. "Psha! psha! you are a grand personage with your twin-bearing goats, no doubt; but you milk them yourself. Now, Damon is richer than you are; he fills pretty nearly twenty hampers with cheeses."

This seems indubitable from the following speech of Lacon. Not to be teased any more after he had been taunted by Comatas that Clearista, although he was a goatherd, threw apples at him and began to sing the moment he drove his herd by her, Lacon, out of patience at last, says, "Cratidas makes me wild with that beautiful hair about the neck." There could have been no room for this if he had spoken of himself, however insatiable; for in a later verse Cratidas seems already to have made room for another, —

'Αλλ' ἐγὼ Εὐμήδευς ἔραμαι μέγα.

Finding Damon here in Theocritus, we may account for his appearance in Virgil. No Greek letters are more easily mistaken one for the other than the capital Λ for Δ, and the small *κ* for *μ*. In the one hundred and fifth verse, Comatas boasts of possessing a cup sculptured by Praxiteles. This is no very grave absurdity in such a braggart: it suits the character. Virgil, who had none to support for his shepherd, makes him state that his is only "*divini* opus Alcimedontis."

It may be remarked, in conclusion, that no other Idyl contains so many pauses after the fourth foot, which Hermann calls bucolic; nearly half of the verses have this cadence.

Idyl VI. This is dramatic, and is addressed to Aratus. The shepherds Damætas and Daphnis had driven their flocks into one place, and sitting by a fountain began a song about Polyphemus and Galatea. Daphnis acts the character of Galatea, Damætas of Polyphemus. The various devices of the gigantic shepherd to make her jealous, and his confidence

of success in putting them into practice are very amusing. His slyness in giving a secret sign to set the dog at her, and the dog knowing that he loved her in his heart, and pushing his nose against her thigh instead of biting her, are such touches of true poetry as are seldom to be found in pastorals. In the midst of these our poet has been thought to have committed one anachronism. But where Galatea is said to have mistaken the game, when —

> φεύγει φιλέοντα καὶ οὐ φιλέοντα διώκει
> Καὶ τὸν ἀπὸ γραμμᾶς κινεῖ λίθον,

> "Seeks him who loves not, him who loves, avoids:
> And makes false moves," —

she herself is not represented as the speaker, nor is Polyphemus, but Daphnis. It is only at the next speech that either of the characters comes forth in person; here Damætas is the Polyphemus, and acts his part admirably.

Idyl VII. The last was different in its form and character from the five preceding; the present is more different still. The poet, on his road to Alexandria with Eucritus and Amyntas, meets Phrasidamus and Antigenes, and is invited to accompany them to the festival of Ceres, called Thalysia. He falls in with Lycidas of Cidon, and they relate their love-stories. This Idyl closes with a description of summer just declining into autumn. The invocation to the Nymphs is in the spirit of Pindar.

Idyl VIII.[1] The subject is a contest in singing between Menalcas and Daphnis for a pipe. Here are some verses of exquisite simplicity, which Virgil has most clumsily translated:

> "Ego hunc vitulum, ne *forte* recuses, etc.
> De grege non ausim quidquam deponere tecum,
> Est mihi namque domi pater, est *injusta* noverca,
> Bisque die numerant ambo *pecus* . . . *alter et hædos*."

[1] The first two lines are the least pleasant to the ear of any in this melodious poet.

> Δάφνιδι τῷ χαρίε | ν τι . . . συνήντετο βουκολέο | ν τι
> Μᾶλα νέμων ὥς φα | ν τί, etc.

Ὡς φαντί is found in all editions; but Pierson has suggested Διόφαντε. Diophantus was a friend of Theocritus, addressed in Idyl XXI.

It is evident that Virgil means by "pecus" the sheep only; "pecora" at this day means a *ewe* in Italian. Virgil's Menalcas had no objection to the robbery, but was afraid of the chastisement.

The Menalcas of Theocritus says, "I will never lay what belongs to my father, but I have a pipe which I made myself;" and according to his account of it, it was no ordinary piece of workmanship. Damætas, it appears, had made exactly such another, quite as good; and the cane of which it was made cut his finger in making it. They carry on the contest in such sweet hexameters and pentameters as never were heard before or since; but they finish with hexameters alone. The prize is awarded to Daphnis by the goatherd who is arbitrator. He must have been a goatherd of uncommonly fine discernment. The match seems equal; perhaps the two following verses turned the balance: —

> *Ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τᾷ πέτρᾳ τᾷδ' ᾄσομαι, ἀγκὰς ἔχων τυ,*
> *Σύνομα μᾶλ' ἐσορῶν, τὰν Σικελὰν ἐς ἅλα.*

Of these, as of those above, we can only give the meaning; he who can give a representation of them, can give a representation of the sea-breezes: —

> "It never was my wish to have possessed
> The land of Pelops and his golden store;
> But only, as I hold you to my breast,
> Glance at our sheep and our Sicilian shore."

IDYL IX. Again Menalcas and Daphnis; but they must both have taken cold.

IDYL X. Milo and Battus are reapers. Milo asks Battus what ails him, that he can neither draw a straight furrow nor reap like his neighbors. For simplicity none of the pastorals is more delightful, and it abounds in rustic irony.

IDYL XI. is addressed to Nikias of Miletus, and appears to have been written in Sicily, by the words ὁ *Κύκλωψ* ὁ *παρ' ἡμῖν.* It describes the love of Polyphemus for Galatea, his appeal to her, his promises (to the extent of eleven kids and four bear-cubs), and his boast that if he cannot have her, he can find another perhaps more beautiful; for that many are ready enough to play with him, challenging him to that effect, and

giggling (κιχλίζοντι) when he listens to them. Virgil's imitation of this Idyl is extremely and more than usually feeble. The last verse however of Theocritus is somewhat flat.[1]

Idyl XII. We now arrive at the first of those Idyls of which the genuineness has been so pertinaciously disputed.[2] And why? Because forsooth it pleased the author to compose it in the Ionic dialect. Did Burns, who wrote mostly in the Scottish, write nothing in the English? With how much better reason has the competitor of Apollonius and Callimachus deserted the Doric occasionally! Meleager and other writers of inscriptions mix frequently Ionic forms with Doric. In fact, the most accurate explorers must come at last to the conclusion, that even in the pastoral portion of these Idyls scarcely a single one is composed throughout of unmingled Doric. The ear that is accustomed to the exuberant flow of Theocritus, will never reject as spurious this melodious and graceful poem. Here, and particularly toward the conclusion, as very often elsewhere, he writes in the style and spirit of Pindar, while he celebrates the loves extolled by Plato.

Idyl XIII. is addressed to Nikias, as the eleventh was. It is not a dialogue; it is a narrative of the loss of Hylas. The same story is related by Propertius in the most beautiful of his Elegies.

Idyl XIV. is entitled "Cynisca's Love," and is a dialogue between her husband Æschines and his friend Thyonichus. Cynisca had taken a fancy to Lucos. At an entertainment given by Æschines, a very mischievous guest, one Apis, sings

[1] *ῥᾶον δὲ διᾶγ' ἢ χρυσὸν ἔδωκεν.*

"He lived more pleasantly than if he had given gold for it."

This is barely sense; nor can it be improved without a bold substitution, —

ἢ χρυσὸν ἔχων τις.

Such terminations are occasionally to be found in our poet; for example, —

Idyl I. *ἀλλὰ μάχευ μοι.* Idyl II. *ὅσσον ἐγώ θην.* Idyl III. *εἰ φιλέεις με*, and three lines farther on, *οὔνεκ' ἔχω μέν*, etc.

[2] The title of this is "Aites," which among the Thessalians was what, according to the poet in v. 13, *εἰσπνείλος* was among the Spartans, — the one *παρὰ τὸ τὸν ἐρώμενον εἰσαίειν*, the other from *εἰσπνεῖν τὸν ἔρωτα τῷ ἀγαπῶντι.*

about a wolf (Λύκος), who was quite charming. Æschines had had some reason for jealousy before. Hearing Cynisca sigh at the name of Lucos, he can endure it no longer, and gives her a slap in the face, then another, and so forth, until she runs out of the house and takes refuge with her Lucos day and night. All this the husband relates to Thyonichus; and the verses from the thirty-fourth to the thirty-eighth, *θάλπε φίλον*, are very laughable. Thyonichus advises that so able a boxer should enter the service of Ptolemy.

Idyl XV. "The Syracusan Gossips." Never was there so exact, or so delightful a description of such characters. There is a little diversity, quite enough, between Praxinoë and Gorgo. Praxinoë is fond of dress; conceited, ignorant, rash, abusive in her remarks on her husband, ambitious to display her knowledge as well as her finery, and talking absurdly on what she sees about her at the festival of Adonis. Gorgo is desirous of insinuating her habits of industry. There are five speakers, — Gorgo, Praxinoë, Eunoë, an old woman, and a traveller, besides a singing girl who has nothing to do with the party or the dialogue.

Gorgo. Don't talk in this way against your husband while your baby is by. See how he is looking at you.

Praxinoë. Sprightly my pretty Zopyrion! I am not talking of papa.

Gorgo. By Proserpine, he understands you! Papa is a jewel of a papa.

After a good deal of tattle they are setting out for the fair, and the child shows a strong desire to be of the party.

Gorgo. I can't take you, darling! There 's a hobgoblin on the other side of the door, and there 's a biting horse. Ay, ay, cry to your heart's content! Do you think I would have you lamed for life? Come, come, let us be off!

Laughter is irrepressible at their mishaps and exclamations in the crowd. This poem, consisting of one hundred and forty-four verses, is the longest in Theocritus, excepting the heroics on Hercules. The comic is varied and relieved by the song of a girl on Adonis. She notices everything she sees, and describes it as it appears to her. After an invocation to Venus she has a compliment for Berenice, not without an eye to the candied flowers and white pastry, and the pretty

little baskets containing mossy gardens and waxwork Adonises, and tiny Loves flying over, —

> Οἷοι ἀηδονιδῆες ἐφεζόμενοι ἐπὶ δένδρων
> Πωτῶνται, πτερύγων πειρώμενοι ὄζον ἀπ' ὄζω.

> "Like the young nightingales, some nestling close,
> Some plying the fresh wing from bough to bough."

Idyl XVI. "The Graces." Here Hiero is reminded how becoming is liberality in the rich and powerful; and here is sometimes a plaintive under-song in the praise. The attributes of the Graces were manifold; the poet has them in view principally as the distributors of just rewards. We have noticed the resemblance he often bears to Pindar; nowhere is it so striking as in this and the next. The best of Pindar's odes is not more energetic throughout; none of them surpass these two in the chief qualities of that admirable poet, — rejection of what is light and minute, disdain of what is trivial, and selection of those blocks from the quarry which will bear strong strokes of the hammer and retain all the marks of the chisel. Of what we understand by sublimity he has little; but he moves in the calm majesty of an elevated mind. Of all poets he least resembles those among us whom it is the fashion most to admire at the present day. The verses of this address to Hiero by Theocritus, from the thirty-fourth to the forty-seventh, are as sonorous and elevated as the best of Homer's; and so are those beginning at the ninety-eighth verse to the end.

Idyl XVII. This has nothing of the Idyl in it, but is a noble eulogy on Ptolemy Philadelphus, son of Ptolemy Lagus and Berenice. Warton is among the many who would deduct it from the works of our poet. It is grander even than the last on Hiero, in which he appears resolved to surpass all that Pindar has written on the earlier king of that name. It is only in versification that it differs from him; in comprehensiveness, power, and majesty, and in the manner of treating the subject, the same spirit seems to have guided the same hand.

Idyl XVIII. "The Epithalamium of Helen." There were two species of epithalamium, — the κοιμητικόν, such as this, and such likewise as that of Catullus, sung as the bride was conducted to her chamber; and the ἐγερτικόν, sung as she arose in the morning. The poet, in the first verses, introduces

twelve Spartan girls crowned with hyacinths, who sing and dance about Menelaus. "And so you are somewhat heavy in the knees, sweet spouse! rather fond of sleep, are you? You ought to have gone to sleep at the proper time, and have let a young maiden play with other young maidens at her mother's until long after daybreak." Then follow the praises of Helen, wishes for her prosperity, and promises to return at the crowing of the cock.

IDYL XIX. "Kariocleptes, or the Hive-stealer," contains but eight verses. It is the story of Cupid stung by a bee,— the first and last bee that ever stung *all* the fingers (Δάκτυλα πάντ' ὑπένυξεν) of both hands; for it is not χειρός but χειρῶν. Having said in the first verse that the bee stung him as he was plundering the hive, we may easily suspect in what part the wound was inflicted; and among the extremely few things we could wish altered or omitted in Theocritus are the words—

ἄκραδε χειρῶν,
Δάκτυλα πάνθ' ὑπένυξεν. Ὁ δ' ἄλγεε.

All the needful and all the ornamental would be comprised in—

Κηρίον ἐκ σίμβλων συλεύμενον, ὃς χέρ' ἔφυσσε, etc.

IDYL XX. "The Oxherd." He complains of Eunica, who holds his love in derision and finds fault with his features, speech, and manners. From plain downright contemptuousness she bursts forth into irony,—

ὡς ἀγρία παίσδεις,
Ὡς τρυφερὸν λαλέεις, ὡς κωτίλα ῥήματα φράσδεις, etc.

"How rustic is your play!
How coarse your language!" etc.

He entertains a very different opinion of himself, boasts that every girl upon the hills is in love with him, and is sure that only a "town lady" (which he thinks is the same thing as a "lady of the town") could have so little taste. There is simplicity in this Idyl, but it is the worst of the author's.

IDYL XXI. "The Fisherman." Two fishermen were lying stretched on seaweed in a wattled hut, and resting their heads against the wall composed of twigs and leaves. Around them

were spread all the implements of their trade, which are specified in very beautiful verse. They arose before dawn, and one said to the other, "They speak unwisely who tell us that the nights are shorter in summer when the days are longer, for within the space of this very night I have dreamed innumerable dreams. Have you ever learned to interpret them?" He then relates how he dreamed of having caught a golden fish, how afraid he was that it might be the favorite fish of Neptune or Amphitrite. His fears subsided, and he swore to himself that he would give up the sea forever and be a king. "I am now afraid of having sworn any such oath," said he. "Never fear," replied the other; "the only danger is of dying with hunger in the midst of such golden dreams."

Idyl XXII. This is the first heroic poem in Theocritus; it is in two parts. First is described the fight of Polideukes and Amycus; secondly, of Castor and Lynceus. Of Amycus the poet says that "his monstrous chest was *spherical*," — ἐσφαιρῶτο.

Omitting this, we may perhaps give some idea of the scene.

> "In solitude both wandered, far away
> From those they sailed with. On the hills above,
> Beneath a rocky steep, a fount they saw
> Full of clear water; and below were more
> That bubbled from the bottom, silvery,
> Crystalline. In the banks around grew pines,
> Poplars, and cypresses and planes, and flowers
> Sweet-smelling; pleasant work for hairy bees
> Born in the meadows at the close of spring.
> There in the sunshine sat a savage man,
> Horrid to see; broken were both his ears
> With cestuses, his shoulders were like rocks
> Polished by some vast river's ceaseless whirl."

Apollonius and Valerius Flaccus have described the fight of Amycus and Polydeukes. Both poets are clever, Valerius more than usually. Theocritus is masterly.

Idyl XXIII. "Dyseros, or the Unhappy Lover." The subject of this is the same as the Corydon of Virgil; but here the statue of Cupid falls on and crushes the inflexible.

Idyl XXIV. "Heracliskos, or the Infant Hercules." There are critics of so weak a sight in poetry as to ascribe this magnificent and wonderful work to Bion or Moschus. Hercules is

cradled in Amphitryon's shield. The description of the serpents, of the supernatural light in the chamber, and the prophecy of Tiresias, are equal to Pindar and Homer.

IDYL XXV. "Hercules the Lion-Killer." This will bear no comparison with the preceding. The story is told by Hercules himself, and the poet has taken good care that it should not be beyond his capacity.

IDYL XXVI. "The Death of Pentheus." Little can be said for this also; only that the style is the pure antique.

IDYL XXVII. "Daphnis and the Shepherdess" has been translated by Dryden. He has given the Shepherdess a muslin gown bespangled. This easy and vigorous poet too often turns the country into the town, smells of the ginshop, and staggers toward the brothel. He was quite at home with Juvenal, imitating his scholastic strut, deep frown, and loud declamation. No other has done such justice to Lucretius, to Virgil, to Horace, and to Ovid; none is so dissimilar to Theocritus. Wherever he finds a stain, he enlarges its circumference, and renders it vivid and indelible. In this lively poem we wish the sixty-fifth and sixty-sixth verses were omitted.

IDYL XXVIII. Neither this nor any one of the following can be called an Idyl. The metre is the pentameter choriambic, like Catullus's "Alphene immemor," etc.

IDYL XXIX. Expostulation against Inconstancy. The metre is the dactylic pentameter, in which every foot is a dactyl, excepting the first, which is properly a trochee; this however may be converted to a spondee or an iambic, enjoying the same license as the Phaleucian. In the twentieth verse there is a false quantity, where κε is short before ζ.

IDYL XXX. The "Death of Adonis." Venus orders the Loves to catch the guilty boar and bring him before her. They do so; he makes his defence against the accusation, which is that he only wished to kiss the thigh of Adonis; and he offers his tusk in atonement, and if the tusk is insufficient, his cheek. Venus pitied him, and he was set at liberty. Out of gratitude and remorse, he went to a fire and burned his teeth down to the sockets. Let those who would pillage Theocritus of his valuables show the same contrition; we then promise them this poem, to do what they will with.

The "Inscriptions," which follow, are all of extreme sim-

plicity and propriety. These are followed by the poems of Bion and Moschus. Bion was a native of Smyrna, Moschus (his scholar) of Syracuse. They are called authors of Idyls, but there is nothing of idyl or pastoral in their works. The worst of them, as is often the case, is the most admired. Bion tells us that the boar bit the thigh of Adonis with his *tusk*, — the *white thigh with the white tusk;* and that Adonis grieved Venus by breathing *softly* while the blood was running. Such faults as these are rarely to be detected in Greek poetry, but frequently on the revival of Pastoral in Italy.

Chaucer was born before that epidemic broke out which soon spread over Europe, and infected the English poetry as badly as any. The thoughts of our poets in the Elizabethan age often look the stronger because they are complicated and twisted. We have the boldness to confess that we are no admirers of the Elizabethan style. Shakspeare stood alone in a fresh and vigorous and vast creation; yet even his first-born were foul offenders, bearing on their brows the curse of a fallen state. Elsewhere, in every quarter, we are at once slumberous and restless under the heaviness of musk and benzoin, and sigh for the unattainable insipidity of fresh air. We are regaled with dishes in which no condiment is forgotten, nor indeed anything but simply the meat; and we are ushered into chambers where the tapestry is all composed of dwarfs and giants, and the floor all covered with blood. Thomson, in the "Seasons," has given us many beautiful descriptions of inanimate nature; but the moment any one speaks in them the charm is broken. The figures he introduces are fantastical. The "Hassan" of Collins is excellent; he however is surpassed by Burns and Scott; and Wordsworth, in his "Michael," is nowise inferior to them. Among the moderns no poet, it appears to us, has written an Idyl so perfect, so pure and simple in expression, yet so rich in thought and imagery, as the "Godiva" of Alfred Tennyson. Wordsworth, like Thomson, is deficient in the delineation of character, even of the rustic, in which Scott and Burns are almost equal. But some beautiful Idyls might be extracted from the "Excursion," which would easily split into *laminæ*, and the residue might with little loss be blown away. Few are suspicious that they may be led astray and get benighted by following simplicity too far. If

there are pleasant fruits growing on the ground, must we therefore cast aside as unwholesome those which have required the pruning-knife to correct and the ladder to reach them? Beautiful thoughts are seldom disdainful of sonorous epithets; we find them continually in the Pastorals of Theocritus; sometimes we see, coming rather obtrusively, the wanton and indelicate, but never (what poetry most abhors) the mean and abject. Widely different from our homestead poets, the Syracusan is remarkable for a facility that never draggles, for a spirit that never flags, and for a variety that never is exhausted. His reflections are frequent, but seasonable, — soon over, like the shadows of spring clouds on flowery meadows, and not hanging heavily upon the scene, nor depressing the vivacity of the blithe antagonists.

THE POEMS OF CATULLUS.

Doering's first edition of Catullus came out nearly half a century before his last edition. When he returned to his undertaking, he found many things, he tells us, to be struck out, many to be altered and set right. We believe we shall be able to show that several are still remaining in these predicaments.

They who in our days have traced the progress of poetry have pursued it generally not as poets or philosophers, but as hasty observers or cold chronologists. If we take our stand on the Roman world just before the subversion of its free institutions, we shall be in a position to look backward on Greece and forward on Italy and England; and we shall be little disposed to pick up and run away with the stale comments left by those who went before us, but rather to loiter a little on the way, and to indulge, perhaps too complacently, in the freshness of our own peculiar opinions and favorite speculations.

