

**C H A P.** in prison during a complete year from the time  
**III.** of their commitment, alleging that he did it to  
 fulfil a vow which he had made when he first  
 imprisoned them <sup>e</sup>.

**Succeeded  
 by Sixtus IV.**

To Paul II. succeeded Francesco della Rovere, a Franciscan monk, who assumed the name of Sixtus IV. His knowledge of theology and the canon law had not conciliated the favour of the populace; for during the splendid ceremony of his coronation a tumult arose in the city, in which his life was endangered <sup>f</sup>. To congratulate him on his elevation, an embassy of six of the most eminent citizens was deputed from Florence, at the head of which was Lorenzo de' Medici. Between Lorenzo and the pope mutual instances of good-will took place; and Lorenzo, who under the direction of his agents had a bank established at Rome, was formally invested with the office of treasurer of the holy see, an appointment which greatly contributed to enrich his maternal uncle, Giovanni Tornabuoni, who, whilst he executed that office on behalf of Lorenzo, had an opportunity of purchasing from

Lorenzo  
 deputed to  
 congratulate him.

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<sup>e</sup> *Platina nella vita de Paolo II.*—Zeno. *Dissert. Voss. Art. Platina*—Turab. *Storia della Lett. Ital.* v. vi par. i. p. 82.

<sup>f</sup> *Muratori Ann.* v. ix. p. 511.

from Sixtus many of the rich jewels that had been collected by Paul II. which he sold to different princes of Europe to great emolument<sup>z</sup>. During this visit Lorenzo made further additions to the many valuable specimens of ancient sculpture, of which, by the diligence of his ancestors, he was already possessed. On his return to Florence he brought with him two busts, in marble, of Augustus and Agrippa, which were presented to him by the pope, with many cameos and medals, of the excellence of which he was an exquisite judge<sup>h</sup>. In the warmth of his admiration for antiquity, he could not refrain from condemning the barbarism of Paul, who had demolished a part of the Flavian amphitheatre in order to build a church to S. Marco<sup>i</sup>. At this interview it is probable that Lorenzo solicited from Sixtus the promise of a cardinal's hat for his brother, and it is certain that he afterwards used his endeavours to obtain for Giuliano a seat in the sacred college, through the medium of the Florentine envoy at Rome; but the circumstances of the times, and the different temper of the pope and  
of

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<sup>z</sup> *Fabr in vitá Laur. v. i. p. 38.*

<sup>h</sup> *Ricordi di Lor. in App. No. XII.*

<sup>i</sup> *Fabroni in vitá Laur. v. i. p. 40.*

**C H A P.** of Lorenzo, soon put an end to all friendly  
**III.** intercourse between them, and an enmity took  
 place which was productive of the most sanguinary  
 consequences.

Revolt and  
 sackage of  
 Volterra.

Soon after the return of Lorenzo to Florence, a disagreement arose between that republic and the city of Volterra, which composed a part of its dominions. A mine of allum had been discovered within the district of Volterra, which being at first considered as of small importance, was suffered to remain in the hands of individual proprietors; but it afterwards appearing to be very lucrative, the community of Volterra claimed a share of the profits as part of their municipal revenue. The proprietors appealed to the magistrates of Florence, who discountenanced the pretensions of the city of Volterra, alleging, that if the profits of the mine were to be applied to the use of the public, they ought to become a part of the general revenue of the government, and not of any particular district. This determination gave great offence to the citizens of Volterra, who resolved not only to persevere in their claims, but also to free themselves, if possible, from their subjection to the Florentines. A general commotion took place at Volterra. Such was the violence of the insurgents, that they put to death several of  
 their

their own citizens who disapproved of their intemperate proceedings. Even the Florentine commissary, Piero Malegonelle, narrowly escaped with his life. This revolt excited great alarm at Florence, not from the idea that the citizens of Volterra were powerful enough to succeed in an attempt which they had previously made at four different times without success, but from an apprehension that if a contest took place, it might afford a pretext for the pope or the king of Naples to interfere on the occasion. Hence a great diversity of opinion prevailed amongst the magistrates and council of Florence, some of whom, particularly Tomaso Soderini, strongly recommended conciliatory measures. This advice was opposed by Lorenzo de' Medici, who, from the enormities already committed at Volterra, was of opinion that the most speedy and vigorous means ought to be adopted to repress the commotion. In justification of this apparent severity, he remarked, that in violent disorders, where death could only be prevented by bold and decisive measures, those physicians were the most cruel, who appeared to be the most compassionate. His advice was adopted by the council, and preparations were made to suppress the revolt by force. The inhabitants of Volterra exerted themselves to put the city in a state of defence, and made earnest applications for

C H A P. for assistance to the neighbouring governments.  
 III About a thousand soldiers were hired and  
 received within the walls, to assist in supporting the expected attack ; but the Florentines having surrounded the place with a numerous army <sup>k</sup>, under the command of the count of Urbino, the citizens soon surrendered at discretion. The Florentine commissaries took possession of the palace, and enjoined the magistrates to repair peaceably to their houses. One of them on his return was insulted and plundered by a soldier ; and notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the duke of Urbino, who afterwards put to death the offender, this incident led the way to a general sassage of the city, the soldiers who had engaged in its defence uniting with the conquerors in despoiling and plundering the unfortunate inhabitants. Lorenzo was no sooner apprized of this event than he hastened to Volterra, where he endeavoured to repair the injuries done to the inhabitants, and to alleviate their distresses by every method in his power <sup>l</sup>.  
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<sup>k</sup> Ten thousand foot and two thousand horse, according to Machiavelli, (*lib.* 7.) but Annunziato, with more probability, enumerates them at five thousand of the former and five hundred of the latter.

*Ist. Fior.* v. iii. p. 3.

<sup>l</sup> *Fabr. in vitâ,* v. i. p. 45.

Although the unhappy termination of this affair arose from an incident, which as the sagacity of Lorenzo could not foresee, so his precaution could not prevent, yet it is highly probable, from the earnestness which he shewed to repair the calamity, that it gave him no small share of regret. Nor has he on this occasion escaped the censure of a contemporary historian, who being himself an inhabitant of Volterra, probably shared in those distresses which he considered Lorenzo as the author, and has therefore, on this and on other occasions, shewn a disposition unfriendly to his character <sup>m</sup>.

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About the close of the following year, great apprehensions of a famine arose in Florence, and five citizens were appointed to take the necessary precautions for supplying the place. The dreadful effects of this calamity were however obviated, principally by the attention of Lorenzo, who shortly afterwards took a journey to Pisa, where he made a long residence <sup>n</sup>. The object of this visit

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1472.

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Lorenzo  
establishes  
the academy  
of Pisa.

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<sup>m</sup> *Raffaelle da Volterra, in Commentar. Urban. Geogr. lib. 5. p. 138. Ed. Lugd. 1552.*

<sup>n</sup> The coincidence of these circumstances is adverted to in an epigram of Politiano, whose poems illustrate almost all the principal incidents in the life of Lorenzo:

“ Cum

CHAPTER III  
 visit was the re-establishment and regulation of the academy of that place, which, after having existed nearly two centuries, and having been celebrated for the abilities of its professors, and the number of its students, had fallen into disrepute and neglect. An institution of a similar nature had been founded in Florence in 1348—a year rendered remarkable by the dreadful pestilence of which Boccaccio has left so affecting a narrative. At Florence was on many accounts an improper situation for this purpose. The scarcity of habitations, the high price of provisions, and the consequent expence of education, had greatly diminished the number of students, whilst the amusements with which that place abounded were unfavourable to a proficiency in serious acquirements. Sensible of these disadvantages, the Florentines, who had held the dominion of Pisa from the year 1406, resolved to establish the academy

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“ Cum commissa sibi tellus malefida negasset  
 “ Semina, et agricola falleret herba fidem,  
 “ Protinus optata patriæ tua dextera fruges  
 “ Obtulit, et celerem jussit abire famem.  
 “ Nec mora, Piseis commutas sedibus urbem  
 “ Servatam, et nimio tempore lentus abes.  
 “ Hæc quid agis? Patriæ *Laurens* te redde gementi,  
 “ Non facta est donis lætior illa tuis.  
 “ Mœsta dolet, malletque famem perferre priorem,  
 “ Quam desiderium patria ferre tui.”

*Pol. in lib. Epigr.*

academy of that place in its former splendor. Lorenzo de' Medici and four other citizens were appointed to superintend the execution of their purpose<sup>o</sup>; but Lorenzo, who was the projector of the plan, undertook the chief direction of it, and in addition to the six thousand florins annually granted by the state, expended, in effecting his purpose, a large sum of money from his private fortune. Amongst the professors at Pisa were speedily found some of the most eminent scholars of the age, particularly in the more serious and important branches of science. At no period have the professors of literature been so highly rewarded<sup>p</sup>. The dissensions and misconduct

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<sup>c</sup> The other deputies were Tomaso de' Ridolfi, Donato degli Acciajuoli, (after whose death his place was supplied by Piero Minerbetti,) Andrea de' Puccini, and Alamanno de' Rinuccini. *Fabron. in vitâ Laur. p. 50.* This author, who was lately, and perhaps is yet, at the head of the Pisan academy, has, in his life of Lorenzo, given a very full account of its renovation, and of the different professors who have contributed towards its celebrity.

<sup>p</sup> The teachers of the civil and canon law were, Bartolomeo, Mariano Soccini, Baldo Bartolini, Lancelotto, Pier Filippo, Cristiano, Pier Filippo Corneo, Felice Sandeo, and Francesco Accolti; all of whom had great professional reputation.

In the department of medicine we find the names



C H A P. III. misconduct of these teachers, whose arrogance was at least equal to their learning, gave Lorenzo no small share of anxiety, and often called for his personal interference<sup>9</sup>. His absence from his native place was a frequent cause of regret to Politiano, who consoled himself by composing verses expressive of his affection for Lorenzo, and

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names of Albertino de Chizzeli, Alessandro Sermoneta, Giovanni d' Aquila, and Pier Leoni. In philosophy, Nicolo Tignosi. In polite letters, Lorenzo Lippi and Bartolommeo da Prato. In divinity, Domenico di Flandria and Bernardino Cherichini. Of these the civilians had the highest salaries—that of Soccini was 700 florins annually; that of Baldo 1050, and that of Accolti 1440.

<sup>9</sup> Forgetful of the *jus gentium* which it was his province to teach, Soccini made an attempt to evade his engagements at Pisa, and to carry off with him to Venice sundry books and property of the academy entrusted to his care, which he had artfully concealed in wine casks. Being taken and brought to Florence, he was there condemned to death; but Lorenzo exerted his authority to prevent the execution of the sentence, alleging as a reason for his interference, that *so accomplished a scholar ought not to suffer an ignominious death*. An observation which may shew his veneration for science, but which will scarcely be found sufficient to exculpate a man whose extensive knowledge rather aggravated than alleviated his offence. Soccini, however, not only escaped punishment, but in the space of three years was re-instated in his professorship, with a salary of 1000 florins.

and soliciting his speedy return<sup>r</sup>. To this circumstance we are however indebted for several of the familiar letters of Lorenzo that have reached posterity, many of which have been published with those of Ficino, and perhaps derive some advantage from a comparison with the epistles of the philosopher, whose devotion to his favourite studies is frequently carried to an absurd extreme, and whose flattery is sometimes so apparent as to call for the reprehension even of Lorenzo himself<sup>s</sup>.

CHAP.  
III

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The increasing authority of Lorenzo, and his importance in the affairs of Europe, now began to be more apparent. In the year 1473, he took part in a negociation, which, had it been successful, might have preserved Italy from many years of devastation, and at all events must have given a different complexion to the affairs not only of that country, but of Europe. Louis XI. of France, who laid the foundation of that despotism which, after having existed for

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1473  
Negociation  
for a marriage between  
the dauphin  
and a daughter of the  
king of  
Naples.

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<sup>r</sup> I give the following for its conciseness rather than its merit:

“ Invideo Pisis Laurenti, nec tamen odi,

“ Ne mihi displiceat quæ tibi terra placet.”

*Pol. in lib. Epigr.*

<sup>s</sup> “ Scribis ut in te laudando posthæc parciore esse  
“ velim,” &c. *Fic. ad Laur. in Ep. Fic. p. 34. Ed. 1502.*

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for three centuries, was at length expiated in the blood of the most guiltless of his descendants, and whose views were uniformly directed towards the aggrandizement of his dominions and the depression of his subjects, was desirous of connecting his family with that of Ferdinand king of Naples, by the marriage of his eldest son with a daughter of that prince. To this end he conceived it necessary to address himself to some person, whose general character, and influence with Ferdinand, might promote his views, and for that purpose he selected Lorenzo de' Medici. The confidential letter from Louis to Lorenzo on this occasion is yet extant, and affords some striking traits of the character of this ambitious, crafty, and suspicious monarch. After expressing his high opinion of Lorenzo, and his unshaken attachment to him, he gives him to understand, that he is informed a negotiation is on foot for a marriage between the eldest daughter of the king of Naples and the duke of Savoy, upon which the king was to give her a portion of 300,000 ducats. Without apologizing for his interference, he then mentions his desire that a connexion of this nature should take place between the princess and

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\* For this letter, first published by Fabroni, *v. App. No. XVIII.*

and his eldest son the dauphin, and requests that Lorenzo would communicate his wishes to the king of Naples. To this proposal Louis stipulates as a condition, that Ferdinand should, in consequence of such alliance, not only assist him in his contest with the house of Anjou, but also against the king of Spain, and his other enemies; alluding to the duke of Burgundy, whom he was then attempting to despoil of his dominions. After making further arrangements respecting the proposed nuptials, he requests that Lorenzo would send some confidential person to reside with him for a time, and to return to Florence as often as might be requisite, but with particular injunctions that he should have no intercourse with any of the French nobility or princes of the blood. The conclusion of the letter conveys a singular request: conscious of his guilt, Louis distrusted all his species, and he desires that Lorenzo would furnish him with a large dog, of a particular breed, which he was known to possess, for the purpose of attending on his person and guarding his bed-chamber". Notwithstanding the apparent seriousness with which Louis proposes to connect his family by marriage

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" ——— Vigilum canum  
Tristes excubæ. HOR.

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Ferdinand  
declines the  
proposal.

marriage with that of the king of Naples, it is probable that such proposal was only intended to delay or prevent the marriage of the princess with the duke of Savoy. Whether Ferdinand considered it in this light, or whether he had other reasons to suspect the king of France of sinister or ambitious views, he returned a speedy answer<sup>v</sup>, in which, after the warmest professions of personal esteem for Lorenzo, and after expressing his thorough sense of the honour he should derive from an alliance with a monarch who might justly be esteemed the greatest prince on earth, he rejects the proposition on account of the conditions that accompanied it; declaring that no private considerations should induce him to interrupt the friendship subsisting between him and his ally the duke of Burgundy, or his relation the king of Spain; and that he would rather lose his kingdom, and even his life, than suffer such an imputation upon his honour and his character. If in his reply he has alleged the true reasons for declining a connexion apparently so advantageous to him, it must be confessed that his sentiments do honour to his memory. The magnanimity of Ferdinand affords a striking contrast to the meanness and duplicity of Louis

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<sup>v</sup> *v. App. No. XIX.*

Louis XI. It is scarcely necessary to add that the proposed union never took place. The dauphin, afterwards Charles VIII., married the accomplished daughter of the duke of Bretagne, and some years afterwards expelled the family of his once-intended father-in-law from their dominions, under the pretence of a will, made in favour of Louis XI. by a count of Provence, one of that very family of Anjou, against whose claims Louis had himself proposed to defend the king of Naples.

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Sixtus IV. at the time he ascended the pontifical chair, had several sons, upon whom, in the character of nephews, he afterwards bestowed the most important offices and the highest dignities of the church. The indecency of Sixtus, in thus lavishing upon his spurious offspring the riches of the Roman see, could only be equalled by their profuseness in dissipating them. Piero Riario, in whose person were united the dignities of cardinal of S. Sisto, patriarch of Constantinople, and archbishop of Florence, expended at a single entertainment in Rome, given by him in honour of the duchess of Ferrara, 20,000 ducats, and afterwards made a tour through Italy with such a degree of splendor, and so numerous a retinue, that the pope himself

Ambition  
and rapacity of  
Sixtus IV.

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could not have displayed greater magnificence<sup>w</sup>. His brother Girolamo was dignified with the appellation of count; and that it might not be regarded as an empty title, 40,000 ducats were expended in purchasing from the family of Manfredi the territory of Imola, of which he obtained possession<sup>x</sup>, and to which he afterwards added the dominion of Forli. The city of Castello became no less an object of the ambition of Sixtus; but instead of endeavouring to possess himself of it by compact, he made an attempt to wrest it by force from Niccolo Vitelli, who then held the sovereignty; for which purpose he dispatched against it another of his equivocal relations, Giuliano della Rovere, who afterwards became pope under the name of Julius II., and who, in the character of a military cardinal, had just before sacked the city of Spoleto, and put the inhabitants to the sword. Niccolo, having obtained the assistance of the duke of Milan and of the Florentines, made a vigorous defence, and, though obliged at length to capitulate, obtained respectable terms. His long resistance was attributed by the pope, and not without reason, to Lorenzo de' Medici, who,

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<sup>w</sup> *Muratori Ann.* v. 12 p. 515.

<sup>x</sup> *Ibid* p. 516.

who, independent of his private regard for Niccolo, could not be an indifferent spectator of an unprovoked attack upon a place which immediately bordered on the territories of Florence, and greatly contributed towards their security<sup>v</sup>. These depredations, which were supposed to be countenanced by the king of Naples, roused the attention of the other states of Italy; and, towards the close of the year 1474, a league was concluded at Milan, between the duke, the Venetians, and the Florentines, for their mutual defence, to which neither the pope nor the king were parties: liberty was however reserved for those potentates to join in the league if they thought proper; but this they afterwards refused, probably considering this article of the treaty as inserted rather for the purpose of deprecating their resentment, than with the expectation of their acceding to the compact<sup>z</sup>.

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League between the duke of Milan, the Venetians, and the Florentines.

In this year, under the magistracy of Donato Acciajuoli, a singular visitor arrived at Florence. This was Christian, or Christiern, king of Denmark

The king of Denmark visits Florence.

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<sup>v</sup> *Amm. Ist. Fior.* v. iii. p. 113

<sup>z</sup> *Amm. Ist. Fior.* v. iii. p. 113. *Muratori Ann.* v. ix. p. 518.

C H A P. mark and Sweden, who was journeying to Rome,  
III. for the purpose, as was alleged, of discharging a  
vow. He is described by the Florentine historians  
as of a grave aspect, with a long and white beard;  
and, although he was considered as a barbarian,  
they admit that the qualities of his mind did not  
derogate from the respectability of his external  
appearance. Having surveyed the city, and paid  
a ceremonial visit to the magistrates, who re-  
ceived their royal visitor with great splendor,  
he requested to be favoured with a sight of the  
celebrated copy of the Greek Evangelists, which  
had been obtained some years before from Con-  
stantinople, and of the Pandects of Justinian,  
brought from Amalfi to Pisa, and thence to  
Florence. His laudable curiosity was accord-  
ingly gratified; and he expressed his satisfaction  
by declaring, through the medium of his inter-  
preter, that these were the real treasures of  
princes, alluding, as was supposed, to the con-  
duct of the duke of Milan, who had attempted  
to dazzle him with the display of that treasure  
of which he had plundered his subjects, to gra-  
tify his vanity and his licentiousness; on which  
occasion Christian had coldly observed, that the  
accumulation of riches was an object below the  
attention of a great and magnanimous sove-  
reign. Ammirato attempts to shew that this  
remark is rather specious than just; but the  
authority

authority of the Roman poet is in favour of the Goth<sup>a</sup>. It was a spectacle worthy of admiration, says the same historian, to see a king, peaceable and unarmed, pass through Italy, whose predecessors had not only overthrown the armies of that country, and harassed the kingdoms of France and of Spain, but had even broken and overturned the immense fabric of the Roman empire itself.

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If we do not implicitly join in the applauses bestowed by Landino on the professors and the tenets of the Platonic or new philosophy<sup>b</sup>, we must not, on the contrary, conceive, that the study of these doctrines was a mere matter of speculation and curiosity. From many circumstances, there is great reason to conclude that they were applied to practical use, and had a considerable influence on the manners and the morals of the age. The object towards which mankind have always directed their aim, and in the acquisition of which every system both of religion and philosophy proposes to assist their endeavours,

Progress of  
the Platonic  
academy.

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<sup>a</sup> *Hor. lib. ii. Ode 2.*

<sup>b</sup> Land. in proem. ad lib. 1: de vera nobilitate ad magnum vereque nobilem *Laurentium Medicem, Petri. F. ap. Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v. ii. p. 38.*

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endeavours, is the *summum bonum*, the greatest possible degree of attainable happiness; but in what this chief good consists has not been universally agreed upon, and this variety of opinion constitutes the essential difference between the ancient sects of philosophy. Of all these sects there was none whose tenets were so elevated and sublime, so calculated to withdraw the mind from the gratifications of sense, and the inferior objects of human pursuit, as that of the Platonists; which, by demonstrating the imperfection of every sensual enjoyment, and every temporal blessing, rose at length to the contemplation of the supreme cause, and placed the ultimate good in a perfect abstraction from the world, and an implicit love of God. How far these doctrines may be consistent with our nature and destination, and whether such sentiments may not rather lead to a dereliction than a completion of our duty, may perhaps be doubted; but they are well calculated to attract a great and aspiring mind. Mankind, however, often arrive at the same conclusion by different means<sup>c</sup>; and we have in our own days seen a sect rise up, whose professors, employing a mode

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<sup>c</sup> Sono infinite vie e differente,  
E quel che si ricerca solo è uno.

*Poetic di Lor. de' Medici, p. 33. Ed. 1554.*

mode of deduction precisely opposite to the Platonists of the fifteenth century, strongly resemble them in their sentiments and manners. Those important conclusions which the one derived from the highest cultivation of intellect, the other has found in an extreme of humiliation, and a constant degradation and contempt of all human endowments. Like navigators who steer a course directly opposite, they meet at last at the same point of the globe. And the sublime reveries of the Platonists, as they appear in the works of some of their followers, and the doctrines of the modern Methodists, are at times scarcely distinguishable in their respective writings.

In this system Lorenzo had been educated from his earliest years. Of his proficiency in it he has left a very favourable specimen in a poem of no inconsiderable extent. The occasion that gave rise to this poem appears from a letter of Ficino, who undertook to give an abstract of the doctrines of Plato in prose, whilst Lorenzo agreed to attempt the same subject in verse<sup>d</sup>.

Lorenzo

Poem of  
Lorenzo,  
intitl'd  
*Alti casz one.*

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<sup>d</sup> Cum ego ac tu nuper in agro Careggio multa de felicitate ultro citroque disputavissetus, tandem in sententiam eandem, duce ratione, convenimus. Ubi tu novas quasdam rationes, quod felicitas in voluntatis potius

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Lorenzo completed his task with that facility for which he was remarkable in all his compositions, and sent it to the philosopher, who performed the part he had undertaken by giving a dry and insipid epitome of the poem of Lorenzo<sup>e</sup>. What seems yet more extraordinary is, that Ficino, in a letter to Bernardo Rucellai, (who had married one of the sisters of Lorenzo,) transmits to him a prosaic paraphrase of the beautiful address to the Deity at the conclusion of the poem, affirming that he daily made use of it in his devotions, and recommending it to Bernardo for the like purpose. At the same time, instead of attributing the composition to its real author, he adverts to it in a manner that Bernardo might well be excused from understanding<sup>f</sup>. It is needless to add, that this subject  
appears

potius quam intellectus actu consistat, subtiliter invenisti. Placuit autem tibi, ut tu disputationem illam carminibus, ego soluta oratione conscriberem. Tu jam eleganti poemate tuum officium implevisti. Ego igitur nunc, aspirante deo, munus meum exequar quam brevissime.

*Fu. Ep. lib. 1. p. 38. Ed. 1497.*

<sup>e</sup> Lege feliciter, Laurenti felix, quæ Marsilius Ficinus tuus; hic breviter magna ex parte a te inventa, de felicitate perstrinxit. *Ib. p. 41.*

<sup>f</sup> Audivi Laurentium Medicem nostrum, nonnulla horum similia ad lyram canentem, furore quodam divino, ut arbitror, concipum. *Fic. Ep. lib. 1. p. 41.*

appears to much greater advantage in the native dress of the poet, than in the prosaic garb of the philosopher<sup>‡</sup>. The introduction is very pleasing. The author represents himself as leaving the city, to enjoy for a few days the pleasures of a country life.

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Da più dolce pensier tirato e scorto,  
 Fuggito avea l' aspra civil tempesta,  
 Per ridur l' alma in più tranquillo porto.  
 Così tradutto il cor da quella, a questa  
 Libera vita, placida, e sicura,  
 Che è quel po del ben ch' al mondo resta :  
 E per levar da mie fragil natura  
 Mille pensier, che fan la mente lassa,  
 Lassaì il bel cerchio delle patrie mura.  
 E pervenuto in parte ombrosa, e bassa,  
 Amena valle che quel monte adombra,  
 Che'l vecchio nome per età non lassa,  
 La ove un verde laur' faceva ombra,  
 Alla radice quasi del bel monte,  
 M'assisi; e'l cor d' ogni pensier si sgombra.

Led

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‡ Printed without date, apparently about the close of the fifteenth century, and not since reprinted, nor noticed by any bibliographer. It is intitled ALTERCATIONE OVERO DIALOGO COMPOSTO DAL MAGNIFICO LORENZO DI PIFRO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI nel quale si disputa tra el cittadino el pastore quale sia più felice vita o la civile o la rusticana con la determinatione facta dal philosopho dove solamente si truovi la vera felicità. In 12°.

C H A P.  
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Led on by pensive thought, I left erewhile  
 Those civil storms the restless city knows,  
 Pleased for a time to smooth my brow of toil,  
 And taste the little bliss that life bestows.  
 Thus with free steps my willing course I sped  
 Far from the circle of my native walls ;  
 And sought the vale with thickest foliage spread,  
 On whose calm breast the mountain shadow falls.  
 Charmed with the lovely spot, I sat me down  
 Where first the hill its easy slope inclined,  
 And every care that haunts the busy town,  
 Fled, as by magic, from my tranquil mind.

Whilst the poet is admiring the surrounding scenery, he is interrupted by a shepherd, who brings his flock to drink at an adjacent spring ; and who, after expressing his surprize at meeting such a stranger, inquires from Lorenzo the reason of his visit.

Dimmi per qual cagion sei quì venuto ?  
 Perchè i theatri, e i gran palazzi, e i templi  
 Lassi, & l' aspro sentier ti è più piaciuto ?  
 Deh ! dimmi in questi boschi hor che contempli ?  
 Le pompe, le ricchezze, e le dehtie,  
 Forse vuoi prezzar più pe' nostri exempli ?  
 —Ed io a lui—Io non so qual divitie,  
 ' O qual honor sien più suavi, & dolci,  
 Che questi, fuor delle civil malitie.  
 Tra voi lieti pastori, tra voi bubulci,  
 Odio non regna alcuno, o ria perfidia,

Nè nasce ambition per questi sulci.  
 Il ben què si possiede senza invidia ;  
 Vostra avaritia ha piccola radice ;  
 Contenti state nella lieta accidia.  
 Quì una per un altra non si dice ;  
 Nè è la lingua al proprio cor contraria ;  
 Che quel ch' oggi el fa meglio, è più felice.  
 Nè credo che gli avvenga in sì pura aria,  
 Che'l cuor sospiri, e fuor la bocca rida ;  
 Che più saggio è chi 'l ver più copre e varia.