The last poet who flourished at Rome before the extinction of the republic by the arms of Julius Cæsar was Catullus; and the last record we possess of him is about the defamatory verses which he composed on that imperishable name. Cicero, to whom he has expressed his gratitude for defending him in a law-suit, commends on this occasion the equanimity of Cæsar, who listened to the reading of them in his bath before dinner. There is no reason to believe that the poet long survived his father's guest, the Dictator; but his decease was unnoticed in those times of agitation and dismay, nor is the date of it to be ascertained. It has usually been placed at the age of forty-six, four years after Cæsar's. Nothing is more absurd than the supposition of Martial, which however is but a poetical one, —

> "Si forsan tener ausus est Catullus
> Magno mittere *Passerem* Maroni."

(It is scarcely worth a remark by the way, that *si fors*an is not Latin; *si for*te would be: *si* and *an* can have nothing to do with each other.) But allowing that Virgil had written his "Ceiris" and "Culex," two poems inferior to several in the Eton school-exercises, he could not have published his first Eclogues in the lifetime of Catullus; and if he had, the whole of them are not worth a single Phaleucian or scazon of the vigorous and impassioned Veronese.

But Virgil is not to be depreciated by us, as he too often has been of late, both in this country and abroad; nor is he at all so when we deliver our opinion that his Pastorals are almost as inferior to those of Theocritus as Pope's are to his. Even in these, there not only are melodious verses, but harmonious sentences, appropriate images, and tender thoughts. Once or twice we find beauties beyond any in Theocritus; for example, —

> "Ite, capellæ!
> Non ego vos posthac viridi projectus in antro
> Dumosâ pendere procul de rupe videbo."

Yet in other places he is quite as harsh as if he had been ever so negligent. One instance is, —

> "Nunc victi, tristes, quoniam Fors omnia *versat*,
> Hos illi (quod nec bene *vertat*) mittimus hædos.

> "But now we must stoop
> To the worst in the troop,
> And must do whatsoever that vagabond wills:
> I wish the old goat
> Had a horn in his throat,
> And the kids and ourselves were again on the hills."

Supposing the first of the Eclogues to have appeared seven years after the death of Catullus, and this poet to have composed his earliest works in the lifetime of Lucretius, we cannot but ponder on the change of the Latin language in so short a space of time. Lucretius was by birth a Roman, and wrote in Rome; yet who would not say unhesitatingly that there is more of what Cicero calls *urbane* in the two provincials, Virgil and Catullus, than in the authoritative and stately man who leads Memmius from the camp into the gardens of Epicurus. He complains of poverty in the Latin tongue; but his complaint is only on its insufficiency in philosophical terms, which

Cicero also felt twenty years later, and called in Greek auxiliaries. But in reality the language never exhibited such a profusion of richness as in the comedies of Plautus, whose style is the just admiration of the Roman orator.

Cicero bears about him many little keepsakes received from this quarter, particularly the diminutives. His fondness for them borders on extravagance. Could you believe that the language contains in its whole compass a hundred of these? Could you believe that an orator and philosopher was likely to employ a quarter of the number? Yet in the various works of Cicero we have counted and written down above a hundred and sixty. Catullus himself has employed them much more sparingly than Cicero, or than Plautus, and always with propriety and effect. The playful Ovid never indulges in them, nor does Propertius, nor does Tibullus. Nobody is willing to suspect that Virgil has ever done it; but he has done it once in —

"*Oscula* libavit natæ."

Perhaps they had been turned into ridicule for the misapplication of them by some forgotten poet in the commencement of the Augustan age. Quintilian might have given us information on this: it lay in his road. But whether they died by a natural death or a violent one, they did not appear again as a plague until after the deluge of the Dark Ages; and then they increased and multiplied in the slime of those tepid shallows from which Italy in few places has even yet emerged. In the lines of Hadrian, —

"Animula, vagula, blandula," —

they have been greatly admired, and very undeservedly. Pope has made sad work of these. Whatever they are, they did not merit such an *experimentum crucis* at his hands.

In Catullus no reader of a poetical mind would desire one diminutive less. In Politian and such people they buzz about our ears insufferably; and we would waft every one of them away, with little heed or concern, if we brush off together with them all the squashy insipidities they alight on.

The imitators of Catullus have indeed been peculiarly unsuccessful. Numerous as they are, scarcely five pieces worth remembrance can be found among them. There are persons

who have a knowledge of Latinity, there are others who have a knowledge of poetry; but it is not always that the same judge decides with equal wisdom in both courts. Some hendecasyllabics of the late Serjeant Lens, an excellent man, a first-rate scholar, and a graceful poet, have been rather unduly praised; to us they appear monotonous and redundant. We will transcribe only the first two for particular notice and illustration:

> "Grates insidiis tuis dolisque
> Vinclis jam refero lubens solutis."

Never were words more perplexed and involved. He who brings them forward as classical is unaware that they are closely copied from a beautiful little poem of Metastasio, which J. J. Rousseau has translated admirably: —

> "Grazie agli inganni tuoi
> Alfin respiro, O Nice!"

How much better is the single word *inganni* than the useless and improper *insidiis* which renders *dolis* quite unnecessary! A better line would be —

> "Vincla projicio libens soluta."

Or —

> "Tandem projicio soluta vincla."

In fact, it would be a very difficult matter to suggest a worse. The most-part of the verses may be transposed in any way whatsoever; each seems to be independent of the rest. They are good, upright, sound verses enough, but never a sentence of them conciliates the ear. The same objection is justly made to nearly all the modern hendecasyllabics. Serjeant Lens has also given us too many lines for one Phaleucian piece. The metre will admit but few advantageously; it is the very best for short poems. This might be broken into three or four, and almost in any place indifferently. Like the *seta equina*, by pushing out a head and a tail, each would go on as well as ever.

In how few authors of hendecasyllabics is there one fine cadence! Such, for instance, as those in Catullus: —

> "Soles occidere et redire possunt,
> Nobis quum semel occidit brevis lux
> Nox est perpetua una dormienda."

And those, —

> "Quamvis candida millies puella
> Euntem revocet, manusque collo
> Ambas injiciens roget morari."

And twenty more. In the former of these quotations, Catullus had before him the best passage in Moschus, which may be thus translated : —

> "Ah ! when the mallow in the croft dies down,
> Or the pale parsley or the crisped anise,
> Again they grow, another year they flourish;
> But we, the great, the valiant, and the wise,
> Once covered over in the hollow earth,
> Sleep a long, dreamless, unawakening sleep."

The original verses are as harmonious as almost any in the language. But the epithet which the poet has prefixed to *parsley* is very undistinguishing. Greek poets more frequently than Latin gave those rather which suited the metre than those which conveyed a peculiar representation. Neither the *χλωρά* applied to parsley is in any of its senses very appropriate, nor are the *εὐθαλές* and *οὖλον* to anise, but rather to burrage.

Catullus has had innumerable imitators in the Phaleucian, but the only dexterity displayed by them in general is in catching a verse and sending it back again like a shuttlecock. Until our own times, there is little thought, little imagination, no passion, no tenderness, in the modern Latin poets. Casimir shows most genius and most facility; but Casimir, in his best poem, writes —

> "Sonora buxi filia *sutilis*."

Was ever allegory treated with such indignity? What becomes of this tight-laced daughter of a box-tree? She was hanged. Where? On a high poplar. Wherefore? That she might be the more easily come at by the poet. Pontanus too has been praised of late; but throughout his thick volume there is scarcely a glimpse of poetry. There are certain eyes which, seeing objects at a distance, take snow for sunshine.

Two verses of Joannes Secundus, almost the only two he has written worth remembering, outvalue all we have imported from the latter ages. They would have been quoted, even from Catullus himself, as among his best, —

> "Non est suaviolum dare, lux mea, sed dare tantum
> Est desiderium flebile suavioli."

The six of Bembo on Venice are admirable also. And there are two from two French authors, each worth two Pontanuses. The first is on the Irish, —

"Gens *ratione furens* et mentem pasta chimæris."

The second (but this is stolen from Manilius) on Franklin, his discoveries in electricity, and his energy in the liberation of his country, —

"Eripuit cœlo fulmen sceptrumque tyranno."

Another has been frequently quoted from a prize poem by Canning. Such as it is, it also is stolen — and with much injury (as stolen things often are) — from the "Nutricia" of Politian, among whose poems one only, that on the death of Ovid, has any merit. This being the only one which is without metrical faults, and the rest abounding in them, a reasonable doubt may arise whether he could have written it, — he who has written by the dozen such as the following: —

"Impedis amplexu —"

intending *impedis* for a dactyl, —

"Quando expĕdiret inseris hexametro —"

for a pentameter, —

"Mutare domi-num dŏm-us hæc nescit suum —"

for an iambic, —

"Lucreti fuit hoc, et Euripīdis —"

for a Phaleucian; and in whom we find *Plutarchus* short in the first syllable, *Bis-ve semelve*, and *Vaticani* long in the second syllable twice.

Milton has been thought like Politian in his hexameters and pentameters. In his Elegies he is Ovidian; but he is rather the fag than the playfellow of Ovid. Among his Latin poems the scazon "De Hominis Archetypo" is the best. In those of the moderns there is rarely more than one thing missing; namely, the poetry, which some critics seem to have held for a matter of importance. If we may hazard a conjecture, they are in the right. Robert Smith is the only one who has ascended

into the higher regions. But even the best scholars, since they receive most of their opinions from tradition, and stunted and distorted in the crevices of a quadrangle, will be slowly brought to conclude that his poetry is better (and better it surely is) than the greater part of that which dazzles them from the luminaries of the Augustan age. In vigor and harmony of diction, in the selection of topics, in the rejection of little ornaments, in the total suppression of playful prettinesses, in solidity and magnitude of thought, sustained and elevated by the purest spirit of poetry, we find nothing in the Augustan age of the same continuity, the same extent. We refer to the poem entitled "Platonis Principia," in which there are a hundred and eleven such verses as are scarcely anywhere together in all the realms of poetry.

The alcaic ode of the same writer, "Mare Liberum," is not without slight blemishes. For instance, at the beginning, —

> "Primo Creator spiritus halitu
> Caliginosi regna silentii
> Turbavit."

In Latinity there is no distinction between *spiritus* and *halitus*; and if theology has made one, the *halitus* can never be said to proceed from the *spiritus*. In the second verse the lyric metre requires *silent*j for *silent*ii. Cavillers may also object to the elision of *quà* at the conclusion, —

> "Et rura *quà* ingentes Amazon
> Rumpit aquas, violentus amnis."

It has never been elided unless at the close of a polysyllable; as, among innumerable instances, —

> "Obliquâ invidia stimulisque agitabat amaris."

This fact is the more remarkable, since *quæ* and *præ* are elided; or, speaking more properly, coalesce.

> Et tibi præ invidiâ Nereides increpitarent. — PROPERTIUS.
> *Quæ* omnia bella devoratis. — CATULLUS.
> *Quæ* imbelles dant prælia cervi:
> *Quæ* Asia circum. — VIRGIL.

But what ode in any language is more animated or more sublime?

In reading the Classics we pass over false quantities, and defer to time an authority we refuse to reason. But never can time acquit Horace of giving us false measure in *palus aptaque remis*, nor in *quomodo*. Whether you divide or unite the component parts of *quomodo*, — *quo* and *modo*, — the case is the same. And as *palus* is *palūdis* in the genitive case, *salus salūtis*, no doubt can exist of its quantity. Modern Latin poets, nevertheless, have written *salŭber*. Thomas Warton, a good scholar, and if once fairly out of Latinity no bad poet, writes in a Phaleucian —

"Salŭberrimis et herbis."

There is also a strange false quantity in one of the most accurate and profound grammarians, Menage. He wrote an inscription, in one Latin hexameter, for Mazarin's college, then recently erected, —

"Has Phœbo et Musis Mazarinus consecrat ædes."

Every vowel is long before z. He knew it, but it escaped his observation, as things we know often do. We return from one learned man to another, more immediately the object of our attention, on whom the same appellation was conferred.

Catullus has been called the "learned;" and critics have been curious in searching after the origin of this designation. Certainly both Virgil and Ovid had greatly more of archæology, and borrowed a great deal more of the Greeks. But Catullus was, what Horace claims for himself, the first who imported into Latin poetry any vast variety of their metres. Evidently he translated from the Greek his galliambic on Atys. The proof is, that "Ty*m*panum tubam Cybeles" would be opposite to, and inconsistent with, the metre. He must have written *Typanum*, finding *τύπανον* before him. But as while he was in the army he was stationed some time in Bithynia and Phrygia, perhaps he had acquired the language spoken in the highlands of those countries; in the lowlands it was Greek. No doubt his curiosity led him to the temple of Cybele, and there he heard the ancient hymns in celebration of that goddess. Nothing breathes such an air of antiquity as his galliambic, which must surely have been translated into Greek from the Phrygian. Joseph Warton in the intemperance of admiration prefers it not only

to every work of Catullus, but to every one in the language. There is indeed a gravity and solemnity in it, a fitness and propriety in every part, unequalled and unrivalled. Poetry can however rise higher than these "templa serena," and has risen higher with Catullus. No human works are so perfect as some of his, but many are incomparably greater. Among the works of the moderns, the fables of La Fontaine come nearest to perfection; but are there none grander and higher?

This intemperance of admiration has been less excusable in some living critics of modern Latin poetry. Yet when we consider how Erasmus, a singularly wise and learned man, has erred in his judgment on poetry, saying, while he speaks of Sidonius Apollinaris, "Let us listen to our Pindar," we are disposed to be gentle and lenient, even in regard to one who has declared his opinion that the elegies of Sannazar "may compete with Tibullus."[1] If they may, it can be only in the number of feet; and there they are quite on an equality. In another part of the volume, which contains so curious a decision, some verses are quoted from the "Paradise Regained" as "perhaps the most musical the author ever produced." Let us pause a few moments on this assertion, and examine the verses referred to. It will not be without its use to exhibit their real character, because, in coming closer to the examination of Catullus, we shall likewise be obliged to confess, that, elegant and graceful as he is to a degree above all other poets in the more elaborate of his compositions, he too is by no means exempt from blemishes in his versification. But in Milton they are flatnesses; in Catullus they are asperities, — which is the contrary of what might have been expected from the characters of the men.

There is many a critic who talks of harmony, and whose ear seems to have been fashioned out of the callus of his foot. "Quotus enim quisque est," as Cicero says, "qui teneat artem numerorum atque modorum!" The great orator himself, consummate master of the science, runs from rhetorical into poetical measure at this very place.

"Numerorum atque modorum"

[1] Mr. Hallam in the first volume of his "Introduction to the Literature of Europe," p. 597.

is the same in time and modulation as the verses in Horace, —

"Miserarum est neque amori
Dare ludum neque dulci," etc.

Well, but what "are perhaps the most musical verses Milton has ever produced?" They are these (*si diis placet!*) : —

"Such forces met not, nor so wide a camp,
When Agrican with all his northern powers
Besieged Albracc*a*, *as romances tell*,
The city of Gallaphrone, *from thence to win*
The fairest of her sex, Angelica
His daughter, sought by many prowest knights,
Both Paynim and the peers of Charlemagne."

There is a sad hiatus in "Albracc*a*, as." On the whole, however, the verses thus unluckily hit upon for harmony are fluent, too fluent; they are feeble in the extreme, and little better than prose, either in thought or expression. Still, it is better to praise accidentally in the wrong place than to censure universally. The passage which is before them leads us to that magnificent view of the cities and empires, the potentates and armies, in all their strength and glory, with which the Tempter would have beguiled our Redeemer. These appear to have left no impression on the critic, who much prefers what every schoolboy can comprehend, and what many undergraduates could have composed. But it is somewhat, no doubt, to praise that which nobody ever praised before, and to pass over that which suspends by its grandeur the footstep of all others.

There is prodigious and desperate vigor in the Tempter's reply to our Saviour's reproof: —

"All hope is lost
Of my reception into grace: what worse?
For when no hope is left, is left no fear.
If there be worse, the expectation more
Of worse torments me than the feeling can.
I would be at the worst: worst is my port,[1]
My harbor, and my ultimate repose,
The end I would attain, my final good."

Yet Milton, in this "Paradise Regained," seems to be subject to strange hallucinations of the ear, — he who before had

[1] A daring critic might suggest *fort* for *port*, since *harbor* makes that word unnecessary.

greatly excelled all poets of all ages in the science and display of harmony. And if in his last poem we exhibit his deficiencies, surely we never shall be accused of disrespect or irreverence to this immortal man. It may be doubted whether the Creator ever created one altogether so great, — taking into our view at once (as much indeed as can at once be taken into it) his manly virtues, his superhuman genius, his zeal for truth, true piety, true freedom, his eloquence in displaying it, his contempt of personal power, his glory and exultation in his country's.

Warton and Johnson are of opinion that Milton is defective in the sense of harmony. But Warton had lost his ear by laying it down on low and swampy places, — on ballads and sonnets; and Johnson was a deaf adder coiled up in the brambles of party prejudices: he was acute and judicious, he was honest and generous, he was forbearing and humane, but he was cold where he was overshadowed. The poet's peculiar excellence, above all others, was in his exquisite perception of rhythm, and in the boundless variety he has given it, both in verse and prose. Virgil comes nearest to him in his assiduous study of it, and in his complete success. With the poetical and oratorical, the harmony is usually in proportion to the energy of passion. But the numbers may be transferred: thus the heroic has been carried into the Georgics. There are many pomps and vanities in that fine poem which we would relinquish unreluctantly for one touch of nature; such as, —

"It tristis arator
Mœrentem abjungens fraterna morte juvencum.

"In sorrow goes the ploughman, and leads off
Unyoked from his dead mate the sorrowing steer."

Here however the poet is not seconded by the language. The ploughman cannot be going on while he is in the act of separating the dead ox from its partner, as the word *it* and *abjungens* signify.

We shall presently show that Catullus was the first among the Romans in whose heroic verse there is nothing harsh and dissonant. But it is not necessary to turn to the grander poetry of Milton for verses more harmonious than those adduced; we find them even in the midst of his prose. Whether he is to be

censured for giving way to his genius in such compositions is remote from the question now before us. But what magnificence of thought is here! how totally free is the expression from the encumbrances of amplification, from the crutches and cushions of swollen feebleness!

> "When God commands to take the trumpet
> And blow a shriller and a louder blast,
> It rests not in Man's will what he shall do,
> Or what he shall forbear."

This sentence in the "Treatise on Prelaty" is printed in prose: it sounds like inspiration. "It rested not in Milton's will" to crack his organ-pipe, for the sake of splitting and attenuating the gush of harmony.

We will now give the reason for the "falling sickness" with which several of his verses are stricken. He was too fond of showing what he had read, and the things he has taken from others are always much worse than his own. Habituated to Italian poetry, he knew that the verses are rarely composed of pure iambics, or of iambics mixed with spondees, but contain a great variety of feet, or rather of subdivisions. When he wrote such a line as —

> "In thĕ bosŏm of bliss and light of light," —

he thought he had sufficient authority in Dante, Petrarca, Ariosto, and Tasso, who wrote —

> Questă selvă selvaggia. — DANTE.
> Tra lĕ vanĕ speranze. — PETRARCA.
> Con lă gentĕ di Francia. — ARIOSTO.
> Cantŏ l'armĭ pietose. — TASSO.

And there is no verse whatsoever in any of his poems for the metre of which he has not an Italian prototype.

The critic who knows anything of poetry, and is resolved to select a passage from the "Paradise Regained," will prefer this other far above the rest, and may compare it, without fear of ridicule or reprehension, to the noblest in the nobler poem:

> "And either tropic now
> 'Gan thunder, and both ends of heaven; the clouds,
> From many a horrid rift, abortive poured
> Fierce rain with lightning mixed, water with fire,
> In ruin reconciled; nor slept the winds

Within their stony caves, but rushed abroad
From the four hinges of the world, and fell
On the vexed wilderness, whose tallest pines,
Though rooted deep as high, and sturdiest oaks,
Bowed their stiff necks, loaden with stormy blasts,
Or torn up sheer. Ill wast thou shrouded then,
O patient Son of God! yet only stood'st
Unshaken! Nor yet stayed the terror there:
Infernal ghosts and hellish furies round
Environed thee; some howled, some yelled, some shrieked,
Some bent at thee their fiery darts, while thou
Sat'st unappalled in calm and sinless peace."

No such poetry as this has been written since, and little at any time before. But Homer would not have attributed to the *pine* what belongs to the *oak*. The tallest pines have superficial roots; they certainly are never "deep as high," — oaks are said to be; and if the saying is not phytologically true, it is poetically, although the oak itself does not quite send

"radicem ad Tartara."

There is another small oversight, —

"yet only *stood'st*
Unshaken."

Below we find —

"*Sat'st* unappalled."[1]

But what verses are the following: —

"And made him bow to the gods of his wives. . . .
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men. . . .
After forty days' fasting had remained. . . .
And with these words his temptation pursued. . . .
Not difficult if thou hearken to me."

---

[1] But Milton's most extraordinary oversight is in "L'Allegro," —

"Hence loathed Melancholy!
Of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born."

Unquestionably he meant to have written Erebus instead of Cerberus, whom no imagination could represent as the sire of a goddess. *Midnight* is scarcely to be converted into one, or indeed into any allegorical personage: and the word "blackest" is far from aiding it. Milton is singularly unfortunate in allegory, but nowhere more so than here. The daughter of Cerberus takes the veil, takes the

"Sable stole of *Cyprus* lawn,"

and becomes, now her father is out of the way,

"A nun devout and pure."

It is pleasanter to quote such a description as no poet, not even Milton himself, ever gave before, of Morning, —

> "Who with her radiant finger stilled the roar
> Of thunder, chased the clouds and laid the winds
> And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had raised
> To tempt the son of God with terrors dire."

In Catullus we see morning in another aspect; not personified. And a more beautiful description, a sentence on the whole more harmonious, or one in which every verse is better adapted to its peculiar office, is neither to be found nor conceived, —

> "Heic qualis flatu placidum mare matutino
> Horrificans zephyrus proclivas incitat undas,
> Aurorâ exoriente vagi sub lumina solis,
> Quæ tarde primum clementi flamine pulsæ
> Procedunt, leni resonant plangore cachinni,
> Post, vento crescente, magis magis increbescunt,
> Purpureâque procul nantes a luce refulgent."

Our translation is very inadequate : —

> "As, by the Zephyr wakened, underneath
> The sun's expansive gaze the waves move on
> Slowly and placidly, with gentle plash
> Against each other, and light laugh ; but soon,
> The breezes freshening, rough and huge they swell,
> Afar refulgent in the crimson east."

What a fall is there from these lofty cliffs, dashing back the waves against the winds that sent them ! what a fall is there to the "wracks and flaws" which Milton tells us —

> "Are to the main as inconsiderable
> And harmless, if not wholesome, as a *sneeze*."

In the lines below, from the same poem, the good and bad are strangely mingled, — the poet keeping in his verse, however, the firmness and majesty of his march : —

> "So saying, he caught him up, and, *without wing*
> *Of hippogrif*, bore through the air sublime,
> Over the wilderness *and o'er the plain:*
> Till underneath them fair Jerusalem,
> The holy city, lifted high her towers,
> And higher yet the glorious temple *reared*
> *Her pile*, far off appearing like a mount
> Of alabaster, topped with golden *spires*."

Splendid as this description is, it bears no resemblance whatsoever to the temple of Jerusalem. It is like one of those fancies in which the earlier painters of Florence, Pisa, Lucca, and Siena were fond of indulging, — not for similitude, but for effect. The poets of Greece and Rome allowed themselves no such latitude. The Palace of the Sun, depicted so gorgeously by Ovid, where imagination might wander unrestricted, contains nowhere an inappropriate decoration.

No two poets are more dissimilar in thought and feeling than Milton and Catullus; yet we have chosen to place them in juxtaposition, because the Latin language in the time of Catullus was nearly in the same state as the English in the time of Milton. Each had attained its full perfection, and yet the vestiges of antiquity were preserved in each. Virgil and Propertius were in regard to the one poet what Dryden and Waller were in regard to the other: they removed the archaisms, but the herbage grew up rarer and slenderer after those extirpations. If so consummate a master of versification as Milton is convicted of faults so numerous and so grave in it, pardon will the more easily be granted to Catullus. Another defect is likewise common to both; namely, the disposition or ordinance of parts. It would be difficult to find in any other two poets, however low their station in that capacity, two such signal examples of disproportion as are exhibited in "The Nuptials of Peleus and Thetis" and in "The Masque of Comus." The better part of the former is the description of a tapestry; the better part of the latter are three undramatic soliloquies. In other respects, the oversights of Catullus are fewer; and in "Comus" there is occasional extravagance of expression such as we never find in Catullus, or in the playful Ovid, or in any the least correct of the ancients. For example, we read of

> "The sea-girt isles,
> That, like to rich and various gems, inlay
> The unadorned bosom of the deep."

How "unadorned," if inlaid with "rich and various gems"? This is a pendant to be placed exactly opposite: —

> "The silken vest Prince Vortigern had on
> Which from a naked Pict his grandsire won."

We come presently to

"The sounds and *seas*."

Sounds are parts of seas. Comus, on the borders of North Wales, talks of

"A green mantling vine,
That crawls along the side of yon small hill,"

and of

"Plucking ripe clusters."

Anon we hear of "stabled wolves." What wolves can those be? The faults we find in the poet we have undertaken to review we shall at the same time freely show.

Carmen I. "Ad Cornelium Nepotem." In verse 4 we read —

"Jam tum *cum* ausus es."

We believe the poet, and all the writers of his age, wrote *quum*. *Quoi* for *cui* grew obsolete much earlier, but was always thus spelled by Catullus. The best authors at all times wrote the adverb *quum*.

Carmen II. "Ad Passerem Lesbiæ." In verse 8 we read "a*c*quiescat;" the poet wrote "a*d*quiescat," which sounds fuller.

Carmen III. "Luctus in Morte Passeris." This poem and the preceding seem to have been admired, both by the ancients and the moderns, above all the rest. Beautiful indeed they are. Grammarians may find fault with the hiatus in

"O factum mal*e*! O miselle passer!"

poets will not.

We shall now, before we go farther, notice the metre. Regularly the Phaleucian verse is composed of four trochees and one dactyl; so is the Sapphic, but in another order. The Phaleucian employs the dactyl in the second place; the Sapphic employs it in the third. But the Latin poets are fonder of a spondee in the first. Catullus frequently admits an iambic; as in

"Meas esse aliquid putare nugas.
Tuâ nunc operâ meæ puellæ," etc.

Carmen IV. "Dedicatio Phaseli." This is a senarian, and composed of pure iambics. Nothing can surpass its elegance.

The following bears a near resemblance to it in the beginning, and may be offered as a kind of paraphrase: —

> "The vessel which lies here at last
> Had once stout ribs and topping mast,
> And whate'er wind there might prevail,
> Was ready for a row or sail.
> It now lies idle on its side,
> Forgetful o'er the waves to glide.
> And yet there have been days of yore
> When pretty maids their posies bore
> To crown its prow, its deck to trim,
> And freight it with a world of whim.
> A thousand stories it could tell,
> But it loves secrecy too well.
> Come closer, my sweet girl! pray do!
> There may be still one left for you."

Carmen V. "Ad Lesbiam." It is difficult to vary our expression of delight at reading the first three poems which Lesbia and her sparrow have occasioned. This is the last of them that is fervid and tender. There is love in many of the others, but impure and turbid, and the object of it soon presents to us an aspect far less attractive.

Carmen VI. "Ad Flavium." Whoever thinks it worth his while to peruse this poem, must enclose in a parenthesis the words "Nequicquam tacitum." *Tacitum* is here a participle: and the words mean, "It is in vain that you try to keep it a secret."

Carmen VII. "Again to Lesbia." Here, as in all his hendecasyllabics, not only are the single verses full of harmony, a merit to which other writers of them not unfrequently have attained, but the sentences leave the ear no "aching void," as theirs do.

Carmen VIII. "Ad seipsum." This is the first of the scazons. The metre in a long poem would perhaps be more tedious than any. Catullus, with admirable judgment, has never exceeded the quantity of twenty-one verses in it. No poet, uttering his own sentiments on his own condition in a soliloquy, has evinced such power in the expression of passion, in its sudden throbs and changes, as Catullus has done here.

In Doering's edition we read, verse 14, —

> "At tu dolebis, cum rogaberis nullâ,
> Scelesta! nocte."

No such pause is anywhere else in the poet. In Scaliger the verses are, —

> "At tu dolebis, quum rogaberis nulla.
> Scelesta rere, quæ tibi manet vita."

The punctuation in most foreign books, however, and in all English, is too frequent; so that we have snatches and broken bars of tune, but seldom tune entire. Scaliger's reading is probably the true one, by removing the comma after *rere*, —

> "Scelesta rere quæ tibi manet vita!
> (*Consider* what must be the remainder of your life!)"

Now, certainly there were many words obliterated in the only copy of our author. It was found in a cellar, and under a wine-barrel. Thus the second word in the second line appears to have left no traces behind it; otherwise, words so different as *nocte* and *rere* could never have been mistaken. Since the place is open to conjecture, therefore, and since every expression round about it is energetic, we might suggest another reading: —

> "At tu dolebis quum rogaberis *nullo*,
> Scelesta! *nullo*. Quæ tibi manet vita?
> Quis nunc te adibit? quoi videberis bella?
> Quem nunc amabis? quojus esse diceris?
> Quem basiabis? quoi labella mordebis?
> At tu, Catulle! destinatus obdura."

Which we will venture to translate: —

> "But you shall grieve while none complains, —
> None, Lesbia! None. Think what remains
> For one so fickle, so untrue!
> Henceforth, O wretched Lesbia! who
> Shall call you dear, — shall call you his?
> Whom shall you love, or who shall kiss
> Those lips again? Catullus! thou
> Be firm, be ever firm as now."

The angry taunt very naturally precedes the impatient expostulation. The repetition of *nullo* is surely not unexpected. *Nullus* was often used absolutely in the best times of Latinity. "Ab *nullo* repetere," and "*nullo* aut paucissimis præsentibus," by Sallust. "Quî scire possum? *nullus* plus," by Plautus. "Vivis his incolumibusque, liber esse *nullus* potest," by Cicero.

It may as well be noticed here that *basiare*, *basium*, *basiatio*,

are words unused by Virgil, Propertius, Horace, Ovid, or Tibullus. They belonged to Cisalpine Gaul more especially, although the root has now extended through all Italy, and has quite supplanted *osculum* and its descendants. *Bellus* has done the same in regard to *formosus*, which has lost its footing in Italy, although it retains it in Spain, slightly shaken, in *hermoso*. The *saviari* and *savium* of Plautus, Terence, Cicero, and Catullus are never found in the poets of the Augustan age, to the best of our recollection, excepting once in Propertius.

CARMEN IX. "Ad Verannium." Nothing was ever livelier or more cordial than the welcome here given to Verannius on his return from Spain. It is comprised in eleven verses. Our poets on such an occasion would have spread out a larger table-cloth with a less exquisite dessert upon it.

CARMEN X. "De Varri Scorto." Instead of expatiating on this, which contains in truth some rather coarse expressions, but is witty and characteristical, we will subjoin a paraphrase, with a few defalcations: —

Varrus would take me t' other day
  To see a little girl he knew,
Pretty and witty in her way,
  With impudence enough for two.

Scarce are we seated, ere she chatters
  (As pretty girls are wont to do)
About all persons, places, matters —
  "And pray, what has been done for *you?*"

"Bithynia, lady," I replied,
  "Is a fine province for a pretor,
For none (I promise you) beside,
  And least of all am I her debtor."

"Sorry for that!" said she. "However
  You have brought with you, I dare say,
Some litter bearers: none so clever
  In any other part as they.

"Bithynia is the very place
  For all that 's steady, tall, and straight;
It is the nature of the race.
  Could not you lend me six or eight?"

"Why, six or eight of them or so,"
  Said I, determined to be grand;
"My fortune is not quite so low
  But these are still at my command."

"You 'll send them?" "Willingly!" I told her,
Altho' I had not here or there
One who could carry on his shoulder
The leg of an old broken chair.

"Catullus! what a charming hap is
Our meeting in this sort of way!
I would be carried to Serapis
To-morrow." "Stay, fair lady, stay!

"You overvalue my intention.
Yes, there *are* eight — there may be nine:
I merely had forgot to mention
That they are Cinna's, and not mine."

Catullus has added two verses which we have not translated, because they injure the poem, —

"Sed tu insulsa male et molesta vivis
Per quam non licet esse negligentem."

This, if said at all, ought not to be said to the lady. The reflection might be (but without any benefit to the poetry) made in the poet's own person. Among the ancients however, when we find the events of common life and ordinary people turned into verse, — as here for instance, and in the "Praxinoë" of Theocritus, and in another of his where a young person has part of her attire torn, — we never are bored with prolixity and platitude, in which a dull moral is our best relief at the close of a dull story.

Carmen XI. "Ad Furium et Aurelium." Furius and Aurelius were probably the comrades of Catullus in Bithynia. He appears to have retained his friendship for them not extremely long. Here he intrusts them with a message for Lesbia, which they were fools if they delivered, although there is abundant reason for believing that their modesty would never have restrained them. He may well call these

"Non bona dicta."

But there are worse in reserve for themselves, on turning over the very next page. The last verses in the third strophe are printed, —

"Gallicum Rhenum horribiles*que* ulti-
mosque Britannos."

The enclitic *que* should be changed to *ad*, since it could not support itself without the intervention of an aspirate, —

> "Gallicum Rhenum horribileis *ad* ulti-
> mosque Britannos," —

and the verse "Cæsaris visens," etc., placed in a parenthesis. When the poet wrote these Sapphics, his dislike of Cæsar had not begun. Perhaps it was occasioned long afterward, by some inattention of the great commander to the Valerian family on his last return from Transalpine Gaul. Here he writes, —

> "Cæsaris visens monimenta *magni*."

Very different from the contemptuous and scurril language with which he addressed him latterly.

CARMEN XII. "Ad Asinium Pollionem." Asinius Pollio and his brother were striplings when this poem was written. The worst but most admired of Virgil's Eclogues was composed to celebrate the birth of Pollio's son, in his consulate. In this Eclogue, and in this alone, his versification fails him utterly. The lines afford one another no support. For instance. this sequence, —

> "Ultima Cumæi venit jam carminis ætas.
> Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo,
> Jam redit et virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna."

Toss them in a bag and throw them out, and they will fall as rightly in one place as another. Any one of them may come first, any one of them may come last, any one of them may come intermediately; better that any one should never come at all. Throughout the remainder of the Eclogue, the ampulla of Virgil is puffier than the worst of Statius or Lucan.

In the poem before us it seems that Asinius, for whose infant the universe was to change its aspect, for whom grapes were to hang upon thorns, for whom the hardest oaks were to exude honey, for whom the rams in the meadows were to dye their own fleeces with murex and saffron, — this Asinius picked Catullus's pocket of his handkerchief. Catullus tells him he is a blockhead if he is ignorant that there is no wit in such a trick, which he says is a very dirty one, and appeals to the brother, calling him a smart and clever lad. He declares he

does not mind so much the value of the handkerchief, as because it was a present sent to him out of Spain by his friends Fabullus and Verannius, who united (it seems) their fiscal forces in the investment. This is among the lighter effusions of the volume, and worth as little as Virgil's Eclogue, though exempt from such grave faults.

CARMEN XIII. "Ad Fabullum." A pleasant invitation to dinner, as in verse 8, —

> "Plenus sacculus est aranearum."

It is curious that Doering, so sedulous in collecting scraps of similitudes, never thought of this in Plautus, where the idea and expression too are so alike, —

> "Ita inaniis sunt oppletæ atque araneis."

Let us offer a paraphrase, —

> "With me, Fabullus, you shall dine,
> And gaudily, I promise you,
> If you will only bring the wine,
> The dinner, and some beauty too.
>
> "With all your frolic, all your fun,
> I have some little of my own —
> And nothing else: the spiders run
> Throughout my purse, now theirs alone."

He goes on rather too far, and promises his invited guest so sweet a perfume that he shall pray the gods to become *all nose*; that is, we may presume, if no one should intervene to correct or divert in part a wish so engrossing.

CARMEN XIV. "Ad Calvum Licinium." The poet seems in general to have been very inconstant in his friendships, but there is no evidence that he ever was estranged from Calvus. This is the more remarkable, as Calvus was a poet, the only poet among his friends, and wrote in the same style. At the close of the poem here addressed to him, properly ending at the twenty-third verse, we find four others appended. They have nothing at all to do with it, they are a worthless fragment; and it is a pity that the wine-cask, which rotted off and dislocated so many pieces, did not leak on and obliterate this, and many similar, particularly the next two. We should then, it

may be argued, have known less of the author's character. So much the better. Unless by knowing the evil that is in any one we can benefit him or ourselves or society, it is desirable not to know it at all.

CARMEN XVII. "Ad Coloniam." Here are a few beautiful verses in a very indifferent piece of poetry. We shall transcribe them, partly for their beauty, and partly to remove an obscurity: —

"Quoi quum sit viridissimo nupta flore puella,
Et puella tenellulo delicatior hædo,
Asservanda nigerrimis diligentiùs uvis;
Ludere hanc sinit ut lubet, nec pili facit uni,
Nec se sublevat ex suâ parte; sed velut alnus
In fossâ Liguri jacet suppernata securi,
Tantundem omnia sentiens quam si nulla sit usquam,
Talis iste meus stupor nil videt, nihil audit,
Ipse qui sit, utrum sit, an non sit, id quoque nescit."

This is in the spirit of Aristophanes, and we may fancy we hear his voice in the cantilena. *Asservanda* should be printed *adservanda;* and *suppernata, subpernata. Liguri* is doubtful. Ligur*is* is the genitive case of Ligur. The Ligurians may in ancient times, as in modern, have exercised their industry out of their own country, and the poorer of them may have been hewers of wood; then *securis Ligur*is would be the right interpretation. But there are few countries in which there are fewer *ditches*, or fewer *alders*, than in Liguria; we who have travelled through the country in all directions do not remember to have seen a single one of either. It would be going farther, but going where both might be found readily, if we went to the *Liger*, and read "In fossâ Liger*is*."

CARMINA XVIII., XIX., XX. "Ad Priapum." The first of these three is a Dedication to the God of Gardens. In the two following the poet speaks in his own person. The first contains only four lines. The second is descriptive, and terminates with pleasantry, —

"O pueri! malas abstinete rapinas!
Vicinus prope dives est, negligensque Priapus;
Inde sumite; semita hæc deinde vos feret ipsa."

In the third are these exquisite verses: —

"Mihi corolla picta vere ponitur,
Mihi rubens arista sole fervido,

Mihi virente dulcis uva pampino,
Mihique glauca duro oliva frigore.
Meis capella delicata pascuis
In urbem adulta lacte portat ubera,
Meisque pinguis agnus ex ovilibus
Gravem domum remittit ære dexteram,
Teneraque matre mugiente vaccula
Deûm profundit ante templa sanguinem."

We will attempt to translate them: —

"In spring the many-colored crown,
The sheaves in summer, ruddy-brown,
The autumn's twisting tendrils green,
With nectar-gushing grapes between, —
Some pink, some purple, some bright gold, —
Then shrivelled olive, blue with cold,
Are all for me: for me the goat
Comes with her milk from hills remote.
And fatted lamb, and calf pursued
By moaning mother, sheds her blood."

The third verse, as printed in this edition and most others, is contrary to the laws of metre in the pure iambic, —

"Agellulum hunc, sinistrā, *tute* quam vides."

And *tute* is inelegant and useless. Scaliger proposed "sinist*e*ra *ante* quem vides." He was near the mark, but missed it; for Catullus would never have written "sinist*e*ra." It is very probable that he wrote the verse —

"Agellulum hunc sinistrà, *inante* quem vides.

On the left hand, just before you."

Inante and *exante* were applied to time rather than place, but not exclusively.

Carmen XXII. "Ad Varrum." This may be advantageously contracted in a paraphrase, —

"Suffenus, whom so well you know,
My Varrus, as a wit and beau
Of smart address and smirking smile,
Will write you verses by the mile.
You cannot meet with daintier fare
Than titlepage and binding are;
But when you once begin to read
You find it sorry stuff indeed,
And you are ready to cry out
Upon this beau, 'Ah! what a lout!'

No man on earth so proud as he
Of his own precious poetry,
Or knows such perfect bliss as when
He takes in hand that nibbled pen.
Have we not all some faults like these?
Are we not all Suffenuses?
In others the defect we find,
But cannot see our sack behind."

Carmen XXV. "Ad Thallum." It is hardly safe to steal a laugh here, and yet it is difficult to refrain from it. Some of the verses must be transposed. Those which are printed —

"Thalle! turbidâ rapacior procellâ,
Cum de viâ mulier aves ostendit oscitantes,
Remitte pallium mihi, meum quod involâste —

ought to be printed —

"Thalle! turbidâ rapacior procellâ,
Remitte pallium mihi, meum, quod involâste
Quum 'devi*as*' mulier aves ostendit oscitantes."

This shows that Thallus had purloined Catullus's cloak while he was looking at a nest of owls; for such are *deviæ aves*, and so they are called by Ovid. It is doubtful whether the right reading is *oscitantes*, "opening their beaks," or *oscinentes*, which is applied to birds that do not sing, — by Valerius Maximus to crows, by Livy to birds of omen. In the present case we may believe them to be birds of augury, and inauspicious, as the word always signifies, and as was manifest in the disaster of Catullus and his cloak. In the eleventh verse there is a false quantity, —

"Inusta turpiter tibi flagella cons*cri*billent."

Was there not such a word as *contribulo?*

Carmen XXIX. "Ad Cæsarem." This is the poem by which the author, as Cicero remarks, affixes an eternal stigma on the name of Cæsar, but which the most powerful and the best tempered man in the world heard without any expression of anger or concern. The punctuation appears ill-placed in the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, —

"Quid est? ait sinistra liberalitas:
Parum expatravit. An parum helluatus est?"

We would write them, —

> "Quid est, ain? Sinistra liberalitas
> Parum expatravit?" etc.

"Where is the harm, do you ask? What! has this left-handed liberality of his," etc.

CARMEN XXX. "Ad Alphenum." A poem of sobs and sighs, of complaint, reproach, tenderness, sad reflection, and pure poetry.