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C H A P.  
 III.

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Thy splendid halls, thy palaces forgot,  
 Can paths o'erspread with thorns a charm supply ;  
 Or dost thou seek, from our severer lot,  
 To give to wealth and power a keener joy ?  
 —Thus I replied—I know no happier life,  
 No better riches than you shepherds boast,  
 Freed from the hated jars of civil strife,  
 Alike to treachery and to envy lost.  
 The weed ambition midst your furrowed field  
 Springs not, and avarice little root can find ;  
 Content with what the changing seasons yield,  
 You rest in cheerful poverty resigned.  
 What the heart thinks the tongue may here disclose ;  
 Nor inward grief with outward smiles is drest.  
 Not like the world—where wisest he who knows  
 To hide the secret closest in his breast.

Comparing

C H A P.  
III.

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Comparing the amusements of the city with the more natural and striking incidents of the country, he has the following passage :

S\*advien ch' un tauro con un altro giostri,  
Credo non manco al cuor porgha diletto,  
Che feri ludi de' theatri nostri.  
E tu giudice, al più perfetto  
Doni verde corona, ed in vergogna  
Si resta l' altro, misero, ed in dispetto.

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If chance two bulls in conflict fierce engage,  
And, stung by love, maintain the doubtful fight ;  
Say, can the revels of the crowded stage  
In all its pomp afford a nobler sight ?  
Judge of the strife, thou weav'st a chaplet gay,  
And on the conqueror's front the wreath is hung :  
Abash'd the vanquish'd takes his lonely way,  
And sullen and dejected moves along.

The shepherd however allows not the superior happiness of a country life, but in reply represents, in a very forcible manner, the many hardships to which it is inevitably liable. In the midst of the debate the philosopher Marsilio approaches, to whom they agree to submit the decision of their controversy. This affords him an opportunity of explaining the philosophical tenets

tenets of Plato ; in the course of which, after an inquiry into the real value of all subordinate objects and temporal acquisitions, he demonstrates, that permanent happiness is not to be sought for either in the exalted station of the one, or in the humble condition of the other, but that it is finally to be found only in the knowledge and the love of the first great cause.

C H A P.  
III.

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In order to give additional stability to these studies, Lorenzo and his friends formed the intention of renewing, with extraordinary pomp, the solemn annual feasts to the memory of the great philosopher, which had been celebrated from the time of his death to that of his disciples Plotinus and Porphyrius, but had then been discontinued for the space of twelve hundred years. The day fixed on for this purpose was the seventh of November, which was supposed to be the anniversary not only of the birth of Plato, but of his death, which happened among his friends at a convivial banquet, precisely at the close of his eighty-first year. The person appointed by Lorenzo to preside over the ceremony at Florence was Francesco Bandini, whose rank and learning rendered him extremely proper for the office. On the same day another party

Platonic  
festival.

party

C H A P.  
III.

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party met at Lorenzo's villa at Carreggi, where he presided in person. At these meetings, to which the most learned men in Italy resorted, it was the custom for one of the party, after dinner, to select certain passages from the works of Plato, which were submitted to the elucidation of the company, each of the guests undertaking the illustration or discussion of some important or doubtful point. By this institution, which was continued for several years, the philosophy of Plato was supported not only in credit but in splendor, and its professors were considered as the most respectable and enlightened men of the age. Whatever Lorenzo thought proper to patronize became the admiration of Florence, and consequently of all Italy. He was the *glass of fashion*; and those who joined in his pursuits, or imitated his example, could not fail of sharing in that applause which seemed to attend on every action of his life.

Effects of  
this insti-  
tution

Of the particular nature, or the beneficial effects of this establishment, little further is now to be collected, nor must we expect, either on this or on any other occasion, to meet with the transactions of the Florentine academy in the fifteenth century. The principal advantages of this institution seem to have been the collecting together

together men of talents and erudition, who had courage to dissent from established modes of belief, and of supplying them with new, rational, and important topics of conversation. From these discourses it was not difficult to extract the purest lessons of moral conduct, or the sublimest sentiments of veneration for the Deity; but good sense was the only alembic through which the true essence could be obtained, and this was not at hand on all occasions. The extravagancies of some of the disciples contributed to sink into discredit the doctrines of their master. Even Ficino himself, the great champion of the sect, exhibits a proof, that when the imagination is once heated by the pursuit of a favourite object, it is difficult to restrain it within proper bounds. Habituated from his earliest youth to the study of this philosophy, and conversant only with Plato and his followers, their doctrines occupied his whole soul, and appeared in all his conduct and conversation. Even his epistles breathe nothing but Plato, and fatigue us with the endless repetition of opinions which Lorenzo has more clearly exhibited in a few luminous pages. Ficino was not, however, satisfied with following the track of Plato, but has given us some treatises of his own, in which he has occasionally taken excursions far beyond the limits which his

**C H A P.** master prescribed to himself<sup>h</sup>. We might be  
**III.** inclined to smile at his folly, or to pity his  
 weakness, did not the consideration of the  
 follies and the weaknesses of the present times,  
 varied indeed from those of past ages, but per-  
 haps not diminished, repress the arrogant emo-  
 tion.

Number  
 and cele-  
 brity of its  
 members.

Of those who more particularly distinguished themselves by the protection which they afforded to the new philosophy, or by the progress they made in the study of it, Ficino has left a numerous catalogue in a letter to Martinus Uranius, in which he allots the chief place to his friends of the family of the Medici<sup>i</sup>. Protected and esteemed by Cosmo, the same unalterable attachment subsisted between the philosopher and his patrons for four successive generations. If ever the love of science was hereditary, it must have been in this family. Of the other eminent men whom Ficino has enumerated, Bandini has given

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<sup>h</sup> In his treatise *de vita caltus comparanda*, we have a chapter, *de virtute verborum atque cantus ad beneficium caeleste captandum*, and another, *de astronomica diligentia in liberis procreandis*, with other disquisitions equally instructive.

*Fic. de vita. Ven. 1548, 8°.*

<sup>i</sup> *Fic. Ep. lib. xi. Ep. 30. Ed. 1497. v. App. No. XX.*

us some interesting particulars<sup>k</sup>, to which considerable additions might be made; but the number is too great, and the materials are too extensive, to be comprized within moderate limits. In perusing the catalogue of the disciples of this institution, we perceive that the greatest part of them were natives of Florence, a circumstance that may give us some idea of the surprising attention which was then paid in that city to literary pursuits. Earnest in the acquisition of wealth, indefatigable in improving their manufactures and extending their commerce, the Florentines seem not, however, to have lost sight of the true dignity of man, or of the proper objects of his regard. A thorough acquaintance as well with the ancient authors as with the literature of his own age, was an indispensable qualification in the character of a Florentine; but few of them were satisfied with this inferior praise. The writers of that country, of whose lives and productions some account is given by Negri, amount in number to upwards of two thousand, and among these may be found many names of the first celebrity. In this respect the city of Florence stands unrivalled. A species of praise as honourable as it is indisputable.

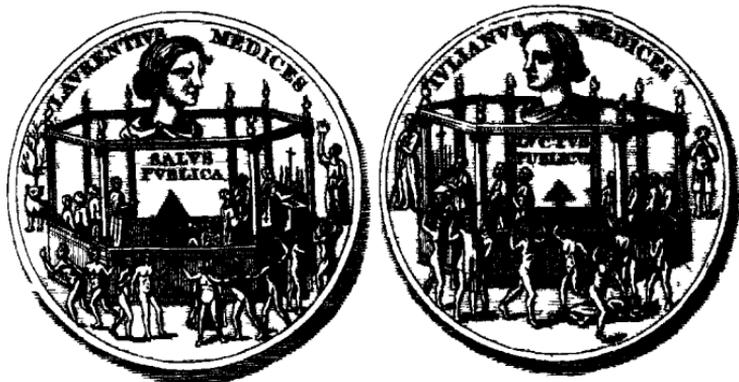
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<sup>k</sup> *Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. passim.*

## CHAP. IV.

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*ASSASSINATION of the duke of Milan—Ambition of Lodovico Sforza—Conspiracy of the Pazzi—Parties engaged in it—Family of the Pazzi—Origin of the attempt—Arrangements for its execution—Giuliano assassinated, and Lorenzo wounded—The conspirators attack the palace—Repulsed by the Gonfaloniere—Punishment of the conspirators—Conduct of Lorenzo—Memorials of the conspiracy—Lorenzo prepares for his defence against the pope and the king of Naples—Latin ode of Politiano—Kindness of Lorenzo to the relatives of the conspirators—Violence of Sixtus IV.—He excommunicates Lorenzo and the magistrates—Singular reply of the Florentine synod—Sixtus attempts to prevail on the Florentines to deliver up Lorenzo—Danger of his situation—Conduct of the war—Lorenzo negotiates for peace—Death of Donato Acciajuoli—Various success of the war—Lorenzo resolves to visit the king of Naples—His letter to the magistrates of Florence—He embarks at Pisa—Concludes a treaty with the king—Sixtus perseveres in the war—The Turks make a descent upon Italy—Peace concluded with the pope.*



#### CHAP. IV.

WHILST Lorenzo was dividing his time between the cares of government and the promotion of literature, an event took place that attracted the attention of all Italy towards Milan. This was the death of the duke Galeazzo Maria, who was assassinated in a solemn procession, and in his ducal robes, as he was entering the church of S. Stefano. This daring act, which seems to have originated partly in personal resentment, and partly in an aversion to the tyranny of the duke, was not attended with the consequences expected by the perpetrators ; two of whom were killed on the spot ;

Assassination of the duke of Milan.

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1476.

**C H A P.** and the third, Girolamo Olgiato, a youth of  
IV. twenty-three years of age, after having been refused shelter in his father's house, died upon the scaffold. On his execution he shewed the spirit of an ancient Roman <sup>a</sup>. The conspirators undoubtedly expected to meet with the countenance and protection of the populace, to whom they knew that the duke had rendered himself odious by every species of cruelty and oppression. The delight which he seemed to take in shedding the blood of his subjects had rendered him an object of horror—his insatiable debauchery, of disgust <sup>b</sup>: he was even suspected of having destroyed

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<sup>a</sup> Nè fu nel morire meno animoso, che nell' operare si fusse stato; perchè trovandosi ignudo, e con il carneficè davanti, che aveva il coltello in mano per ferirlo, disse queste parole in lingua Latina, perchè litterato era, "*Mors acerba, fama perpetua, stabit vetus memoria facti.*"

*Mac. Hist. lib. vii.*

It appears, however, from the ancient chronicle of Donato Bossi, that more than one of the conspirators suffered the horrid punishment which he there relates:—  
 "Post questionem de participibus conjurationis, in vestibulo arcis, urbem versus, in quaterna membra vivi  
 "discerpti sunt." *Chronc. Bossiana. Ed. Ms. 1492.*

<sup>b</sup> Era Galeazzo libidinoso, e crudele; delle qual due cose gli spessi essempli l'havevano fatto odiosissimo; perchè non solo non gli bastava corrompere le donne nobili,

stroyed his mother, who, as he thought, interfered too much in the government of Milan; and who suddenly died as she was making her retreat from thence to Cremona. But no commotion whatever took place in the city, and Giovan Galeazzo, a child of eight years of age, peaceably succeeded his father in the dukedom<sup>c</sup>. The imbecility of his youth tempted the daring spirit of his uncle, Lodovico, to form a systematic plan for obtaining the government of Milan, in the execution of which he drew ruin upon himself, and entailed a long succession of misery upon his unfortunate country.

CHAP.  
IV.

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The connexion that had long subsisted between the houses of Sforza and of Medici, rendered it impossible for Lorenzo to be an indifferent spectator of this event. At his instance Tomaso Soderini was dispatched to Milan, to assist by his advice the young prince and his mother, who had taken upon herself the regency during the minority of her son. The ambitious designs of Lodovico soon became apparent. Having persuaded his three brothers,

Sforza

Ambition of  
Lodovico  
Sforza.

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nobili, che prendeva ancora piacere di publicarle; nè era contento fare morire gli huomini, se con qualche modo crudele non gli ammazzava. *Mac. lib. vii.*

<sup>c</sup> *Murat. Ann. v. ix. p. 522.*

CHAPTER  
IV.

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Sforza duke of Bari, Ottaviano, and Ascanio, to second his views, he began to oppose the authority of the duchess, and attempted to divest her of the assistance of her faithful and experienced counsellor Cecco Simoneta, a native of Calabria, whose integrity and activity had recommended him to the patronage of the celebrated Francesco Sforza<sup>d</sup>. Simoneta, aware of his design, endeavoured to frustrate it, by imprisoning and punishing some of his accomplices of inferior rank. The four brothers immediately resorted to arms, and of this circumstance Simoneta availed himself to obtain a decree, that either banished them from Milan or prohibited their return. Ottaviano, one of the brothers, soon afterwards perished in attempting to cross the river Adda. These rigorous measures, instead of depressing the genius of Lodovico, gave a keener edge to his talents, and superadded to his other motives the desire of revenge. Nor was it long before his resentment was gratified

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<sup>d</sup> Cecco was brother to the historian Simoneta, whose elegant Latin history of the life of Francesco Sforza has furnished future historians with some of the most interesting particulars of that period. This work was first published at Milan in 1479, and reprinted there in 1486. The Italian translation, by Cristoforo Landino, was also published at Milan in 1490, under the title of *La Sforziada*.

tified by the destruction of Simoneta, who expiated by his death the offence which he had committed against the growing power of the brothers<sup>e</sup>. No sooner was the duchess deprived of his support, than Lodovico wrested from her feeble hands the sceptre of Milan, and took the young duke under his immediate protection; where, like a weak plant in the shade of a vigorous tree, he languished for a few miserable years, and then fell a victim to that increasing strength in which he ought to have found his preservation.

C H A P.  
IV.

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The public agitation excited by the assassination of the duke of Milan had scarcely subsided, before an event took place at Florence of a much more atrocious nature, inasmuch as the objects destined to destruction had not afforded a pretext, in any degree plausible, for such an attempt. Accordingly we have now to enter on a transaction that has seldom been mentioned without emotions of the strongest horror and detestation, and which, as has justly been observed, is an incontrovertible proof of the practical atheism of the times in which it took place.

Conspiracy  
of the Pazzi.

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1478.

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<sup>e</sup> *Murat. Ann. v. ix. p. 532.*

CHAPTER  
IV

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place<sup>f</sup>.—A transaction in which a pope, a cardinal, an archbishop, and several other ecclesiastics, associated themselves with a band of ruffians, to destroy two men who were an honour to their age and country; and purposed to perpetrate their crime at a season of hospitality, in the sanctuary of a Christian church, and at the very moment of the elevation of the host, when the audience bowed down before it, and the assassins were presumed to be in the immediate presence of their God.

Parties engaged in it.

At the head of this conspiracy were Sixtus IV. and his nephew Girolamo Riario. Raffaello Riario, the nephew of this Girolamo, who, although a young man then pursuing his studies, had lately been raised to the dignity of cardinal, was rather an instrument than an accomplice in the scheme. The enmity of Sixtus to Lorenzo had for some time been apparent, and if not occasioned by the assistance which Lorenzo had afforded to Niccolo Vitelli, and other independent nobles, whose dominions Sixtus had either threatened or attacked, was certainly increased by it. The destruction of the Medici appeared therefore

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<sup>f</sup> *Voltaire Essai sur les mœurs, &c. des nations, v. ii. p. 283. Ed. Genev. 1769, 4°.*

therefore to Sixtus as the removal of an obstacle that thwarted all his views, and by the accomplishment of which the small surrounding states would soon become an easy prey. There is, however, great reason to believe that the pope did not confine his ambition to these subordinate governments, but that, if the conspiracy had succeeded to his wish, he meant to have grasped at the dominion of Florence itself<sup>s</sup>. The alliance lately formed between the Florentines, the Venetians, and the duke of Milan, which was principally effected by Lorenzo de' Medici, and by which the pope found himself prevented from disturbing the peace of Italy, was an additional and powerful motive of resentment<sup>b</sup>. One of the first proofs of the displeasure of the pope was his depriving Lorenzo of the office of treasurer of the papal see, which he gave to the Pazzi,

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<sup>s</sup> At least Ferdinand of Naples, the ally of Sixtus in the contest that ensued, assured the Florentine ambassador that such was the intention of the pope, "che sapeva lui, che Sisto non tenne meno fantasia in capo d' occupare e farsi signore di Firenze, che il presente sommo pontefice si habbi tenuta di occupare questo regno."—Alluding to the subsequent attack made by Innocent VIII. upon the kingdom of Naples.

*Fabr. in vitá Laur. v. ii. p. 107.*

<sup>b</sup> *Murat. Ann. v. ix. p. 526.*

CHAP. Pazzi, a Florentine family, who, as well as  
 IV. the Medici, had a public bank at Rome,  
 and who afterwards became the coadjutors of  
 Sixtus in the execution of his treacherous pur-  
 pose.\*

Family of,  
 the Pazzi.

This family was one of the noblest and most respectable in Florence; numerous in its members, and possessed of great wealth and influence. Of three brothers, two of whom had filled the office of gonfaloniere, only one was then living. If we may credit the account of Politiano<sup>1</sup>, Giacopo

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<sup>1</sup> CONJURATIONIS FACTIANÆ COMMENTARIUM. This piece, written by a spectator, and printed in the same year in which the event took place, is as remarkable for the vehemence of its *invective*, as for the elegance of its style, and proves how deeply Politiano felt, and how keenly he resented the injury done to his great patrons. Not being republished with the other works of this author in 1498 or 1499, or in the Paris edition of 1519, it became extremely rare, "tam rarum deventum quidem, ut inter doctos sæpe dubitatum est, an unquam typis impressum fuerit, ac inter alios ignoratus etiam libri titulus." *Adimarius in pref. ad Pact. Conj. Comment. Ed. Nap. 1769.* Adimari having procured the ancient copy from the Strozzi library, and collated it with various manuscripts, republished it at Naples in 1769, with great elegance and copious illustrations, forming an ample quarto volume; from which accurate edition this piece is given in the Appendix, No. XXI.

copo de' Pazzi, the surviving brother, who was regarded as the chief of the family, and far advanced in years, was an unprincipled libertine, who having by gaming and intemperance dissipated his paternal property, sought an opportunity of averting, or of concealing his own ruin in that of the republic. C H A P.  
IV. 

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 Giacomo had no children; but his elder brother Piero had left seven sons, and his younger brother Antonio three; one of whom, Guglielmo de' Pazzi, had in the lifetime of Cosmo de' Medici married Bianca, the sister of Lorenzo. Francesco, the brother of Guglielmo, had for several years resided principally at Rome. Of a bold and aspiring temper, he could not brook the superiority of the Medici, which was supposed to have induced him to choose that place as his residence in preference to Florence.

Several of the Florentine authors have endeavoured to trace the reason of the enmity of this family to that of the Medici; but nothing seems discoverable, which could plausibly operate as a motive, much less as a justification of their resentment. On the contrary, the affinity between the two families, and the favours conferred by the Medici on the Pazzi, memorials of which yet remain in the hand-writing of Giacomo,

**C H A P.** **IV.** **Giacopo**<sup>k</sup>, might be presumed to have prevented animosity, if not to have conciliated esteem; and that they lived on terms of apparent friendship and intimacy is evident from many circumstances of the conspiracy. Machiavelli relates a particular injury received by one of the Pazzi, which, as he informs us, that family attributed to the Medici. Giovanni de' Pazzi had married the daughter of Giovanni Borromeo, whose immense property upon his death should have descended to his daughter. But pretensions to it being made by Carlo, his nephew, a litigation ensued, in the event of which the daughter was deprived of her inheritance<sup>l</sup>. There is, however, reason to believe that this decree, whether justifiable or not, and of which we have no documents to enable us to form a judgment, was made many years before the death of Piero de' Medici, when his sons were too young to have taken a very active part in it; and it is certain that it produced no ostensible enmity between the families. It is also deserving of notice, that this transaction happened at a time when Lorenzo

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<sup>k</sup> In letters from him to Lorenzo, two of which are given by Fabroni, and will be found in the Appendix, No. XXII.

<sup>l</sup> *Mac. Hist. lib. 8.*

renzo was absent from Florence, on one of his youthful excursions through Italy<sup>m</sup>.

C H A P.  
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This conspiracy, of which Sixtus and his nephew were the real instigators, was first agitated at Rome, where the intercourse between the count Girolamo Riario and Francesco de' Pazzi, in consequence of the office held by the latter, afforded them an opportunity of communicating to each other their common jealousy of the power of the Medici, and their desire of depriving them of their influence in Florence; in which event it is highly probable, that the Pazzi were to have exercised the chief authority in the city, under the patronage, if not under the avowed dominion of the papal see. The principal agent engaged in the undertaking was Francesco Salviati, archbishop of Pisa, to which rank he had lately been promoted by Sixtus, in opposition to the wishes of the Medici, who had for some time endeavoured to prevent him from exercising his episcopal functions. If it be  
allowed

Origin of  
the attempt.

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<sup>m</sup> This fact is authenticated by the letter from Luigi Pulci to Lorenzo de' Medici, dated the twenty-second of April 1465, and now first published in the Appendix from the MS. in the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence.

*App. No. IX.*

C H A P.  
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allowed that the unfavourable character given of him by Politiano is exaggerated, it is generally agreed that his qualities were the reverse of those which ought to have been the recommendations to such high preferment. The other conspirators were, Giacopo Salviati, brother of the archbishop Giacopo Poggio, one of the sons of the celebrated Poggio Bracciolini, and who, like all the other sons of that eminent scholar, had obtained no small share of literary reputation";

Bernardo

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" Giacopo not only translated the Florentine history of his father from Latin into Italian, but has also left a specimen of his talents in a commentary on the *Trionfo della Fama* of Petrarca, which was published in folio, without a date, but, as Bandini conjectures, about the year 1485 or 1487. It may however be presumed, from the dedication of this book to Lorenzo de' Medici, that it was printed previous to the year 1478, when the author joined in this conspiracy to destroy a man, of whom, and of whose family, he had shortly before expressed himself in the following affectionate and grateful terms: " E  
 " perchè, charissimo Lorenzo, io conosco quel poco di  
 " cognitione è in me, tutto essere per conforto e acer-  
 " rimo stimolo ne miei teneri anni, da Cosimo tuo avolo,  
 " pari per certo a Camillo, o Fabritio, o Scipione, o  
 " qualunque altro, i quali appresso di noi sono in vene-  
 " ratione, se fussi nato nella Romana republica, mi pare  
 " essere obligato e costretto ogni frutto producessi per  
 " alcun tempo le sue gravissime monitioni et exortationi,  
 " come persona grata, a te, vero e degno suo herede  
 " destinarlo ;

Bernardo Bandini, a daring libertine, rendered desperate by the consequences of his excesses; Giovan Battista Montesicco, who had distinguished himself by his military talents as one of the *Condottieri* of the armies of the pope; Antonio Maffei, a priest of Volterra; and Stefano da Bagnone, one of the apostolic scribes, with several others of inferior note.

In the arrangement of their plan, which appears to have been concerted with great precaution and secrecy, the conspirators soon discovered, that the dangers which they had to encounter were not so likely to arise from the difficulty of the attempt, as from the subsequent resentment of the Florentines, a great majority of whom were strongly attached to the Medici. Hence it became necessary to provide a military force, the assistance of which might be equally requisite whether the enterprize proved abortive or successful. By the influence of the pope, the king of Naples, who was then in alliance with him, and on one of whose sons he had recently

Arrange-  
ments for its  
execution.

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“ destinarlo; aciochè intenda quel tanto di lume d' alcuna  
 “ virtù è in me, reconoscerlo dalla casa tua, alla quale  
 “ tanto sono obligato quanto giudicherai sieno da stimare  
 “ queste mie lettere.” *Giac. Poggio in Proem.*

CHAPTER IV. recently bestowed a cardinal's hat, was also induced to countenance the attempt.

These preliminaries being adjusted, Girolamo wrote to his nephew, the cardinal Riario, then at Pisa, ordering him to obey whatever directions he might receive from the archbishop. A body of two thousand men were destined to approach by different routes towards Florence, so as to be in readiness at the time appointed for striking the blow.

Shortly afterwards, the archbishop requested the presence of the cardinal at Florence, whither he immediately repaired, and took up his residence at a seat of the Pazzi, about a mile from the city. It seems to have been the intention of the conspirators to have effected their purpose at Fiesole, where Lorenzo then had his country residence, to which they supposed that he would invite the cardinal and his attendants. Nor were they deceived in this conjecture, for Lorenzo prepared a magnificent entertainment on this occasion: but the absence of Giuliano, on account of indisposition, obliged the conspirators to postpone the attempt<sup>o</sup>. Being thus disappointed

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<sup>o</sup> *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p. 23.*

pointed in their hopes, another plan was now to be adopted; and on further deliberation it was resolved, that the assassination should take place on the succeeding Sunday, in the church of the Reparata, since called *Santa Maria del Fiore*, and that the signal for execution should be the elevation of the host. At the same moment the archbishop and others of the conspirators were to seize upon the palace, or residence of the magistrates, whilst the office of *Giacopo de' Pazzi* was to endeavour, by the cry of liberty, to incite the citizens to revolt.

C H A P.  
IV.

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The immediate assassination of *Giuliano* was committed to *Francesco de' Pazzi* and *Bernardo Bandini*, and that of *Lorenzo* had been entrusted to the sole hand of *Montesicco*. This office he had willingly undertaken whilst he understood that it was to be executed in a private dwelling; but he shrunk from the idea of polluting the house of God with so heinous a crime<sup>p</sup>. Two ecclesiastics were therefore selected for the commission

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<sup>p</sup> Disse che non gli basterebbe mai l'animo, commettere tanto eccesso *in chiesa*, ed accompagnare il tradimento col sacrilegio; il che fu il principio della rovina dell'impresa loro. *Mac. lib. 8.*

**C H A P.** mission of a deed, from which the soldier was  
**IV.** deterred by conscientious motives. These were  
 Stefano da Bagnone, the apostolic scribe, and  
 Antonio Maffei.

Giuliano  
 assassinated, and  
 Lorenzo  
 wounded.