CARMEN XXXI. "Ad Sirmionem Peninsulam." Never was a return to home expressed so sensitively and beautifully as here. In the thirteenth line we find —

> "Gaudete vosque Lydiæ lacûs undæ."

The "Lydian waves of the lake" would be an odd expression. Although, according to a groundless and somewhat absurd tradition, —

> "Gens *Lyda* jugis insedit Etruscis, — "

yet no *gens Lyda* could ever have penetrated to these Alpine regions. One of the Etrurian nations did penetrate so far, whether by conquest or expulsion is uncertain. But Catullus here calls upon Sirmio to rejoice in his return, and he invites the waves of the lake to laugh. Whoever has seen this beautiful expanse of water, under its bright sun and gentle breezes, will understand the poet's expression; he will have seen the waves laugh and dance. Catullus, no doubt, wrote

> "Gaudete vosque 'l*u*diæ' lacûs undæ!
>
> Ye revellers and dancers of the lake!"

If there was the word *ludius*, which we know there was, there must also have been *ludia*.

CARMEN XXXIV. "Ad Dianam." A hymn, of the purest simplicity.

CARMEN XXXV. "Cæcilium invitat." It appears that Cæcilius, like Catullus, had written a poem on Cybele. Catullus invites him to leave Como for Verona, —

> "Quamvis candida millies puella
> Euntem revocet, manusque collo
> Ambas injiciens roget morari."

Which may be rendered, —

"Although so passing fair a maid
Call twenty times, be not delayed;
Nay, do not be delayed although
Both arms around your neck she throw."

For it appears she was desperately in love with him from the time he had written the poem. Catullus says it is written so beautifully that he can pardon the excess of her passion.

Carmen XXXIX. "In Egnatium." This is the second time he has ridiculed Egnatius, — a Celtiberian, and overfond of displaying his teeth by continually laughing. Part of the poem is destitute of merit, and indelicate; the other part may be thus translated, or paraphrased rather: —

Egnatius has fine teeth, and those
Eternally Egnatius shows.
Some criminal is being tried
For murder, and they open wide;
A widow wails her only son, —
Widow and him they open on.
'T is a disease, I 'm very sure,
And wish 't were such as you could cure,
My good Egnatius! for what's half
So silly as a silly laugh?"

We cannot agree with Doering that we should read, in verse 11, —

"Aut *porcus* Umber aut obesus Etruscus."

First, because the *porcus* and *obesus* convey the same meaning without any distinction; and secondly, because the distinction is necessary both for the poet and the fact. The Etrurians were a most luxurious people; the Umbrians, a pastoral and industrious one. He wishes to exhibit a contrast between these two nations, as he has done in the preceding verse between what is *urbane* and what is *Sabine*. Therefore he wrote, —

"Aut p*a*rcus Umber aut obesus Hetruscus."

Carmen XL. "Ad Ravidum." The sixth verse is printed improperly —

"Quid vis? quâ lubet esse notus opta*s*?"

Read —

"Quid vis? quâ lubet esse notus? opt*a*."

"Opta," — make your *option*.

Carmen XLII. "Ad Quandam." We should not notice this "ad quandam" were it not to correct a mistake of Doering. "Ridentem canis ore *Gallicani*," — his note on this expression is, "Epitheton *ornans*, pro *quovis* cane venatico cujus rictus est latior." No, the "canis *gallicus*" is the *grey-hound*, whose *rictus* is indeed much *latior* than that of other dogs; and Catullus always uses words the most characteristic and expressive.

Carmen XLV. "De Acme et Septimio." Perhaps this poem has been admired above its merit; but there is one exquisitely fine passage in it, and replete with that harmony which, as we have already had occasion to remark, Catullus alone has given to the Phaleucian metre, —

> "At Acme leviter caput reflectens,
> Et dulcis pueri ebrios ocellos
> Isto purpureo ore suaviata,
> 'Sic,' inquit, 'mea vita Septimille!
> Huic uno domino usque serviamus.'"

Carmen XLVI. "De Adventu Veris." He leaves Phrygia in the beginning of spring, and is about to visit the celebrated cities of maritime Asia. What beauty and vigor of expression is there in —

> "Jam mens prætrepidans avet vagarí,
> Jam læti studio pedes vigescunt."

There is also much tenderness at the close in the short valediction to his companions, who set out together with him in the expedition, and will return (whenever they do return) by various roads into their native country.

Carmen L. "Ad Licinium." On the day preceding the composition of this poem, he and Licinius had agreed to write together in different metres, and to give verse for verse. Catullus was so delighted with the performances of Licinius that he could never rest, he tells us, until he had signified it by this graceful little poem.

Carmen LI. This is a translation from Sappho's ode, and perhaps is the first that had ever been attempted into Latin, although there is another which precedes it in the volume. Nothing can surpass the graces of this, and it leaves us no regret but that we have not more translations by him of Sappho's

poetry. He has copied less from the Greek than any Latin poet had done before Tibullus.

The adonic at the close of the second strophe is lost. Many critics have attempted to substitute one. In the edition before us we find —

> "Simul te
> Lesbia! adspexi, nihil est super mî
> *Vocis in ore*."

A worse cannot be devised.

> "Quod loquar amens"

would be better. The ode ends, and always ended, with

> "Lumina nocte."

CARMEN LIII. "De Quodam et Calvo." Calvus, as well as Cicero, spoke publicly against Vatinius. It will be requisite to write out the five verses of which this piece of Catullus is composed, —

> "Risi nescio quem modo in coronâ
> Qui quum mirifice Vatiniana
> Meus crimina Calvus explicasset
> Admirans ait hæc manusque tollens,
> Dî magni! *salaputium* disertum!"

Doering's note on the words is this: "Vox nova, ridicula et, ut videbatur, *plebeia* (*salaputium*). Catullum ad hos versus scribendos impulit." He goes on to put into prose what Catullus had told us in verse, and adds, "Catullus a risu sibi temperare non potuit." Good Herr Doering does not *see where's the fun*. It lies in the fact of Calvus being a very little man, and in the clown hearing a very little man so eloquent, and crying out, "Heavens above! what a clever little *cocky!*" The word should not be written "salapu*t*ium," but "salapu*s*ium." The termination in *um* is a signification of endearment, as *deliciolum* for *deliciæ*, — and correspondently the *ον* in Greek; *παιδίον*, for instance, and *παιδάριον*. It cannot be *salepygium*, as some critics have proposed, because the third syllable in this word (supposing there were any such) would, according to its Greek origin, be short. Perhaps the best reading may be "sal*i*pusium," from *sal* and *pusius*. Rustic terms are unlikely to be compounded with accuracy. In old Latin the word, or words, would be *sali* (for *salis*) *pusium*.

But *t* is equivalent to *s;* and the modern Italian, which is founded on the *most* ancient Latin, has *putto.*

CARMEN LIV. "Ad Cæsarem."

"Fuffitio seni *recocto.*"

On this is the note "Homo *recoctus* jam dicitur qui in rebus *agendis* diu multumque *agitatus,* versatus, exercitatus, et quasi *percoctus,* rerum naturam penitus perspexit," etc.

Surely these qualities are not such as Catullus or Cæsar ought to be displeased with. But "senex *recoctus*" means an old dandy boiled up into youth again in Medea's caldron. In this poem Catullus turns into ridicule no other than personal peculiarities and defects, — first in Otho, then in Libo, lastly in Fuffitius.

CARMEN LVII. "In Mamurram et Cæsarem." If Cæsar had hired a poet to write such wretched verses as these and swear them to Catullus, he could never in any other way have more injured his credit as a poet. The "Duo Cæsaris Anti-Catones," which are remembered as having been so bulky, could never have fallen on Cato so fatally as this Anti-Catullus on Catullus.

CARMEN LXI. "De Nuptiis Juliæ et Manlii." Never was there, and never will there be probably, a nuptial song of equal beauty. But in verse 129 there is a false quantity as now printed, and quite unnoticed by the editor, —

"Dese*r*tum domini audiens."

The metre does not well admit a spondee[1] for the second foot; it should be a trochee, and this is obtained by the true reading, "Des*i*tum."

CARMEN LXII. Another nuptial song, and properly an epithalamium in heroic verse, and very masterly. It seems incredible, however, that the last lines, beginning, —

"At tu ne pugna," —

were written by Catullus. They are trivial; and besides, the young singing men never have sung so long together in the former parts assigned to them. The longest of these consists of nine verses, with the choral

"Hymen, O Hymenæe!"

[1] Yet here, in two hundred and thirty-five verses nine begin with it.

and the last would contain eleven with it, even after rejecting these seven which intervene, and which, if admitted, would double the usual quantity. We would throw them out because there is no room for them, and because they are trash.

Carmen LXIII. This has ever been, and ever will be, the admiration of all who can distinguish the grades of poetry. The thirty-ninth verse is printed, —

"Piger his labente*s* languore oculos sopor operit."

The metre will not allow it. We must read, "labant*e* languore," although the construction may be somewhat less obvious. The words are in the ablative absolute, — "Sleep covers their eyes, a languor dropping over them."

Verse 64 should be printed "gymnasj," not "gymnasii." The seventy-fifth and seventy-sixth lines must be reversed, and instead of

"Geminas '*D*eorum' ad aur*e*s nova nuncia referens
Ibi juncta juga resolvens Cybele leonibus
Lævumque pecoris hostem stimulans,"

read —

"Ibi juncta juga resolvens Cybele leonibus,
Geminas '*e*orum' ad aur*ei*s nova nuncia referens," etc.

Carmen LXIV. "Nuptiæ Pelei et Thetidis." Among many excellencies of the highest order, there are several faults and inconsistencies in this heroic poem. In verse 15, —

"Illâque haudque aliâ," etc., —

it is incredible that Catullus should have written "haud*que*."

In verse 37 we read, —

"Pharsaliam coeunt, Pharsalia rura frequentant."

No objection can be raised against this reading. "Pharsaliam" is a trisyllable. The *i* sometimes coalesces with another vowel, as *a* and *o* do. In Virgil we find, —

"Stell*io* et lucifugis.
Aur*eâ* composuit spondâ.
Unâ eâdemque viâ.
Uno *eo*demque igni.
Perque ær*ea* scuta."

Verses 58 and the following are out of their order. They stand thus: —

> "Rura colit nemo: mollescunt colla juvencis:
> Non humilis curvis purgatur vinea rastris:
> Non glebam prono convellit vomere taurus:
> Non falx attenuat frondatorum arboris umbram:
> Squalida desertis robigo infertur aratris."

The proper and natural series is, together with the right punctuation, —

> "Rura colit nemo: mollescunt colla juvencis,
> Non glebam prono convellit vomere taurus;
> Squalida desertis robigo infertur aratris.
> Non humilis curvis purgatur vinea rastris,
> Non falx attenuat frondatorum arboris umbram," —

because here the first, the second, and the third refer to the same labor, that of ploughing; the fourth and fifth to the same also, that of cultivating the two kinds of vineyard. In one kind the grapes are cut low and fastened on poles with bands of withy, and raked between; in the other they are trained against trees. Formerly the tree preferred was the elm; at present it is the maple, particularly in Tuscany. The branches are lopped and thinned when the vines are pruned, to let in sun and air. By ignorance of such customs in agriculture, many things in the Classics are mistaken. Few people know the meaning of the words in Horace, —

> "Cum *duplice* ficu."

Most fancy it must be the purple fig and the yellow; but there is also a green one. The Italians, to dry their figs the more expeditiously, cut them open and expose them on the pavement before their cottages. They then stick two together, and this is *duplex ficus*.

We now come to graver faults (and faults certainly the poet's) than a mere transposition of verses. In the palace of Peleus there is a piece of tapestry which takes up the best part of the poem.

> "Hæc vestis *priscis* hominum variata figuris"

exhibits the story of Theseus and Ariadne. Their adventures could not have happened five-and-twenty years before these

nuptials. Of the Argo, which carried Peleus when Thetis fell in love with him, the poet says, as others do, —

> "Illa rudem cursu *prima* imbuit Amphitriten."

But in the progress of sixty lines we find that vessels had been sailing to Crete every year, with the Athenian youths devoted to the Minotaur. Castor and Pollux sailed in the Argo with Peleus; and Helen, we know, was their sister: she was about the same age as Achilles, and Theseus had run away with her before Paris had. But equal inconsistencies are to be detected in the Æneid, a poem extolled, century after century, for propriety and exactness. An anachronism quite as strange as this of Catullus is in the verses on Acragas, Agrigentum, —

> "Arduus inde Acragas ostentat maxima longe
> Mœnia, magnanimum *quondam* generator equorum.

Whether the city itself was built in the age of Æneas is not the question; but certainly the breed of horses was introduced by the Carthaginians, and improved by Hiero and Gelon. The breed of the island is small, as it is in all mountainous countries, where the horses are never found adapted to chariots any more than chariots are adapted to surfaces so uneven.

In verse 83, for "*Funera* Cecropiæ," etc., we must read "*Pubis* Cecropiæ."

In verse 119, "Quæ misera," etc., is supposititious.

In verse 178 we read, —

> "*Idomeneos-ne* petam montes? at gurgite lato," etc

Idomeneus was unborn in the earlier days of Theseus. Probably the verses were written, —

> "*Idam ideone* petam? Montes (ah gurgite vasto
> Discernens!) ponti truculentum dividit æquor."

In verse 191, nothing was ever grander or more awful than the adjuration of Ariadne to the Eumenides, —

> "Quare facta virûm multantes vindice penâ
> Eumenides! quarum anguineo redimita capillo
> *Frons expirantes præportat pectoris iras*,
> Huc, huc adventate!"

Verse 199, Doering explains, —

> "Vos nolite pati nostrum *vanescere* luctum," —

"*impunitum* manere." What, — her grief? Does she pray that her grief may not remain *unpunished?* No, she implores that the prayers that arise from it may not be in vain.

In verse 212 we read, —

> "Namque ferunt olim [classi cum mœnia Divæ]
> Linquentem, natum, ventis concrederet Ægeus,
> Talia complexum juveni mandata dedisse."

The mould of the barrel has been doing sad mischief there. We must read —

> "Namque ferunt, natum ventis quum crederat Ægeus."

In verse 250 we have, —

> "At parte ex aliâ.

This scene is the subject of a noble picture by Titian, now in the British Gallery. It has also been deeply studied by Nicolas Poussin. But there is a beauty which no painting can attain in —

> "*Plangebant* alii proceris tympana palmis,
> *Aut tereti tenues tinnitus œre ciebant.*"

Soon follows that exquisite description of morning on the sea-side, already transcribed, and placed by the side of Milton's personification.

In verse 340 we read, —

> "Nascetur vobis expers terroris Achilles,
> *Hostibus haud tergo sed forti pectore notus,*
> Qui persæpe vagi victor certamine cursûs
> Flammea prævertet celeris vestigia cervi."

It is impossible that Catullus, or any poet whatever, can have written the second of these. Some stupid critic must have done it, who fancied that the "expers terroris" was not clearly and sufficiently proven by urging the car over the field of battle, and had little or nothing to do in outstripping the stag.

Verse 329. Rarely have the Fates sung so sweetly as in this verse to Peleus, —

> "Adveniet tibi jam portans optata maritis
> Hesperus, adveniet fausto cum sidere conjux,
> Quæ tibi flexanimo mentem perfundat amore
> Languidulosque paret tecum conjungere somnos,
> Lævia substernens robusto brachia collo."

Carmen LXV. "Ad Hortalum." He makes his excuse to Hortalus for delaying a compliance with his wishes for some verses. This delay he tells him was occasioned by the death of his brother, to whom he was most affectionately attached, and whose loss he laments in several of his poems. In this he breaks forth into a very pathetic appeal to him, —

"Alloquar? audiero numquam tua facta loquentem?
Nunquam ego te, vitâ frater amabilior,
Adspiciam posthac! At certe semper amabo,
Semper mæsta tuâ carmina morte canam."

The two following lines are surely supposititious. Thinking with such intense anguish of his brother's death, he could find no room for so frigid a conceit as that about the Daulian bird and Itylus. This is almost as much out of place, though not so bad in itself, as the distich which heads the epistle of "Dido to Æneas" in Ovid, —

"Sic, ubi Fata vocant, udis abjectus in herbis
Ad vada Mæandri concinit *albus olor*."

As if the Fates were busied in "calling white swans!" Ovid never composed any such trash. The epistle in fact begins with a verse (21) of consummate beauty, tenderness, and gravity, —

"Quod miseræ oblitæ molli sub veste locatum,
Dum adventu matris prosilit, excutitur."

These require another punctuation, —

"Quod miseræ (oblitæ molli sub veste locatum)."

The Germans, to whom we owe so much in every branch of learning, are not always fortunate in their punctuation; and perhaps never was anything so subversive of harmony as that which Heyne has given us in a passage of Tibullus, —

"Blanditiis vult esse locum Venus ipsa —"

Who could ever doubt this fact, — that even Venus herself will admit of blandishments? But Tibullus laid down no such truism. Heyne writes it thus, and proceeds, —

"querelis
Supplicibus, miseris fletibus, illa favet."

The tender and harmonious poet wrote not "Blandit*i*is" but "Bland*i*tis, —

> "Blanditis vult esse locum Venus ipsa querelis ;
> Supplicibus, miseris, flentibus, illa favet."

Here the "blanditiæ" are quite out of the question ; but the "blanditæ querelæ" are complaints softly expressed and *coaxingly* preferred.

To return to Catullus. The following couplet is —

> "Atque illud prono præceps agitur decursu ;
> Huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor."

Manat can hardly be applicable to *rubor*. We would prefer —

> "*Huic manet in* tristi conscius ore rubor," —

the opposite to "agitur decursu."

They whose ears have been accustomed to the Ovidian elegiac verse, and have been taught at school that every pentameter should close with a dissyllable, will be apt to find those of Catullus harsh and negligent. But let them only read over, twice or thrice, the first twelve verses of this poem, and their ear will be cured of its infirmity. By degrees they may be led to doubt whether the worst of all Ovid's conceits is not his determination to give every alternate verse this syllabic uniformity.

Carmen LXVI. "De Comâ Berenices." This is imitated from a poem of Callimachus, now lost, — perhaps an early exercise of our poet, corrected afterward, but insufficiently. The sixth verse, however, is exquisite in its cadence, —

> "Ut Triviam furtim sub Latmia saxa relegans
> *Dulcis amor gyro devocat aerio.*"

Verse 27 reads, —

> "Anne bonum oblita es facinus, quo regium adepta es
> Conjugium, quod non fortior ausit *alis.*"

Berenice is said to have displayed great courage in battle. To render the second verse intelligible, we must admit "alis" for *alius*, as *alid* is used for *aliud* in Lucretius. Moreover, we must give "fortior" the expression of *strength*, not of *courage*, — as *forte* throughout Italy at the present time expresses never courage, always strength. The sense of the passage then is,

"Have you forgotten the great action by which you won your husband, — an action which one much stronger than yourself would not have attempted?" For it would be nonsense to say, "You have performed a brave action which a *braver* person would not have dared." In the sense of Catullus are those passages of Sallust and Virgil, —

> "Neque a 'fortissimis' *infirmissimo* generi resisti posse.
> 'Forti' fidis equo."

Verse 65 reads, —

> "Virginis, *et* sævi contingens *namque* Leonis Lumina."

Namque may be the true reading. The editor has adduced two examples from Plautus to show the probability of it, but fails, —

> "Quando hæc innata est nam tibi."[1]

> "Quid tibi ex filio nam ægre est."[2]

He seems unaware that "nam," in the first, is only a part of *quid-nam*, the *quid* being separated; *quando-nam*, the same for *ecquando* (*ede* quando) "tell me when," *quianam*, etc.; but *namque* is not in the like condition, and in this place it is awkward. The *nam* added to the above words is always an interrogative.

Carmen LXVII. "Ad Januam," etc. In verse 31 we have, —

> "Atqui non solum se dicit cognitum habere
> Brixia, Cycnææ supposita speculæ,
> *Flavus quam molli percurrit flumine Mela,*
> Brixia Veronæ mater amata meæ."

Why should the sensible Marchese Scipione Maffei have taken it into his head that the last couplet is spurious? What a beautiful verse is that in italics!

Carmen LXVIII. "Ad Manlium." A rambling poem quite unworthy of the author. The verses from the beginning of the twenty-sixth to the close of the thirtieth appertain to some other piece, and break the context. Doering has given a strange interpretation to —

> "Veronæ turpe Catullo," etc.

[1] Pers. ii. 5, 13. [2] Bacch. v. 1, 20.

The true meaning is much more obvious and much less delicate. In the sixty-third we must read "At" for "Ac;" this helps the continuity. After the seventy-third we must omit, as belonging to another place, all until we come to verse 143. Here we catch the thread again. The intermediate lines belong to *two* other poems, both perhaps addressed to Manlius, — one relating to the death of the poet's brother, the other on a very different subject: we mean the fragment just now indicated —

> "Quare quod scribis, Veronæ turpe Catullo," etc.

Verse 145 reads, —

> "Sed furtiva dedit mirâ munuscula nocte,
> Ipsius ex ipso demta viri gremio."

The verses are thus worded and punctuated in Doering's edition and others, but improperly. "*Mirâ* nocte" is nonsense. We must read the lines thus: —

> "Sed furtiva dedit *mirè* munuscula nocte
> Ipsius ex ipso," etc.

Or thus, —

> "Sed furtiva dedit *mediâ* munuscula nocte
> Ipsius ex ipso demta viri gremio."

Verse 147, which reads, —

> "Quare illud satis est, si nobis is datur unus,
> Quem lapide illa diem candidiore notat," —

Doering thus interprets: —

> "Quare jam illud mihi satis est, si illa vel *unum diem, quem mecum vixit,* ut diem faustum felicemque albo lapide insigniat."

That the verses have no such meaning is evident from the preceding, —

> "Quæ tamen etsi uno non est contenta Catullo
> Rara verecundæ furta feremus heræ."

This abolishes the idea of one single day contenting him, contented as he professes himself to be with little aberrations and infidelities. Scaliger has it, —

> "Quare illud satis est, si nobis *id* datur *unis;*
> Quod lapide illa dies candidiore notat."

And it appears to us that Scaliger has given the first line correctly; but not the punctuation. We should prefer, —

> "Quare illud satis est, si nobis id datur unis
> Qu*o*[1] lapide illa die*m* candidiore not*et*."

Verses 69 and 70 read, —

> "Trito fulgentem in limine plantam
> Innisa argutâ constitit *in soleâ*."

The slipper could not be *arguta* while she was standing in it. Scaliger reads "constit*uit* soleâ." The one is not sense; the other is neither sense nor Latin, unless the construction is *constituit plantam*, and then all the other words are in disarray. The meaning is, "She placed her foot against the door, and, *without speaking*, rapped it with her sounding slipper." Then the words would be "argutâ *conticuit* soleâ."

In verse 78 we have, —

> "Nil mihi tam valde placeat, Rhamnusia virgo,
> *Quod* temere invitis suscipiatur heris."

In Scaliger it is, —

> "Quàm temere," etc.

The true reading is neither, but —

> "Quàm *ut* temere."

Such elisions are found in this very poem and the preceding, —

> "Ne amplius a misero," —

and —

> "*Qui* ipse sui gnati."

Carmen LXXI. "Ad Virronem." Doering thinks, as others have done, that the poem is against Virro. On the contrary, it is a facetious consolation to him on the punishment of his rival.

> "Mirifice est *a te* nactus utrumque malum"

means only "for his offence against you." We have a little more to add on this in CXV.

Carmen LXXV. "Ad Lesbiam." Here are eight verses, the rhythm of which plunges from the ear into the heart. Our attempt to render them in English is feeble and vain, —

[1] "Quo" for "quod."

"None could ever say that she,
Lesbia, was so loved by me.
Never all the world around
Faith so true as mine was found:
If no longer it endures
(Would it did!) the fault is yours.
I can never think again
Well of you: I try in vain.
But — be false — do what you will —
Lesbia, I must love you still."

CARMEN LXXVI. "Ad seipsum." They whose ears retain only the sound of the hexameters and pentameters they recited and wrote at school, are very unlikely to be greatly pleased with the versification of this poem. Yet perhaps one of equal earnestness and energy was never written in elegiac metre. *Sentences* must be read at once, and not merely distichs; then a fresh harmony will spring up exuberantly in every part of it, into which many discordant verses will sink and lose themselves, to produce a part of the effect. It is, however, difficult to restrain a smile at such expressions as these from such a man, —

"Si vitam puriter egi,
O Dii! reddite mî hoc pro pietate meâ!"

CARMEN LXXXV. "De Amore suo."

"Odi et amo. *Quare id faciam, fortasse requiris:*
Nescio, sed fieri sentio et excrucior."

The words in italics are flat and prosaic; the thought is beautiful, and similar to that expressed in LXXV.

"I love and hate. Ah! never ask why so!
I hate and love — and that is all I know.
I see 't is folly, but I feel 't is woe."

CARMEN XCII. "De Lesbia." The fourth verse is printed —

"Quo signo? quasi non totidem *mox* deprecor illi
Assidue."

"Mox" and "assidue" cannot stand together. Jacobs has given a good emendation, —

"Quasi non totidem *mala* deprec*er* illi," etc.

CARMEN XCIII. "In Cæsarem." Nothing can be imagined more contemptuous than the indifference he here affects toward

a name destined in all after ages to be the principal jewel in the highest crowns; and thinking of Cæsar's genius, it is difficult to see without derision the greatest of those who assume it. Catullus must have often seen, and we have reason to believe he personally knew, the conqueror of Gaul when he wrote this epigram, —

> "I care not, Cæsar, what you are,
> Nor know if you be brown or fair."

CARMEN XCV. "De Smyrnâ Cinnæ Poetæ." There is nothing of this poem, in which Cinna's "Smyrna" is extolled, worth notice, excepting the last line; and that indeed not for what we read in it, but for what we have lost, —

> "Parva mei mihi sunt cordi monumenta . . ."

The word "mon*u*menta" is spelled improperly; it is "mon*i*menta." The last word in the verse is wanting; yet we have seen quoted, and prefixed to volumes of poetry, —

> "Parva mei mihi sunt cordi monumenta laboris."

But Catullus is not speaking of himself, he is speaking of Cinna; and the proper word comes spontaneously, "sodalis."

CARMEN XCIX. "Ad Juventium."

> "Multis diluta labella
> Guttis *abstersisti omnibus articulis*."

How few will this verse please! but how greatly those few!

CARMEN CI. "Inferiæ ad Fratris Tumulum." In these verses there is a sorrowful but a quiet solemnity, which we rarely find in poets on similar occasions. The grave and firm voice which has uttered the third, breaks down in the fourth, —

> "Multas per gentes et multa per æquora vectus
> Adveni has miseras, frater, ad inferias,
> Ut te postremo donarem munere mortis
> *Et mutum nequidquam alloquerer cinerem*."

Unusual as is the cadence, the cæsura, who would wish it other than it is? If there were authority for it, we would read, in the sixth, instead of —

> "Heu *miser* indigne frater ademte mihi" —

"Heu *nimis;*" because just above we have, —

> "Adveni has *miseras*, frater, ad inferias."

CARMEN CX. "Ad Aufilenam." Doering says, "Utrum poetæ an scribarum *socordiæ* tribuenda sit, qua ultimi hujus carminis versus laborant, obscuritas, pro suo quisque statuat arbitrio. Tolli quidem potest hæc obscuritas, sed *emendandi genere liberrimo*." We are not quite so sure of that; we are only sure that we find no obscurity at all in them. The word *factum* is understood, and would be inelegant if it could have found for itself a place in the verse.

CARMEN CXV. It is requisite to transcribe the verses here to show that Doering is mistaken in two places; he was at LXXI. in one only, —

> "Prata arva, ingentes sylvas saltusque paludesque
> Usque ad Hyperboreos et mare ad Oceanum.
> Omnia magna hæc sunt, tamen ipse est *maximus ultor*."

He quotes LXXI., forgetting that that poem is addressed to Virro, and this to Mamurra, under his old nickname: Mamurra, whatever else he might be, was no *maximus ultor* here. The context wlll show what the word should be. Mamurra, by his own account, is possessor of meadow ground and arable ground, of woods, forests, and marshes, from the Hyperboreans to the Atlantic. "These are great things," says Catullus, "but he himself is great *beyond them all*," — "ipse est maximus, ultra;" sc. "Hyperboreas et Oceanum."

In how different a style, how artificially, with what infinite fuss and fury, has Horace addressed Virgil on the death of Quintilius Varus! Melpomene is called from a distance, and several more persons equally shadowy are brought forward; and then Virgil is honestly told that if he could sing and play more blandly than the Thracian Orpheus, he never could reanimate an empty image which Mercury had drawn off among his "black flock."

In selecting a poet for examination, it is usual either to extol him to the skies, or to tear him to pieces and trample on him. Editors in general do the former, — critics on editors, more usually the latter. But one poet is not to be raised by casting

another under him. Catullus is made no richer by an attempt to transfer to him what belongs to Horace, nor Horace by what belongs to Catullus. Catullus has greatly more than he; but he also has much, — and let him keep it. We are not at liberty to indulge in forwardness and caprice, snatching a decoration from one and tossing it over to another. We will now sum up what we have collected from the mass of materials which has been brought before us, laying down some general rules and observations.

There are four things requisite to constitute might, majesty, and dominion in a poet: these are creativeness, constructiveness, the sublime, the pathetic. A poet of the first order must have formed, or taken to himself and modified, some great subject. He must be creative and constructive. Creativeness may work upon old materials: a new world may spring from an old one. Shakspeare found Hamlet and Ophelia; he found Othello and Desdemona, — nevertheless he, the only universal poet, carried this and all the other qualifications far beyond the reach of competitors. He was creative and constructive, he was sublime and pathetic, and he has also in his humanity condescended to the familiar and the comic. There is nothing less pleasant than the smile of Milton; but at one time Momus, at another the Graces, hang upon the neck of Shakspeare. Poets whose subjects do not restrict them, and whose ordinary gait displays no indication of either greave or buskin, if they want the facetious and humorous, and are not creative nor sublime nor pathetic, must be ranked by sound judges in the secondary order and not among the foremost even there.

Cowper and Byron and Southey, with much and deep tenderness, are richly humorous. Wordsworth, grave, elevated, observant, and philosophical, is equi-distant from humor and from passion. Always contemplative, never creative, he delights the sedentary and tranquillizes the excited. No tear ever fell, no smile ever glanced on his pages. With him you are beyond the danger of any turbulent emotion at terror, or valor, or magnanimity, or generosity. Nothing is there about him like Burns's "Scots wha ha'e wi' Wallace bled," or Campbell's "Battles of Copenhagen and Hohenlinden," or those exquisite works which in Hemans rise up like golden spires among broader but lower structures, — "Ivan" and "Casabianca."

Byron, often impressive and powerful, never reaches the heroic and the pathetic of these two poems; and he wants the freshness and healthiness we admire in Burns. But an indomitable fire of poetry, the more vivid for the gloom about it, bursts through the crusts and crevices of an unsound and hollow mind. He never chatters with chilliness, nor falls overstrained into languor; nor do metaphysics ever muddy his impetuous and precipitate stream. It spreads its ravages in some places, but it is limpid and sparkling everywhere. If no story is well told by him, no character well delineated, — if all resemble one another by their beards and Turkish dresses, there is however the first and the second and the third requisite of eloquence, whether in prose or poetry, — vigor. But no *large* poem of our days is so animated, or so truly of the heroic cast as "Marmion." Southey's "Roderick" has less nerve and animation; but what other living poet has attempted, or shown the ability, to erect a structure so symmetrical and so stately? It is not enough to heap description on description, to cast reflection over reflection; there must be development of character in the development of story; there must be action, there must be passion; the end and the means must alike be great.

The poet whom we mentioned last is more studious of classical models than the others, especially in his "Inscriptions." Interest is always excited by him, enthusiasm not always. If his elegant prose and harmonious verse are insufficient to excite it, turn to his virtues, to his manliness in defence of truth, to the ardor and constancy of his friendships, to his disinterestedness, to his generosity, to his rejection of title and office, and consequently of wealth and influence. He has labored to raise up merit in whatever path of literature he found it; and poetry in particular has never had so intelligent, so impartial, and so merciful a judge. Alas! it is the will of God to deprive him of those faculties which he exercised with such discretion, such meekness, and such humanity!

We digress, — not too far, but too long; we must return to the ancients, and more especially to the author whose volume lies open before us.

There is little of the creative, little of the constructive, in him; that is, he has conceived no new varieties of character, he has built up nó edifice in the intellectual world, — but he

always is shrewd and brilliant; he often is pathetic; and he sometimes is sublime. Without the sublime, we have said before, there can be no poet of the first order; but the pathetic may exist in the secondary, for tears are more easily drawn forth than souls are raised: so easily are they on some occasions, that the poetical power needs scarcely to be brought into action; while on others the pathetic is the very summit of sublimity. We have an example of it in the Ariadne of Catullus; we have another in the Priam of Homer. All the heroes and gods, debating and fighting, vanish before the father of Hector in the tent of Achilles, and before the storm of conflicting passions his sorrows and prayers excite. But neither in the spirited and energetic Catullus, nor in the masculine and scornful and stern Lucretius, — no, nor in Homer, — is there anything so impassioned, and therefore so sublime, as the last hour of Dido in the Æneid. Admirably as two Greek poets have represented the tenderness, the anguish, the terrific wrath and vengeance of Medea, all the works they ever wrote contain not the poetry which Virgil has condensed into about a hundred verses, — omitting, as we must, those which drop like icicles from the rigid lips of Æneas; and also the similes which, here as everywhere, sadly interfere with passion. In this place Virgil fought his battle of Actium, which left him poetical supremacy in the Roman world, whatever mutinies and conspiracies may have arisen against him in Germany or elsewhere.

The Ariadne of Catullus has greatly the advantage over the Medea of Apollonius, for what man is much interested by such a termagant? We have no sympathies with a woman whose potency is superhuman. In general, it may be apprehended, we like women little the better for excelling us even moderately in our own acquirements and capacities; but what energy springs from her weaknesses! what poetry is the fruit of her passions, once perhaps in a thousand years bursting forth with imperishable splendor on its golden bough! If there are fine things in the Argonautics of Apollonius, there are finer still in those of Catullus. In relation to Virgil, he stands as Correggio in relation to Raphael, — a richer colorist, a less accurate draftsman, less capable of executing grand designs, more exquisite in the working out of smaller. Virgil is depreciated by the arrogance of self-sufficient poets, nurtured

on coarse fare, and dizzy with home-brewed flattery. Others, who have studied more attentively the ancient models, are abler to show his relative station, and readier to venerate his powers. Although we find him incapable of contriving and more incapable of executing so magnificent a work as the Iliad, yet there are places in his compared with which the grandest in that grand poem lose much of their elevation. Never was there such a whirlwind of passions as Virgil raised on those African shores, amid those rising citadels and departing sails. When the vigorous verses of Lucretius are extolled, no true poet, no sane critic, will assert that the seven or eight examples of the best are equivalent to this one: even in force of expression, here he falls short of Virgil.

When we drink a large draught of refreshing beverage, it is only a small portion that affects the palate. In reading the best poetry, moved and excited as we may be, we can take in no more than a part of it; passages of equal beauty are unable to raise enthusiasm. Let a work in poetry or prose indicating the highest power of genius be discoursed on, probably no two persons in a large company will recite the same portion as having struck them the most forcibly; but when several passages are pointed out and read emphatically, each listener will to a certain extent doubt a little his own judgment in this one particular, and hate you heartily for shaking it. Poets ought never to be vexed, discomposed, or disappointed, when the better is overlooked and the inferior is commended: much may be assigned to the observer's point of vision being more on a level with the object. And this reflection also will console the artist, when really bad ones are called more simple and natural, while in fact they are only more ordinary and common. In a palace we must look to the elevation and proportions, whereas a low grotto may assume any form and almost any deformity. Rudeness is here no blemish; a shell reversed is no false ornament; moss and fern may be stuck with the root outward; a crystal may sparkle at the top or at the bottom; dry sticks and fragmentary petrifactions find everywhere their proper place, and loose soil and plashy water show just what Nature delights in. Ladies and gentlemen who at first were about to turn back, take one another by the hand, duck their heads, enter it together, and exclaim, "What a charming grotto!"

In poetry, as in architecture, the Rustic Order is proper only for the lower story.

They who have listened, patiently and supinely, to the catarrhal songsters of goose-grazed commons, will be loath and ill-fitted to mount up with Catullus to the highest steeps in the forests of Ida, and will shudder at the music of the Corybantes in the temple of the Great Mother of the Gods.

FRANCESCO PETRARCA.

SCARCELY on any author, of whatever age or country, has there so much been written, spoken, and thought, by both sexes, as on the subject of this criticism, — Petrarca.

The compilation by Mr. Campbell is chiefly drawn together from the French. It contains no criticism on the poetry of his author, beyond a hasty remark or two in places which least require it. He might have read Sismondi and Ginguené more profitably. The author of the "Introduction to the Literature of Europe" had already done so; but neither has *he* thrown any fresh light on the character or the writings of Petrarca, or, in addition to what had already been performed by those two judicious men, furnished us with a remark in any way worth notice. The readers of Italian, if they are suspicious, may even suspect that Mr. Campbell knows not very much of the language. Among the many apparent causes for this suspicion, we shall notice only two. Instead of "Friuli," he writes the French word "Frioul;" and instead of the "Marca di Ancona," the "Marshes." In Italian, a *marsh* is *palude* or *padule;* whereas *marca* is the origin of *marchese,* — the one a *confine;* the other a *defender* of a *confine,* or lord of such a territory.

Whoever is desirous of knowing all about Petrarca, will consult Muratori and De Sade; whoever has been waiting for a compendious and sound judgment on his works at large, will listen attentively to Ginguené; whoever can be gratified by a rapid glance at his works and character, will be directed by the clear-sighted follower of truth, Sismondi; and whoever reads only English, and is contented to fare on a small portion of recocted criticism in a long excursion, may be accommodated by Mrs. Dobson, Mr. Hallam, and Mr. Campbell.

It may seem fastidious and affected to write, as I have done, his Italian name in preference to his English one; but I think it better to call him as he called himself, as Laura called him,

as he was called by Colonna and Rienzi and Baccaccio, and in short by all Italy, for I pretend to no vernacular familiarity with a person of his distinction, and should almost be as ready to abbreviate Francesco into Frank, as Petrarca into Petrarch. Besides, the one appellation is euphonious, the other quite the reverse.

We Englishmen take strange liberties with Italian names. Perhaps the human voice can articulate no sweeter series of sounds than the syllables which constitute *Livorno;* certainly the same remark is inapplicable to *Leghorn.* However, we are not liable to censure for this depravation; it originated with the Genoese, the ancient masters of the town, whose language is extremely barbarous, not unlike the Provençal of the Troubadours. With them the letter *g*, pronounced hard, as it always was among the Greeks and Romans, is common for *v:* thus *lagoro* for *lavoro.*

I hope to be pardoned my short excursion, which was only made to bring my fellow-laborers home from afield. At last we are beginning to call people and things by their right names. We pay a little more respect to Cicero than we did formerly, calling him no longer by the appellation of Tully; we never say Laurence, or Lal de Medici, but Lorenzo. On the same principle, I beg permission to say Petrarca and Boccaccio, instead of Petrarch and Boccace. These errors were fallen into by following French translations; and we stopped and recovered our footing only when we came to *Tite-live* and *Aulugelle;* it was then indeed high time to rest and wipe our foreheads. Yet we cannot shake off the illusion that Horace was one of us at school, and we continue the friendly nickname, although with a whimsical inconsistency we continue to talk of the *Horatii* and *Curiatii.* Ovid, our earlier friend, sticks by us still. The ear informs us that Virgil and Pindar and Homer and Hesiod suffer no worse by defalcation than fruit-trees do; the sounds indeed are more euphonious than what fell from the native tongue. The great historians, the great orators, and the great tragedians of Greece have escaped unmutilated; and among the Romans it has been the good fortune, at least so far as *we* are concerned, of Paterculus, Quintus Curtius, Tacitus, Catullus, Propertius, and Tibullus to remain intact by the hand of onomaclasts. Spellings, whether

of names or things, should never be meddled with, save where the ignorant have superseded the learned, or where analogy has been overlooked by these. The courtiers of Charles II. chalked and charcoaled the orthography of Milton. It was thought a scandal to have been educated in England, and a worse to write as a republican had written. We were the subjects of the French king, and we borrowed at a ruinous rate from French authors, but not from the best. Eloquence was extinct, a gulf of ignominy divided us from the genius of Italy, the great master of the triple world was undiscovered by us, and the loves of Petrarca were too pure and elevated for the sojourners of Versailles.

Francesco Petrarca, if far from the greatest, yet certainly the most celebrated of poets, was born in the night between the nineteenth and twentieth day of July, 1304. His father's name was Petracco; his mother's, Eletta Canigiani. Petracco left Florence under the same sentence of banishment as his friend Dante Alighieri, and joined with him and the other exiles of the Bianchi army in the unsuccessful attack on that city the very night when, on his return to Arezzo, he found a son born to him: it was his first. To this son, afterward so illustrious, was given the name of Francesco di Petracco. In after life the sound had something in it which he thought ignoble; and he converted it into Petrarca. The wise and virtuous Gravina, patron of one who has written much good poetry, and less of bad than Petrarca, changed in like manner the name of Trapasso to Metastasio. I cannot agree with him that the sound of the Hellenized name is more harmonious, — the reduplication of the syllable *tas* is painful; but I do agree with Petrarca, whose adopted form has only one fault, which is, that there is no meaning in it.