The young cardinal having expressed a desire to attend divine service in the church of the Reparata, on the ensuing Sunday, being the twenty-sixth day of April 1478, Lorenzo invited him and his suite to his house in Florence. He accordingly came with a large retinue, supporting the united characters of cardinal and apostolic legate, and was received by Lorenzo with that splendor and hospitality with which he was always accustomed to entertain men of high rank and consequence. Giuliano did not appear, a circumstance that alarmed the conspirators, whose arrangements would not admit of longer delay. They soon however learned that he intended to be present at the church.—The service was already begun, and the cardinal had taken his seat, when Francesco de' Pazzi and Bandini, observing that Giuliano was not yet arrived, left the church and went to his house, in order to insure and hasten his attendance. Giuliano accompanied them; and as he walked between them, they threw their arms round him with the familiarity of intimate friends,

friends, but in fact to discover whether he had any armour under his dress<sup>2</sup>; possibly conjecturing, from his long delay, that he had suspected their purpose. At the same time, by their freedom and jocularly, they endeavoured to obviate any apprehensions which he might entertain from such a proceeding<sup>1</sup>. The conspirators having taken their stations near their intended victims, waited with impatience for the appointed signal<sup>3</sup>. The bell rang—the priest raised

C H A P.  
IV.

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<sup>2</sup> Condottolo nel tempio, e per la via e nella chiesa con motteggi, e giovenili ragionamenti l' intratenero. Ne mancò Francesco sotto colore di carezzarlo, con le mani e con le braccia strignerlo, per vedere se lo trovava o di corazza, o d' altra simile difesa munito. *Mac. lib. 8.*

<sup>1</sup> Giuliano was indisposed, and totally unarmed, having left at home even his dagger, which he was generally accustomed to wear. “ Infirmus quidem, & qui ea die, præter morem, gladiolum, qui ei ulceratum crus quatiebat, domi reliquerat.”

*Synod. Flor. Act. ap. Fabr. v. ii. p. 134.*

<sup>3</sup> In the point of time fixed for the perpetration of this deed, historians are nearly agreed. “ Cum Eucharistia attolleretur,” says *Raffaello da Volt. Geogr. 151.* “ Cum sacerdos manibus Eucharistiam frangeret.” *Val. in vitâ, p. 24.* “ Peracta sacerdotis communione,” says *Poltiano.* “ Post Eucharistiæ consecratione.” *In Prov. Rep. Flor. ap. Fabr. v. ii. p. 111.* “ Quando communi-  
“ nicava il sacerdote.” *Mac. lib. 8.*

C H A P. raised the consecrated wafer—the people bowed  
 IV. before it—and at the same instant Bandini  
 plunged a short dagger into the breast of Giuliano.—On receiving the wound he took a few hasty steps and fell, when Francesco de' Pazzi rushed upon him with incredible fury, and stabbed him in different parts of his body, continuing to repeat his strokes even after he was apparently dead. Such was the violence of his rage that he wounded himself deeply in the thigh. The priests who had undertaken the murder of Lorenzo were not equally successful. An ill-directed blow from Maffei, which was aimed at the throat, but took place behind the neck, rather roused him to his defence than disabled him'. He immediately threw off his cloak, and holding it up as a shield in his left hand, with his right he drew his sword, and repelled his assailants. Perceiving that their purpose was defeated, the two ecclesiastics, after having wounded one of Lorenzo's attendants who had interposed to defend him, endeavoured to save themselves by flight. At the same moment, Bandini, his dagger streaming with the blood of Giuliano, rushed towards Lorenzo ;  
 but

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\* “ Il primo colpo fu nella collotola, perchè non potè tenerlo pel braccio per dargli nel petto, e così confessò.”

*Strinatus, ap. Admar. in not. p. 25.*

but meeting in his way with Francesco Nori, a person in the service of the Medici, and in whom they placed great confidence, he stabbed him with a wound instantaneously mortal<sup>u</sup>. At the approach of Bandini the friends of Lorenzo encircled him, and hurried him into the sacristy, where Politiano and others closed the doors, which were of brass. Apprehensions being entertained that the weapon which had wounded him was poisoned, a young man attached to Lorenzo sucked the wound<sup>v</sup>. A general alarm and consternation commenced in the church; and such was the tumult which ensued, that it was at first believed by the audience that the building

C H A P.  
IV.

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<sup>u</sup> When Leo X. many years afterwards paid a visit to Florence, he granted an indulgence to all those who should pray for the soul of Francesco Nori, under the idea that his death had preserved the life of his father Lorenzo. *Adimar. in not. p. 20.*

<sup>v</sup> " Aggressus in eos factus fuit a Francisco de Pazzis, " et aliis pluribus suis sotiis armatis *armis veneno infectis,*" says Matteo de Toscano, cited by Adimari, *Documenta Conj. Pact. p. 142.* I do not find that any other author mentions this circumstance. The young man who gave this striking proof of his affection to Lorenzo was Antonia Ridolfo, of a noble family of Florence.

*Pol. Conj. Pact. Comment. in App.*

C H A P. building was falling in \* ; but no sooner was it  
 IV. understood that Lorenzo was in danger, than  
 several of the youth of Florence formed them-  
 selves into a body, and receiving him into the  
 midst of them, conducted him into his house,  
 making a circuitous turn from the church, lest  
 he should meet with the dead body of his  
 brother.

The con-  
 spirators  
 attack the  
 palace.

Whilst these transactions passed in the  
 church, another commotion arose in the palace ;  
 where the archbishop, who had left the church,  
 as agreed upon before the attack on the Medici,  
 and about thirty of his associates, attempted to  
 overpower the magistrates, and to possess them-  
 selves of the seat of government \*. Leaving  
 some of his followers stationed in different apart-  
 ments,

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\* “ Qui in templo fuerant, clamoribus territi, huc  
 “ atque illuc cursitantes veluti attoniti, quidnam rei  
 “ fuisset quæritabant. Fuere qui crederent templum  
 “ ruere.” *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p. 25.*

x “ Con la sua compagnia, ch’ erano circa persone  
 “ ventotto,” says Belfredello Strinato, *ap. Adimar. in not.*  
*p. 17.* Ammirato informs us, that the archbishop had  
 about thirty followers, and that he left the church on the  
 pretence of paying a visit to his mother.

*Amm. Ist. v. iii. p. 117.*

ments, the archbishop proceeded to an interior chamber, where Cesare Petrucci, then gonfaloniere, and the other magistrates, were assembled. No sooner was the gonfaloniere informed of his approach, than out of respect to his rank he rose to meet him. Whether the archbishop was disconcerted by the presence of Petrucci, who was known to be of a resolute character, of which he had given a striking instance in frustrating the attack of Bernardo Nardi upon the town of Prato, or whether his courage was not equal to the undertaking; is uncertain; but instead of intimidating the magistrates by a sudden attack, he began to inform Petrucci that the pope had bestowed an employment on his son, of which he had to deliver to him the credentials<sup>7</sup>. This he did with such hesitation, and in so desultory a manner, that it was scarcely possible to collect his meaning. Petrucci also observed that he frequently changed colour, and at times turned towards the door, as if giving a signal to some one to approach.— Alarmed at his manner, and probably aware of his character, Petrucci suddenly rushed out of the chamber, and called together the guards and

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<sup>7</sup> Sub nomine et colore præsentandi cujusdam brevis papalis. *M. Tuscanus ap. Sidimar. int. doc. p. 142.*

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Repulsed  
by the gon-  
faloniere  
and magi-  
strates.

and attendants. By attempting to retreat, the archbishop confessed his guilt<sup>z</sup>. In pursuing him, Petrucci met with Giacompo Poggio, whom he caught by the hair, and, throwing him on the ground, delivered into the custody of his followers. The rest of the magistrates and their attendants seized upon such arms as the place supplied, and the implements of the kitchen became formidable weapons in their hands. Having secured the doors of the palace, they furiously attacked their scattered and intimidated enemies, who no longer attempted resistance. During this commotion they were alarmed by a tumult from without, and perceived from the windows Giacompo de' Pazzi, followed by about one hundred soldiers, crying out liberty, and exhorting the people to revolt. At the same time they found that the  
insurgents

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<sup>z</sup> He was deprived of his expected support by a singular incident. Some of his followers had retired into an adjoining chamber to wait his signal. It was customary for every succeeding magistrate to make an alteration in the doors of that place, as a precaution against treachery; and Petrucci had so constructed them that they closed and bolted on the slightest impulse. The followers of the archbishop thus found themselves unexpectedly secured in the chamber, without the possibility of affording assistance to their leader.

insurgents had forced the gates of the palace, and that some of them were entering to defend their companions. The magistrates however persevered in their defence, and repulsing their enemies, secured the gates till a reinforcement of their friends came to their assistance. Petrucci was now first informed of the assassination of Giuliano, and the attack made upon Lorenzo. The relation of this treachery excited his highest indignation. With the concurrence of the state counsellors, he ordered Giacompo Poggio to be hung in sight of the populace, out of the palace windows; and secured the archbishop, with his brother and the other chiefs of the conspiracy. Their followers were either slaughtered in the palace, or thrown half alive through the windows. One only of the whole number escaped. He was found some days afterwards concealed in the wainscots, perishing with hunger, and in consideration of his sufferings received his pardon <sup>a</sup>.

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The young cardinal Riario, who had taken refuge at the altar, was preserved from the rage of the populace by the interference of Lorenzo, who appeared to give credit to his assever-

Punishment  
of the con-  
spirators.

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<sup>a</sup> *Amm.* v. iii. p 118.

C H A P.  
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asseverations, that he was ignorant of the intentions of the conspirators<sup>b</sup>. It is said that his fears had so violent an effect upon him that he never afterwards recovered his natural complexion<sup>c</sup>. His attendants fell a sacrifice to the resentment of the citizens. The streets were polluted with the dead bodies and mangled limbs of the slaughtered. With the head of one of these unfortunate wretches on a lance, the populace paraded the city, which resounded with the cry of *Palle, Palle*<sup>d</sup>! *Perish the traitors*!<sup>e</sup> Francesco de' Pazzi being found at the house of his uncle Giacopo, where on account of his wound

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<sup>b</sup> *Valor. in vitâ Lau. p. 26.*

<sup>c</sup> “ Tali tantoque metu arreptum, ut exinde nunquam naturalem colorem acquisierit.”

*Ciacconius ap. Adimar. in not. p. 26.*

<sup>d</sup> The palle d' oro, or golden balls, the arms of the family of Medici.

<sup>e</sup> Un prete del vescovo fu morto in piazza, e squartato, e levatogli la testa, e per tutto il dì fu portata la detta testa in sur una lancia per tutto Firenze; e strascinato le gambe, e un quarto dinanzi con un braccio portato in su uno spiede per tutta la città, gridando sempre MUOIANO I TRADITORI. *Landuccius ap. Adimar in not. p. 26.* Tutti gridando VIVA LE PALLE, E MUOIANO I TRADITORI.

*Chron. Caroli e Florentioli ap. idem.*

wound he was confined to his bed, was dragged out naked and exhausted by loss of blood, and being brought to the palace, suffered the same death as his associate. His punishment was immediately followed by that of the archbishop, who was hung through the windows of the palace, and was not allowed even to divest himself of his prelatical robes. The last moments of Salviati, if we may credit Politiano, were marked by a singular instance of ferocity. Being suspended close to Francesco de' Pazzi, he seized the naked body with his teeth, and relaxed not from his hold even in the agonies of death<sup>f</sup>. Jacopo de' Pazzi had escaped from the city during the tumult; but the day following he was made a prisoner by the neighbouring peasants, who, regardless of his entreaties to put him to death, brought him to Florence, and delivered

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<sup>f</sup> In the opinion of Politiano, the crime of the archbishop was not expiated by his death. Amongst his poems, printed in the edition of Basil, are several epigrams that strongly speak his unquenchable resentment. The following is a specimen:

Salviatus mitræ sceleratus honore superbit :  
 Et quemquam cœlo credimus esse deum ?  
 Scilicet hæc scelera, hoc artes meruere nefandæ ?  
 At laqueo, en ! pendet. Estis 10 superi !

C H A P. delivered him up to the magistrates<sup>§</sup>. As his  
 1V. guilt was manifest, his execution was instantaneous, and afforded from the windows of the palace another spectacle that gratified the resentment of the enraged multitude. His nephew Renato, who suffered at the same time, excited in some degree the commiseration of the spectators. Devoted to his studies, and averse to popular commotions, he had refused to be an actor in the conspiracy, and his silence was his only crime. The body of Giacopo had been interred in the church of Santa Croce, and to this circumstance the superstition of the people attributed an unusual and incessant fall of rain that succeeded these disturbances. Partaking in their prejudices, or desirous of gratifying their revenge, the magistrates ordered his body to be removed without the walls of the city. The following morning it was again torn from the grave by a great multitude of children, who, in spite of the restrictions of decency, and the interference of some of the inhabitants, after  
 dragging

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§ *Amm. Ist. Fior.* v. iii p. 119. “L' altro di ne venne  
 “ preso Messer Jacopo de' Pazzi che era fuggito; e' fu  
 “ preso in Romagna, che fu a di 27, e fu isaminato, e di  
 “ subito impiccato a detta finestra del palagio.”

*Strinat. ap. Adimar. in not.* p. 27.

dragging it a long time through the streets, and treating it with every degree of wanton opprobrium, threw it into the river Arno<sup>b</sup>. Such was the fate of a man who had enjoyed the highest honours of the republic, and for his services to the state had been rewarded with the privileges of the equestrian rank<sup>1</sup>. The rest of this devoted family were condemned either to imprisonment

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<sup>b</sup> Quando furono all'uscio della sua casa, messono il capestro nella campanella dell'uscio, e lo tirarono sù, dicendo, *picchia l'uscio*. Landucci ap. Adimar. in not. p. 43. Politiano, who seems to dwell with pleasure on the excesses of an enraged populace, relates more particularly their insults to the lifeless body of Jacopo.

<sup>1</sup> Machiavelli, who bore no partiality towards the Medici, gives us a more favourable idea of the character of Jacopo. "Narronsi de i suoi alcuni vitii, tra i quali erano giuochi e bestemmie, più che a qualunque perduto huomo non si converebbe; i quali vitu con le molte elemosine ricompensava; perchè a molti bisognosi, e luoghi più largamente sovveniva. Puossi ancora di quello dire questo bene, che il sabbato davanti a quella Domenica diputata a tanto homicidio, per non fare partecipe dell'aversa sua fortuna alcun' altro, tutti i suoi debiti pagò, tutte le mercantie che egli haveva in dogana ed in casa, le quali ad altrui appartenessero, con maravigliosa sollecitudine a i padroni di quelle consegnò." *Mac. lib. 8*

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sonment or to exile<sup>k</sup>, excepting only Guglielmo de' Pazzi, who, though not unsuspected, was first sheltered from the popular fury in the house of Lorenzo, and was afterwards ordered to remain at his own villa, about twenty-five miles distant from Florence.

Although most diligent search was made for the priests who had undertaken the murder of Lorenzo, it was not till the third day after the attempt that they were discovered, having obtained a shelter in the monastery of the Benedictine monks. No sooner were they brought from the place of their concealment, than the populace, after cruelly mutilating them, put them to death; and with difficulty were prevented from slaughtering the monks themselves<sup>l</sup>. Montesicco, who had adhered to the cause of the conspirators, although he had refused to be the active instrument of their project, was taken a few days afterwards, as he

was

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<sup>k</sup> Furono presi Andrea di Piero de' Pazzi, Giovanni, e Nicolo, e Galeotto e Antonio de' Pazzi fratelli, trovati nell' orto de' Monaci degli Angeli. Nicolo, Giovanni, e Galeotto furono menati nella Torre di Volterra.

*Cod. Abbatie Flor. ap. Adimar. in not. p. 36.*

<sup>l</sup> *Pol. Conj. Pact. Comment. in App.*

was endeavouring to save himself by flight, and beheaded, having first made a full confession of all the circumstances attending the conspiracy, by which it appeared that the pope was privy to the whole transaction<sup>m</sup>. The punishment of Bernardo Bandini was longer delayed. He had safely passed the bounds of Italy, and had taken refuge at length in Constantinople; but the sultan Mahomet, being apprised of his crime, ordered him to be seized, and sent in chains to Florence; at the same time alleging, as the motive of his conduct, the respect which he had for the character of Lorenzo de' Medici. He arrived in the month of December in the ensuing year, and met with the due reward of his treachery. An embassy was sent from Florence

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<sup>m</sup> Montesiccus in ipsa fuga comprehensus, postquam omnia uti gesta erant, et non solum consilia, sed etiam dicta pontificis, et comitis Hieronymi de tota conjuratione aperuisset, reste suspenditur. *Fabr in vitâ Laur v. i. p. 69.* But Adimari had before produced documents from the libraries of Florence, which shew that Montesecco was decapitated. "A dì 1. maggio venne preso M. Gio. Bat. da Montesecco, e a dì 4. di detto mese, gli fu tagliato la testa al palazzo del podestà." *Bibl. Abbat. Flor. Cod. No. 67. ap. Adimar.* "Fu tagliato il capo sulla porta del podestà, a Gio Battista da Montesecco." *In noi. ad lib. cui titulus, li Priorista, ap. idem.*

C H A P. rence to return thanks to the sultan in the name  
 IV. of the republic".

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Conduct of  
 Lorenzo.

Throughout the whole of this just but dreadful retribution, Lorenzo had exerted all his influence to restrain the indignation of the populace, and to prevent the further effusion of blood. Soon after the attempt upon his life, an immense multitude surrounded his house, and not being convinced of his safety, demanded to see him°. He seized the opportunity which  
 their

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° “ Bernardo di Bandino Bandini ne venne preso da  
 “ Constantinopoli, a dì 14 Dicembre 1479, e disami-  
 “ nato che fu al Bargello, fu impiccato alle finestre di  
 “ detto Bargello, allato alla Doana, a dì 29 Dicembre  
 “ 1479, che pochi dì sette.” *Strinatus ap. Adimar. in*  
*notis ad Cony Pact. Comment. p. 29.* Adimari, on the au-  
 thority of the Chronicle of Carlo a Florentiola, attributes  
 the seizure of Bandini to the orders of the sultan Bajazet;  
 but the capture of Bandini took place in the reign of his  
 predecessor Mahomet II. whose death did not happen till  
 the year 1481.

*Murat. Ann. v. ix. p. 537. Sagrado, Mem. Istor.*  
*de' Monarchi Ottomani, p. 95. Ed. Ven. 1688.*

° “ Jam ante Laurentianas aedes, populus ingens de  
 “ illius salute sollicitus convenerat, quibus ut animum  
 “ confirmaret, quum se e fenestris vulneratum quidem,  
 “ sed alioqui incolumem ostendisset, tanto plausu,  
 “ tantisque acclamationibus exceptus est, ut exprimi non  
 “ possit.” *Valor. in vitâ, p. 25.*

their affection afforded, and, notwithstanding his wound, endeavoured by a pathetic and forcible address to moderate the violence of their resentment. He entreated that they would resign to the magistrates the task of ascertaining and of punishing the guilty, lest the innocent should be incautiously involved in destruction <sup>p</sup>. His appearance and his admonitions had a powerful and instantaneous effect. With one voice the people devoted themselves to the support of his cause, and besought him to take all possible precautions for his safety, as upon that depended the hopes and welfare of the republic. However Lorenzo might be gratified with these proofs of the affection of his fellow-citizens, he could not but lament that inconsiderate zeal which was so likely to impel them to a culpable excess. Turning to some of the Florentine nobility by whom he was attended, he declared that he felt more anxiety from the intemperate acclamations of his friends, than he had experienced even from his own disasters <sup>q</sup>.

The general sorrow for the loss of Giuliano was strongly marked. On the fourth day after his

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<sup>p</sup> *Ann. Ist. v. iv. p. 118.*

<sup>q</sup> *Valor. in vita Laur. p. 27.*

C H A P. his death his obsequies were performed, with  
 IV. great magnificence, in the church of S. Lorenzo.

It appeared that he had received from the daggers of Bandini and Francesco de' Pazzi no less than nineteen wounds'. Many of the Florentine youth changed their dress in testimony of respect to his memory. In the predilection of the Florentines for Giuliano, historians are agreed. Even Machiavelli allows, that he possessed all the humanity and liberality that could be wished for in one born to such an elevated station, and that his funeral was honoured by the tears of his fellow-citizens'. Tall of stature—strong in his person—his breast prominent—his limbs full and muscular—dark eyes—a lively look—an olive complexion—loose black hair turned back from his forehead:—such is the portrait given of Giuliano by his intimate associate Politiano, who to these particulars has further added, that he excelled in active exercises, in horsemanship, in wrestling, in throwing the spear: that he was habituated to thirst and to hunger, and frequently passed a day in voluntary abstinence: possessed of great courage, of unshaken fortitude, a friend to religion and order, an admirer  
 of

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' *Pol. Conj. Pact. Com. in App.*

' *Mac. Hist. lib. 8.*

of painting, music, and other elegant arts<sup>t</sup>. From the same author we also learn, that Giuliano had given proofs of his poetical talents in several pieces remarkable for their strength of diction and plenitude of thought; but of these no specimens now remain. Shortly after this transaction, Lorenzo received a visit from Antonio da San Gallo, who informed him that the untimely death of Giuliano had prevented his disclosing to Lorenzo a circumstance, with which it was now become necessary that he should be acquainted<sup>u</sup>. This was the birth of a son, whom a lady of the family of Gorini had born to Giuliano about twelve months before his death, and whom Antonio had held over the baptismal fount, where he received the name of Giulio. Lorenzo immediately repaired to the place

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<sup>t</sup> *Pol. Conj. Pact. Com. in App.*

<sup>u</sup> “ Antonio da S. Gallo andò allora a trovar Lorenzo, dicendo, che essendo morto Giuliano, ei non aveva potuto far noto, come aveva avuto da una donna de' Gorini, sua amica, un figlio, già un anno, quale aveva tenuto egli a battesimo, e stava al rincontro della sua casa antica, nella via di Pinti. Il detto Lorenzo l' andò a vedere, e dettolo alla cura del medesimo Antonio, dove stette fino al settimo anno.”

*Cod. Abbat. Flor. ap. Adimar. in notis ad Conj. Pact. Com. p. 40.*

C H A P. place of the infant's residence, and taking him  
 IV. under his protection, delivered him to Antonio, with whom he remained until he arrived at the seventh year of his age. This concealed offspring of illicit love, to whom the kindness of Lorenzo supplied the untimely loss of a father, was destined to act an important part in the affairs of Europe. The final extinction of the liberties of Florence; the alliance of the family of Medici with the royal house of France; the expulsion of Henry VIII. of England from the bosom of the Roman church; and the consequent establishment of the doctrines of the reformers in this island, are principally to be referred to this illegitimate son of Giuliano de' Medici, who, through various vicissitudes of fortune, at length obtained the supreme direction of the Roman see, and under the name of Clement VII. guided the bark of St. Peter through a succession of the severest storms which it has ever experienced †.

The

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† Machiavelli, who wrote his history in the pontificate of Clement VII. informs us, that this pontiff was born a few months after the death of his father, in which he has been generally followed by succeeding writers. “ *Ri-  
 mase di lui (Giuliano) un figliuolo, il quale dopo a  
 pochi mesi che fu morto, nacque, e fu chiamato  
 Giulio;*”

The public grief occasioned by the death of Giuliano was however mingled with, and alleviated by exultation for the safety of Lorenzo. Every possible method was devised to brand with infamy the perpetrators of the deed. By a public decree, the name and arms of the Pazzi were ordered to be for ever suppressed. The appellations of such places in the city as were derived from that family were directed to be changed. All persons contracting marriage with the descendants of Andrea de' Pazzi were declared to be *anmoniti*, and prohibited from all offices and dignities in the republic.

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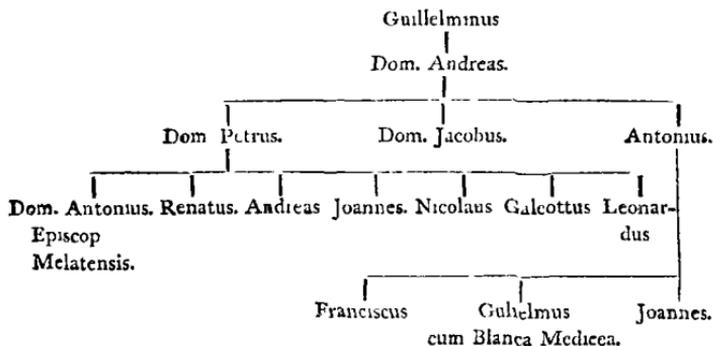
Memorials  
of the con-  
spiracy.

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“ Giulio ; il quale fu da quella virtù & fortuna ripieno, “ che in questi presenti tempi tutto il mondo conosce.” *Mac. lib. 8.* A full account of the political transaction of Clement VII. will be found in the Florentine history of Benedetto Varchi, written under the auspices of Cosmo I. grand duke of Florence, who granted the author access to all the archives of his family. The favour of an absolute sovereign did not seduce Varchi from the duty of an historian; but the extreme freedom with which he commented upon the events which led to the subjugation of his country, and animadverted on the characters of Clement VII. and others who contributed towards it, prevented for nearly two centuries the publication of his work, which first appeared at Cologne in 1721 in folio, and afterwards without date at Leyden, *ap. Pietro vander Aa.*

**C H A P. IV.** lic<sup>v</sup>. The ancient ceremony of conducting annually the sacred fire from the church of S. Giovanni to the house of the Pazzi was abolished, and a new method was adopted of continuing this popular superstition<sup>x</sup>. Andrea dal Castagno was employed, at the public expence, to represent the persons of the traitors on the walls of the palace, in the execution of which he obtained great applause, although the figures, as a mark of infamy, were suspended by the feet<sup>y</sup>.  
On

<sup>w</sup> The descendants of Andrea de' Pazzi are thus accurately given by Adimari:



<sup>x</sup> The decree on this occasion appears amongst the documents published by Fabroni, and is given in the Appendix, No. XXIII.

<sup>y</sup> “ L’anno 1478, quando dalla famiglia de’ Pazzi & altri loro adherenti & congiurati; fu morto in S. Maria  
“ del

On the other hand the skill of the Florentine artists was exerted in soothing the feelings, and gratifying the curiosity of the public, by perpetuating the remembrance of the dangers which Lorenzo had escaped. By the assistance of Andrea Verocchio, Orsini, a celebrated modeller in wax, formed three figures as large as the life, which bore the most perfect resemblance of the person and features of Lorenzo, and which were placed in different churches of the territory of Florence. One of these represented him in the dress which he wore when he received the wound, and as he appeared to the populace

C H A P.  
IV.

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“ del Fiore Giuliano de' Medici, e Lorenzo suo fratello  
 “ ferito, tu deliberato dalla Signoria, che tutti quelli della  
 “ congiura fussino, come traditori, dipinti nella fac-  
 “ ciata del palagio del podestà; onde essendo questa  
 “ opera offerta ad Andrea, egli, come servitore, ed obli-  
 “ gato alla casa de' Medici, l'acchetto molto ben volentieri,  
 “ e messovisi, la fece tanto bella, che fu uno stupore;  
 “ ne si potrebbe dire quanta arte e giudizio si conosceva  
 “ in quei personaggi ritratti per lo più di naturale, ed  
 “ impiccati per i piedi in strane attitudini, e tutte varie  
 “ e bellissime. La qual opera, perchè piacque a tutta la  
 “ citta, & particolarmente agli intendenti delle cose di  
 “ pittura, fu cagione che da quella in poi, non più  
 “ Andrea dal Castagno, ma Andrea degli Impiccati  
 “ fusse chiamato.”