When he was seven months old he was taken by his mother from Arezzo to Incisa, in the Val-d'Arno, where the life so lately given was nearly lost. The infant was dropped into the river, which is always rapid in that part of its course, and was then swollen by rain into a torrent. At Incisa he remained with her seven years. The father had retired to Pisa; and now his wife and Francesco, and another son born after, named Gherardo, joined him there. In a short time however

he took them to Avignon, where he hoped for employment under Pope Clement V. In that crowded city lodgings and provisions were so dear that he soon found it requisite to send his wife and children to the small episcopal town of Carpentras, where he often went to visit them. In this place Francesco met Convenole, who had taught him his letters, and who now undertook to teach him what he knew of rhetoric and logic. He had attained his tenth year when the father took him with a party of friends to the fountain of Vaucluse. Even at that early age his enthusiasm was excited by the beauty and solitude of the scene. The waters then flowed freely; habitations there were none but the most rustic, and indeed one only near the rivulet. Such was then Vaucluse; and such it remained all his lifetime, and long after. The tender heart is often moulded by localities. Perhaps the purity and singleness of Petrarca's, his communion with it on one only altar, his exclusion of all images but one, result from this early visit to the gushing springs, the eddying torrents, the insurmountable rocks, the profound and inviolate solitudes of Vaucluse.

The time was now come when his father saw the necessity of beginning to educate him for a profession; and he thought the canon law was likely to be the most advantageous. Consequently he was sent to Montpelier, the nearest university, where he resided four years, — not engaged, as he ought to have been, among the jurisconsults, but among the Classics. Information of this perversity soon reached Petracco, who hastened to the place, found the noxious books, and threw them into the fire; but, affected by the lamentations of his son, he recovered the Cicero and the Virgil, and restored them to him, partially consumed. At the age of eighteen he was sent from Montpelier to Bologna, where he found Cino da Pistoja, to whom he applied himself in good earnest, not indeed for his knowledge as a jurisconsult, in which he had acquired the highest reputation, but for his celebrity as a poet. After two more years he lost his father; and the guardians, it is said, were unfaithful to their trust. Probably there was little for them to administer. He now returned to Avignon, where, after the decease of Clement V., John XXII. occupied the popedom. Here his Latin poetry soon raised him into notice, for nobody in Avignon wrote so good; but happily, both for himself and

many thousand sensitive hearts in every age and nation, he soon desired his verses to be received and understood by one to whom the Latin was unknown.

> "Benedetto sia il giorno, e 'l mese, e l'anno!
>
> Blessed be the day, and month, and year!"

Laura, daughter of Audibert de Noves, was married to Hugh de Sade, — persons of distinction. She was younger by three years than Petrarca. They met first on Good Friday, in the convent-church of Saint Claire, at six in the morning. That hour she inspired such a passion, by her beauty and her modesty, as years only tended to strengthen, and death to sanctify. The incense which burned in the breast of Petrarca before his Laura might have purified, one would have thought, even the court of Avignon; and never was love so ardent breathed into ear so chaste. The man who excelled all others in beauty of person, in dignity of demeanor, in genius, in tenderness, in devotion, was perhaps the only one who failed in attaining the object of his desires. But cold as Laura was in temperament, rigid as she was in her sense of duty, she never was insensible to the merits of her lover. A light of distant hope often shone upon him and tempted him onward, through surge after surge, over the depths of passion. Laura loved admiration, as the most retired and most diffident of women do; and the admiration of Petrarca drew after it the admiration of the world. She also, what not all women do, looked forward to the glory that awaited her, when those courtiers and those crowds and that city should be no more, and when of all women the Madonna alone should be so glorified on earth.

Perhaps it is well for those who delight in poetry that Laura was inflexible and obdurate; for the sweetest song ceases when the feathers have lined the nest. Incredible as it may seem, Petrarca was capable of quitting her: he was capable of believing that absence could moderate, or perhaps extinguish, his passion. Generally the lover who can think so has almost succeeded; but Petrarca had contracted the habit of writing poetry, — and now writing it on Laura, and Laura only, he brought the past and the future into a focus on his breast. All magical powers, it is said, are dangerous to the possessor: none is more dangerous than the magic of the poet, who can call be-

fore him at will the object of his wishes; but her countenance and her words remain her own, and are beyond his influence.

It is wonderful how extremely few, even of Italian scholars and natives of Italy, have read his letters or his poetry entirely through. I am not speaking of his Latin; for it would indeed be a greater marvel if the most enterprising industry succeeded there. The thunderbolt of war — "Scipiades fulmen belli" — has always left a barren place behind. No poet ever was fortunate in the description of his exploits; and the least fortunate of the number is Petrarca. Probably the whole of the poem contains no sentence or image worth remembering. I say *probably;* for whosoever has hit upon what he thought the best of it has hit only upon what is worthless, or else upon what belongs to another. The few lines quoted and applauded by Mr. Campbell are taken partly from Virgil's Æneid, and partly from Ovid's Metamorphoses. I cannot well believe that any man living has read beyond five hundred lines of "Africa;" I myself, in sundry expeditions, have penetrated about thus far into its immeasurable sea of sand. But the wonder is that neither the poetry nor the letters of Petrarca seem to have been, even in his own country, read thoroughly and attentively; for surely his commentators ought to have made themselves masters of these, before they agitated the question, — some whether Laura really existed, and others whether she was flexible to the ardor of her lover. Speaking of his friends, Socrates and Lælius, of whose first meeting with him I shall presently make mention, he says, —

> "Con costor colsi 'l glorioso ramo
> Onde forse anzi tempo ornai le tempie,
> In memoria di quella ch' i' tant' amo:
> Ma pur di lei che il cuor di pensier m' empie
> Non potei coglier mai ramo nè foglie;
> Si fur' le sue radici acerbe ed empie."

I cannot render these verses much worse than they actually are, with their "tempo" and "tempie," and their "radici *empie*;" so let me venture to offer a translation: —

> "They saw me win the glorious bough
> That shades my temples even now,
> *Who never bough nor leaf could take*
> From that severe one, for whose sake
> So many sighs and tears arose —
> Unbending root of bitter woes."

There is a canzone to the same purport, to be noticed in its place; and several of his letters could also be adduced in evidence. We may believe that although he had resolved to depart from Avignon for a season, he felt his love increasing at every line he wrote. Such thoughts and images cannot be turned over in the mind and leave it perfectly in composure. Yet perhaps when he had completed the most impassioned sonnet, the surges of his love may have subsided under the oil he had poured out on his vanity; for love, if it is a weakness, was not the only weakness of Petrarca, and when he had performed what he knew was pleasing in the eyes of Laura, he looked abroad for the applause of all around.

Giacomo Colonna, who had been at the university of Bologna with him, had come to Avignon soon after. It was with Colonna he usually spent his time; both had alike enjoyed the pleasures of the city, until the day when Francesco met Laura. To Giacomo was now given the bishopric of Lombes, in reward of a memorable and admirable exploit, among the bravest that ever has been performed in the sight of Rome herself. When Lewis of Bavaria went thither to depose John XVIII., Giacomo Colonna, attended by four men in masks, read publicly in the Piazza di San Marcello the bull of that emperor's excommunication and dethronement, and challenged to single combat any adversary. None appearing, he rode onward to the stronghold of his family at Palestrina, the ancient Preneste. His reward was this little bishopric. When Petrarca found him at Lombes, in the house of the bishop he found also two persons of worth, who became the most intimate of his friends, — the one a Roman, Lello by name, which name the poet Latinized to Lælius; the other from the borders of the Rhine, whose appellation was probably less tractable, and whom he called Socrates. Toward the close of autumn the whole party returned to Avignon.

In the bosom of Petrarca love burned again more ardently than ever. It is censured as the worst of conceits in him that he played so often on the name of Laura, and many have suspected that there could be little passion in so much allusion. A purer taste might indeed have corrected in the poetry the outpourings of tenderness on the name; but surely there is a true and a pardonable pleasure in cherishing the very sound of

what we love. If it belongs to the heart, as it does, it belongs to poetry, and is not easily to be cast aside. The shrub recalling the idea of Laura was planted by his hand: often that he might nurture it was the pen laid by; the leaves were often shaken by his sighs, and not unfrequently did they sparkle with his tears. He felt the comfort of devotion as he bent before the image of her name. But he now saw little of her, and was never at her house; it was only in small parties, chiefly of ladies, that they met. She excelled them all in grace of person and in elegance of attire. Probably her dress was not the more indifferent to her on her thinking whom she was about to meet; yet she maintained the same reserve, — the nourisher of love, but not of hope.

Restless, forever restless, again went Petrarca from Avignon. He hoped he should excite a little regret at his departure and a desire to see him again soon, if not expressed to him before he left the city, yet conveyed by letters or reports. He proceeded to Paris, thence to Cologne, and was absent eight months. On his return, the bishop, whom he expected to meet, was neither at Avignon nor at Lombes. His courage and conduct were required at Rome, to keep down the rivals of his family, the Orsini. Disappointed in his visit and hopeless in his passion, the traveller now retired to Vaucluse; and here he poured in solitude from his innermost heart incessant strains of love and melancholy.

At Paris he had met with Dionigi de' Ruperti, an Augustine monk, born at Borgo San Sepolcro near Florence, and esteemed as one of the most learned, eloquent, philosophical, and religious men in France. To him Petrarca wrote earnestly for counsel; but before the answer came he had seen Laura. A fever was raging in the city, and her life was in danger. Benedict XII., to whom he addressed the least inelegant of his Latin poems (an exhortation to transfer the Roman See to Rome), conferred on him, now in the thirtieth year of his age, a canonry at Lombes. But the bishop was absent from the diocese, and again at Rome. Thither hastened Petrarca, and was received at Capraniccia, a castle of the Colonnas, not only by his diocesan, but likewise by Stefano, senator of Rome, to which city they both conducted him. His stay here was short; he returned to Avignon, but inflamed with unquenchable love,

and seeking to refresh his bosom with early memories, he retired to Vaucluse. Here he purchased a poor cottage and a small meadow; hither he transferred his books, and hither also that image which he could nowhere leave behind. Summer, autumn, winter, he spent among these solitudes; a fisherman was his only attendant, but occasionally a few intimate friends came from Avignon to visit him. The bishop of Cavaillon, Philippe de Cabassoles, in whose diocese was Vaucluse, and who had a villa not far off, here formed with him a lasting friendship, and was worthy of it. During these months the poet wrote the three canzoni on the eyes of Laura, which some have called the "Three Graces," but which he himself called the "Three Sisters." The Italians, the best-tempered and the most polite of nations, look rather for beauties than faults, and imagine them more easily. A brilliant thought blinds them to improprieties, and they are incapable of resisting a strong expression. Enthusiastic criticism is common in Italy; ingenious is not deficient, correct is yet to come.

About this time Simone Memmi of Siena, whom some without any reason whatsoever have called a disciple of Giotto, was invited by the Pope to Avignon, where he painted an apartment in the pontifical palace, just then completed. Petrarca has celebrated him, not only in two sonnets, but also in his letters, in which he says, "Duos ego novi pictores egregios, — Joctium Florentinum civem, cujus inter modernos fama ingens est, et Simonem Senensem."

Had so great an artist been the scholar of Giotto, it would have added to the reputation of even this illustrious man, a triumvir with Ghiberti and Michelangelo. These, although indeed not flourishing together, may be considered as the first triumvirate in the republic of the arts; Raphael, Correggio, and Titian the second. There is no resemblance to Giotto in the manner of Simone, nor does Ghiberti mention him as the disciple of the Florentine. No man knew better than Ghiberti how distinct are the Sanese and the Florentine schools. Simone Memmi, the first of the moderns who gave roundness and beauty to the female face, neglected not the graceful air of Laura. Frequently did he repeat her modest features in the principal figure of his sacred compositions; and Petrarca was alternately tortured and consoled by the possession of her por-

trait from the hand of Memmi. It was painted in the year 1339, so that she was thirty-two years old; but whether at the desire of her lover, or guided by his own discretion, or that in reality she retained the charms of youth after bearing eight or nine children, she is represented youthful and almost girlish whenever he introduces her.

With her picture now before him, Petrarca thought he could reduce in number and duration his visits to Avignon, and might undertake a work sufficient to fix his attention and occupy his retirement. He began to compose in Latin a history of Rome, from its foundation to the subversion of Jerusalem. But almost at the commencement the exploits of Scipio Africanus seized upon his enthusiastic imagination, and determined him to abandon history for poetry. The second Punic War was the subject he chose for an epic. Deficient as the work is in all the requisites of poetry, his friends applauded it beyond measure. And indeed no small measure of commendation is due to it; for here he had restored in some degree the plan and tone of antiquity. But to such a pitch was his vanity exalted, that he aspired to higher honors than Virgil had received under the favor of Augustus, and was ambitious of being crowned in the capitol. His powerful patrons removed every obstacle; and the senator of Rome invited him by letter to his coronation. A few hours afterward, on the 23d of August, 1340, another of the same purport was delivered to him from the University of Paris. The good king Robert of Naples had been zealous in obtaining for him the honor he solicited; and to Naples he hastened, ere he proceeded to Rome.

It was in later days that kings began to avoid the conversation and familiarity of learned men. Robert received Francesco as became them both; and on his departure from the court of Naples presented to him the gorgeous robe in which, four days afterward, he was crowned in the capitol. At the close of his life he lamented the glory he had thus attained, and repined at the malice it drew down on him. Even in the hour of triumph he was exposed to a specimen of the kind. Most of those among the ancient Romans to whom in their triumphal honors the laurel crown was decreed, were exposed to invectives and reproaches in their ascent; fescennine verses, rude and limping, interspersed with saucy trochaics, were gen-

erally their unpalatable fare. But Petrarca, the elect of a senator and a pope, was doomed to worse treatment. Not on his advance, but on his return, an old woman emptied on his laurelled head one of those mysterious vases which are usually in administration at the solemn hour of night. Charity would induce us to hope that her venerable age was actuated by no malignity, but there were strong surmises to the contrary; nor can I adduce in her defence that she had any poetical vein, by which I might account for this extraordinary act of incontinence. Partaking, as was thought by the physicians, of the old woman's nature, the contents of the vase were so acrimonious as to occasion baldness; her caldron, instead of restoring youth, drew down old age, or fixed immovably its odious signal. A projectile scarcely more fatal, in a day also of triumph, was hurled by a similar enemy on the head of Pyrrhus. The laurel decreed in full senate to Julius Cæsar, although it might conceal the calamity of baldness, never could have prevented it; nor is it probable that either his skill or his fortune could have warded off efficaciously what descended from such a quarter. The Italians, who carry more good humor about them than any other people, are likely to have borne this catastrophe of their poet with equanimity, if not hilarity. Perhaps even the gentle Laura, when she heard of it, averted the smile she could not quite suppress.

I will not discuss the question, how great or how little was the glory of this coronation, — a glory which Homer and Dante, which Shakspeare and Milton, never sought, and never would have attained. Merit has rarely risen of itself, but a pebble or a twig is often quite sufficient for it to spring from to the highest ascent. There is usually some baseness before there is any elevation. After all, no man can be made greater by another, although he may be made more conspicuous by title, dress, position, and acclamation. The powerful can only be ushers to the truly great; and in the execution of this office they themselves approach to greatness. But Petrarca stood far above all the other poets of his age; and incompetent as were his judges, it is much to their praise that they awarded due honor to the purifier both of language and of morals. With these, indeed, to solicit the wife of another may seem inconsistent; but such was always the custom of the Tuscan race, and

not always with the same chastity as was enforced by Laura. As Petrarca loved her, —

> "Id, Manli! non est turpe, magis miserum est."

Love is the purifier of the heart; its depths are less turbid than its shallows. In despite of precepts and arguments, the most sedate and the most religious of women think charitably, and even reverentially, of the impassioned poet. Constancy is the antagonist of frailty, exempt from the captivity and above the assaults of sin.

There is much resemblance in the character of Petrarca to that of Abelard. Both were learned, both were disputatious, both were handsome, both were vain; both ran incessantly backward and forward from celebrity to seclusion, from seclusion to celebrity; both loved unhappily; but the least fortunate was the most beloved.

Devoted as Petrarca was to the Classics, and prone as the Italian poets are to follow and imitate them, he stands apart with Laura; and if some of his reflections are to be found in the sonnets of Cino da Pistoja, and a few in the more precious reliquary of Latin Elegy, he seems disdainful of repeating in her ear what has ever been spoken in another's. Although a cloud of pure incense rises up and veils the intensity of his love, it is such love as animates all creatures upon earth, and tends to the same object in all. Throughout life we have been accustomed to hear of the Platonic: absurd as it is everywhere, it is most so here. Nothing in the voluminous works of Plato authorizes us to affix this designation to simple friendship, to friendship exempt from passion. On the contrary, the philosopher leaves us no doubt whatever that his notion of love is sensual.[1] He says expressly what species of it, and from what

[1] A mysterious and indistinct idea, not dissipated by the closest view of the original, led the poetical mind of Shelley into the labyrinth that encompassed the garden of Academus. He has given us an accurate and graceful translation of the most eloquent of Plato's dialogues. Consistently with modesty he found it impossible to present the whole to his readers; but as the subject is entirely on the nature of love, they will discover that nothing is more unlike Petrarca's. The trifles, the quibbles, the unseasonable jokes of what is exhibited in very harmonious Greek, and in English nearly as harmonious, pass uncensured and unnoticed by the fascinated Shelley. So his gentleness and warmth of heart induced

bestowers, should be the reward of sages and heroes, — "Dii meliora piis!"

Besides Sonnets and Canzoni Petrarca wrote "Sestine;" so named because each stanza contains six verses, and each poem six stanzas, to the last of which three lines are added. If the terza-rima is disagreeable to the ear, what is the sestina, in which there are only six rhymes to thirty-six verses, and all these respond to the same words! Cleverness in distortion can proceed no further. Petrarca wearied the popes by his repeated solicitations that they would abandon Avignon: he never thought of repeating a sestina to them, — it would have driven the most obtuse and obstinate out to sea, and he never would have removed his hands from under the tiara until he entered the port of Civita-Vecchia. While our poet was thus amusing his ingenuity by the most intolerable scheme of rhyming that the poetry of any language has exhibited, his friend Boccaccio was occupied in framing that very stanza, the ottava-rima, which so delights us in Berni, Ariosto, and Tasso. But Tasso is most harmonious when he expatiates most freely, "numerisque fertur lege solutis," — for instance, in the "Aminta," where he is followed by Milton in his "Lycidas."

We left Petrarca not engaged in these studies of his retirement, but passing in triumph through the capital of the world. On his way toward Avignon, where he was ambitious of displaying his fresh laurels, he stayed a short time at Parma with Azzo da Correggio, who had taken possession of that city. Azzo was among the most unprincipled, ungrateful, and mean of the numerous petty tyrants who have infested Italy. Petrarca's love of liberty never quite outrivalled his love of princes, — for which Boccaccio mildly expostulates with him, and Sismondi, as liberal, wise, and honest as Boccaccio, severely reprehends him. But what other, loving as he loved, would have urged incessantly the return to Italy, the abandonment of Avignon? At times, beyond a doubt, he preferred his imperfect hopes to the complete restoration of Italian glory; but he shook them like

him to look with affection on the poetry of Petrarca, — poetry by how many degrees inferior to his own! Nevertheless, with justice and propriety he ranks Dante higher in the same department, who indeed has described love more eloquently than any other poet, excepting (who always must be excepted) Shakspeare. Francesca and Beatrice open all the heart, and fill it up with tenderness and with pity.

dust from his bosom, and Laura was less than Rome. Shall we refuse the name of patriot to such a man? No! those alone will do it who have little to lose or leave. Sismondi, who never judges harshly, never hastily, passes no such sentence on him.

So pleased was Petrarca with his residence at Parma that he purchased a house in the city, where he completed his poem of "Africa." He was now about to rejoin at Lombes his friend and diocesan, — whom he saw in a dream, pale as death. He communicated this dream to several persons; and twenty-five days afterward he received the intelligence of its perfect truth. Another friend, more advanced in years, Dionigi di Borgo San Sepolcro, soon followed. Before the expiration of the year he was installed archdeacon of Parma. Soon after this appointment, Benedict XII. died, and Clement VI. succeeded. This pontiff was superior to all his predecessors in gracefulness of manners and delicacy of taste, and at his accession the corruptions of the papal court became less gross and offensive. He divided his time between literature and the ladies, — not quite impartially. The people of Rome began to entertain new and higher hopes that their city would again be the residence of Christ's vicegerent. To this intent they delegated eighteen of the principal citizens, and chose Petrarca, who had received the freedom of the city on his coronation, to present at once a remonstrance and an invitation. The polite and wary pontiff heard him complacently, talked affably and familiarly with him, conferred on him the priory of Migliorino; but, being a Frenchman, thought it gallant and patriotic to remain at Avignon. Petrarca was little disposed to return with the unsuccessful delegates. He continued at Avignon, where his countryman Sennuccio del Bene, who visited the same society as Laura, and who knew her personally, gave him frequent information of her, though little hope.

Youth has swifter wings than Love. Petrarca had loved Laura sixteen years; but all the beauty that had left her features had settled on his heart, immovable, unchangeable, eternal. Politics could, however, at all times occupy him, — not always worthily. He was induced by the pope to undertake a mission to Naples, and to claim the government of that kingdom on the part of his holiness. The good king Robert was dead, and had bequeathed the crown to the elder of his

two granddaughters. Giovanna, at nine years of age, was betrothed to her cousin Andreas of Hungary, who was three years younger. She was beautiful, graceful, gentle, sensible, and fond of literature; he was uncouth, ferocious, ignorant, and governed by a Hungarian monk of the same character, Fra Rupert. It is deplorable to think that Petrarca could ever have been induced to accept an embassy of which the purport was to deprive of her inheritance an innocent and lovely girl, the granddaughter of his friend and benefactor. She received him with cordiality, and immediately appointed him her private chaplain. His departure, he says, was hastened by two causes, — first, by the insolence of Fra Rupert, which he has well described; and secondly, by an atrocious sight, which also he has commemorated. He was invited to an entertainment, of which he gives us to understand he knew not at all the nature. Suddenly he heard shouts of joy, and "turning his head," he beheld a youth of extraordinary strength and beauty, covered with dust and blood, expiring at his feet. He left Naples without accomplishing the dethronement of Giovanna, or (what also was intrusted to him) the liberation from prison of some adherents of the Colonnas, — robbers no doubt, and assassins, who had made forays into the Neapolitan territory, for all persons of that description were under the protection of the Colonnas or the Orsini. His failure was the cause of his return, and not the ferocity of a monk and a gladiator.

Petrarca went to Parma on his way back to Avignon. The roads were dangerous; war was raging in the country. His friend Azzo had refused to perform the promise he had made to Lucchino Visconti, by whose intervention he had obtained his dominion, which he was to retain for five years and then resign. Azzo, Petrarca found, had taken refuge with Mastino della Scala, at Verona; and he embarked on the Po for that city. His friends hastened him forward to Avignon, — some by telling him how often the pope had made inquiries about him; and others, that Laura looked melancholy. On his return Clement offered him the office of Apostolic secretary; it was a very laborious one, and was declined.

Laura, pleased by Petrarca's return to her, was for a time less rigorous. Within the year, Charles of Luxemburg, soon after made emperor, went to Avignon. Knowing the celebrity

of Laura, and finding her at a ball, he went up to her and kissed her forehead and her eyes. "This sweet and strange action," says her lover, "filled me with envy." Surely, to him at least the sweetness must have been somewhat less than the strangeness. She was now indeed verging on her fortieth year; but love is forgetful of arithmetic. The following summer, Francesco for the first time visited his only brother Gherardo, who had taken the monastic habit in the Chartreuse of Montrieu. On his return he went to Vaucluse, where he composed a treatise "De Otio Religiosorum," which he presented to the monastery.

Very different thoughts and feelings now suddenly burst upon him. Among the seventeen who accompanied him in the deputation inviting the pope to Rome, there was another besides Petrarca chosen for his eloquence. It was Cola Rienzi. The love of letters and the spirit of patriotism united them in friendship. This extraordinary man, now invested with power, had driven the robbers and assassins, with their patrons the Orsini and Colonnas, out of Rome, and had established (what rarely are found together) both liberty and order. The dignity of tribune was conferred on Rienzi; by which title Petrarca addressed him, in a letter of sound advice and earnest solicitation. Now the bishop of Lombes was dead he little feared the indignation of the other Colonnas, but openly espoused and loudly pleaded the cause of the resuscitated commonwealth. The cardinal was probably taught by him to believe, that by his influence with Rienzi he might avert from his family the disaster and disgrace into which the mass of the nobility had fallen. "No family on earth," says he, "is dearer to me; but the republic, Rome, Italy, are dearer."

Petrarca took leave of the prelate, with amity on both sides undiminished; he also took leave of Laura. He could not repress, he could not conceal, he could not moderate his grief, nor could he utter one sad adieu. A look of fondness and compassion followed his parting steps; and the lover and the beloved were separated forever. He did not think it, else never could he have gone; but he thought a brief absence might be endured once more, rewarded as it would be with an accession to his glory, — and precluded from other union with him, in his glory Laura might participate.

Retired, and thinking of her duties and her home, sat Laura; not indifferent to the praises of the most celebrated man alive (for her heart in all its regions was womanly), but tepidly tranquil, or moved invisibly, and retaining her purity amidst the uncleanly stream that deluged Avignon. We may imagine that she sometimes drew out and unfolded on her bed the apparel, long laid apart and carefully preserved by her, in which she first had captivated the giver of her immortality; we may imagine that she sometimes compared with him an illiterate, coarse, morose husband, — and perhaps a sigh escaped her, and perhaps a tear, as she folded up again the cherished gown she wore on that Good Friday.

On his arrival at Genoa, Petrarca heard of the follies and extravagances committed by Rienzi, and instead of pursuing his journey to Rome, turned off to Parma. Here he learned that the greater part of the Roman nobility, and many of the Colonnas, had been exterminated by order of the tribune. Unquestionably they had long deserved it; but the exercise of such prodigious power unsettled the intellect of Rienzi. In January the poet left Parma for Vienna, where on the 25th (1348) he felt the shock of an earthquake. In the preceding month a column of fire was observed above the pontifical palace. After these harbingers of calamity came that memorable plague, to which we owe the immortal work of Boccaccio, — a work occupying the next station, in continental literature, to the "Divina Commedia," and displaying a greater variety of powers. The pestilence had now penetrated into the northern parts of Italy, and into the southern of France; it had ravaged Marseilles, it was raging in Avignon. Petrarca sent messenger after messenger for intelligence. Their return was tardy; and only on the 19th of May was notice brought to him that Laura had departed on the 6th of April, at six in the morning, — the very day, the very hour, he met her first. Beloved by all about her for her gentleness and serenity, she expired in the midst of relatives and friends. But did never her eyes look round for one who was away? And did not love, did not glory, tell him that in that chamber he might at least have died?

Other friends were also taken from him. Two months after this event he lost Cardinal Colonna; and then Sennuccio del Bene, the depositary of his thoughts and the interpreter of Laura's.

The Lord of Mantua, Luigi Gonzaga, had often invited Petrarca to his court, and he now accepted the invitation. From this residence he went to visit the hamlet of Pietola, formerly Andes, the birthplace of Virgil. At the cradle of her illustrious poet the glories of ancient Rome burst again upon him; and hearing that Charles of Luxemburg was about to cross the Alps, he addressed to him an eloquent exhortation, *Dê pacificandâ Italiâ*. After three years the emperor sent him an answer. The testy republican may condemn Petrarca, as Dante was condemned before, for inviting a stranger to become supreme in Italy; but how many evils would this step have obviated! Recluses and idlers, and often the most vicious, had been elevated to the honors of demigods; and incense had been wafted before the altar, among the most solemn rites of religion, to pilferers and impostors. As the Roman empire, with all the kingdoms of the earth, was sold under the spear by the Prætorian legion, so now, with title-deeds more defective, was the kingdom of heaven knocked down to the best bidder. It was not a desire of office and emolument, it was a love of freedom and of Roman glory, which turned the eyes of Petrarca, first in one quarter, then in another, to seek for the deliverance and regeneration of his native land.

No preferment, no friendship, stood before this object. In the beginning Petrarca exhorted Rienzi to the prosecution of his enterprise, and augured its success. But the vanity of the tribune, like Bonaparte's, precipitated his ruin. Both were so improvident as to be quite unaware that he who continues to play at *double or quits* must at last lose all. Rienzi, different from that other, was endowed by Nature with manly, frank, and generous sentiments. Meditative but communicative, studious but accessible, he would have followed, we may well believe, the counsels of Petrarca, had they been given him personally. Cautious but not suspicious, severe but not vindictive, he might perhaps have removed a D'Enghien by the axe, but never a L'Ouverture by famine. He would not have banished, he would not have treated with insolence and indignity, the greatest writer of the age from a consciousness of inferiority in intellect, as that other did in Madame de Staël. With that other, similarity of views and sentiments was no bond of union; he hated, he maligned, he persecuted, the wisest and bravest who

would not serve his purposes; patriotism was a ridicule, honor was an insult to him, and veracity a reproach. The *heart* of Rienzi was not insane. Instead of ordering the murder, he would have condemned to the gallows the murderer of such a man as Hofer. In his impetuous and eccentric course he carried less about him of the Middle Ages than the pestilent meteor that flamed forth in ours. Petrarca had too much wisdom, too much virtue, to praise or countenance him in his pride and insolence; but his fall was regretted by him, and is even still to be regretted by his country. It is indeed among the greatest calamities that have befallen the human race, condemned for several more centuries to lie in chains and darkness.

In the year of the jubilee (1350) Petrarca went again to Rome. Passing through Florence, he there visited Boccaccio, whom he had met at Naples. What was scarcely an acquaintance grew rapidly into friendship; and this friendship, honorable to both, lasted throughout life, unbroken and undiminished. Both were eloquent, both richly endowed with fancy and imagination; but Petrarca, who had incomparably the least of these qualities, had a readier faculty of investing them with verse, — in which Boccaccio, fond as he was of poetry, ill succeeded. There are stories in the "Decameron" which require more genius to conceive and execute than all the poetry of Petrarca; and indeed there is in Boccaccio more variety of the mental powers than in any of his countrymen, greatly more deep feeling, greatly more mastery over the human heart, than in any other but Dante. Honesty, manliness, a mild and social independence, rendered him the most delightful companion and the sincerest friend.

Petrarca on his road through Arezzo was received with all the honors due to him; and among the most delicate and acceptable to a man of his sensibility was the attendance of the principal inhabitants in a body, who conducted him to the house in which he was born, showing him that no alteration had been permitted to be made in it. Padua was the place to which he was going. On his arrival he found that the object of his visit, Giovanni da Carrara, had been murdered; nevertheless, he remained there several days, and then proceeded to Venice. Andrea Dandolo was doge, and war was about to break out between the Venetians and the Genoese. Petrarca,

who always wished most anxiously the concord and union of the Italian States, wrote a letter to Dandolo, powerful in reasoning and eloquence, dissuading him from hostilities. The poet on this occasion showed himself more provident than the greatest statesman of the age. On the 6th of April, the third anniversary of Laura's death, a message was conveyed to him from the republic of Florence restoring his property and his rights of citizen. Unquestionably he who brought the message counselled the measure, and calculated the day. Boccaccio again embraced Petrarca.

It was also proposed to establish a university at Florence, and to nominate the illustrious poet its rector. Declining the office, he returned to Vaucluse, but soon began to fancy that his duty called him to Avignon. Rome and all Italy swarmed with robbers. Clement, from the bosom of the Vicomtesse de Turenne, consulted with the cardinals on the means of restoring security to his dominions. Petrarca too was consulted, and in the most elaborate and most eloquent of his writings he recommended the humiliation of the nobles, the restoration of the republic, and the enactment of equal laws.

The people of Rome however had taken up arms again, and had elected for their chief magistrate Giovanni Cerroni. The privileges of the popedom were left untouched and unquestioned; not a drop of blood was shed; property was secure; tranquillity was established. Clement, whose health was declining, acquiesced. Petrarca, disappointed before, was reserved and silent. But his justice, his humanity, his gratitude were called into action elsewhere.

Ten years had elapsed since his mission to the court of Naples. The king Andreas had been assassinated, and the queen Giovanna was accused of the crime. Andreas had alienated from him all the Neapolitans excepting the servile, which in every court form a party, and in most a majority. Luigi of Taranto, the queen's cousin, loved her from her childhood, but left her at that age. Graceful and gallant as he was, there is no evidence that she placed too implicit and intimate a confidence in him. Never has any great cause been judged with less discretion by posterity. The pope, to whom she appealed in person, and who was deeply interested in her condemnation, with all the cardinals and all the judges unani-

mously and unreservedly acquitted her of participation or connivance or knowledge. Giannone, the most impartial and temperate of historians, who neglected no sources of information, bears testimony in her behalf. Petrarca and Boccaccio, men abhorrent from every atrocity, never mention her but with gentleness and compassion. The writers of the country, who were nearest to her person and her times, acquit her of all complicity. Nevertheless, she has been placed in the dock by the side of Mary Stuart. It is as certain that Giovanna was *not* guilty as that Mary *was*. She acknowledged before the whole Pontifical Court her hatred of her husband, and in the simplicity of her heart attributed it to magic. How different was the magic of Othello on Desdemona! and this too was believed.

If virtuous thoughts and actions can compensate for an irrecoverable treasure which the tomb encloses, surely now must calm and happiness have returned to Petrarca's bosom. Not only had he defended the innocent and comforted the sorrowful, in Giovanna; but with singular care and delicacy he reconciled two statesmen whose disunion would have been ruinous to her government, — Acciajoli and Barili. Another generous action was now performed by him, in behalf of a man by whom he and Rome and Italy had been deceived. Rienzi, after wandering about for nearly four years, was cast into prison at Prague, and then delivered up to the pope. He demanded to be judged according to law, which was refused. The spirit of Petrarca rose up against this injustice, and he addressed a letter to the Roman people, urging their interference. They did nothing. But it was believed at Avignon that Rienzi, the correspondent and friend of Petrarca, was not only an eloquent and learned man, but (what Petrarca had taught the world to reverence) a poet. This caused a relaxation in the severity of his confinement, subsequently his release, and ultimately his restoration to power.

Again the office of apostolic secretary was offered to Petrarca; again he declined it; again he retired to Vaucluse. Clement died; Innocent was elected, — so illiterate and silly a creature that he took the poet for a wizard because he read Virgil. It was time to revisit Italy. Acciajoli had invited him to Naples, Dandolo to Venice; but he went to neither. Gio-

vanni Visconti, Archbishop of Milan, had duly succeeded his brother Lucchino in the sovereignty. Clement, just before his decease, sent a nuncio to him, ordering him to make choice between the temporal and spiritual power. The duke-archbishop made no answer; but on the next Sunday, after celebrating pontifical Mass in the cathedral, he took in one hand a crozier, in the other a drawn sword, and "Tell the Holy Father," said he, "here is the spiritual, here the temporal: one defends the other." Innocent was unlikely to intimidate a prince who had thus defied his predecessor. Giovanni Visconti was among the most able statesmen that Italy has produced, and Italy has produced a greater number of the greatest than all the rest of the universe. Genoa, reduced to extremities by Venice, had thrown herself under his protection; and Venice, although at the head of the Italian league, guided by Dandolo and flushed with conquest, felt herself unable to contend with him. Visconti, who expected and feared the arrival of the emperor in Italy, assumed the semblance of moderation. He engaged Petrarca, whom he had received with every mark of distinction and affection, to preside in a deputation with offers of peace to Dandolo. The doge refused the conditions, and Visconti lost no time in the prosecution of hostilities. These were so successful that Venice was in danger of falling; and Dandolo died of a broken heart. In the following month died also Giovanni Visconti. The emperor Charles, who had deceived the hopes of the Venetians by delaying to advance into Italy, now crossed the Alps, and Petrarca met him at Mantua. Finding him, as usual, wavering and avaricious, the poet soon left him, and returned to the nephews and heirs of Visconti. He was induced by Galeazzo to undertake an embassy to the emperor. Ill disposed as was Charles to the family, he declared that he had no intention of carrying his arms into Italy. On this occasion he sent to Petrarca the diploma of Count Palatine, in a golden box, which golden box the Count Francesco returned to the German chancellor, and he made as little use of the title.

Petrarca now settled at Garignano, a village three miles from Milan, to which residence he gave the name of Linterno, from the villa of Scipio on the coast of Naples. Fond as he was of the great and powerful, he did not always give them the prefer-

ence. Capra, a goldsmith of Bergamo, enthusiastic in admiration of his genius, invited him with earnest entreaties to honor that city with a visit. On his arrival the governor and nobility contended which should perform the offices of hospitality toward so illustrious a guest; but he went at once to the house of Capra, where he was treated by his worthy host with princely magnificence, and with delicate attentions which princely magnificence often overlooks. The number of choice volumes in his library and the conversation of Capra were evidences of a cultivated understanding and a virtuous heart. In the winter following (1359) Boccaccio spent several days at Linterno, and the poet gave him his Latin Eclogues in his own handwriting. On his return to Florence, Boccaccio sent his friend the "Divina Commedia," written out likewise by himself, and accompanied with profuse commendations.

Incredible as it may appear, this noble poem, the glory of Italy, and admitting at that time but one other in the world to a proximity with it, was wanting to the library of Petrarca. His reply was cold and cautious: the more popular man, it might he thought, took umbrage at the loftier. He was jealous even of the genius which had gone by, and which bore no resemblance to his own except in the purity and intensity of love, for this was a portion of the genius in both. Petrarca was certainly the very best man that ever was a very vain one: and vanity has a better excuse for itself in him than in any other, since none was more admired by the world at large, and particularly by that part of it which the wisest are most desirous to conciliate, turning their wisdom in full activity to the elevation of their happiness. Laura, it is true, was sensible of little or no passion for him; but she was pleased with his, and stood like a beautiful Cariatid of stainless marble at the base of an image on which the eyes of Italy were fixed.

Petrarca, like Boccaccio, regretted at the close of life not only the pleasure he had enjoyed, but also the pleasure he had imparted to the world. Both of them, as their mental faculties were diminishing and their animal spirits were leaving them apace, became unconscious how incomparably greater was the benefit than the injury done by their writings. In Boccaccio there are certain tales so coarse that modesty casts them aside, and those only who are irreparably contaminated

can receive any amusement from them; but in the greater part what truthfulness, what tenderness, what joyousness, what purity! Their levities and gayeties are like the harmless lightnings of a summer sky in the delightful regions they were written in. Petrarca, with a mind which bears the same proportion to Boccaccio's as the Sorga bears to the Arno, has been the solace of many sad hours to those who probably were more despondent. It may be that at the time when he was writing some of his softest and most sorrowful complaints, his dejection was caused by dalliance with another far more indulgent than Laura. But his ruling passion was ungratified by her; therefore she died unsung, and, for aught we know to the contrary, unlamented. He had forgotten what he had declared in Sonnet 17, —

> "E, se di lui forse altra donna spera,
> Vive in speranza debile e fallace,
> Mio, perche sdegno ciò ch' a voi dispiace, etc.
>
> If any other hopes to find
> That love in me which you despise,
> Ah! let her leave the hope behind:
> I hold from all what you alone should prize."

It can only be said that he ceased to be a visionary; and we ought to rejoice that an inflammation of ten years' recurrence sank down into a regular fit, and settled in no vital part. Yet I cannot but wish that he had been as zealous in giving instruction and counsel to his only son — a youth whom he represents in one of his letters to have been singularly modest and docile — as he had been in giving it to princes, emperors, and popes, who exhibited very little of those qualities. While he was at his villa at Linterno, the unfortunate youth robbed the house in Milan, and fled. We may reasonably suppose that home had become irksome to him, and that neither the eye nor the heart of a father was over him. Giovanni was repentant, was forgiven, and died.

The tenderness of Petrarca, there is too much reason to fear, was at all times concentrated in self. A nephew of his early patron Colonna, in whose house he had spent many happy hours, was now deprived of house and home, and being reduced to abject poverty had taken refuge in Bologna. He

had surely great reason to complain of Petrarca, who never in his journeys to and fro had visited or noticed him, or, rich as he was in benefices by the patronage of his family, offered him any succor. This has been excused by Mr. Campbell: it may be short of turpitude, but it is farther, much farther, from generosity and from justice. Never is mention made by him of Laura's children, whom he must have seen with her, and one or other of whom must have noticed with the pure delight of unsuspicious childhood his fond glances at the lovely mother. Surely in all the years he was devoted to Laura, one or other of her children grieved her by ill-health, or perhaps by dying; for virtue never set a mark on any door so that sickness and sorrow must not enter. But Petrarca thought more about her eyes than about those tears that are usually the inheritance of the brightest, and may well be supposed to have said in some inedited canzone, —

> "What care I what tears there be,
> If the tears are not for me?"

His love, when it administered nothing to his celebrity, was silent. Of his two children, a son and a daughter, not a word is uttered in any of his verses. How beautifully does Ovid, who is thought in general to have been less tender, and was probably less chaste, refer to the purer objects of his affection, —

> "Unica nata, mei justissima causa doloris," etc.

Petrarca's daughter lived to be the solace of his age, and married happily. Boccaccio, in the most beautiful and interesting letter in the whole of Petrarca's correspondence, mentions her kind reception of him, and praises her beauty and demeanor. Even the unhappy boy appears to have been by nature of nearly the same character. According to the father's own account, his disposition was gentle and tractable; he was modest and shy, and abased his eyes before the smart witticisms of Petrarca on the defects his own negligence had caused. A parent should never excite a blush, nor extinguish one.

Domestic cares bore indeed lightly on a man perpetually busy in negotiations. He could not but despise the emperor, who yet had influence enough over him to have brought him

into Germany. But bands of robbers infested the road, and the plague was raging in many of the intermediate cities. It had not reached Venice, and there Petrarca took refuge. Wherever he went, he carried a great part of his library with him; but he found it now more inconvenient than ever, and therefore he made a present of it to the republic, on condition that it neither should be sold nor separated. It was never sold, it was never separated; but it was suffered to fall into decay, and not a single volume of the collection is now extant. While he was at Verona, his friend Boccaccio made him another visit, and remained with him three summer months. The plague deprived him of Lælius, of Socrates, and of Barbato. Among his few surviving friends was Philip de Cabassoles, now patriarch of Jerusalem, to whom he had promised the dedication of his treatise on "Solitary Life," which he began at Vaucluse.