*Vasari, nella vita di Andrea dal Castagno.*

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populace at the window of his palace <sup>z</sup>. A more lasting memorial was devised by Antonio Pollajuoli, who struck a medal on this occasion, exhibiting in the ancient choir of the Reparata, the assassination of Giuliano, and the attack made upon Lorenzo. In this medal, the conspirators are all represented naked, not merely for the purpose of displaying the knowledge of the artist in the human figure, in which he excelled all his contemporaries, but, as some have conjectured, as being characteristic of the flagitious act in which they were engaged <sup>z</sup>.

Lorenzo  
prepares for  
his defence  
against the

Although the body of troops destined to support the conspirators had kept aloof from the scene of action, and with difficulty effected their  
retreat

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<sup>z</sup> *V. Vasari, nella vita di And. Verocchio*, where a particular account is given of these figures, which were "tanto ben fatti, che rappresentavano non più uomini di cera, ma vivissimi," one of them was placed in the church of the Chiariti "dinanzi al Crucifisso che fa miracoli." It appears they were all remaining at the time Vasari wrote.

<sup>z</sup> *Vasari vita di Ant. Pollajuoli*.—"Fece il medesimo alcune medaglie bellissime, e fra l'altre in una la congiura de' Pazzi; nella quale sono le teste di Lorenzo e Giuliano de' Medici, e nel reverso il choro di S. Maria del Fiore, & tutto il caso come passò appunto."

retreat from the Florentine dominions<sup>b</sup>, yet Lorenzo was well aware of the storm that was gathering around him, and with equal prudence and resolution prepared to meet it. By the confession of Montesicco he was fully informed of the implacable hatred of the pope, which was inflamed almost to madness by the miscarriage of his designs, and the publicity of his treachery. Lorenzo also knew that the king of Naples, who was not less formidable to Italy from the ferocity and military reputation of his son Alfonso, duke of Calabria, than from the extent and resources of his own dominions, would most probably concur with the pope. His comprehensive eye saw at one glance the extent of the danger to which he was exposed, and he accordingly adopted every measure that might be likely to oppose or to avert it. He addressed himself to all the Italian states, with strong representations of the conduct of the pope, and entreated them, by every motive which was likely to influence them, to shew their open disapprobation of a species of treachery,

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pope and the  
king of  
Naples.

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<sup>b</sup> “ Adfuit eodem die e conjuratis Joannes Franciscus  
“ Tollentinas ex agro Forocornel'ensi, cum peditibus  
“ mille, totidemque Laurentius Tiferias ex alia parte,  
“ qui, ubi rem infectam viderunt, magno se periculo  
“ domum receperunt.” *Raph. Volater. in Geogr. lib. 5.*

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chery, from which neither rank, nor talents, nor virtue, could afford protection. He adverted to the fatal consequences which must arise to Italy from the subjugation of the Florentine republic, and connected his cause with that of the country at large. In the same terms he wrote to the kings of France and of Spain, endeavouring to obtain their interference in his behalf, and to convince them of the injustice of his enemies, and of his own innocence and moderation<sup>c</sup>. Nor was he negligent, in the mean time, in providing for his own defence. By every possible means he incited the citizens of Florence to make preparation for repelling their enemies. He procured from all quarters large supplies of provisions, with every other requisite for supporting an obstinate siege. The activity of Lorenzo infused a similar spirit into those around him; and the hopes of the people were supported by the early appearance, in Mugello, of Giovanni Bentivoglio, the firm ally of the Medici, with a chosen band of soldiers, which

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<sup>c</sup> Louis XI. had anticipated his communication by a letter written to Lorenzo, immediately after the intelligence of the assassination had arrived at Paris, in which he expressed the warmest resentment against the authors of the treachery. These letters are yet extant, and are given from the documents of *Fabroni*, in the Appendix, No. XXIV.

which he led to the relief of Lorenzo as soon as he was apprized of his danger. Moved by his representations, or jealous of the power of the pope and of the king of Naples, several other states of Italy warmly espoused the cause of the Florentines. Ercole d'Este, duke of Ferrara, attended in person with a powerful reinforcement. The Venetians, although cautious in their determination, displayed a manifest partiality to the Florentines; and even the kings of Spain, and of France, transmitted to Lorenzo the fullest assurances of their conviction of the rectitude of his conduct, and of their willingness to interpose with all their authority in his behalf<sup>d</sup>.

So

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<sup>d</sup> Philip de Commines was sent by Louis XI. to Florence, from whence he afterwards went to Milan to request the Milanese to send a body of soldiers to the relief of the Florentines, with which he informs us they complied, "tant a la requete du Roi, que pour faire leur devoir." Speaking of the Florentines, he further adds, "La faveur du Roi leur fait quelque chose: mais non pas tant que j'eusse voulu. Car je n'avoie armée pour les aider; mais seulement avoye mon train. Je demouray au dit lieu de Florence un an, ou en leurs terres, & bien traité d'eux, & a leurs despens, & mieux le dernier jour que le premier." *Mem. de P. de Commines, lib. vi. c. 5.* For this last assertion the French statesman had sufficient reason; for Ammirato informs us, that at his departure from Florence, the republic presented him with fifty-five pounds weight of wrought silver for the use of his table. *Amm. iii. 126.*

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Ode of  
Politiano.

So favourable a concurrence of circumstances gave fresh spirits to the Florentines, and removed in a great degree the apprehensions of the friends of the Medici. At this juncture Politiano addressed to Gentile d' Urbino, bishop of Arezzo, a Latin ode, which is not less entitled to notice for its intrinsic merit, than as an authentic indication of the public opinion at the time it was written <sup>c</sup>.

*Ad Gentilem Episcopum.*

Gentiles animi maxima pars mei,  
Communi nimium sorte quid angeris ?  
Quid curis animum lugubribus teris,  
Et me discrucias simul ?

Passi

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<sup>c</sup> Politiano afterwards sent this poem, with the following address, to Lorenzo de' Medici :

“ Qua ode Gentilem nostrum nuper sum consolatus,  
“ eandem quoque ad te mittendam statui, visa est enim  
“ mihi res, quæ non minus ad te, quam ad eum, atque  
“ ad meipsum pertineret. Omnia collegi quæ communem  
“ hunc nostrum dolorem, etsi minus tollere, levare procul  
“ dubio aliqua ex parte possint : Tu, cum tot videas tuæ  
“ salutis tam diligenter invigilare, potes admoneri quam  
“ tibi necesse sit magni teipsum facere ; neque tuam, hoc  
“ est publicam totius (ita me deus amet) Italiæ salutem  
“ neglectam pati. Lege et vale.”

*Pol. Op. Ed. Ald. 1498.*

Passi digna quidem perpetuo sumus  
 Luctu, qui medus (heu miseri) sacris  
 Illum, illum juvenem, vidimus, O nefas!  
 Stratum sacrilega manu !

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At sunt attonito quæ dare pectori  
 Solamen valeant plurima, nam super  
 Est, qui vel gremio creverit in tuo,  
 LAURENS Etruriæ caput.

LAURENS quem patriæ cælicolum pater  
 Tutum terrifica gorgone præstitit ;  
 Quem Tuscus pariter, quem Venetus Leo  
 Servant, et Draco pervigil.

Illi bellipotens excubat Hercules ;  
 Illi fatiferis militat arcubus ;  
 Illi mittit equos Francia martios,  
 Felix Francia regibus.

Circumstat populus murmure dissono ;  
 Circumstant juvenem purpurei patres ;  
 Causa vincimus, et robore militum ;  
 Hac stat Juppiter, hac favet.

Quare, O cum misera quid tibi Nenia,  
 Si nil proficiamus ? quin potius gravis  
 Absterisse bono lætitiæ die  
 Audes nubila pectoris.

Nam cum jam gelidos umbra reliquerit  
 Artus, non dolor hanc perpetuus retro,  
 Mordacesve trahunt sollicitudines,  
 Mentis, curaque pervicax.

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O Friend, whose woes this bosom shares,  
 Why ceaseless mourn our mutual cares ?  
 Ah why thy days to grief resign,  
 With thy regrets recalling mine ?

Eternal o'er the atrocious deed,  
 'Tis true our kindred hearts may bleed ;  
 When He, twin glory of our land,  
 Fell by a sacrilegious hand !

But sure, my friend, there yet remains  
 Some solace for these piercing pains,  
 Whilst He, once nurtur'd at thy side,  
 LORENZO lives, Etruria's pride.

LORENZO, o'er whose favour'd head,  
 Jove his terrific gorgon spread ;  
 Whose steps the lion-pair await,  
 Of *Florence*, and *Venetia's* state.

For him his crest the dragon rears ;  
 For him the *Herculean* band appears ;  
 Her martial succour Gallia brings ;  
 Gallia that glories in her kings !

See

See round the youth the purpled band  
Of venerable fathers stand ;  
Exulting crowds around him throng  
And hail him as he moves along.

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Strong in our cause and in our friends,  
Our righteous battle Jove defends ;  
Thy useless sorrows then repress,  
Let joy once more dilate thy breast.

To animate the clay-cold frame,  
No sighs shall fan the vital flame ;  
Nor all the tears that love can shed,  
Recal to life the silent dead.

Notwithstanding the vigour and activity of Lorenzo in preparing for the war, he was anxiously desirous of preventing, if possible, such a calamity. By his moderation, and even kindness to the surviving relatives of the conspirators, he thought to obliterate the remembrance of past disturbances, and to unite all the citizens in one common cause. Upwards of one hundred persons had already perished, some by the hands of justice, and others by the fury of the populace<sup>f</sup>. Many had absconded or concealed

Kindness  
of Lorenzo  
to the rela-  
tives of the  
conspira-  
tors.

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<sup>f</sup> In tal che la città tutto era sollevata per il rumore, furono tagliati a pezzi circa venti persone della famiglia del

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concealed themselves under apprehensions of being charged with a participation of the crime. Among the latter was Averardo Salviati, a near relation of the archbishop of Pisa. Lorenzo being informed that he had secreted himself in his house, requested, by the mediation of a common friend, an interview with him, and on his arrival received him with such tokens of kindness and benevolence as drew tears from all who were present<sup>g</sup>. Salviati was not ungrateful: a closer intimacy took place between them, and a few years afterwards Lorenzo gave one of his daughters in marriage to Giacopo Salviati, the nephew of Averardo, whose character and accomplishments merited such an honour. The cardinal Raffaello Riario was liberated as soon as the tumult had subsided, and was suffered to return to Rome<sup>h</sup>. To Raffaello Mattei of  
Volterra,

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del cardinale, ed altrettanti di quella del Arcivescovo; e tra le fenestre del palagio della Signoria e quelle del podestà furono impiccati circa sessanta persone, tutti congiurati, e molt' altri malconci dalle ferite.

*Orig. e descend. della casa de' Med. M.S.*

<sup>g</sup> *Valori in vita, p. 35.*

<sup>h</sup> Whatever share the cardinal had in the conspiracy, he was by no means insensible of the lenity that had been shown him. In a letter to the pope of the 10th of June

1478,

Volterra, the brother of Antonio, one of the priests who had undertaken the assassination of Lorenzo, a man distinguished by his uncommon learning and indefatigable spirit of research, Lorenzo wrote a Latin letter, full of kindness and urbanity, which, on account of the elegance of its diction, Maffei erroneously attributed to the pen of Politiano<sup>1</sup>. Even the survivors of the Pazzi family, although they had at first been treated with great severity, were, by the interference of Lorenzo, in a short time restored to their former honours. The only public monument that remained of this transaction was the painting

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1478, some days after he was liberated, he expresses the strongest sense of his obligations to the Florentines, and in particular to Lorenzo de' Medici: he remonstrates with the pope in warm terms on the injustice of subjecting to ecclesiastical censures those persons to whom he is indebted for his preservation; and declares his resolution not to leave Florence until the sentence of excommunication issued by Sixtus be annulled. *v. App. No. XXV.*

<sup>1</sup> Mihi quoque, quem Antonii supradicta fratris mei gravis causa suspectum reddere debuerat, Epistolam humanitatis ac officii plenissimam scripsit, adeoque elegantem, ut eam a Politiano scriptam omnino putaverim, nisi ille postea jurasset Laurentii ingenio dictatam, qui paucis, si quando a curis esset vacuus, in hoc genere cederet. *Raph. Vol. Com. Urb. p. 153. Ed. Lugd. 1552.*

**C H A P.** painting on the walls of the palace by Andrea  
**IV.** dal Castagno, which was suffered to remain,  
 long after the family of the Pazzi had been reinstated in their ancient rights and dignity.

*Violence of  
 Sixtus IV.*

The generosity and moderation of Lorenzo, although they endeared him still more to his fellow-citizens, had no effect upon the temper of Sixtus, who no sooner heard of the miscarriage of his design, the death of the archbishop, and the restraint imposed upon the cardinal, than he gave a loose to his impetuosity, and poured out against Lorenzo the bitterest invectives. In the first paroxysms of his anger, he directed that the property of the Medici and of all Florentine citizens then in Rome should be confiscated, and the Florentines themselves imprisoned; and had he not entertained apprehensions respecting the fate of the cardinal, it is probable that he would have treated them with still greater severity. To appease his wrath the republic dispatched to Rome Donato Acciajuoli, a person no less celebrated for his talents and his learning, than for the credit with which he had performed the most important embassies and filled the highest offices of the state. This measure, far from pacifying the pope, seemed to add fresh fuel to his anger. Instead of attending to the representations of the ambassador,

sador,

sador, he threatened to send him as a prisoner to the castle of S. Angelo, and would certainly have executed his purpose, had not the legates from Venice and from Milan interfered in his favour, and declared that they should consider such a breach of the faith of nations as an insult to themselves. The resentment of Sixtus then burst forth through another channel. He attacked the Florentines with his spiritual weapons, and anathematized not only Lorenzo de' Medici, but the gonfaloniere and other magistrates of the republic. In the document which Sixtus issued on this occasion, Lorenzo is emphatically styled "the child of iniquity and the nurseling of perdition." After bestowing similar epithets on the magistrates, Sixtus proceeds to relate the manifold offences of Lorenzo against the holy see. Adverting to the gentleness and moderation of his own character, he then declares, that according to the example of our Saviour, he had long suffered in peace the insults and the injuries of his enemies, and that he should still have continued to exercise his forbearance, had not Lorenzo de' Medici, with the magistrates of Florence, and their abettors, discarding the fear of God, inflamed with fury, and instigated by diabolical suggestions, laid violent hands on ecclesiastical persons, *proh dolor et inauditum scelus!* hung up the archbishop, imprisoned the

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He excommunicates Lorenzo and the magistrates.

**C H A P.** cardinal, and by various means destroyed and  
**IV.** slaughtered their followers. He then solemnly  
 excommunicates Lorenzo, the gonfaloniere, and  
 other officers of the state, and their immediate  
 successors; declaring them to be incapable of  
 receiving or transmitting property by inheritance  
 or will; and prohibiting their descendants from  
 enjoying any ecclesiastical employment. By the  
 same instrument he suspended the bishops and  
 clergy of the Florentine territories from the  
 exercise of their spiritual functions<sup>k</sup>.

Singular  
 reply of the  
 Florentine  
 synod.

Whatever might have been the effect of this  
 denunciation, if directed solely against the  
 persons immediately concerned in the trans-  
 actions to which the pope referred, it appears,  
 that in extending his censures to the dignitaries  
 of the church, who were not personally impli-  
 cated in the imputed guilt, Sixtus had exceeded  
 his authority; and the exasperated ecclesiastics,  
 availing

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<sup>k</sup> Although this piece be of considerable length, I  
 have thought proper to give it a place in the Appendix.  
 First, because Sixtus, labouring under such imputations,  
 ought to be allowed to relate his own story. Secondly,  
 because this document will throw farther light on many  
 of the facts before adverted to; and lastly, because it is  
 one of the most extraordinary specimens of priestly arro-  
 gance that ever insulted the common sense of mankind.

availing themselves of his imprudence, retorted upon the pope the anathemas which he had poured out against them. The most eminent civilians of the time were consulted on this occasion, many of whom asserted the nullity of the prohibition. By the exertions of Gentile d'Urbino, bishop of Arezzo, a convocation was summoned in the church of the Reparata, and Fabroni has produced, from the archives of Florence, a document yet remaining in the handwriting of Gentile, which purports to be the result of the deliberations which there took place<sup>1</sup>. The professed tendency of this piece is to criminate the pope as being the chief instigator  
of

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<sup>1</sup> Fabroni conjectures that this convocation was not held, but for this opinion he adduces no reasons; and other historians have related it as a well-known circumstance. Some doubt may perhaps remain whether the document, purporting to be the act of the synod, was in fact adopted there, or whether it was merely proposed for the approbation of the assembly; though the presumption is in favour of the former opinion. For producing a document addressed in such contumelious terms to the head of the church, Fabroni thinks it necessary to apologize: "Vererè reprehensionem prudentum, quod talia, injuriosa sane Sixto pontifici ediderim, nisi historici munus esset referre omnia quæ dicta et acta sunt." *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v. ii. p. 136.* Happily I can lay this piece before my readers without a similar precaution.

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of the enormities committed at Florence, and to exculpate Lorenzo de' Medici and the Florentines from the charges which Sixtus had brought against them; but this vindication would have lost nothing of its effect, if, in exposing the guilt of the pontiff, it had consulted the dignity of those he had injured, and exhibited a more temperate and dispassionate refutation. How so unmodified and daring an attack can be reconciled to the catholic idea of the infallibility of the holy see, it is not easy to discover. If it be acknowledged that the bull of Sixtus had exceeded all the limits of decorum, it must also be allowed that the reply of the synod is in this respect equally censurable; nor is it in the power of language to convey a more copious torrent of abuse, than was poured out upon this occasion by the Florentine clergy, on the supreme director of the Roman church.

Sixtus attempts to prevail on the Florentines to deliver up Lorenzo.

Sixtus did not however relax from his purpose. Whilst he brandished in one hand the spiritual weapon, which has impressed with terror the proudest sovereigns of Europe, in the other he grasped a temporal sword, which he now openly, as he had before secretly, aimed at the life of Lorenzo. At his instigation the king of Naples dispatched an envoy to Florence, to prevail upon the citizens to deliver up Lorenzo  
into

into the hands of his enemies, or at least to banish him from the Tuscan territories. The alternative denounced to them was the immediate vengeance of both the king and the pope. These threats had not, however, the intended effect, but on the contrary produced another instance of the attachment of the Florentines to Lorenzo. They not only refused to comply with the proposition of the king, but avowed their firm resolution to suffer every extremity, rather than betray a man with whose safety and dignity those of the republic were so nearly connected. They also directed their chancellor Bartolomeo Scala to draw up an historical memorial of all the proceedings of the conspiracy<sup>m</sup>; by which it clearly appeared, that throughout the whole transaction the conspirators had acted with the privity and assent of the pope<sup>n</sup>.

Lorenzo

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<sup>m</sup> *v. App. No. XXVIII.* Several eminent scholars also testified their readiness to transmit to posterity the memory of this transaction. Even Filelfo, the ancient adversary of the family, offered his pen to Lorenzo on this occasion. *v. App. No. XXIX.*

<sup>n</sup> As to the atrocity of the crime, and the turpitude of the authors of it, contemporary historians are agreed, It is only in our own days that an attempt has been made to transfer the guilt from its perpetrators, to those who suffered

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Danger of  
his situa-  
tion.

Lorenzo was now fully apprized of the danger of his situation. It was sufficiently evident

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suffered by it. The *Conspiracy of the Pazzi* has afforded a subject for a tragedy to a celebrated living author, who, in his various dramatic works, has endeavoured, not without success, to accustom his countrymen to bolder sentiment, and to remove the idea that the genius of the Italian language is not adapted to the purposes of tragedy. It must however be confessed, that in attempting to render this transaction subservient to the interests of freedom, by his *Congiura de' Pazzi*, he has fallen greatly short of that effect which several of his other pieces produce. The causes of this failure are not difficult to discover. In selecting a subject for tragedy, the author may either derive his materials from his own fancy, or he may choose some known historical transaction. The first of these is the creature of the poet, the second he can only avail himself of so far as acknowledged historical facts allow. In the one the imagination is predominant; in the other, it is subservient to the illustration of truths previously understood, and generally admitted. What then shall we think of a dramatic performance in which the Pazzi are the champions of liberty? in which superstition is called in to the aid of truth, and Sixtus consecrates the holy weapons devoted to the slaughter of the two brothers? in which the relations of all the parties are confounded, and a tragic effect is attempted to be produced by a total dereliction of historical veracity, an assumption of falsehood for truth, of vice for virtue? In this tragedy Guglielmo de' Pazzi, (there called Raimondi,) who married Bianca the sister of Lorenzo, is the chief of the conspirators, and, failing in his attempt, executes

evident that this powerful league was not formed against the Florentines, but against himself; and that the evils of war might be avoided by a compliance with the requisition of the king. Under these circumstances, instead of sheltering himself in the affections of his fellow-citizens, he boldly opposed himself to the danger that threatened him, and resolved either to fall with dignity, or to render his own cause that of the republic at large. He therefore called together about  
three

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1479

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executes vengeance on himself: but Machiavelli expressly informs us, that “*Giulmo de' Pazzi, di Lorenzo cognato, nelle case di quelle, e per l'innocenza sua, e per l'auto di Bianca sua moghe, si salvò:*” *Hist. lib. 8.* whereas Francesco, the leader of the assassins, and who was not related to the Medici, died by a halter. If we are surprised at so extraordinary a perversion of incident and character, we are not less so in perusing the remarks with which the author has accompanied his tragedy, in which he avows an opinion, that Lorenzo would be too insignificant even to be the object of a conspiracy, if he had not lent him a fictitious importance! It is to be hoped that the better information, or the ripen judgment of this feeling author, will induce him to form a more just estimation of the character of a man, whose name is the chief honour of his country; and to adopt the converse of the assertion with which he concludes his remarks on this tragedy, “*che per nessuna cosa del mondo non vorrebbe l'aver fatta.*”

*Trag. del Conte Vittorio Alfieri. vol. iv. Paris. ap. Didot, 1788.*

C H A P. three hundred of the principal citizens, whom he  
 IV. addressed in a striking and energetic harangue,  
 at the close of which he earnestly besought them,  
 that as the public tranquillity could not be pre-  
 served by other means, nor a treaty effected  
 with their enemies unless it was sealed with his  
 blood, they would no longer hesitate to comply  
 with the terms proposed, nor suffer their atten-  
 tion to the safety of an individual to bring  
 destruction upon the state. When Lorenzo had  
 concluded, Giacompo de' Alessandri, with the  
 concurrence of every person present, declared  
 it to be the unanimous resolution of the whole  
 assembly to defend his life at the hazard of their  
 own°.

All was now prepared for war, the approach-  
 ing horrors of which were increased by the  
 appearance of the plague at Florence. In this  
 emergency Lorenzo thought it advisable to send  
 his wife and children to Pistoia. "I now  
 " remove from you," said he to the citizens,  
 " these objects of my affection, whom I would,  
 " if necessary, willingly devote for your welfare ;  
 " that whatever may be result of this contest,  
 " the

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° *Mac Hist. lib. 8. Ann. v. iii. p. 123. Fabr. in  
 vita, v. 1. p. 87.*

“ the resentment of my enemies may be appeased  
 “ with my blood only.”

C H A P.  
 IV

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Though the duke of Calabria, and the count of Urbino were esteemed the most formidable commanders of Italy, the Florentines could boast of men of great eminence and experience in the military art ; but the supreme command was entrusted to Ercole d' Este, duke of Ferrara. The enemy were now approaching towards Florence, and marked their way with devastation. After possessing themselves of several smaller places, they at length besieged Arezzo, but on the approach of the Florentine troops they prepared for an engagement. Notwithstanding the inferiority of the latter in the reputation of their generals, and in the number of their soldiers, they possessed such advantages as it was supposed would, in case of a general engagement, have ensured their success. The citizens of Arezzo by a vigorous defence had damped the spirit of the Papal and Neapolitan troops, who experienced also a scarcity of provisions, and were very disadvantageously posted ; but after the two armies had regarded each other for some time with mutual apprehensions, a truce was proposed by the duke of Urbino, which was acceded to by the duke of Ferrara, to the great dissatisfaction of the Florentines,  
 who

Conduct of  
 the war

C H A P. who conceived that their general had betrayed  
 IV. their cause. The two armies retired into their  
 winter quarters; and the Florentines found  
 themselves incumbered with great and increasing  
 expence, without being relieved from their  
 fears<sup>p</sup>.

Lorenzo  
 negociates  
 for peace.

This season, however, afforded Lorenzo another opportunity of trying the result of further negotiation; but whilst he endeavoured on the one hand to reconcile himself to the pope, on the other hand, he made preparation to meet his enemies, in case his negociations should prove unsuccessful. From the connexion between his family and that of Sforza, he had promised himself powerful support from Milan; but the disagreement between the duchess and Lodovico Sforza, which terminated in the latter assuming the regency during the minority of the young duke, in a great degree disappointed his hopes. The Venetians had sent Bernardo Bembo, the father of the celebrated Pietro Bembo<sup>q</sup>, as their ambassador to Florence, and  
 professed

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<sup>p</sup> *Mac. Hist. lib. 8.*

<sup>q</sup> On this occasion Bernardo was accompanied by his son, then only nine years of age. He remained there  
 about

professed themselves inimical to the proceedings of the pope and the king. They did not, however, yet think proper to engage in the war; but with that species of policy by which they were always distinguished, looked on for the purpose of taking advantage of any opportunity of aggrandizing themselves at the expence of their neighbours. In the course of the winter, different envoys arrived at Florence from the emperor and the kings of France and Bohemia, who repeated to Lorenzo their assurances of attachment and support, at the same time advising him once more to attempt a reconciliation with the pope, under the sanction of their names and influence. A deputation, consisting of several of the most respectable citizens of Florence,

was

about two years; and to this circumstance his historian, Casa, attributes the proficiency he made in the Italian tongue, of which he was destined to be one of the brightest ornaments. “Nec vero patris consilium filii fefellit industria: sic enim excitatum puerile Bembi ingenium Florentiæ est, sic teneræ pueri aures, animusque, puro ac dulci illo Etruscorum sermone imbutus, ut jam inde a prima adolescentia, multa cum Latine, tum vero Tusce, a se scripta ediderit, quibus nihil hominum auribus poltius, nihil omnino elegantius aut suavius accidere possit.”

*Job. Casa in vitâ P. Bembi. in Op. Cas. v. iv.  
p. 46. Ed. Ven. 1728.*

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was accordingly sent to Rome ; but Sixtus still remained inflexible, and paid no more regard to the recommendations of the European sovereigns, than he had before done to the intreaties and remonstrances of Lorenzo himself.

Death of  
Donato  
Acciajuoli.