Urban V., successor to Innocent, designed to reform the discipline of the Church, and Petrarca thought he had a better chance than ever of seeing its head at Rome. Again he wrote a letter on the occasion, learned, eloquent, and enthusiastically bold. Urban had perhaps already fixed his determination. Despite of remonstrances on the side of the French king, and of intrigues on the side of the cardinals, whose palaces and mistresses must be left behind, Urban quitted Avignon on the 30th of April, 1367, and, after a stay of four months at Viterbo, entered Rome. Before this event Petrarca had taken into his house, and employed as secretary, a youth of placid temper and sound understanding, which he showed the best disposition to cultivate. His name was Giovanni Malpighi, better known afterward as Giovanni da Ravenna. He was admitted to the table, to the walks, and to the travels of his patron, enjoying far more of his kindness and affection than, at the same time of life, had ever been bestowed upon his son. Petrarca superintended his studies, and prepared him for the clerical profession. Unexpectedly one morning this youth entered his study, and declared he would stay no longer in the house. In vain did Petrarca try to alter his determination; neither hope nor fear moved him, and nothing was left but to accompany him as far as Venice. Giovanni would see the tomb of Virgil; he would visit the birthplace of Ennius; he would learn

Greek at Constantinople. He went however no farther than Pavia, where Petrarca soon followed him, and pardoned his extravagance.

Urban had no sooner established the holy see at Rome again than he began to set Italy in a flame, raising troops in all quarters, and directing them against the Visconti. The emperor too, in earnest, had resolved on war. But Bernabo Visconti, who knew his avarice, knew how to divert his arms. He came into Italy, but only to lead the pope's palfrey and to assist at the empress's coronation. Urban sent an invitation to Petrarca; and he prepared, although in winter, to revisit Rome. Conscious that his health was declining, he made his will. To the Lord of Padua he bequeathed a picture of the Virgin by Giotto, and to Boccaccio fifty gold florins for a cloak to keep him warm in his study.

Such was his debility, Petrarca could proceed no farther than Ferrara, and thought it best to return to Padua. For the benefit of the air he settled in the hamlet of Arquà, where he built a villa, and where his daughter and her husband Francesco di Brossano came to live with him. Urban died, and was succeeded by Gregory XI., who would have added to the many benefices held already by Petrarca; and the poet in these his latter days was not at all averse to the gifts of fortune. His old friend the bishop of Cabassoles, now a cardinal, was sent as legate to Perugia. Petrarca was desirous of visiting him, and the rather as the prelate's health was declining; but before his own enabled him to undertake the journey, he had expired.

One more effort of friendship was the last reserved for him. Hostilities broke out between the Venetians and Francesco da Ferrara, aided by the king of Hungary, who threatened to abandon his cause unless he consented to terms of peace. Venice now recovered her advantages, and reduced Francesco to the most humiliating conditions: he was obliged to send his son to ask pardon of the republic. To render this less intolerable, he prevailed on Petrarca to accompany the youth, and to plead his cause before the senate. Accompanied by a numerous and a splendid train, they arrived at the city; audience was granted them on the morrow. But fatigue and illness so affected Petrarca that he could not deliver the speech he had prepared.

Among the many of his compositions which are lost to us is this oration. Happily there is preserved the friendly letter he wrote to Boccaccio on his return, — the last of his writings. During the greater part of his lifetime, though no less zealous than Boccaccio himself in recovering the works of the Classics, he never had read the "Divina Commedia;" nor, until this period of it, the "Decameron," — the two most admirable works the Continent has produced from the restoration of learning to the present day. Boccaccio, who had given him the one, now gave him the other. In his letter of thanks for it, he excuses the levity of his friend in some places, attributes it to the season of life in which the book was written, and relates the effect the story of Griseldis had produced, not only on himself, but on another of less sensibility. He even learned it by heart, that he might recite it to his friends; and he sent the author a Latin translation of it. Before this, but among his latest compositions, he had written an indignant answer to an unknown French monk who criticised his letter to Urban, and who had spoken contemptuously of Rome and Italy. Monks generally know at what most vulnerable part to aim the dagger, and the Frenchman struck Petrarca between his vanity and his patriotism. A greater mind would have looked down indifferently on a dwarf assailant, and would never have lifted him up even for derision. The most prominent rocks and headlands are most exposed to the elements; but those which can resist the violence of the storms are in little danger from the corrosion of the limpets.

On the 18th of July, 1374, Petrarca was found in his library, his brow upon a book he had been reading: he was dead.

There is no record of any literary man, or perhaps of any man whatsoever, to whom such honors, — honors of so many kinds, and from such different quarters and personages, — have been offered. They began in his early life, and we are walking at this hour in the midst of the procession. Few travellers dare to return from Italy until they can describe to the attentive ear and glistening eye the scenery of the Euganean hills. He who has loved truly, and above all he who has loved unhappily, approaches, as holiest altars are approached, the cenotaph on the little columns at Arquà.

The Latin works of Petrarca were esteemed by himself more highly than his Italian.[1] His Letters and his Dialogues, "De Contemptu Mundi," are curious and valuable. In the latter he converses with Saint Augustine, to whom he is introduced by "Truth," the same personage who appears in his "Africa," and whom Voltaire also invokes to descend on his little gravelly Champ de Mars, the "Henriade." The third dialogue is about his love for Laura, and nobly is it defended. He wrote a treatise on the ignorance of one's self and others (*multorum*), in which he has taken much from Cicero and Augustine, and in which he afterward forgot a little of his own. "Ought we to take it to heart," says he, "if we are ill-spoken of by the ignorant and malicious, when the same thing happened to Homer and Demosthenes, to Cicero and Virgil?" He was fond of following these two, — Cicero in the number of his epistles, Virgil in eclogue and in epic.

Of his twelve Eclogues, which by a strange nomenclature he also called Bucolics, many are satirical. In the sixth and seventh Pope Clement is represented in the character of Mitio. In the sixth Saint Peter, under the name of Pamphilus, reproaches him for the condition in which he keeps his flock, and asks him what he has done with the wealth intrusted to him. Mitio answers that he has kept the gold arising from the sale of the lambs, and that he has given the milk to certain friends of his. He adds that his spouse, very different from the old woman Pamphilus was contented with, went about in gold and jewels. As for the rams and goats, they played their usual gambols in the meadow, and he himself looked on. Pamphilus is indignant, and tells him he ought to be flogged and sent to prison for life. Mitio drops on a sudden his peaceful character, and calls Pamphilus a faithless runaway slave, deserving the fetter and the cross. In the twelfth eclogue, under the appellations of Pan and Arcticus, are represented the kings of France and England. Arcticus is indignant at the favors Pan receives from Faustula (Avignon). To King John the pope

[1] It is incredible that Julius Cæsar Scaliger, who has criticised so vast a number of later poets quite forgotten, and deservedly, should never have even seen the Latin poetry of Petrarca. His words are: "Primus, quod equidem sciam, Petrarca ex lutulentâ, barbarie os cœlo attollere ausus est, *cujus*, quemadmodum diximus alibi, *quòd nihil videre licuerit*, ejus viri castigationes sicut et alia multa, relinquam studiosis." (Poet. l. vi. p. 769).

had remitted his tenths, so that he was enabled to continue the war against England, which ended in his captivity.

Petrarca in all his Latin poetry, and indeed in all his Latin compositions, is an imitator, and generally a very unsuccessful one; but his versification is more harmonious than any since Boethius, and his language has more the air of antiquity and more resembles the better models.

We now come to his Italian poetry. In this he is less deficient in originality, though in several pieces he has imitated too closely Cino da Pistoja, — "Mille dubj in un di," for instance, in his seventh canzone. Cino is crude and enigmatical; but there is a beautiful sonnet by him addressed to Dante, which he wrote on passing the Apennines, and stopping to visit the tomb and invoke the name of Selvaggia. Petrarca late in life made a collection of sonnets on Laura; they are not printed in the order in which they were written. The first is a kind of prologue to the rest, as the first ode of Horace is. There is melancholy grace in this preliminary piece. The third ought to have been the second; for after having in the first related his errors and regrets, we might have expected to find the cause of them in the following, — we find it in the third. "Di pensier in pensier," "Chiare dolci e fresche acque," "Se il pensier che mi strugge," "Benedetto sia il giorno," "Solo e pensoso," are incomparably better than the "Tre Sorelle" by which the Italians are enchanted, and which the poet himself views with great complacency. These three are upon the eyes of Laura. The seventh canzone, the second of the "Sorelle," or, as they have often been styled, the "Grazie," is the most admired of them. In this, however, the ear is offended at "Qual all' al*ta*." The critics do not observe this sad cacophony. And nothing is less appropriate than, —

"Ed al fuoco *gentil* ond' io *tutt' ardo*."

The close is, —

"Canzon! l'una Sorella è poco inanzi,
E l' altra sento in quel medesmo albergo
Apparecchiarsi, *ond' io più carta vergo*."

This ruins the figure. What becomes of the *Sorella*, and the *albergo*, and the *apparecchiarsi?* The third is less celebrated than the two elder sisters.

Muratori, the most judicious of Italian commentators, gives these canzoni the preference over the others; but it remained for a foreigner to write correctly on them, and to demonstrate that they are very faulty. I find more faults and graver than Ginguenè has found in them; but I do not complain with him so much that the commencement of the third is heavy and languid, as that serious thoughts are intersected with quibbles and spangled with conceits. I will here remark freely, and in some detail, on this part of the poetry of Petrarca.

SONETTO XXI. It will be difficult to find in all the domains of poetry so frigid a conceit as in the conclusion of this sonnet, —

"E far delle sue braccia a se stess' ombra."

Strange that it should be followed by the most beautiful he ever wrote, —

"Solo e pensoso," etc.

CANZONE I.

"Ne mano ancor m' agghiaccia
L' esser coperto poi di bianche piume,
Ond' io presi col suon color di cigno!"

How very inferior is this childish play to Horace's ode, in which he also becomes a swan!

CANZONE III. Among the thousand offices which he attributes to the eyes is *carrying the keys*. Here he talks of the *sweet eyes* carrying the keys of his *sweet thoughts*. Again he has a peep at the keyhole in the seventh, —

"Quel cuor ond' hanno i begli occhi la chiave."

He also lets us into the secret that he is really *fond* of complaining, and that he *takes pains* to have his eyes always full of tears, —

"Ed io son un di quei ch' il pianger *giova*,
E par ben ch' io m' *ingegno*
Che di lagrime pregni
Sien gli occhi miei."

SONETTO XX. Here are Phœbus, Vulcan, Jupiter, *Cæsar*, Janus, Saturn, Mars, Orion, Neptune, Juno, and a chorus of *Angels*; and they have only fourteen lines to turn about in!

Canzone IV. The last part has merit from "E perche un poco."

Sonetto XXXIX. In this beautiful sonnet, as in almost every one, there is a redundancy of words; for instance, —

> "Benedetto sia il giorno, e 'l mese, e l' anno,
> *E la stagion, e 'l tempo.*"

Sonetto XL. is very serious. It is a prayer to God that his heart may be turned to other desires, and that it may remember how on that day He was crucified.

Sestina III. With what derision would a poet of the present day be treated who had written such stuff as —

> "E *pel bel* petto l' *indurato* ghiaccio
> Che trae dal mio si *dolorosi venti.*"

Sonetto XLIV. "L'aspetto sacro" is ingenious, yet without conceits.

Canzone VIII. So far as we know, it has never been remarked (nor indeed is an Italian Academia worth a remark) that the motto of the Academia della Crusca, "Il più bel fior ne coglie," is from

> "E, le onorate
> Cose cercando, il più bel fior ne coglie."

Sonetto XLVI. Here he wonders whence all the ink can come with which he fills his paper on Laura.

Sonetto L. In the fourteenth year of his passion, his ardor is increasing to such a degree that he says, "Death approaches . . . *and life flies away,*" —

> "Che la morte m'appressa . . . *e 'l viver fugge.*"

We believe there is no instance where life has resisted the encounter.

Sonetto LIX. This is very different from all his others. The first part is poor enough; the last would be interesting if we could believe it to be more than imaginary. Here he boasts of the impression he had made on Laura, yet in his last canzone he asks her whether he ever had. The words of this sonnet are, —

> "Era ben forte la nemica mia,
> E lei viddi io ferita in *mezzo al core.*"

But we may well take all this for ideal, when we read the very next, in which he speaks of being free from the thraldom that had held him so many years.

Sonetto LXVI. The conclusion from "Ne mi lece ascoltar" is very animated; here is greatly more vigor and incitation than usual.

Canzone IX. It would be difficult to find anywhere, except in the rarest and most valuable books, so wretched a poem as this. The rhymes occur over and over again, not only at the close, but often at the fifth and sixth syllables, and then another time. Metastasio has managed best the redundant rhymes.

Sonetto LXXIII. The final part, "L' aura soave," is exquisitely beautiful, and the harmony complete.

Sonetto LXXXIV. "Quel vago impallidir" is among the ten best.

Canzone X. In the last stanza there is a lightness of movement not always to be found in the graces of Petrarca.

Canzone XI. This is incomparably the most elaborate work of the poet, but it is very far from the perfection of "Solo e pensoso." The second and third stanzas are inferior to the rest; and the "fera bella e mansueta" is quite unworthy of the place it occupies.

Canzone XIII. is extremely beautiful, until we come to

"Pur tì medesmo assido,
Me freddo, *pietra morta in pietra viva.*"

Sonetto XCV. "Pommi ovi 'l Sol" is imitated from Horace's "Pone me pigris," etc.

Sonetto XCVIII. Four verses are filled with the names of rivers, excepting the monosyllables *non* and *e*. He says that all these rivers cannot slake the fire that is the anguish of his heart, — no, nor even ivy, fir, pine, beech, or juniper. It is by no means a matter of wonder that these subsidiaries lend but little aid to the exertions of the fireman.

Sonetto CX., —

"O anime gentili ed amorose"

has been imitated and improved upon by Redi, in his

"Donne gentili, divote d' amore."

SONETTO CXI. No extravagance ever surpassed the invocation to the rocks in the water, requiring that henceforward there should not be a single one which had neglected to learn how to burn with his flames. He himself can only go farther in

SONETTO CXIX, where he tells us that Laura's eyes can burn up the Rhine when it is most frozen, and crack its hardest rocks.

SONETTO CXXXII. In the precarious state of her health, he fears more about the disappointment of his hopes in love than about her danger.

SONETTO CXLVIII. His descriptions of beauty are not always distinct and correct; for example, —

> "Gli occhi sereni e le *stellanti* ciglia
> La bella bocca angelica . . . de perle
> *Piena*, e di rose . . . e di dolci *parole*."

In this place we shall say a little about "occhi" and "ciglia." First, the sense would be better and the verse equally good if, transposing the epithets, it were written —

> "Gli occhi stellanti e le serene ciglia."

The Italian poets are very much in the habit of putting the *eyelashes* for the *eyes*, because "ciglia" is a most useful rhyme. The Latin poets, contented with *oculi*, *ocelli*, and *lumina*, never employ *cilia*, of which indeed they appear to have made but little account. Greatly more than a hundred times has Petrarca inserted "eyes" into the first part of his sonnets; it is rarely that we find one without its *occhi*. They certainly are very ornamental things; but it is not desirable for a poet to resemble an Argus.

CANZONE XV. The versification here differs from the others but is no less beautiful than in any of them. However, where Love appears in person, we would rather that Pharaoh, Rachel, etc., were absent.

SONETTO CLVII. He tells us on what day he entered the labyrinth of love, —

> "Mille trecento ventisette *appunto*
> Sull' ora prima il dì setto d'Aprili."

This poetry has very unfairly been taken advantage of, in a book

> "Written by William Prynne Esquier, the
> Year of our Lord sixteen hundred thirty-three."

SONETTO CLVIII. He has now loved twenty years.

SONETTO CLXI. The first verse is rendered very inharmonious by the cæsura and the final word having syllables that rhyme. "Tutto 'l dí *pian*go," "e per la notte *quan*do," "lagri*mando*," and "consu*mando*" are considered as rhymes, although rhymes should be formed by similarity of sound and not by identity. The Italians, the Spaniards, and the French reject this canon.

SONETTO CLXXXVII, on the present of two roses, is light and pretty.

SONETTO CXCII. He fears he may never see Laura again. Probably this was written after her death. He dreams of her saying to him, "Do you not remember the last evening, when I left you with your eyes in tears? Forced to go away from you, I would not tell you, nor could I, what I tell you now. *Do not hope to see me again on earth.*" This most simple and beautiful sonnet has been less noticed than many which a pure taste would have rejected. The next is a vision of Laura's death. There are verses in Petrarca which will be uttered by many sorrowers through many ages. Such, for instance, are —

> "Non la conobbe il mondo mentre l' ebbe,
> Conobbila io chi a pianger quì rimasi."

But we are hard of belief when he says —

> "Pianger cercai, *non già dal pianto onore.*"

There are fourteen more sonnets, and one more canzone in the first series of the "Rime;" but we must here close it. Of the second, third, and fourth series we must be contented with fewer notices, for already we have exceeded the limits we proposed. They were written after Laura's death, and contain altogether somewhat more than the first alone. Many of the poems in them are grave, tender, and beautiful; there are the same faults, but fewer in number, and less in degree. He never talks again, as he does in the last words of the first, of carrying a laurel and a column in his bosom, — the one for fifteen, the other for eighteen years.

Ginguenè seems disinclined to allow a preference to this second part of the Canzoniere; but surely it is in general far more pathetic, and more exempt from the importunities of petty fancies. He takes the trouble to translate the wretched sonnet (XXXIII. Part II.) in which the waters of the river are increased by the poet's tears, and the fish (as they had a right to expect) are spoken to. But the next is certainly a most beautiful poem, and worthy of Dante himself, whose manner of thinking and style of expression it much resembles. There is a canzone in dialogue which also resembles it in sentiment and feeling, —

"Quando soave mio fido conforto," etc.

The next again is imitated from Cino da Pistoja: what a crowd of words at the opening! —

"Quel antico mio dolce empio signore."

It is permitted in no other poetry than the Italian to shovel up such a quantity of trash and triviality before the doors.

But rather than indulge in censure, we will recommend to the especial perusal of the reader another list of admirable compositions, — "Alma felice," "Anima bella," "Ite rime dolenti," "Tornami a mente," "Quel rossignol," "Vago augelletto," "Dolce mio caro," "Gli angeli," "Ohime! il bel viso," "Che debbo io far," "Amor! se vuoi," "O aspettata," "Anima, che dimostra," "Spirto gentil," "Italia mia." Few indeed, if any, of these are without a flaw; but they are of higher worth than those on which the reader, unless forewarned, would spend his time unprofitably. It would be a great blessing if a critic deeply versed in this literature (like Carey) would publish the Italian poets with significant marks before the passages worth reading; the more worth, and the less. Probably it would not be a mark of admiration, only that surprise and admiration have but one between them, which would follow the poet's declaration in Canzone XVIII., that "if he does not melt away it is because fear holds him together." After this foolery he becomes a true poet again, "O colli!" etc.; then again bad, "You see how many colors love paints my face with."

Nothing he ever wrote is so tender as a reproach of Laura,

after ten years' admiration, — "You are *soon* grown tired of loving me !"

There is poetry in Petrarca which we have not yet adverted to, in which he has changed the chords *καὶ τὴν λύρην ἅπασαν,* — such as "Fiamma del ciel," "L' avara Babilonia," "Fontana di dolor." The volumes close with the "Trionfi." The first, as we might have anticipated, is "Il Trionfo d' Amore." The poem is a vile one, stuffed with proper names. The "Triumph of Chastity" is shorter, as might also be anticipated, and not quite so full of them. At the close, Love meets Laura, who makes him her captive, and carries him in triumph among the virgins and matrons most celebrated for purity and constancy. The "Triumph of Death" follows.

This poem is truly admirable. Laura is returning from her victory over Love; suddenly there appears a black flag, followed by a female in black apparel, and terrible in attitude and voice. She stops the festive procession, and strikes Laura. The poet now describes her last moments, and her soft sleep of death, in which she retains all her beauty. In the second part she comes to him in a dream, holds out her hand, and invites him to sit by her on the bank of a rivulet, under the shade of a beech and a laurel. Nothing in this most beautiful of languages is so beautiful, excepting the lines of Dante on Francesca, as these, —

> "E quella man' già tanto desiäta,
> *A me, parlando e sospirando, porse.*"

Their discourse is upon death, which she tells him should be formidable only to the wicked, and assures him that the enjoyment she receives from it is far beyond any which life has to bestow. He then asks her a question, which he alone had a right to ask her, and only in her state of purity and bliss —

> "She sighed, and said, 'No ; nothing could dissever
> My heart from thine, and nothing shall there ever.
> If, thy fond ardor to repress,
> I sometimes frowned (and how could I do less ?),
> If now and then my look was not benign,
> 'T was but to save my fame and thine;
> And, as thou knowest, when I saw thy grief,
> A glance was ready with relief.'

"Scarce with dry cheek
These tender words I heard her speak.
'Were they but true!' I cried. She bent the head,
Not unreproachfully, and said,
'Yes, I did love thee; and whene'er
I turned away mine eyes, 't was shame and fear;
A thousand times to thee did they incline,
But sank before the flame that shot from thine.'"

He who the twentieth time can read unmoved this canzone never has experienced a love which could not be requited, and never has deserved a happy one.

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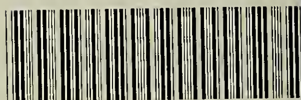
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