In order to testify to the king of France the sense which they entertained of his interposition, the Florentines dispatched Donato Acciajuoli as their ambassador to Paris. Shortly after his departure, intelligence was received at Florence of his death, which happened at Milan as he was pursuing his journey. This circumstance was a subject of the sincerest grief to the Florentines, who well knew how to appreciate the virtues of their fellow-citizens, and omitted no opportunity of inciting the patriotism of the living, by the honours they bestowed on the memory of the dead. A sumptuous funeral was decreed to his remains ; Lorenzo de' Medici and three other eminent citizens were appointed curators of his children, who were declared to be exempt from the payment of taxes ; and the daughters had considerable portions assigned them from the public treasury †.

Besides

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† *Amm. Ist. v. iii. p. 126.*

Besides the duke of Ferrara, the Florentines had, during the course of the winter, prevailed upon several other experienced commanders, amongst whom were Roberto Malatesta, Constantino Sforza, and Rodolfo Gonzàga, to espouse their cause. The states of Venice also at length sent a reinforcement under the command of Carlo Montone and Deifebo d' Anguillari : by these powerful succours the Florentines found themselves enabled to take the field in the ensuing spring with great expectations of success. Emboldened by this support, they determined to carry on a war not merely defensive. Their troops were divided into two bodies, one of which was destined to make an irruption into the territories of the pope, and the other to oppose the duke of Calabria. At the approach of Montone, who intended to attack Perugia, the troops of the pope made a precipitate retreat ; but the unexpected death of that commander relieved them in some degree from their fears, and they at length ventured to oppose the further progress of the Florentines. The two armies met near the lake of Perugia, the ancient Thrasymenus, rendered remarkable by the defeat which the Romans experienced there from the arms of Hannibal. Struck with the similarity of their situation, a sentiment of terror pervaded the papal troops, who were

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Various  
success of  
the war.

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soon repulsed, and obliged to quit the field with considerable loss, whilst the successful army proceeded to invest Perugia. The other division of the Florentine troops was not equally successful. The mercenary views of the different commanders, who preferred plunder to victory, defeated the hopes which the Florentines had justly formed of their success. A disagreement took place among the leaders; in consequence of which the duke of Ferrara, with his own immediate followers, retired from the service of the republic. Availing himself of this opportunity, the duke of Calabria made an instantaneous attack upon the Florentines, who having lost all confidence in their commanders, pusillanimously deserted their standards, and consulted their safety by a shameful flight. The consternation occasioned at Florence by this disaster is scarcely to be described, as it was supposed that the duke of Calabria would immediately proceed to the attack of the city; and this distress was heightened by the ravages of the plague, and by impending famine. Happily, however, the apprehensions of the Florentines on this occasion were not wholly realized. Instead of proceeding towards Florence, the duke rather chose to employ himself in plundering the surrounding country. The capture of the town of Colle, which made an obstinate

obstinate resistance, and of some adjacent places of less importance, engaged his attention till the detachment that had been sent to the attack of Perugia, having suddenly raised the siege, returned towards Florence, and alleviated the fears of the citizens. An unexpected proposition made by the duke of Calabria for a truce of three months, was cheerfully assented to by the Florentines, who thus once more obtained a temporary relief from a state of anxiety and a profusion of expence, which were become equally insupportable\*.

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But although by this cessation of hostilities the tranquillity of the city was for a time restored, the situation of Lorenzo de' Medici was in the highest degree critical and alarming. He had witnessed the terrors of the populace on the approach of the Neapolitan army; and although he had great confidence in the affection of the citizens, yet as the war was avowedly waged against him as an individual, and might at any time be concluded by delivering him up to his enemies, he knew enough of human nature to be convinced that he had just grounds

Lorenzo resolves to visit the king of Naples.

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\* *Mac. Hist. lib. 8. Ann. v. iii. p. 142.*

CHAP. IV. grounds to dread the event. The rising discontents and murmurs of the people increased his suspicion; even the truce was unfavourable to him, as it gave the Florentines an opportunity of estimating the injuries they had sustained by the war, which, like wounds received by an individual in the ardour of action, were not fully felt till the heat of the contest had subsided. Complaints began to be heard that the public treasure was exhausted, and the commerce of the city ruined, whilst the citizens were burdened with oppressive taxes. Insinuations of a more personal nature were not always suppressed; and Lorenzo had the mortification of being told, that sufficient blood had been already shed, and that it would be expedient for him rather to devise some means of effecting a peace than of making further preparations for the war. Under these circumstances, he resolved to adopt some measure which should effectually close the contest, although with the hazard of his life. In deliberating on the mode of accomplishing his purpose, his genius suggested to him one of those bold expedients, which only great minds can conceive and execute. This was secretly to quit

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<sup>1</sup> *Mac. Hist. lib. 8.*

<sup>2</sup> *Fabr. in vitâ Laur. v. i. p. 100.*

quit the city of Florence, to proceed immediately to Naples, and to place himself in the hands of Ferdinand, his avowed enemy; with the determination either to convince him of the injustice and impolicy of his conduct, and thereby induce him to agree to a separate peace, or to devote himself to the preservation of his country.

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In the commencement of the month of December 1479, Lorenzo accordingly left the city, without having communicated his intentions to his fellow-citizens, and proceeded to San Miniato, a town in the Florentine state, whence he addressed a letter to the magistrates of Florence, which places the motives of his conduct in a very clear point of view<sup>w</sup>.

His letter  
to the magi-  
strates of  
Florence.

*Lorenzo*

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<sup>w</sup> It is somewhat surprising that this letter, so explicitly stating the purpose of Lorenzo, should have escaped the attention of Fabroni; who has, however, favoured us with the oration of Lorenzo to Ferdinand, on his arrival at Naples, the authority of which may perhaps be doubted; as well as that of Lorenzo to the magistrates of Florence before his departure for Naples, attributed to him by Ammirato. *Ist. v. iii. p. 143.* The efforts of imagination should not be substituted for the documents of history. This letter is published in the *Lettere di Principi, v. i. p. 3. Ed. Ven. 1581.*

*Lorenzo de' Medici to the States of Florence.*

“ If I did not explain to you, before I left  
“ Florence, the cause of my departure, it was  
“ not from want of respect, but because I  
“ thought, that in the dangerous circumstances  
“ in which our city is placed, it was more neces-  
“ sary to act than to deliberate. It seems to me  
“ that peace is become indispensable to us ; and  
“ as all other means of obtaining it have proved  
“ ineffectual, I have rather chosen to incur  
“ some degree of danger myself, than to suffer  
“ the city to continue longer under its present  
“ difficulties : I therefore mean, with your  
“ permission, to proceed directly to Naples ;  
“ conceiving that as I am the person chiefly  
“ aimed at by our enemies, I may, by deliver-  
“ -ing myself into their hands, perhaps be the  
“ means of restoring peace to my fellow-citizens.  
“ Of these two things, one must be taken for  
“ granted ; either the king of Naples, as he has  
“ often asserted, and as some have believed, is  
“ friendly to the Florentine state, and aims,  
“ even by these hostile proceedings, rather to  
“ render us a service, than to deprive us of our  
“ liberties ; or he wishes to effect the ruin of  
“ the republic. If he be favourably disposed  
“ towards us, there is no better method of  
“ putting his intention to the test, than by  
“ placing

“ placing myself freely in his hands, and this I  
 “ will venture to say is the only mode of  
 “ obtaining an honourable peace. If, on the  
 “ other hand, the views of the king extend to  
 “ the subversion of our liberties, we shall at  
 “ least be speedily apprized of his intentions;  
 “ and this knowledge will be more cheaply  
 “ obtained by the ruin of one, than of all. I  
 “ am contented to take upon myself this risque,  
 “ because, as I am the person principally sought  
 “ after, I shall be a better test of the king’s  
 “ intentions; it being possible that my destruc-  
 “ tion is all that is aimed at: and again, as I  
 “ have had more honour and consideration  
 “ amongst you than my merits could claim,  
 “ and perhaps more than have in our days been  
 “ bestowed on any private citizen, I conceive  
 “ myself more particularly bound than any  
 “ other person to promote the interest of my  
 “ country, even with the sacrifice of my life.  
 “ With this full intention I now go; and per-  
 “ haps it may be the will of God, that as this war  
 “ was begun in the blood of my brother, and  
 “ of myself, it may now by my means be con-  
 “ cluded. All that I desire is, that my life and  
 “ my death, my prosperity and my misfortunes,  
 “ may contribute towards the welfare of my  
 “ native place. Should the result be answer-  
 “ able to my wishes, I shall rejoice in having  
 “ obtained

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“ obtained peace to my country, and security to  
 “ myself. Should it prove otherwise, my mis-  
 “ fortunes will be alleviated by the idea that  
 “ they were requisite for my country’s welfare;  
 “ for if our adversaries aim only at my destruc-  
 “ tion, I shall be in their power; and if their  
 “ views extend further, they will then be fully  
 “ understood. In the latter case, I doubt not  
 “ that all my fellow-citizens will unite in defend-  
 “ ing their liberties to the last extremity, and I  
 “ trust with the same success as, by the favour  
 “ of God, our ancestors have heretofore done.  
 “ These are the sentiments with which I shall  
 “ proceed; entreating Heaven that I may be  
 “ enabled on this occasion to perform what  
 “ every citizen ought at all times to be ready  
 “ to perform for his country. *From San*  
 “ *Miniato, the 7th December 1479* \*.”

The departure of Lorenzo upon so novel and so dangerous an expedition, occasioned various opinions and conjectures at Florence. Those  
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\* Valori informs us, that when the letter of Lorenzo was recited in the senate, not one of the assembly could refrain from tears. “ Litteræ recitatæ sunt in Senatu, assensu vario, ita tamen, ut nemo a lachrymis temperaret. Movebat omnes tanti viri desiderium, qui pro salute patriæ nullis suis laboribus, aut periculis parceret.” *Val. in vitâ Laur. p. 33.*

who were friendly to the Medici, or who were interested in the personal welfare of Lorenzo, could not regard this measure without great anxiety. Even those who entertained the highest opinion of his prudence were inclinèd to consider his conduct in this instance as rash and inconsiderate, and as having resulted rather from the impulse of the moment, than from that mature deliberation which generally preceded his determinations<sup>y</sup>. They remembered the fate of Giacomo Piccinini, who with more claims on the favour of Ferdinand than Lorenzo could pretend to, had, on a visit to him at Naples, in violation of all the laws of honour and hospitality, been thrown into a dungeon, and soon afterwards secretly murdered<sup>z</sup>. Those who  
enter-

<sup>y</sup> *Murat Ann.* v ix. p. 533.

<sup>z</sup> Piccinini was one of the most eminent *Condottieri* of his time, and by his valour had acquired the absolute sovereignty of several towns in Italy, and raised himself to such consideration as to obtain in marriage Drusiana, one of the daughters of the great Francesco Sforza duke of Milan. Soon after his marriage he was invited<sup>y</sup> by Ferdinand, who had some secret cause of enmity against him, to pass a short time at Naples, whither he went, accompanied by his new bride, and fell an easy victim to the treachery of Ferdinand; who, not being able to allege any

C H A P. IV. entertained better hopes, founded them on a conjecture that Lorenzo had previously obtained an assurance from Ferdinand of a welcome reception, and a safe return; which assurance was supposed to be sanctioned by the other states of Italy. In proportion as his friends were alarmed at the dangers that threatened him, those who feared, or who envied the authority which he had obtained in Florence, rejoiced in the probability of his destruction; and by affecting on all occasions to express their apprehensions of his ruin, and of a consequent change of government in Florence, endeavoured as far as in their power to prepare the way for those events <sup>a</sup>.

He embarks  
at Pisa.

From San Miniato, Lorenzo went to Pisa, where he received from the magistrates of Florence their unlimited authority to enter into such conditions with the king as he might think advisable <sup>b</sup>. Thence he embarked for Naples, and

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any plausible reason for this atrocious act, endeavoured to propagate a report that Piccinini had broken his neck by a fall from the window of the place of his confinement. v. *Murat. Ann.* v. ix. p. 493.

<sup>a</sup> *Mac. Ist. lib.* 8.

<sup>b</sup> The instructions sent by the magistracy of Florence to Lorenzo on this occasion were drawn up by  
Bartolomeo

and on his arrival there was surprized, but certainly not displeas'd, to find that the king had information of his approach, and had directed the commanders of his gallies to receive him with due honour. This token of respect was confirm'd by the presence of the king's son Federigo, and his grandson Ferdinand, who met Lorenzo on his landing, and conducted him to the presence of the king<sup>c</sup>. The Neapolitans testified their eagerness to see a man who had been the object of such contention, and whose character and accomplishments were the subject of general admiration. On his interview with Ferdinand, Lorenzo omitted nothing that was likely to conciliate his esteem, and attach him to his cause. Fully acquainted with the political state of Italy, and with the temper and intentions of its different potentates, he demonstrated to Ferdinand the impolicy of separating the interests of the Neapolitans from those of the Florentines. He reminded him of the dangers which the kingdom of Naples had repeatedly

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Bartolomeo Scala, the chancellor of the republic, who transmitted them to Lorenzo, accompanied by a private letter, strongly expressive of his anxiety for the success of his patron in this dangerous expedition.

v. *App. No. XXX.*

<sup>c</sup> *Valori in vitâ Laur. p. 34.*

C H A P. repeatedly experienced from the pretensions  
 IV. of the holy see, and thence adverted to the  
 imprudence of contributing to the aggrandizement of the papal power. Nor was he silent on that flagrant breach of divine and human laws, which had deprived him of a brother, and endangered his own life; from which he justly inferred, that the perpetrators of such a crime could be bound by no engagements but such as suited their own interest or ambition. To representations thus forcibly urged, it was impossible that the king could be inattentive; and although he did not immediately comply with the wishes of Lorenzo, yet he gave him hopes of eventual success, and treated him with every distinction due to his character, expressing his approbation of him in the words of Claudian, “*vicit præ-sentia famam*.”<sup>d</sup>”

Lorenzo concludes a treaty with the king.

During the abode of Lorenzo at Naples, which was protracted by the cautious hesitation of the king, he rendered his liberality, his taste, and his urbanity, subservient to the promotion of his political views, and was careful that the expectations formed of him by the populace should not be disappointed. His wealth and his

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<sup>d</sup> *Val. in vitâ Laur. p. 34.*

his munificence seemed to be equally boundless, and were displayed, amongst other instances, in apportioning out in marriage young women of the lower rank, who resorted to Naples from the remotest parts of Calabria and Appulia to share his bounty<sup>e</sup>. The pleasures which he experienced from thus gratifying his natural disposition, were however counterbalanced by the anxiety of his solitary moments, when the difficulties which he had to encounter pressed upon his mind with a weight almost irresistible<sup>f</sup>. The disposition of Ferdinand was severe and unrelenting; from an appeal to his feelings little was to be expected; his determination could only be influenced by motives of policy or of interest. The conquests of his son Alfonso had rendered him less favourable to the views of Lorenzo; and it was particularly unfortunate, that whilst the negotiation was depending, Alfonso broke the stipulated truce, and gained advantages over the Florentine troops. The pope had also received intelligence of the arrival  
of

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<sup>e</sup> *Val. in vitá, p. 35.*

<sup>f</sup> Addebant, qui se in die omnibus hilarem, gratumque præbebat, eundem in nocte, quasi duas personas gereret, secum ad miserationem usque lamentari solitum, nunc suam ipsius, nunc patriæ vicem dolere.

*Val. in vitá, p. 36.*

**C H A P.** of Lorenzo at Naples, and exerted all his interest  
**IV.** with Ferdinand to prevail upon him either to detain Lorenzo there, or to send him to Rome, on pretence of accommodating his difference with the holy see, and effecting a general peace. Notwithstanding these unfavourable circumstances, Lorenzo did not relax in the pursuit of his object, nor betray in public the least appearance of dejection. He had already obtained the confidence of Caraffa, count of Metalonica, the minister of Ferdinand, and made daily progress in the affections of the king himself, who was at length induced seriously to weigh his propositions, and to consider the advantages that might result to himself and his family, by attaching to his interests a man of such talents and influence, now in the prime of life, and daily rising in the public estimation. Led by these considerations, and by the unwearied assiduities of Lorenzo, he at length gave way to his solicitations; and having once adopted a decided opinion, became as warmly devoted to Lorenzo, as he before had been inimical to him. The conditions of the treaty were accordingly agreed on<sup>§</sup>; and Lorenzo, who had arrived at  
Naples

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§ These conditions were, that the parties should mutually assist each other in the defence of their dominions.  
That

Naples not merely an unprotected stranger, but an open enemy, left that place at the end of three months, in the character of an ally and a friend.

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Having thus accomplished his purpose, he instantly embarked for Pisa, notwithstanding the entreaties of Ferdinand, who wished to prolong his stay. His apology to the king for this apparent want of respect, was the desire that he had to communicate to his fellow-citizens, as speedily as possible, the happy result of his expedition; but the excuses of Lorenzo were urged with a levity and jocularly which he judged most likely to conceal his real motives, and to prevent the suspicions of Ferdinand. Shortly before his departure the king presented to him a beautiful horse, and Lorenzo returned his thanks by observing, *That the messenger of joyful news ought to be well mounted.* He had, however, more  
urgent

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1480.

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That the places which had been taken from the Florentines should be restored at the discretion of the king. That the survivors of the Pazzi family should be liberated from the tower of Volterra; and that the duke of Calabria should receive a certain sum of money to defray the expences of his return. *Amm. Ist. v. iii. p. 145.*

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urgent reasons for his haste : every moment that delayed his return gave encouragement to his enemies, and endangered his authority at Florence ; but above all, he was apprehensive that the repeated remonstrances of the pope might induce the king to waver in his resolution, or to change his opinion. The event proved that his distrust was not unfounded ; Lorenzo had no sooner sailed from Naples, than a messenger arrived there from Rome, with such propositions to the king, on the part of the pope, as would in all probability not only have defeated the treaty, but have led the way to the ruin of Lorenzo de' Medici. Such was the effect which this communication had on the mind of the king, that he dispatched a letter to Lorenzo, entreating him, in the most pressing language, that at whatever place he might receive it, he would immediately return to Naples, where the ambassador of Sixtus was ready to accede to the articles of pacification. Having once escaped from the jaws of the lion, Lorenzo did not think proper a second time to confide in his clemency ; and his determination was probably confirmed by the tenor of the letter from Ferdinand, which discovers such an extreme degree of anxiety for the accomplishment of his purpose, as seems scarcely consistent

consistent with an open and generous intention<sup>h</sup>.

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After touching at Leghorn, Lorenzo returned to Pisa, where the event of his embassy being known, he was received with the utmost demonstrations of joy. Thence he hastened to Florence, where the exultation of the populace was unbounded. Secured from the storm that had so long threatened to burst upon their heads, and restored to tranquillity by the magnanimity of a single citizen, they set no limits to their applause. All ranks of people surrounded and congratulated Lorenzo on his return. His faithful associate Politiano, having struggled in vain to approach his patron, expressed his affection in a few extempore stanzas, in which is given a lively picture of this interesting scene; where Lorenzo is represented as towering above his fellow-citizens, by his superior stature, and expressing his sense of their kindness by all the means in his power, by his smiles, his nods, his voice, and his hands<sup>i</sup>.

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<sup>h</sup> v. *App. No. XXXI.*

<sup>i</sup> *Ad Laurentium Medicem.*

“ O ego quam cupio reducis contingere dextram

“ Laurenti ! et læto dicere lætus, ave !

CHAPTER  
IV.

Sixtus per-  
severes in  
the war.

The reconciliation which had thus been effected between the king of Naples and the republic of Florence, was a cause of vexation not only to the pope, but to the Venetians, who expressed great dissatisfaction that a measure of such importance should have been adopted without their previous concurrence. In order to excuse to the pope the step which he had taken, Ferdinand alleged his apprehensions from the Turks, who had long threatened a descent upon Italy. Sixtus did not, however, relinquish the prosecution of his favourite object, the destruction of Lorenzo de' Medici, in which he was constantly

- “ Maxima sed densum capiunt vix atria vulgus,  
 “ Tota salutantum vocibus aula fremit.  
 “ Undique purpurei Medicem pia turba senatus  
 “ Stat circum; cunctis celsior ipse patet.  
 “ Quid faciam? accedam? — nequeo; — vetat invida  
 “ turba.  
 “ Alloquar? — at pavido torpet in ore sonus.  
 “ Aspiciam? — licet hoc, toto nam vertice supra est,  
 “ Non omne officium, turba molesta, negas.  
 “ Aspice sublimi quum vertice fundit honorem,  
 “ Sidereo quantum spargit ab ore jubar.  
 “ Quæ reductis facies, lætis quam lætus amicis!  
 “ Respondet nutu, lumine, voce, manu.  
 “ Nil agimus: cupio solitam de more salutem  
 “ Dicere, et officium persoluisse meum.  
 “ Ite mei versus, Medicique hæc dicite nostro,  
 “ Angelus hoc mittit Politianus, ave.”

*Pol. in Op. ap. Ald.*

constantly incited to persevere, by his nephew Girolamo Riario, whose hatred to Lorenzo was unalterable. To no purpose did the Florentines dispatch a new embassy to Rome to deprecate the wrath, and entreat the clemency of the pope. Riario began to make preparations for renewing the war; and at his instance the duke of Calabria, instead of withdrawing his troops from Tuscany, remained at Sienna; where he continued to exercise great authority, and to fill with apprehensions the surrounding country. But while the affairs of Florence remained in this state of suspence, a more general alarm took place, and speedily accomplished what the intercessions and humiliation of the Florentines might have failed of effecting. Mahomet II. the conqueror of Constantinople, was yet living, and meditated further victories. In turning his arms westward, he first attacked the island of Rhodes; but being delayed and irritated by a vigorous defence, he determined to retrieve his military credit by making a descent upon Italy, where he captured the important city of Otranto, and threatened the whole extent of that country with devastation and slavery.

This alarming incident roused the adjacent states of Italy to their defence. So opportunely did it occur for the safety of Lorenzo, that it

Descent of  
the Turks  
upon Italy.

**C H A P.** has given rise to an opinion that he incited and  
**IV.** encouraged it<sup>k</sup>. But if Mahomet had in fact any invitation upon this occasion, it was most probably from the Venetians, who were strongly suspected of having favoured his purpose; and this suspicion was afterwards strengthened by the reluctance which they shewed to unite with the other states of Italy in expelling the Turks from Otranto<sup>1</sup>. Compelled to attend to the defence of his own country, the duke of Calabria suddenly withdrew his troops from Sienna; and the pope of his own motion gave the Florentines to understand,

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<sup>k</sup> *Albinus*, p. 35. de bello Etrusco. *Camillus Portius* la Conguira de' Baroni di Napoli contro il Re Ferdinando I. et *Jannonius* ap. *Fabronium*. v. 11. p. 216. v. also *Swimburn's Travels in the Two Sicilies*, p. 377.

<sup>1</sup> "Sospettarono i Napolitani," says Muratori, "che Maometto, o pure il suo Bassà Achmet, fosse stato mosso a questa impresa dai Venetiani, per l'odio grande che portavano al Re Ferdinando" *Murat. Ann.* v. ix. p. 535. That Ferdinand did not suppose Lorenzo had any share in instigating Mahomet to this enterprize, is evident from his subsequent letters to him, several of which yet remain. Fabroni has also preserved a letter from Lorenzo de' Medici to Albino, who attended the duke of Calabria on his expedition to Otranto, in which he expresses his strong aversion to the *Omni Turchi*, as he denominates the invaders, and his extreme and perhaps courtly solicitude for the success and personal safety of the duke. v. *App. No. XXXII.*

understand, that, on a proper submission, he should now listen to terms of reconciliation. Twelve of the most respectable citizens were sent to Rome, as a deputation in the name of the republic; but although the pope expressed his desire that Lorenzo should be of the number, he wisely judged that such a measure would neither be consistent with his honour nor his safety. Francesco Soderini, bishop of Volterra, made the oration to the pope; who, in his reply, once more gave way to his anger, and, in very severe language, reproached the Florentines with their disobedience to the holy see. Having vented his rage, he received their submission; and in milder terms reconciled them to the church; at the same time touching their backs with a wand, according to the usual ceremony, and releasing the city from his interdict.

C H A P.  
IV.

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Peace con-  
cluded with  
the pope.

## CHAP. V.

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*STUDIES of Lorenzo de' Medici—Rise of Italian literature in the fourteenth century—Its subsequent degradation—Revivors of it in the fifteenth century—Burchiello—The three brothers of the Pulci—Writings of Bernardo Pulci—Of Luca Pulci—Of Luigi Pulci—Of Matteo Franco—Early productions of Lorenzo—Inquiry into his merits as a poet—Object and characteristics of poetry—Description—Talents of Lorenzo for description—Poetic comparison—Instances of it from the writings of Lorenzo—Personification of material objects—Of the passions and affections—Comparative excellence of the ancients and moderns in the PROSOPOPEIA—Instances of this figure in the writings of Lorenzo—Various species of poetry cultivated by him—Origin of the Italian sonnet—Character of the sonnets of Dante—Of Petrarca—Of Lorenzo de' Medici—SELVE D' AMORE of Lorenzo—His poem of AMBRA—On hawking—Moral pieces—Sacred poems—The BEONI—Rise of the jocose Italian satire—STANZE CONTADINESCHE—State of the Italian Drama—The musical drama—CANTI CARNASCIALESCHI—CANZONE A BALLO—Critique of Pico of Mirandula on the poems of Lorenzo—Opinions of other authors on the same subject—The poems of Lorenzo celebrated in the NUTRICIA of Politiano.*



## CHAP. V.

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**T**HE establishment of peace was a blessing which Lorenzo felt in common with the rest of his fellow-citizens; but to him it was peculiarly grateful, as it left him at liberty to attend to the prosecution of those studies in which he had always found his most unembittered pleasures, and the surest alleviation of his cares. “When my mind is disturbed with the tumults of public business,” says he, writing to Ficino, “and my ears are stunned with the clamours of turbulent citizens, how would it be possible for me to support such contention unless I found a relaxation in science?” Nor was it to any particular study, in exclusion of all

Studies of  
Lorenzo de'  
Medici.

C H A P.  
V.

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all others. that he addicted himself during his hours of leisure, although poetry had in his younger years a decided preference. “ So “ vigorous and yet so various was his genius,” says Pico of Mirandula, “ that he seemed “ equally formed for every pursuit ;/ but that “ which principally excites my wonder is, that “ even when he is deeply engaged in the affairs “ of the republic, his conversation and his “ thoughts should be turned to subjects of lite- “ rature as if he were perfect master of his “ time<sup>m</sup>.” Lorenzo was not, however, insensible that, amidst his serious and important avocations, the indulgence of a poetical taste might be considered as indicating a levity of disposition inconsistent with his character. “ There are “ some,” says he<sup>n</sup>, “ who may perhaps accuse “ me of having dissipated my time in writing “ and commenting upon amorous subjects, par- “ ticularly in the midst of my numerous and “ unavoidable occupations : to this accusation I “ have to reply, that I might indeed be justly “ condemned if Nature had endowed mankind “ with

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<sup>m</sup> *In Proem. ad tract. de ente et uno, ad Angelum Politianum in op. Pici. Ed. Ven. 1498.*

<sup>n</sup> *Commento di Lorenzo sopra alcuni de suoi sonetti, Ed. Aldo, 1554.*

“ with the power of performing, at all times, CHAP.  
 “ those things which are most truly commend- V.  
 “ able ; but inasmuch as this power has been  
 “ conceded only to few, and to those few the  
 “ opportunity of exercising it cannot often  
 “ occur in the course of life, it seems to me,  
 “ that considering our imperfect nature, those  
 “ occupations may be esteemed the best in  
 “ which there is the least to reprove.—If the  
 “ reasons I have before given,” he afterwards  
 “ adds, “ be thought insufficient for my exculpa-  
 “ tion, I have only to confide in the kindness of  
 “ my readers. Persecuted as I have been from  
 “ my youth, some indulgence may perhaps be  
 “ allowed me for having sought consolation in  
 “ these pursuits.” In the sequel of his com-  
 “ mentary he has thought it necessary to touch  
 “ more fully on the peculiarity of his situation.  
 “ It was my intention,” says he, “ in my expo-  
 “ sition of this sonnet °, to have related the  
 “ persecutions which I have undergone ; but an  
 “ apprehension that I may be thought arrogant  
 “ and ostentatious, induces me to pass slightly  
 “ over them. In relating our own transactions  
 “ it is not indeed easy to avoid these imputations.  
 “ When the navigator informs us of the perils  
 “ which

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° “ *Se tra gli altri sospir eb' escon di fore.*”

C H A P. " which his ship has escaped, he means rather  
 V. " to give us an idea of his own exertions and  
 " prudence, than of the obligations which he  
 " owes to his good fortune, and perhaps en-  
 " hances the danger beyond the fact, in order  
 " to increase our admiration. In the same  
 " manner physicians frequently represent the  
 " state of their patient as more dangerous than  
 " it is in reality, so that if he happen to die, the  
 " cause may be supposed to be in the disorder,  
 " and not in their want of skill; and if he  
 " recover, the greater is the merit of the cure.  
 " I shall therefore only say, that my sufferings  
 " have been very severe, the authors of them  
 " having been men of great authority and talents,  
 " and fully determined to accomplish, by every  
 " means in their power, my total ruin. Whilst  
 " I, on the other hand, having nothing to  
 " oppose to these formidable enemies, but youth  
 " and inexperience, saving indeed the assist-  
 " ance which I derived from divine goodness,  
 " was reduced to such an extreme of misfortune,  
 " that I had at the same time to labour under  
 " the excommunication of my soul, and the  
 " dispersion of my property, to contend with  
 " endeavours to divest me of my authority in  
 " the state, and to introduce discord into my  
 " family, and with frequent attempts to deprive  
 " me of my life, insomuch that I should have  
 " thought

“ thought death itself a much less evil than those  
 “ with which I had to combat. In this unfor-  
 “ tunate situation it is surely not to be wondered  
 “ at, if I endeavoured to alleviate my anxiety  
 “ by turning to more agreeable subjects of  
 “ meditation, and in celebrating the charms of  
 “ my mistress sought a temporary refuge from  
 “ my cares.”

CHAP.  
 V.

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In taking a retrospect of the state of letters in Italy, it is impossible not to be struck with the great superiority which that country possessed over the rest of Europe. “ To the Com-  
 “ media of Dante, the sonnets of Petrarca, and  
 “ the Decameron of Boccaccio, three little  
 “ books written for the purposes of satire, of  
 “ gallantry, and of feminine amusement, we  
 “ are to trace the origin of learning and true  
 “ taste in modern times<sup>p</sup>.” Whether Dante was stimulated to his singular work by the success of his immediate predecessors, the provençal poets, or by the example of the ancient Roman authors, has been doubted. The latter opinion seems, however, to be the more probable. In his *Inferno* he had apparently the descent of Eneas in view. “ Virgil is the guide of Dante  
 “ through

Rise of  
 Italian literature in the  
 fourteenth  
 century.

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<sup>p</sup> *Andres, Dell' Origine progressi e stato attuale d' ogni letteratura*, v. 1. p. 339.

C H A P  
V.

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“through these regions of horror<sup>9</sup>.” In the rest of his poem there is little resemblance to any antecedent production. Compared with the *Æneid*, it is a piece of grand Gothic architecture at the side of a beautiful Roman temple. Dante was immediately succeeded by Boccaccio and by Petrarca, not as imitators, but as originals in the different branches to which their talents led them. Though they followed Dante, they did not employ themselves in cultivating the ground which he had broken up, but chose each for himself a new and an untried field, and reaped a harvest not less abundant.

The

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<sup>9</sup> Landino considered Dante as a close imitator of Virgil. “Nonne è nostris Danthem, virum omni doctrina excultum, gravissimum auctorem habemus? Quia ejus stineris quo mundum omnem ab imis tartaricis ad supremum usque cælum peragrat, in eo sibi illum (Virgiliu[m]) ducem fingit. In quo summum hominis bonum perquirens, miro quodam ingenio unicam *Æneida* imitandam proponit; ut cum pauca omnino inde excerpere videatur, nunquam tamen, si diligentius inspiciemus, ab ea discedat.” *Land. Disput. Camal. lib. 4. Ed. 1508.* Even the form of his hell and his purgatory, the first of which resembled the cavity of an inverted cone, the other the exterior of an erect one, may perhaps be traced to the following passage :

“ ——— Tum Tartarus ipse

“ Bis patet in præceps tantum, tenditque sub umbrâs,

“ Quantus ad ætherium cæli suspectus olympum.”

*Æn. lib. vi.*

The merits of these writers have been frequently recognized and appreciated, but perhaps by no one with more accuracy than by Lorenzo himself. In attempting to shew the importance and dignity of the Italian tongue, he justly remarks, that the proofs of its excellence are to be sought for in the writings of the three authors before mentioned; "who," says he, "have fully shewn with what facility this language may be adapted to the expression of every sentiment." He then proceeds as follows: "If we look into the *Commedia* of Dante, we shall find theological and natural subjects treated with the greatest ease and address. We shall there discover those three species of composition so highly commended in oratory, the simple, the middle style, and the sublime; and shall find in perfection, in this single author, those excellencies which are dispersed amongst the ancient Greek and Roman writers. Who can deny that the subject of love has been treated by Petrarca with more consistency and elegance than by Ovid, Catullus, Tibullus, Propertius, or any other of the Latin poets? The prose compositions of the learned and eloquent

C H A P.  
V.

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<sup>r</sup> *Com. di Lorenzo sopra alcuni de' suoi sonetti. ap. Ald.*  
1554.

C H A P. V.  
 “ eloquent Boccaccio may be considered as unri-  
 “ valled, not only on account of the invention  
 “ which they display, but for the copiousness  
 “ and elegance of the style. If on perusing the  
 “ Decamerone we attend to the diversity of the  
 “ subjects, sometimes serious or tragical, at  
 “ others conversant with common life, and at  
 “ others humorous or ridiculous ; exhibiting  
 “ all the perturbations incident to mankind, of  
 “ affection and of aversion, of hope and of  
 “ fear ; if we consider the great variety of the  
 “ narrative, and the invention of circumstances  
 “ which display all the peculiarities of our nature,  
 “ and all the effects of our passions, we may  
 “ undoubtedly be allowed to determine, that no  
 “ language is better adapted to the purposes of  
 “ expression than our own.”

Its subse-  
 quent de-  
 gradation

But although the career of these first re-  
 formers of Italian literature was wonderfully  
 rapid, the disciples they formed were few, and  
 of those none maintained the reputation of their  
 masters. Petrarca died in 1374, and Boccaccio  
 in the year following. The clouds that had  
 been awhile dispersed by the lustre of their abi-  
 lities, again collected, and involved the world  
 in their gloom. A full century elapsed with-  
 out producing any literary work that can be  
 ranked with the compositions of those great  
 men.

men'. The attempt of Piero de' Medici, in the year 1441, to create a spirit of poetical emulation in Florence, while it serves as a proof of his munificence, sufficiently indicates the low degree of estimation in which this study was then held, and the insignificance of its professors. If philosophy in the fourteenth century went poor and naked, in the next she had changed her destiny with her sister poetry'. The state of prose composition was equally wretched. No longer the vehicle of elegant or learned sentiment, the Italian language was consigned over to the use of the vulgar, corrupted by neglect, and debased by the mixture of provincial dialects. It was only on the most common occasions, or in the freedom of epistolary intercourse, that men

C H A P.  
V.

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of

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\* The *Bella Mano* of Giusto da Conti, a Roman civilian by profession, but a poet by inclination, who wrote in the beginning of the fifteenth century, may perhaps be exempted from this general censure. It consists of a series of sonnets in praise of the author's mistress, some of which may contend, in point of elegance, with those of Petrarca, on the model of which they are professedly written. "Benchè pur," says Tiraboschi, not without some reason, "vi abbia molto di stentato e di languido."

*Storia della Lett. Ital. v. vi. parte ii. p. 146.*

\* *Povera e nuda vai Filosofia.* PETR.

C H A P. <sup>v</sup> of learning condescended to employ their native tongue; and even then it appears to have been considered as inadequate to the purpose, and the assistance of the Latin language was often resorted to, and intermixed with it, in order to render it intelligible <sup>u</sup>.

The

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<sup>u</sup> Some authors, who have taken too general and indistinct a view of this subject, would induce us to believe, that a continual improvement in Italian literature took place from the time of Petrarca, till it arrived at its summit in the sixteenth century, and have had influence enough to establish this as a popular opinion; but to say nothing of the evidence of the best Italian critics, by whom this singular degradation of their language is fully attested, it is yet capable of being ascertained by an appeal to facts. If the rise of literature had been gradual during this period, some memorials of it must have remained; but from the death of Petrarca to the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, Italy did not produce a single specimen of this boasted improvement; whilst, on the other hand, innumerable instances remain, both in verse and prose, of the barbarous and degraded style then in use. Even the celebrity of Cosmo de' Medici, the great patron of letters, never gave rise to a panegyric in his native tongue that has any pretensions to the approbation of the present time, although there yet remain among the manuscripts of the Laurentian library, innumerable pieces in his praise, of which the two sonnets given in the Appendix (No. XXXIII.) are a fair, and perhaps will be thought a sufficient specimen. Voltaire indeed informs us, "that there was an uninterrupted succession of Italian poets, who are all known to possess  
"terity;

The only symptoms of improvement which had appeared in Italy, at the time that Lorenzo de' Medici first began to distinguish himself by his writings, are to be found in the productions of Burchiello, or in those of the three brothers of the family of Pulci, to some of which we have before adverted. Burchiello, who flourished about the middle of the fifteenth century, and who exercised in Florence a profession, in which, as he informs us,

C H A P.  
V.

Revivors of  
it in the  
fifteenth  
century.

Burchiello.

“ *The muses with the razor were at strife*,”

has left a great number of sonnets, which exhibit

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“terity; that Pulci wrote after Petrarca; that Bojardo succeeded Pulci; whilst in the fertility of his imagination, Ariosto surpassed them all.” *Essai sur les mœurs*, &c. v. ii. p. 163. Pulci, it is true, is the next author of popular estimation that followed Petrarca; but the period between them is precisely the time in question. The *Morgante* was not written till upwards of a century after the death of Petrarca. The errors into which many writers on this subject have fallen, have been occasioned by a want of discrimination between the progress of Italian and of classical literature; a distinction which I shall hereafter have occasion to develop more at large.

\* “*La Poesia combattè col rasoio.*” BURCH.

C H A P.  
V.

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hibit no inconsiderable share of wit and vivacity, and occasionally display a felicity of expression, that might have done honour to better subjects than those which generally employed his pen; but it is to be regretted that the excellencies of these pieces are too often lost in their obscurity, and that, although we may at times perceive the vivid sallies of imagination, it is only as we see coruscations from a cloud by night, which leave us again in total darkness. This obscurity has been the cause of great regret to his admirers, several of whom have undertaken to comment upon and illustrate his works. Crescimbeni is of opinion, that these extravagant productions were intended to satirize the absurdities of his poetical contemporaries, and the folly of their admirers; but satire, too obscure to be generally understood, is not likely to effect a reformation<sup>v</sup>.

The

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<sup>v</sup> The sonnets of Burchiello were several times printed in the fifteenth century, generally without date. The earliest edition is supposed to be that of Bologna, 1475. In the following century they were commented by Anton Francesco Doni, and published at Venice, 1553; but the commentator stands no less in need of an interpreter than the author. This edition is inscribed by the editor to the celebrated artists Tintoretto and Romanelli, and is printed by Francesco Marcolini, in a singular but not inelegant type.

The Pulci were of a noble family of Florence, but seem to have declined any participation in the offices of the republic, for the purpose of devoting themselves to their favourite studies. That a close intimacy subsisted between them and the Medici is apparent from many of the works of these brothers, some of which are inscribed to their great patrons, and others entirely devoted to their praise. The earliest production of any of this family is probably the elegy by Bernardo, to the memory of Cosmo de' Medici, which he has addressed to Lorenzo. To his elegy on the death of the beautiful Simo-  
 netta, we have before assigned its proper date.

C H A P.  
 V.

The three  
 brothers of  
 the Pulci.

Writings of  
 Bernardo  
 Pulci.

He

type. Besides his sonnets, Burchiello is also the author of a satire in *terza rima*, in which he has attempted to imitate the manner of Dante. The objects of his animadversion are the practitioners of what are called the liberal professions in Florence, amongst whom the physicians have their full share of ridicule. Of this poem, which has not been printed, a copy is preserved in the Gaddi library, now incorporated with that of the great duke of Florence. (*Band. Cat. vol. v. Plut. xlv. cod. 30.*) Another transcript of the fifteenth century is in my possession, from which I shall give a short extract in the Appendix; whence the reader may be further enabled to judge of the state of Italian literature immediately previous to the time of Lorenzo de' Medici.

*App. No. XXXIV*

C H A P.  
V.

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He afterwards translated the Eclogues of Virgil, which he also inscribed to Lorenzo de' Medici <sup>z</sup>. Bernardo is likewise the author of a poem on the passion of Christ, which is by no means devoid of poetical merit. It is preceded by a dedication

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<sup>z</sup> This was the first attempt to translate the Eclogues of Virgil into the Italian language. From the dedication of these pieces, it is not difficult to determine that they were translated about the year 1470, as the author adverts to the recent death of Piero de' Medici, and at the same time mentions his translation as having been commenced in the year preceding his address to Lorenzo; that they are not to be referred to a much later period, is evident from his congratulating Lorenzo on his knowledge of the Latin tongue, which he asserts is far beyond his years. These translations were first published in 1481, and again at Florence in 1494. Tuaboschi is mistaken in supposing that the Eclogues of Bernardo, and his version of the Bucolics, are different works. (*Storia della Let. Ital. v. vi. parte II. p. 174.*) In both these editions, the works of Bernardo are united with those of other writers, although in the latter some additional pieces are included. The title of this edition is as follows: BUCOLICHE ELLEGANTISSIMAMENTE COMPOSTE DA BERNARDO PULCI FIORLINTINO. ET DA FRANCESCO DE ARSOCHI SENESE ET DA HIERONYMO BENIVIGNI FIORLINTINO ET DA JACOPO FIORINO DE BONINSEGGNI SENESE. At the close we read—*Finite sono le quattro Boccoliche sopra dette con una elegia della morte di Cosimo Et un'altra elegia della morte della diva Simoneta. Et un'altra elegia di nuovo adgiunta, Impresse in Firenze per maestro ANTONIO MISCHOMINI ANNO MCCCCLXXXIII a dì XVIII del mese Aprile.*

dedication to a pious nun ; from which it appears that the good sister had not only prescribed this subject to the poet, but that by her pressing instances he had been induced to complete the work, which he affirms had cost him many a tear<sup>a</sup>. In the Laurentian library some other poems of this author are yet preserved, that have not hitherto been published<sup>b</sup>.

C H A P.  
V.

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Of Luca Pulci, whose verses on the tournament of Lorenzo have before been noticed, we have two other poems. The first of these, intitled

Luca Pulci.

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<sup>a</sup> This poem was published at Florence *per Franc. Bonacursio, die 3 Novembris, anno 1490*, in 4to. (*Haym. Bibl. Ital. p. 95.*) But I conceive that the edition also printed at Florence without note of the year, or name of the printer, and having at the close only the mark *Florentia impressum*, is of earlier date. The lady to whom it is inscribed is *Annalena de' Tanini nel monasterio delle murate*, who was probably sister of the author's wife, as it appears that he married a lady of the family of Tanini, who, as well as her husband, was distinguished by her talents for poetry.

<sup>b</sup> From these I shall give two sonnets addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici, which are followed by thirty-eight others, all on the exhaustless subject of love. At what time they were written is uncertain ; but from their being addressed to Lorenzo, we may conjecture that he was then of manly age, before which time he had given some specimens of his own poetical talents. *App. No. XXXV.*

C H A P. intitled *Il Ciriffo Calvaneo*, is an epic romance,  
 V. and was probably the first that appeared in Italy ;  
 it being certainly produced some years prior to  
 the *Morgante* of Luigi Pulci, and to the *Orlando  
 Innamorato* of Bojardo, two pieces which have  
 generally been considered as the first examples  
 of this species of poetry. In relating the wars  
 between the Christians and the Infidels, the  
 author seems to have prepared the way for the  
 more celebrated works on the same subject  
 which soon afterwards followed<sup>c</sup>. This poem  
 was

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<sup>c</sup> *Il Ciriffo Calvaneo*, and his companion *Il Povero Avveduto*, the heroes of the poem, are the illicit offspring of two unfortunate ladies, who, being abandoned by their lovers, are indebted to the shepherd *Lecore* for their preservation. As the young men grow up, they display their courage in pursuing wild beasts, and their generosity in giving a way the old shepherd's cattle and effects; in consequence of which he breaks his heart. *Massima*, the mother of *Il Ciriffo*, then informs them of the nobility of their origin, and of the distress which she has herself suffered; in consequence of which her son piously swears to accomplish the death of his father, which vow he accordingly fulfils. Repenting of his crime he hastens to Rome, obtains Christian baptism and the remission of his sins. In the mean time *Il Povero Avveduto* is carried off by *Epidoniffo*, a pirate of Marseilles, who stood in fear neither of God nor his saints.

“ Egl harebbe rubata quella nave

“ Dove Christo a San Pier venne in ajuto;

“ E se

was left unfinished by the author, but, at the instance of Lorenzo de' Medici, was, after the death of Luca, completed by Bernardo Giambullari<sup>d</sup>. The *Triadeo d' amore* is a pastoral romance

C H A P.  
V.

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“ E se vi fusser stato su, le chiave  
 “ Tolte, e poi l'oro e l'argento fonduto ;  
 “ E preso in terra l'angel che disse ave,  
 “ Menato a fusta, e ne' ferri tenuto,  
 “ E spogliato Gioseppe vecchiarcello,  
 “ Ma col baston prima scosso il mantello.”

After many adventures, Il Povero Avveduto goes to the assistance of Tebaldo, sultan of Egypt, who was besieged by Luigi, king of France. The combatants on each side are particularly described. A battle takes place, after which Il Povero is made a cavalier by the sultan, for whose particular amusement he tilts with his newly-discovered brother Lionetto. Such is the heterogeneous mixture which composes this poem ; the invention of which is not, however, to be wholly attributed to Luca. In the Gaddi library is a MS. anterior to his time by 150 years, intitled, by Bandini, “ *Liber pauperis prudentis.*” (*Cat. Bibl. Laur. vol. v. Plut. xlv. cod. 30.*) From which it sufficiently appears, that, in this instance, Luca is only an imitator. It is to be regretted that his judgment did not lead him to select a better model.

<sup>d</sup> It was printed, with the continuation of Giambullari, at Florence in 1535 ; and had probably been printed before, as it is dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, the grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent, who died in the year 1519. It there consists of four books, of which the first

C H A P  
V

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romance in *ottava rima*, and is dedicated by the author to Lorenzo de' Medici, for whose particular amusement he professes to have written it<sup>e</sup>. The heroic epistles of Luca Pulci do credit to their author. These epistles are eighteen in number, and are composed in *terza rima*. The first is from Lucretia to Lauro; that is, from the accomplished Lucretia Donati to Lorenzo de' Medici. The others are founded on different incidents in the ancient Greek and Roman history<sup>f</sup>.

Luigi

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first only is the work of Pulci. The *Ciriffo Calvaneo* was reprinted with the *Giostra* of Lorenzo, and other works of Luca, by the *Giunti* at Florence, in 1572; but the continuation by *Giambullari* is there omitted.

<sup>e</sup> Printed at Florence in 1479. (*De Bure Bibliogr. Instruc. No 3411.*) I have seen two other ancient editions of this poem, without date; at the close of one of which we read *Finito il Drudeo per Luca Pulci ad Petitione di ser Piero Pacini*. Haym erroneously attributes this poem to Luigi Pulci, and I conceive he is also mistaken in citing an edition of 1482. *Bibl. Ital. p. 91.*

<sup>f</sup> These epistles have been several times printed. *Tiriboschi* refers to an edition of 1481, and I have met with three others. the first, *Impresso in Firenze per ser Francesco Bonacorsi et per Antonio di Francesco Venetiano nell' anno MCCCCLXXXVIII, a di XXVIII di Febraio*; the second at Florence in 1513; and the last in 1572.

Luigi Pulci, the youngest of these brothers, was born on the third day of December 1431, and appears, from many circumstances, to have lived on terms of the utmost friendship with Lorenzo de' Medici, who in one of his poems mentions him with great freedom and jocularity<sup>g</sup>. The principal work of this author is the *Morgante maggiore*, a poem which has given rise to various opinions and conjectures, as to its tendency and its merits. Whether this poem, or the Orlando Innamorato of the count Bojardo, was first written, has been a matter of doubt; certain it is, that in publication the *Morgante* had the priority, having been printed at Venice in 1488, after a Florentine edition of uncertain date, whilst the Orlando Innamorato did not appear till the year 1496<sup>h</sup>. Accordingly the

Morgante

C H A P.  
V  
Luigi Pulci.

<sup>g</sup> In his poem on hawking, intituled *La Caccia col Falcone*, first published at the close of the present work.

<sup>h</sup> It is evident, from the following lines at the conclusion of the poem of Bojardo, that it was not finished when the French made an irruption into Italy, in the year 1494:

“ Mentre ch'io canto, Ahime Dio redentore,

“ Veggio l' Italia tutta a fiamma e a fuoco

“ Per questi Galli, che con gran furore

“ Vengon per rovinar non so che luoco.”

*Bojardo Orl. Inam. lib. 3. Canto 9. Ed. Ven.*  
1548.

C H A P.  
V.

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Morgante is generally regarded as the prototype of the *Orlando Furioso* of Ariosto. It has been said that Ficino and Politiano had each a share in the composition of this work; but the poetry of Politiano is of a very different character, and there is no instance on record that Ficino ever attempted poetical composition<sup>1</sup>. The same degree of credit is due to the opinion, that Luigi Pulci was accustomed to recite his poem at the table of Lorenzo de' Medici, about the year 1450<sup>k</sup>; for it must be remembered that Lorenzo de'

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<sup>1</sup> Limerno Pitocco (*Teofilo Folengi*) in his extravagant and licentious poem of *Orlandino*, ridicules the idea of Politiano being the author of the Morgante.

“ Politian fu quello, ch' altamente  
 “ Cantò del gran gigante dal bataio :  
 “ Et a Luigi Pulci suo cliente  
 “ L' honor diè senza scritto di notajo.  
 “ Pur dopo si pentì; ma chi si pente  
 “ Po'l fatto, pesta l' acqua nel mortajo.  
 “ Sia o non sia pur cotesto vero  
 “ So ben, chi crede troppo, ha del liggero.”

*Orlandino, Cap. i. Ed. Ven. 1550.*

<sup>k</sup> *Dr. Burney's History of Music, v. iv. p. 14.* For this the learned and ingenious author has cited the authority of Crescimbeni, (*vol. ii. part ii. p. 273. Ed. Ven. 1730.*) who informs us, as is probably the truth, that Pulci was accustomed to recite his poem in the manner of ancient rhapsodists, at the table of Lorenzo de' Medici, but does

not

de' Medici was only born in 1448. It may further be observed, that although the *Morgante* was written at the particular request of Lucretia, the mother of Lorenzo, it was not finished till after her death, which did not happen till the year '1482'. This singular offspring of the wayward genius of Pulci has been as immoderately commended by its admirers, as it has been unreasonably degraded and condemned by its opponents; and whilst some have not scrupled to give it the precedence, in point of poetical merit, to the productions of Ariosto and of Tasso, others have decried it as vulgar, absurd, and profane; and the censures of the church have been promulged in confirmation of the latter part of the sentence<sup>m</sup>. From  
the

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not fix this event at any particular period, though he afterwards informs us, that Luigi flourished about the year 1450.

<sup>1</sup> *Morgant Magg. Cant. xxviii. Stan. 124. Ed. 1546.*

<sup>m</sup> Folengi, however, ranks the poem of Pulci as canonical, with those of Bojardo, Ariosto, Francesco Cieco, and himself; and freely condemns those of the other romancers to the flames, as apocryphal.

— “Trabionda, Ancroia, Spagna, e Bovo,

“Con l'altro resto al foco sian donate:

“Apocrife

C H A P. V. the solemnity and devotion with which every canto is introduced, some have judged that the author meant to give a serious narrative ; but the improbability of the relation, and the burlesque nature of the incidents, destroy all ideas of this kind. By others, this author has been accused of a total want of elegance in his expressions, and of harmony in his verse ; but this work yet ranks as classical in Italian literature, and, if it be not poetry of the highest relish, has a flavour that is yet perceptible<sup>n</sup>.

The

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“ Apocrife son tutte ; e le riprovo

“ Come nemighc d’ogni veritate.

“ Bojardo, l’Ariosto, Pulci, e’l Cicco,

“ Autenticati sono, ed io con seco.”

*Orlandino, cap. i.*

<sup>n</sup> A very judicious French critic has given the following just and accurate character of this work : “ C’est un poeme en Rime octave, de 28 chants, d’un goût original. L’auteur s’y est mis au dessus des régles, non pas de dessein, comme Vincent Gravina lui a fait l’honneur de le croire, mais parcequ’il les a entièrement ignorees. Fort en repos du jugement des critiques, il a confondu les lieux et les tems, allie le comique aux serieux, fait mourir burlesquement de la morsure d’un cancre marin au talon, le géant son héros, et cela dès le 20 livre, en sorte qu’il n’en est plus parlé dans les huit suivans. La naiveté de sa narration a couvert tous ces defauts. Les amateurs de la diction Florentine font encore aujourd’hui leurs  
“ delices

The sonnets of Luigi Pulci, printed with those of Matteo Franco, have the same capricious character as his other writings, and bear a resemblance to those of his predecessor Burchiello. Franco, the poetic correspondent of Pulci, was a canon of Florence, and was by no means inferior to him in pungency and humour. It is to be regretted that these authors so far exceeded at times the bounds of civility and decorum, that it is scarcely possible to suggest an expression of reproach and resentment which is not to be found in their writings. The family name of Pulci (*Pulex*) affords an ample subject for the satirical powers of Franco °. His person

is

C H A P.  
V.

Matteo  
Franco.

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“ delices de la lecture de Morgante, sur tout quand ils  
 “ en peuvent rencontrer un exemplaire de l'edition de  
 “ Venice 1546 ou 1550, accompagnée des explications de  
 “ Jean Pulci neveu de l'auteur.” *M. de la Monnoye.*  
*v. Baillet Jugem. des Scav. v. iv. p. 30.* I must, however,  
 add, that these explications amount to nothing more than  
 a glossary of a very few words, placed at the end of each  
 canto.

° A che credi ch'io pensi, o ch'io balocchi  
 Tanti de' Pulci & persone stolte ?  
 Perchè de' Pulci hai sol tre cose tolte,  
 Leggerezza, colore, e piccini occhi,  
 Ma il nome tuo e Gigi de' Pidocchi, &c.

*Son. ix.*

**C H A P.**            **V.** is a theme equally fertile. Famine, says his antagonist, was as naturally depicted in his countenance as if it had been the work of Giotto<sup>p</sup>. He had made an eight days' truce with death, which was on the point of expiring, when he would be swept away to *Giudecca*, (the lowest pit of Dante,) where his brother Luca was gone before to prepare him a place<sup>q</sup>: Luigi supports this opprobrious contest by telling his adversary that he was marked at his birth with the sign of the halter, instead of that of the cross, and by a thousand other imputations, of which decency forbids a repetition<sup>r</sup>. We are, however, informed, by the editor of the ancient edition of these poems, that although, for the amusement of their readers, these authors so lavishly abused and

<sup>p</sup> E già la fame in fronte al naturale  
Porti dipinta, e pare opra di Giotto.

*Son.* xxxvii.

Tenuto ha, con la morte,  
Otto dì triegua; hor che sofferto ha troppo,  
Con la falce fienaja vien di galoppa.  
Tu n' andrai a piè zoppo,  
A trovar Luca tuo, ladro di zecca,  
Che per te serba un luogo alla Judecca.

*Son.* xxxvii.

<sup>r</sup> Tu nascesti col segno del capresto,  
Come in Francia si dice della croce.

*Son.* xxx.

and satirized each other, they continued in reality intimate friends<sup>5</sup>; and this information is rendered highly probable, by their having equally shared the favour of Lorenzo de' Medici, whose authority would have suppressed the first indications of real dissension. The freedoms in which they indulged themselves called, however, for the interference of the inquisition; and a prohibition was issued against the further circulation of this work<sup>6</sup>. But although

<sup>5</sup> Et benchè M. Matteo & Luigi in questi loro sonetti dimonstrino esser poco amici l'uno dell' altro, niente di manco nel secreto erono amicissimi. Ma per dare piacere & dilectare altri, alcuna volta si mordevano & s'vilaneggiavano in tal modo come se proprio stati fussono nimici capitali.

<sup>6</sup> I have seen an edition of these poems, without note of date or place, but apparently printed about the close of the fifteenth century, and intitled, "SONETTI DI "MISSERE MATTHEO FRANCO ET DI LUIGI PULCI "JOCOSI ET FACETI CIOE DA RIDERE." Many of these sonnets are addressed to Lorenzo de' Medici, for whose favour the rival poets seem to have contended, by endeavouring to surpass each other in eccentricity and scurrility. A new edition was published in the year 1759, by the marchese Filippo de' Rossi, who informs us, that they were thrée times printed in the fifteenth century; to which he adds, "Il S. S. tribunale dell' inquisizione gli fulminò una giustissima proibizione,

C H A P. although the productions of the before-men-  
 V. tioned authors display some share of vivacity and  
 imagin-

“ che avendone sempre meritamente impedita la ri-  
 “ stampa, ha talmente resi rari questi sonetti, che da  
 “ ogn’ uno oramai si cercano invano.” If my readers  
 be curious to know the style of these formidable compo-  
 sitions, which excited the vigilance of the holy tribunal,  
 they may take as a specimen the following sonetto of  
 Luigi Pulci :

LUIGI PULCI A UN SUO AMICO PER RIDERE.

Costor, che fan sì gran disputazione  
 Dell’ anima, ond’ ell’ entri, o ond’ ell’ esca,  
 O come il nocciol si stia nella pesca,  
 Hanno studiato in su n’ un gran mellone.

Aristotile allegano, e Platone,  
 E voglion ch’ ella in pace requiesca  
 Fia suoni, e canti, e fannoti una tresca,  
 Che t’ empie il capo di confusione.

L’ Anima e sol come si vede espresso  
 In un pan bianco caldo un pinnocchiato,  
 O una carbonata in un pan fesso.

E chi crede altro ha il fodero in bucato,  
 E que’ che per l’un cento hanno promesso  
 Ci pagheran di succiole in mercato.

    Mi dice un che v’ è stato  
 Nell’ altra vita, e più non può tornarvi  
 Che appena con la scala si può andarvi.

    Costor credon trovarvi  
 E’ beccafichi, e gli ortolan pelati,  
 E’ buon vin dolci, e letti spiumacciati,

    E vanno drieto a’ Frati.  
 Noi ce n’ andrem, Pandolfo, in val-di buja,  
 Senza sentir più cantare : Alleluja.

imagination, and exhibit at times a natural and easy vein of poetry; yet upon the whole they are strongly tinctured with the rusticity of the age in which they were produced.

C H A P.  
V.

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That Lorenzo de' Medici had begun to exercise his talents for poetry at a very early age, there remains decisive proof. We have before adverted to his interview with Federigo of Naples, at Pisa, in the year 1465. On this occasion he was requested by that prince to point out to him such pieces of Italian poetry as were most deserving of his attention. Lorenzo willingly complied with his request; and shortly afterwards selected a small volume, at the close of which he added some of his own sonnets and canzoni, addressing them to Federigo in a few prefatory lines, as a testimony of his affection and regard<sup>u</sup>. Hence it appears, that at the age

Early productions of  
Lorenzo.

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<sup>u</sup> This singular circumstance, which so decisively ascertains the early period at which Lorenzo began to exercise his poetical talents, was first discovered by Apostolo Zeno, who having, in the year 1742, found in the possession of his friend Jacopo Facciolati, at Padua, a manuscript collection of ancient Italian poems, was, after mature deliberation, induced to conjecture that they were collected and arranged by Lorenzo de' Medici. To this supposition he was principally

C H A P. age of seventeen, Lorenzo had attempted dif-  
 V. ferent kinds of composition, which may be con-  
 sidered not only as anterior to the celebrated  
 poem of Politiano, on the *Giostra* of Giuliano,  
 which we have before noticed, but probably to  
 any of the writings of the Pulci. But, how-  
 ever the Pulci may contend with Lorenzo in  
 priority, they fall greatly short of him in all the  
 essential requisites of a poet; and whilst their  
 produc-

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cipally led by the introductory address to Federigo of Arragon, in which the compiler adverts to the visit of Federigo to Pisa, in the preceding year, and afterwards addresses that prince in the following terms: *At the close of the book, (conceiving that it might afford you some satisfaction,) I have inserted a few of MY OWN SONNETS AND CANZONI, with the expectation, that when you peruse them they may recall your remembrance the fidelity and attachment of their author.* On comparing the productions of the anonymous compiler, with the *Poesie Volgari* of Lorenzo, printed by Aldo, in 1554, the conjectures of the critic were amply confirmed; he having there discovered almost every poem which appeared in the manuscript, except five pieces, which he conceived might probably be inserted in the *Canzone a ballo* of Lorenzo and Politiano, but which in fact he could not then ascertain for want of that work. I shall give the letter of Zeno' on this subject, in the Appendix, No. XXXVI. I must, however, observe, that the visit of Federigo to Pisa was not in 1464, as mentioned by Zeno, who has too hastily quoted Ammirato (v. iii. p. 93.), but in 1465, as will appear by a reference to the before-cited passage of the Florentine historian.

productions bear the uniform character of a rude and uncultivated age, those of Lorenzo de' Medici are distinguished by a vigour of imagination, an accuracy of judgment, and an elegance of style, which afforded the first great example of improvement, and entitle him, almost exclusively, to the honourable appellation of the restorer of Italian literature. Within the course of a few years Politiano, Benivieni, and others, imbibed the true spirit of poetry, and Florence had once more the credit of rekindling that spark which was soon to diffuse a lustre through the remotest parts of Europe.

If, in order to justify the pretensions of Lorenzo to the rank here assigned him, it were sufficient merely to adduce the authority of succeeding critics, this would be productive of little difficulty. But to found our opinion of an author whose works are yet open to examination, on that of others, however it may soothe our indolence, or gratify our curiosity, cannot inform our judgment. It is from the writings which yet remain of Lorenzo de' Medici that we are to acquire a just idea of his general character as a poet, and to determine how far they have been instrumental in effecting a reformation in the taste of his countrymen, or in opening the way to subsequent improvements.

Inquiry into  
his merits  
as a poet

C H A P.  
V.

Object and  
character-  
istics of  
poetry.

The great end and object of poetry, and consequently the proper aim of the poet, is to communicate to us a clear and perfect idea of his proposed subject. What the painter exhibits to us by variety of colour, by light and shade, the poet expresses in appropriate language. The former seizes merely the external form, and that only in a given attitude ; the other surrounds his object, pierces it, and discloses its most hidden qualities. With the former it is inert and motionless ; with the latter it lives and moves, it is expanded or compressed, it glares upon the imagination, or vanishes in air, and is as various as nature herself.

Descrip-  
tion.

The simple description of natural objects is perhaps to a young mind the most delightful species of poetry, and was probably the first employment of the poet. It may be compared to melody in music, which is relished even by the most uncultivated ear. In this department, Virgil is an exquisite master<sup>v</sup>. Still more lively are the conceptions of Dante, still more precise the language in which they are expressed. As  
we

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<sup>v</sup> How grateful to our sensations, how distinct to our imaginations, appear the

“ Speluncæ, vivique lacus, ac frigida Tempe,

“ ~~Magis~~que boùm, mollesque sub arbore somni.”

we follow him, his wildest excursions take the appearance of reality. Compared with his vivid hues, how faint, how delicate, is the colouring of Petrarca! yet the harmony of the tints almost compensates for their want of force. With accurate descriptions of the face of nature the works of Lorenzo abound; and these are often heightened by those minute but striking characteristics, which, though open to all observers, the eye of the poet can alone select. Thus the description of an Italian winter, with which he opens his poem of *Ambra*<sup>w</sup>, is marked by several appropriate and striking images.

C H A P.  
V.

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Talents of  
Lorenzo for  
description.

The foliage of the olive appears of a dark green, but is nearly white beneath.

L'uliva, in qualche dolce piaggia aprica,  
Secondo il vento par, or verde, or bianca.☞

---

On some sweet sunny slope the olive grows,  
Its hues still changing as the zephyr blows.

The flight of the cranes, though frequently noticed in poetry, was perhaps never described  
in

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<sup>w</sup> Published for the first time at the close of the present work.

C H A P. in language more picturesque than the following,  
 V.  
 from the same poem :

Stridendo in ciel, i gru veggonsi a lunge  
 L'aere stampar di varic e belle forme ;  
 E l' ultima col collo steso aggiunge  
 Ov' è quella dinanzi alle vane orme.

---

Marking the tracts of air, the clamorous cranes  
 Wheel their due flight, in varied lines descried ;  
 And each with out-stretched neck his rank maintains,  
 In marshal'd order through th' ethereal void.

The following picture from his *Selve d' amore*  
 is also drawn with great truth and simplicity :

Al dolce tempo il bon pastore informa  
 Lasciar le mandre, ove nel verno giacque :  
 L' l' lieto gregge, che ballando in torma,  
 Torna all' alte montagne, alle fresche acque.  
 L' agnel, trottando pui la materna orma  
 Segue ; ed alcun, che pur or ora nacque,  
 L' amorevol pastore in braccio porta :  
 Il fido cane a tutti fa la scorta.

---

Sweet spring returns ; the shepherd from the fold  
 Brings forth his flock, nor dreads the wint'ry cold ;  
 Delighted once again their steps to lead  
 To the green hill, clear spring, and flowery mead.

Truec

True to their mother's track, the sportive young  
 Trip light. The careful hind slow moves along,  
 Pleased in his arms the new-dropt lamb to bear;  
 His dog, a faithful guard, brings up the rear.

C H A P.  
 V.

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In the same poem is a description of the golden age, in which the author seems to have exerted all his powers, in selecting such images as are supposed to have been peculiar to that happy state of life.

But the description of natural objects awakes in the poet's mind corresponding emotions; as his heart warms his fancy expands, and he labours to convey a more distinct or a more elevated idea of the impressions of his own imagination. Hence the origin of figures, or figurative language; in the use of which he aims at describing his principal subject, by the qualities of some other object more generally known, or more striking in its nature. These figures of poetry have furnished the philologists of ancient and modern times with a great variety of minute distinctions, but many of them consist rather in form than in substance; comparison, express or implied, will be found to be the essence of them all.

Poetic com-  
 parison.

In

C H A P.

V

Instances  
from the  
writings of  
Lorenzo.

In the employment of comparative illustration, Lorenzo de' Medici is often particularly happy. An attentive observer of the works of nature, as well in her general appearances, as in her more minute operations, intimately acquainted with all the finer productions of art, and accustomed to the most abstruse speculations of philosophy, whatever occurred to his mind excited a profusion of relative ideas, either bearing a general resemblance to his immediate subject, or associated with it by some peculiar circumstance. The first of these he often employed for the purpose of explanation or of ornament in his more serious compositions, the latter with great wit and vivacity in his lighter productions. At some times one external object, or one corporeal action, is elucidated by another; at other times natural phenomena are personified, and illustrated by sensible images; and instances occur where abstract ideas and metaphysical sentiments are brought before the mind, by a comparison with the objects of the material world. Of the simplest mode of comparison the following is no inelegant instance:

Quando sopra i nevósi ed alti monti,  
Apollo spande il suo bel lume adorno,  
Tal i crin suoi sopra la bianca gonna.

Son. lxxiii.

O'er

—O'er her white dress her shining tresses flow'd ;  
 Thus on the mountain heights with snows o'erspread,  
 The beams of noon their golden lustre shed.

C H A P.  
 V.

---

In his pastoral of Corydon, the shepherd thus addresses his scornful mistress, elucidating one action by another :

Lasso quanto dolor io aggio avuto,  
 Quando fuggi da gli occhi col pie scalzo ;  
 Et con quanti sospir ho già temuto  
 Che spine, o fere venenose, o il balzo  
 Non offenda i tuoi piedi ; io mi ritegno,  
 Per te fuggo i pie invano, e per te gli alzo :  
 Come chi drizza stral veloce al segno,  
 Poi che tratt' ha, torcendo il capo crede  
 Drizzarlo, egli è già fuor del curvo legno.

---

Ah nymph ! what pangs are mine, when causeless  
 fright  
 O'er hill, o'er valley, wings thy giddy flight,  
 Lest some sharp thorn thy heedless way may meet,  
 Some poisonous reptile wound thy naked feet.  
 Thy pains I feel, but deprecate in vain,  
 And turn, and raise my feet, in sympathetic pain.  
 So when the archer, with attentive glance,  
 Marks his fleet arrow wing its way askance,  
 He strives with tortuous act and head aside,  
 Right to the mark its devious course to guide.

The

C H A P.      The following sonnet affords an instance,  
 v.              not only of the illustration of one sensible  
 ————— object by another, but of the comparison of  
 an abstract sentiment, with a beautiful natural  
 image :

## SONETTO.

Oimè, che belle lagrime fur quelle  
 Che'l nembo di disio stillando messe !  
 Quando il giusto dolor che'l cor percosse,  
 Sali poi su nell' amoroze stelle !  
 Rigavon per la delicata pelle  
 Le bianche guancie dolcemente rosse.  
 Come chiar rio faria, che'n prato fosse,  
 Fior bianchi, e rossi, le lagrime belle ;  
 Lieto amor stava in l'amorosa pioggia,  
 Com' uccel dopo il sol, bramate tanto,  
 Lieto riceve rugiadose stille \*.

Poi

---

\* Spenser has a similar passage in his *Mourning Muse*  
 of *Thestylis* :

The blinded archer boy,  
 Like larke in showre of rain,  
 Sate bathing of his wings,  
 And glad the tyme did spend  
 Under those chrystall drops  
 Which fell from her faire eyes,  
 And at their brightest beams,  
 Him proyn'd in lovely wise.

Mr.

Poi spiangendo in quelli occhi ov' egli alloggia,  
 Facea del bello e doloroso pianto,  
 Visibilmente uscir dolce faville.

C H A P.  
 V.

---

Ah pearly 'drops, that pouring from those eyes;  
 Spoke the dissolving cloud of soft desire !  
 What time cold sorrow chill'd the genial fire,  
 " Struck the fair urns and bade the waters rise."  
 Soft down those cheeks, where native crimson vies  
 With ivory whiteness, see the chrystals throng;  
 As some clear river winds its stream along,  
 Bathing the flowers of pale and purple dyes.

Whilst

---

Mr. Warton, in his observations on the Fairy Queen  
 (v. i. p. 223.) has traced this passage to Ariosto (*Canto 11.*  
*Stanza 65.*):

Così a le belle lagrime le piume,  
 Sì bagna amore, e gode al chiaro lume.

Though he thinks Spenser's verses bear a stronger  
 resemblance to those of Nic. Archias (or the count  
 Nicolo d'Arco, a Latin poet of the 16th century):

Tum suavi in pluvia nitens Cupido,  
 Insidebat, uti solet volucris,  
 Ramo, vere novo, ad novos tepores  
 Post solem accipere aetheris liquores,  
 Gestire et pluvix ore blandiando.

I have only to add, that as Lorenzo de' Medici is the  
 earliest author who has availed himself of this beautiful  
 idea, so his representation of it has not been surpassed  
 by any of those who have since adopted it.

C H A P. Whilst Love, rejoicing in the amorous shower,  
 V. Stands like some bird, that after sultry heats  
 Enjoys the drops, and shakes his glittering wings ;  
 Then grasps his bolt, and, conscious of his power,  
 Midst those bright orbs assumes his wonted seat,  
 And thro' the lucid shower his living light'ning flings.

To examples of this kind I shall only add another, in which the poet has attempted to explain the mysterious intercourse of Platonic affection, by a familiar but fanciful comparison:

Delle caverne antiche  
 Trahe la fiamma del sol, fervente e chiara,  
 Le picciole formiche.  
 Sagace alcuna e sollecita impara,  
 E dice all' altre, ov' ha il parco villano  
 Ascoso astuto un monticel di grano ;  
 Ond' esce fuor la nera turba avara :  
 Tutte di mano in mano  
 Vanno e vengon dal monte ;  
 Porton la cara preda in bocca, e'n mano ;  
 Vanno leggieri, e pronte,  
 E gravi e carche ritornon di fore.

Fermon la picciola orma  
 Scontrandosi in cammino ; e mentre posa  
 L' una, quell' altra informa  
 Dell' alta preda ; ond' e più disiosa  
 Alla dolce fatica ogn'or l'invita.  
 Calcata e spessa è la via lunga, e trita ;  
 E se riporton ben tutte una cosa,  
 Più cara e più gradita

Sempre

Sempre e, quant 'esser deve  
 Cosa, senza la qual manca la vita.  
 Lo ingiusto fascio è lieve,  
 Se'l picciol animal senz 'esso more.  
 Così li pensier miei  
 Van più leggeri alla mia Donna bella ;  
 Scontrando quei di lei  
 Fermonsì, e l'un con l'altro allor favella.  
 Dolce preda s'è ben quanto con loro,  
 Porton dal caro ed immortal tesoro.

*Canz. xii.*

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As from their wint'ry cells,  
 The summer's genial warmth impels  
 The busy ants—a countless train,  
 That with sagacious sense explore,  
 Where provident for winter's store,  
 The careful rustic hides his treasur'd grain ;  
 Then issues forth the sable band,  
 And seizing on the secret prize,  
 From mouth to mouth, from hand to hand,  
 His busy task each faithful insect plies,  
 And often as they meet,  
 With scanty interval of toil,  
 Their burthens they repose awhile,  
 For rest alternate renders labour sweet.  
 The travell'd path their lengthened tracks betray,  
 And if no varied cates they bear,  
 Yet ever is the portion dear,  
 Without whose aid the powers of life decay.

C H A P  
V.

---

Thus from my faithful breast,  
 The busy messengers of love,  
 Incessant towards my fair one's bosom move ;  
 But in their way some gentle thought  
 They meet with kind compassion fraught,  
 Soft breathing from that sacred shrine,  
 Where dwells a heart in unison with mine,  
 And in sweet interchange delight awhile to rest.

Personifi-  
 cation of  
 material  
 objects

. But the poet does not confine himself to the lively description of nature, or of the corresponding emotions of his own mind. His next attempt is of a bolder kind, and the inanimate objects by which he is surrounded seem to possess life and motion, consciousness and reason, to act and to suffer. The mountains frown, the rivers murmur, the woods sigh, and the fable of Orpheus is revived. In the use of this figure, Petrarca is inexhaustible ; and there are few rural objects that have not been called upon to share his emotions ; the tenderness of the lover inspires the fancy of the poet, he addresses them as if they were conscious of his passion, and applauds or reproaches them as they are favourable or adverse to the promotion of it. The works of Lorenzo afford also frequent instances of the use of this figure, which more than any other gives action and spirit to poetry. In the following sonnet he not only animates the violets, but represents them

them

them as accounting, by a beautiful fiction, for  
 their purple colour : C H A P.  
 V.

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## SONETTO.

Non di verdi giardin, ornati, e colti  
 Del soave e dolce aere Pestano,  
 Veniam Madonna, in la tua bianca mano ;  
 Ma in aspre selve, e valli ombrose colti ;  
 Ove Venere affitta, e in pensier molti,  
 Pel periglio d'Adon correndo in vano,  
 Un spino acuto al nudo piè villano  
 Sparse del divin sangue i boschi folti :  
 Noi sommettemmo allora il bianco fiore,  
 Tanto che'l divin sangue non aggiunge  
 A terra, ond' il color purpureo nacque.  
 Non aure estive, o rivi tolti a lunge  
 Noi nutrit' anno, ma sospir d'amore  
 L'aure son sute, e pianti d'Amor l'acque.

---

Not from the verdant garden's cultur'd bound,  
 That breathes of Pœstum's aromatic gale,  
 We sprung ; but nurslings of the lonely vale,  
 'Midst woods obscure, and native glooms were found.  
 'Midst woods and glooms, whose tangled brakes around  
 Once Venus sorrowing traced, as all forlorn  
 She sought Adonis, when a lurking thorn  
 Deep on her foot impress'd an impious wound.  
 Then prone to earth we bow'd our pallid flowers,  
 And caught the drops divine ; the purple dyes

C H A P.

V

Tinging the lustre of our native hue .  
 Nor summer gales, nor art-conducted showers  
 Have nursed our slender forms, but lovers' sighs  
 Have been our gales, and lovers' tears our dew.

Of the pas-  
 sions and  
 affections.

The province of the poet is not, however, confined to the representation, or to the combination of material and external objects. The fields of intellect are equally subject to his controul. The affections and passions of the human mind, the abstract ideas of unsubstantial existence, serve in their turn to exercise his powers. In arranging themselves under his dominion, it becomes necessary that they should take a visible and substantial form, distinguished by their attributes, their insignia, and their effects. With this form the imagination of the poet invests them, and they then become as subservient to his purpose "as if they were objects of external sense. In process of time, some of these children of imagination acquire a kind of prescriptive identity; and the symbolic forms of pleasure, or of wisdom, present themselves to our minds in nearly as definite a manner as the natural ones of Ajax, or of Achilles. Thus embodied, they become important actors in the drama, and are scarcely distinguishable from human character. But the offspring of fancy is infinite; and however the regions of poetry may

may seem to be peopled with these fantastic beings, genius will still proceed to invent, to vary, and to combine.

C H A P.  
V

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If the moderns excel the ancients, in any department of poetry, it is in that now under consideration. It must not indeed be supposed that the ancients were insensible of the effects produced by this powerful charm, which more peculiarly than any other may be said

Compara-  
tive excel-  
lence of the  
ancients and  
moderns in  
the use of  
the *prosopopoeia*

— *To give to airy nothing,  
A local habitation and a name.*

But it may safely be asserted, that they have availed themselves of this creative faculty, much more sparingly, and with much less success, than their modern competitors. The attribution of sense to inert objects is indeed common to both; but that still bolder exertion which embodies abstract existence, and renders it susceptible of ocular representation, is almost exclusively the boast of the moderns<sup>v</sup>. If, however, we advert to the few

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<sup>v</sup> If Virgil have given us a highly-finished personification of rumour; if Horace speak of his *atra cura*; if Lucretius present us with an awful picture of superstition; their portraits are so vague as scarcely to communicate any discriminate idea, and are characterised by their operation and effects, rather than by their poetical

C H A P. v. few authors who preceded Lorenzo de' Medici, we shall not trace in their writings many striking instances of those embodied pictures of ideal existence, which are so conspicuous in the works of Ariosto, Spenser, Milton, and subsequent writers of the higher class, who are either natives of Italy, or have formed their taste upon the poets of that nation<sup>z</sup>.

The

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insignia. Of the ancient Roman authors, perhaps there is no one that abounds in these personifications more than the tragedian Seneca; yet what idea do we form of labour when we are told, that

Labor exoritur durus, et omnes  
Agitat curas, aperitque domos.

Or of hope or fear from the following passage:

Turbine magni, spes sollicitæ  
Urbibus errant, trepidique metus.

The personification of hope by Tibullus (*Lib.* ii. *Eleg.* 6.) is scarcely worthy of that charming author; and if he has been happier in his description of sleep, (*Lib.* i. *Eleg.* i.) it is still liable to the objections before mentioned.

<sup>z</sup> One of the finest personifications of Petrarca is that of liberty, in a beautiful canzone; which, on account of its political tendency, has been excluded from many editions of his works.

Libertà, dolce e desiato bene!  
Mal conosciuto a chi talor no'l perde;

Quanto

The writings of Lorenzo afford many instances of genuine poetical personification ; some of which will not suffer by a comparison with those of any of his most celebrated successors. Of this his representation of jealousy may afford no inadequate proof.

C H A P.  
V

Instances of  
this figure.

Solo una vecchia in un oscuro canto,  
Pallida, il sol fuggendo, si sedea,  
Tacita sospirando, ed un ammanto  
D'un incerto color cangiante havca :  
Cento occhi ha in testa, e tutti versan pianto  
E cent' orecchie la maligna dea :  
Quel ch'è, quel che non è, trista ode e vede ;  
Mai dorme, ed ostinata a se sol crede.

Sad in a nook obscure, and sighing deep,  
A pale and haggard beldam shrinks from view ;  
Her

Quanto gradito al buon mondo esser dei.  
Per te la vita vien fiorita e verde,  
Per te stato gioioso mi mantiene,  
Ch'ir mi fa sonughianti a gli alti dei :  
Senza te, lungamente non vorrei  
Ricchezze, onor, e cio ch'uom più desia,  
Ma teco ogni tugurio acqueta l'alma.

Yet the painter who would represent the allegorical form of liberty, would derive but little assistance from the imagination of the poet.

C H A P.

V

Her gloomy vigils there she loves to keep,  
 Wrapt in a robe of ever-changing hue ;  
 A hundred eyes she has, that ceaseless weep,  
 A hundred ears, that pay attention due.  
 Imagin'd evils aggravate her grief,  
 Hèedless of sleep, and stubborn to relief.

If his personification of hope be less discriminate, it is to be attributed to the nature of that passion, of which uncertainty is in some degree the characteristic.

È una donna di statura immensa,  
 La cima de' capelli al ciel par monti ;  
 Formata, e vestita è di nebbia densa ;  
 Abita il sommo de' più alti monti.  
 Se i nugoli guardando un forma, pensa  
 Nove forme veder d' animal pronti,  
 Che'l vento muta, e poi di novo figne  
 Così Amor questa vana dipigne.

Immense of bulk, her towering head she shews,  
 Her floating tresses seem to touch the skies,  
 Dark mists her unsubstantial shape compose,  
 And on the mountain's top her dwelling lies.  
 As when the clouds fantastic shapes disclose,  
 For ever varying to the gazer's eyes,  
 Till on the breeze the changeful hues escape,  
 Thus vague her form, and mutable her shape.

Her

Her attendants are also highly characteristic.

C H A P.  
V.

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Seguon questa infelice in ogni parte  
 Il sogno, e l' augurio, e la bugia,  
 E chiromanti, ed ogni fallace arte,  
 Sorte, indovini, e falza profezia .  
 La vocale, e la scritta in sciocche carte,  
 Che dicon, quando è stato, quel che fia :  
 L'archimia, e chi di terra il ciel misura,  
 E fatta a volontà la conjettura.

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Illusive beings round their sovereign wait,  
 Deceitful dreams, and auguries, and lies,  
 Innumerable are the gaping crowd that cheat,  
 Predictions wild, and groundless prophecies ;  
 With wondrous words, or written rolls of fate,  
 Foretelling—when 'tis past—what yet shall rise ;  
 And alchymy, and astrologic skill,  
 And fond conjecture—always form'd at will.

Though not perhaps strictly to be ranked  
 in this department, I shall not deprive my  
 readers of the following fanciful description of  
 the formation of the lover's chain.

Non già così la mia bella catena  
 Stringe il mio cor gentil, pien di dolcezza :  
 Di tre nodi composta ha la catena  
 Con le sue mani ; il primo fe bellezza,

La

La pietà l'altro per sì dolce pena,  
E l'altro amor ; nè tempo alcun gli spezza .  
La bella mano insieme poi gli strinse  
E di sì dolce laccio il cor avvinse.

\* \* \*

Quando tessuta fu questa catena,  
L'aria, la terra, il ciel lieto concorse :  
L'aria non fu giammai tanto serena,  
Nè il sol giammai sì bella luce porse :  
Di frondi giovanette, e di fior piena  
La terra lieta, ov'un chiar rivo corse :  
Ciprigna in grembo al padre il dì si mise,  
Lieta mirò dal ciel quel loco, e rise.

Dal divin capo, ed amoroso seno,  
Prese con ambo man rose diverse,  
E le sparse nel ciel queto e sereno :  
Di questi fior la mia donna coperse.  
Giove benigno, di letizia pieno,  
Gli umani orecchi quel bel giorno aperse  
A sentir la celeste melodia,  
Che in canti, ritmi, e suon, dal ciel venia.

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Dear are those bonds my willing heart that bind,  
Form'd of three chords, in mystic union twin'd ;  
The first by beauty's rosy fingers wove,  
The next by pity, and the third by love.  
—The hour that gave this wonderous texture birth,  
Saw in sweet union, heaven, and air, and earth ;

Serene

Serene and soft all ether breath'd delight,  
 The sun diffus'd a mild and temper'd light ;  
 New leaves the trees, sweet flowers adorned the mead,  
 And sparkling rivers gush'd along the glade.  
 Repos'd on Jove's own breast, his favorite child  
 The Cyprian queen, beheld the scene and smil'd ;  
 Then with both hands, from her ambrosial head,  
 And amorous breast, a shower of roses shed,  
 The heavenly shower descending soft and slow,  
 Pour'd all its fragrance on my fair below ;  
 Whilst all benign the ruler of the spheres  
 To sounds celestial open'd mortal ears.

From the foregoing specimens we may be enabled to form a general idea of the merits of Lorenzo de' Medici, and may perceive, that of the essential requisites of poetic composition, instances are to be found in his writings. The talents of a poet he certainly possessed. But before we can form a complete estimate of his poetical character, it will be necessary to inquire to what purpose those talents were applied, and this can only be done by taking a view of the different departments of poetry in which he employed his pen. In the execution of this task, we may also be enabled to ascertain how far he has imitated his predecessors, and how far he has himself been a model to those who have succeeded him.

Various  
 species of  
 poetry cul-  
 tivated by  
 Lorenzo.

The

C H A P.  
V.

Origin of  
the Italian  
sonnet.

The Italian sonnet is a species of composition almost coëval with the language itself; and may be traced back to that period when the Latin tongue, corrupted by the vulgar pronunciation, and intermixed with the idioms of the different nations that from time to time over-ran Italy, degenerated into what was called the *lingua volgare*; which language, though at first rude and unpolished, was, by successive exertions, reduced to a regular and determinate standard, and obtained at length a superiority over the Latin, not only in common use, but in the written compositions of the learned. The form of the sonnet, confined to a certain versification, and to a certain number of lines, was unknown to the Roman poets, who adopting a legitimate measure, employed it as long as the subject required it, but was probably derived from the Provençals; although instances of the regular stanza, now used in these compositions, may be traced amongst the Italians, as early as the thirteenth century<sup>a</sup>. From that time to the present, the sonnet has retained its precise form, and has been the most favourite mode of composition in the

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<sup>a</sup> For a learned and curious disquisition on the origin of the Sonetto, v. *Annotazioni di Francesco Redi, al suo ditrambo di Bacco in Toscana*, p. 99.

the Italian tongue. It may, however, be justly doubted, whether the Italian poesy has, upon the whole, derived any great advantage from the frequent use of the sonnet. Confined to so narrow a compass, it admits not of that extent and range of ideas which suggest themselves to a mind already warm with its subject. On the contrary, it illustrates only some one distinct idea, and this must be extended or condensed, not as its nature requires, but as the rigid laws of the composition prescribe. One of the highest excellencies of a master in this art consists, therefore, in the selection of a subject neither too long nor too short for the space which it is intended to occupy<sup>b</sup>. Hence the invention is cramped, and the free excursions of the mind are fettered and restrained. Hence, too, the greater part of these compositions display rather the glitter of wit than the fire of genius; and hence they have been almost solely appropriated to the illustration of the passion of love: a subject which,  
from

C H A P.  
V.

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<sup>b</sup> The following remarks by Lorenzo de' Medici, on this kind of composition, are as judicious as they are pointed and concise: "La brevità del sonetto non comporta, che una sola parola sia vana, ed il vero subietto e materia del sonetto debbe essere qualche acuta e gentile sentenza, narrata attamente, ed in pochi versi ristretta, e fuggendó la oscurità e durezza."

*Comment. di Lor. de' Med. sopra i suoi Sonetti, p. 120.  
Ed Ald. 1554.*

C H A P. from its various nature, and the endless analogies  
 V. of which it admits, is more susceptible than any  
 other, of being apportioned into those detached  
 sentiments of which the sonnet is composed.

To these restraints, however, the stern genius of Dante frequently submitted. In his *Vita Nuova* we have a considerable number of his sonnets, which bear the distinct marks of his character, and derogate not from the author of the *Divina Commedia*<sup>c</sup>. These sonnets are uniformly devoted to the praises of his Beatrice; but his passion is so spiritualized, and so remote from gross and earthly objects, that great doubts have arisen among his commentators, whether the object of his adoration had a substantial existence, or was any thing more than the  
 abstract

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<sup>c</sup> If written in later times, some of these sonnets might have been thought to border on impiety. Thus the poet addresses the faithful—in love—

“ A ciascun alma presa, e gentil core,  
 “ Nel cui cospetto viene il dir presente,  
 “ In ciò ch'è mi rescrivan suo parvente,  
 “ Salute in lor signore—cioè Amore.”

And again, in allusion to a well-known passage,

“ O voi che per la via d'amor passate,  
 “ Attendete e guardate,  
 “ S'egli è dolore alcun quanto 'l mio grave.”

*Vita Nuova di Dante, Fir. 1723.*

abstract idea of wisdom, or philosophy. Certain it is, that the abstruse and recondite sense of these productions seems but little suited to the comprehension of that sex to which they are addressed, and ill calculated to promote the success of an amorous passion. The reputation of Dante as a poet is not, however, founded on this part of his labours; but Petrarca, whose other works have long been neglected, is indebted to his sonnets and lyric productions for the high rank which he yet holds in the public estimation. Without degrading his subject by gross and sensual images, he has rendered it susceptible of general apprehension; and, whether his passion was real or pretended, for even this has been doubted<sup>d</sup>, he has traced the effects of love through every turn and winding of the human bosom; so that it is scarcely possible for a lover to find himself so situated, as not to meet with his own peculiar feelings reflected in

C H A P.  
V.

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<sup>d</sup> “ Interpretabar olim nostri Petrarchæ Elegias, Lyricosque, quibus Lauram canit; adcrantque adversarii, qui Lauram fuisse negarent, assererentque non illo nomine puellam a se amatam intelligi, sed aliud allegorice ibi latere.” (*Land. in Interp. Carm. Hor. lib. 2. ap. Band. Spec. Lit. Flor. v. i. p. 232.*) where it appears that Landino past a tolerable jest on these refined critics.

CH A P. in some passage or other of that engaging  
 V.  
 author.

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Without possessing the terseness of those of Dante, or the polish and harmony of those of Petrarca, the sonnets of Lorenzo de' Medici have indisputable pretensions to high poetical excellence. It is indeed to be regretted, that, like those of his two celebrated predecessors, they are almost all devoted to one subject—the illustration of an amorous passion; but he has so diversified and embellished them with images drawn from other sources, as to rescue them from that general censure of insipidity, which may properly be applied to the greater part of the productions of the Italians, in this their favourite mode of composition. These images he has sought for in almost all the appearances of nature, in the annals of history, the wilds of mythology, and the mysteries of the Platonic philosophy; and has exhibited them with a splendor and vivacity peculiar to himself. If the productions of Dante resemble the austere grandeur of Michael Agnolo, or if those of Petrarca remind us of the ease and gracefulness of Raffaello, the works of Lorenzo may be compared to the less correct, but more animated and splendid labours of the Venetian school. The poets, as well as the painters, each  
 formed

formed a distinct class, and have each had their exclusive admirers and imitators. In the beginning of the succeeding century, the celebrated Pietro Bembo attempted again to introduce the style of Petrarca; but his sonnets, though correct and chaste, are too often formal and insipid. Those of Casa, formed upon the same model, possess much more ease, and a greater flow of sentiment. Succeeding authors united the correctness of Petrarca with the bolder colouring of Lorenzo, and in the works of Ariosto, the two Tassos, Costanzo, Tansillo, and Guarini, the poetry of Italy attained its highest degree of perfection.

The sonnets of Lorenzo de' Medici are intermixed with *Canzoni*, *Sestine*, and other lyric productions, which in general display an equal elegance of sentiment, and brilliancy of expression. One of his biographers is, however, of opinion, that the merit of his odes is inferior to that of his sonnets; but it is not easy to discover any striking evidence of the propriety of this remark. It must not, however, be denied, that his writings occasionally display too evident  
proofs

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\* Felicior mihi fuisse videtur in brevioribus epigrammatibus, quam in odis. *Fab. in vitâ Laur. v. i. p. 10.*

C H A P.  
V.

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proofs of that haste with which it is probable they were all composed ; or that they are sometimes interspersed with modes of expression, which would scarcely have been tolerated among the more accurate and polished writers of the succeeding century. The language of Lorenzo de' Medici appears even more obsolete, and is more tinctured with the rusticity of the vulgar dialect, than that of Petrarca, who preceded him by so long an interval. But, with all these defects, the intrinsic merit of his writings has been acknowledged by all those who have been able to divest themselves of an undue partiality for the fashion of the day, and who can discern true excellence, through the disadvantages of a dress in some respects antiquated, or negligent. Muratori, in his treatise on the poetry of Italy, has accordingly adduced several of the sonnets of Lorenzo, as examples of elegant composition : “ It is gold from the mine<sup>f</sup>,” says that judicious critic, adverting to one of these pieces, “ mixed indeed with ruder materials, yet it is “ always gold<sup>g</sup>.”

The

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<sup>f</sup> E' oro di miniera, mischiato, con rozza terra, ma sempre è oro.

*Murat. della perfetta poesia Italiana, v. ii. p. 376.*

<sup>g</sup> In the general collection of the poems of Lorenzo, printed by Aldo in 1554, his sonnets are accompanied with

The *Selve d'amore* of Lorenzo de' Medici is a composition in *ottava rima*, and, though it extend  
 to

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with a copious commentary, which exhibits many striking traits of his character, and is a very favourable specimen of his prose composition. This commentary has not been reprinted; and the copies of this edition have long been of such rare occurrence in Italy, that even Cionacci, the editor of the sacred poems of Lorenzo, and of others of the Medici family, in 1680, had never been able to obtain a sight of the book. "Di questi due," says he, adverting to the *Selve d'amore*, and the *Libro di Rime, intitolato Poesie volgari*, "fa menzione il Poccianti, e il Valori, sopra citati; ma io non ho veduto se non *il primo*, stampato in ottavo." *Cion. osserv.* 28. This volume is intitled "POESIE VOLGARI, NUOVAMENTE STAMPATE DI LORFNZO DE' MEDICI, CHE FU PADRE DI PAPA LEONE" *Col commento del medesimo sopra alcuni de' suoi sonetti. In Vinegia M.D.LVIII.* From the expression *nuovamente stampate*, we might infer, that these poems had before been printed; but I have not been able to discover any trace of a former impression; and Apostolo Zeno, in his notes on the *Biblioteca Italiana* of Fontanini, v. ii. p. 59. *Ed. Ven.* 1753, expressly informs us that this is the only edition known, "l'unica edizione delle poesie del Magnifico" A variation, however, occurs in the copies: the sheet marked with the letter O having, in the greater part of the edition, been reduced from eight leaves to four, as appears by a defect in the numeration of the pages. This is generally understood to have arisen from the scrupulous delicacy of the printer, who, having discovered some indecent pieces, inserted from the *Canzoni a ballo*, cancelled the leaves in such copies as remained unsold, and hence the

C H A P. V. to a considerable length, deserves to be held at least in equal esteem with his sonnets and lyric productions<sup>h</sup>. The stanza in which it is written is the

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copies which contain the sheet O complete have, in the perverse estimation of bibliographers and collectors, acquired an additional value. On an examination of the pieces thus omitted, I have, however, some doubts, whether the reason above assigned be the true motive for the caution of the printer; a caution which I conceive was rather occasioned by an apprehension of the censures of the inquisition, for his having unaccountably blended in the same poem some pious stanzas with others of a more terrestrial nature, intended for a different poem, without giving the reader due notice, by a proper separation or distinct title, of so unexpected a change of sentiment. In consequence of which a poem on the resurrection of Christ is terminated by some stanzas that relate only to a mere mortal passion. The works of Lorenzo were reprinted; with the addition of several pieces, at Bergamo, in octavo, in 1763.

<sup>h</sup> This poem has been several times printed. The earliest edition which I have seen is "*Impresso in Pesaro per Hieronymo Soncino nel M.CCCCXIII a di XV di Luglio,*" under the title of STANZE BELLISSIME ET ORNATISSIME INTITULATE LE SELVE D'AMORE COMPOSTE DAL M'AGNIFICO LORENZO DI PIERO DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI. It was again printed by *Matthio Pagan* at Venice, in 1554, and is also inserted in the Aldine and Bergamo edition of his works. In the last-mentioned edition it is, however, preceded by thirty *stanze*, which form a poem entirely distinct in its subject, though not inferior in merit; and the reader ought to commence the perusal of the *Selve d'amore* at the thirty-first stanza, "*Dopo tanti sospiri e tanti omer.*"

the most favourite mode of versification amongst the Italians, and has been introduced with great success into the English language. It was first reduced to its regular form by Boccaccio, who employed it in his heroic romances, the *Theseide* and the *Filostrato*<sup>1</sup>; but the poems of Ariosto and of Torquato Tasso have established it as the vehicle of epic composition<sup>k</sup>. These *stanze* were produced by Lorenzo at an early age, and are undoubtedly the same of which Landino and Valori expressed such warm approbation<sup>l</sup>. The estimation

C H A P.  
V.

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<sup>1</sup> *Crescim. v. i. p. 200. Manni Istoria del Decamerone, p. 52.*

<sup>k</sup> Notwithstanding these illustrious authorities, it may perhaps be allowable to doubt, whether a series of stanzas be the most eligible mode of narrating an epic, or indeed any other extensive kind of poem. That it is not natural must be admitted; for naturally we do not apportion the expression of our sentiments into equal divisions; and that which is not natural cannot in general long be pleasing. Hence the works of Ariosto, of Tasso, and of Spenser, labour under a disadvantage which it required all the vigour of genius to surmount; and this is the more to be regretted, as both the Italian and the English languages admit of compositions in black verse, productive of every variety of harmony.

<sup>l</sup> *Legere memini opusculum ejus amatorium, cum eodem Gentile, lepidum admodum, et expolitum, multiplex, varium, copiosum, elegans, ut nihil supra.*

C H A P. estimation in which they were held may be deter-  
 V. mined by the many imitations which have appear-  
 ed from Benivieni<sup>m</sup>, Serafino d' Aquila<sup>n</sup>, Politiano<sup>o</sup>,  
 Lodovico

Christophorus certe Landinus per ea tempora poeta et orator insignis, viso carmine, in hoc, inquit, scribendi genere, ceteros hic sine controversia superabit: id quod etiam suis scriptis testatum reliquit. Nec mirum quum ingenium alicui maximum, vis ingens amoris accenderit. *Val. in vitâ, p. 8.*

<sup>m</sup> *I dilettevoli amori di messer Girolamo Benivieni Fiorentino*, printed at Venice, by *Nicolo d' Aristotile di Ferrara, detto Zoppino*, 1537, with another poem intitled, *Caccia bellissima del Reverendissimo Egidio*, and several pieces of the count Matteo Bojardo. This piece of Benivieni is not printed in the general edition of his works. *Ven 1524.*

<sup>n</sup> *Strambotti di Serafino d' Aquila*. This celebrated poet and improvvisatore, "A quo," says Paolo Cortese, "ita . . . est verborum et cantuum conjunctio modulata nexa, " ut nihil fieri posset modorum ratione dulcius," was born in 1466, and died in 1500 *Tirab. Storia della Let. Ital. v. vi. parte 2. p. 154.* His works have been frequently printed; but the edition most esteemed is that of Florence, by the Giunti, in 1516. Zeno has cited no less than sixteen editions of the works of Serafino, the latest of which is in the year 1550. *Bibl. Ital. v. 1. p. 429.*

<sup>o</sup> Some of these *Stanze* of Politiano were first published in the edition of his works by Comino, *Padua*, 1765; but, being there left imperfect, I have given a complete copy in the Appendix, as they have been preserved in the Laurentian library.

*v. Band. Cat. Bib. Laur. t. v. p. 51. App. No. XXXVII.*

Lodovico Martelli<sup>p</sup>, and others; who seem to have contended with each other for superiority in a species of poetry which gives full scope to the imagination, and in which the author takes the liberty of expatiating on any subject, which he conceives to be likely to engage the attention and obtain the favour of his mistress.

Among the poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, which have been preserved for three centuries in manuscript, in the Laurentian Library, and which are given to the public for the first time at the close of the present work<sup>q</sup>, is a beautiful Ovidian allegory, intitled *Ambra*, being the name of a small island, formed by the river Ombrone, near Lorenzo's villa at Poggio Cajano, the destruction of which is the subject of the poem. This favourite spot he had improved and ornamented with great assiduity, and

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<sup>p</sup> *Stanze in lode delle Donne*, printed in the works of this author. Flor. 1548.

<sup>q</sup> About a dozen copies of these poems were printed in the year 1791, chiefly for the purpose of regulating the text; which have since been distributed by the editor amongst his friends. This he thinks it necessary to mention, to prevent any misapprehension on the part of those into whose hands such volume may chance to fall.

C H A P. and was extremely delighted with the retired  
 V. situation and romantic aspect of the place'.  
 Poem of He was not, however, without apprehensions  
*Ambra.* that the rapidity of the river might destroy his  
 improvements, which misfortune he endeavoured  
 to prevent by every possible precaution: but  
 his cares were ineffectual; an inundation took  
 place, and sweeping away his labours, left him  
 no consolation but that of immortalizing his  
*Ambra* in the poem now alluded to'. The  
 same stanza is employed by Lorenzo in his  
 poem on hawking, now also first published  
 under the title of *La Caccia col Falcone*. This  
 piece is apparently founded on a real incident.  
 The author here gives us a very circumstantial,  
 and

Poem on  
 hawking.

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' Laurēntius Medices, qui scilicet Ambram ipsam  
 Cajanam, prædium (ut ita dixerim) omniferum, quasi  
 pro laxamento sibi delegit civilium laborum.

*Pol. ad Laur. Tornabonum in Op. ap. Ald.*

' This is not the only occasion on which *Ambra* has  
 been celebrated in the language of poetry. Politiano  
 has given the same title to his beautiful Latin poem  
 devoted to the praises of Homer; in the close of which  
 is a particular description of this favourite spot, which  
 was at that time thought to be sufficiently secured against  
 the turbulence of the flood:

“ Ambra mei Laurentis amor, quam corniger Umbro

“ Umbro senex genuit, domino gratissimus Arno;

“ Umbro, suo tandem non erupturus ab alveo.”

and at the same time a very lively account of this once popular diversion, from the departure of the company in the morning, to their return in the heat of the day. The scene is most probably, at Poggio-Cajano, where he frequently partook of the diversions of hunting and of hawking, the latter of which he is said to have preferred'. In this poem, wherein the author has introduced many of his companions by name, the reader will find much native humour, and a striking picture of the manners of the times.

Lorenzo has, however, occasionally assumed in his writings a more serious character. His *Altercazione*, or poem explanatory of the Platonic philosophy, has before attracted our notice; but notwithstanding this attempt has great merit, and elucidates with some degree of poetical ornament a dry and difficult subject, it is much inferior to his moral poems, one of which in particular exhibits a force of expression, a grandeur and elevation of sentiment, of which his predecessors had set him no example, and which

C H A P.  
V.

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Moral  
pieces

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† Circa quoque prætorium Cajanum, quod regali magnificentia a fundamentis erexit, prædia habuit proventus maximi, et amœnitatis plurimæ, quibus in locis frequens esset venationibus deditus, sed multo magis falconum et ejusmodi avium volatibus. *Valor. in vitâ Laur. p. 39.*

**C H A P.** which perhaps none of his countrymen have  
**V.** since excelled. This piece, in which the author  
 calls upon the faculties of his own mind to exert  
 themselves to great and useful purposes, thus  
 commences :

Destàti pigro ingegno da quel sonno,  
 Che par che gli occhi tuoi d'un vel ricopra,  
 Onde veder la verità non ponno ;  
 Svegliati omai; contempla, ogni tua opra  
 Quanto disutil sia, vana, e fallace,  
 Poi che il desio alla ragione è sopra.  
 Deh pensa, quanto falsamente piace,  
 Onore, utilitate, ovver diletto,  
 Ove per più s'affërma esser la pace ;  
 Pensa alla dignità del tuo intelletto,  
 Non dato per seguir cosa mortale,  
 Ma perchè avessi il cielo per suo obietto  
 Sai per esperienza, quanto vale  
 Quel, ch' altri chiama ben, dal ben più scosto,  
 Che l'oriente dall' occidentale.  
 Quella vaghezza, ch' a gli occhi ha proposto  
 Amor, e cominciò ne' teneri anni,  
 D' ogni tuo viver lieto t' ha disposto.  
 Brieve, fugace, falsa, e pien d'affanni,  
 Ornata in vista, ma è poi crudel mostro,  
 Che tien lupi e delfin sotto i bei panni.  
 Deh pensa, qual sarebbe il viver nostro,  
 Se quel, che de' tener la prima parte,  
 Preso avesse il cammin, qual io t' ho mostro,  
 Pensa, se tanto tempo, ingegno, o arte,  
 Avessi volto al più giusto desio,  
 Ti potresti hor in pace consolarte.

Se ver te fosse il tuo voler più pio,  
 Forse quel, che per te si brama, o spera,  
 Conosceresti me', se' è buono o rio.  
 Dell'età tua la verde primavera  
 Hai consumata, e forse tal fia il resto,  
 Fin che del verno sia l'ultima sera ;  
 Sotto falsa ombra, e sotto rio pretesto,  
 Persuadendo a te, che gentilezza  
 Che vien dal cuor, ha causato questo.  
 Questi tristi legami oramai spezza :  
 Leva dal collo tuo quella catena  
 Ch' avolto vi tenea falsa bellezza :  
 E la vana speranza, che ti mena,  
 Leva dal cuor, e fa il governo pigli  
 Di te, la parte più bella e serena :  
 Et sottometta questa a' suoi artigli  
 Ogni disir al suo voler contrario,  
 Con maggior forza, e con maggior consigli,  
 Sicchè sbattuto il suo tristo avversario,  
 Non drizzi più la venenosa cresta.

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Rise from thy trance, my slumbering genius rise,  
 That shrouds from truth's pure beam thy torpid eyes!  
 Awake, and see, since reason gave the rein  
 To low desire, thy every work how vain.  
 Ah think how false that bliss the mind explores,  
 In futile honours, or unbounded stores;  
 How poor the bait that would thy steps decoy  
 To sensual pleasure, and unmeaning joy.

Rouse

C H A P. Rouse all thy powers, for better use designed,  
 V. And know thy native dignity of mind ;

Not for low aims and mortal triumphs given,  
 Its means exertion, and its object heaven.

Hast thou not yet the difference understood,  
 Twixt empty pleasure, and substantial good ?  
 Not more opposed—by all the wise confest,  
 The rising orient from the farthest west.

Doom'd from thy youth the galling chain to prove  
 Of potent beauty, and imperious love,  
 Their tyrant rule has blighted all thy time,  
 And marr'd the promise of thy early prime.  
 Tho' beauty's garb thy wondering gaze may win,  
 Yet know that wolves, that harpies dwell within.

Ah think, how fair thy better hopes had sped,  
 Thy widely erring steps had reason led ;  
 Think, if thy time a nobler use had known,  
 Ere this the glorious prize had been thine own.  
 Kind to thyself, thy clear discerning will  
 Had wisely learnt to sever good from ill.  
 Thy spring-tide hours consum'd in vain delight,  
 Shall the same follies close thy wintry night ?  
 With vain pretexts of beauty's potent charms,  
 And nature's frailty, blunting reason's arms ?  
 —At length thy long-lost liberty regain,  
 Tear the strong tie, and break the inglorious chain,  
 Freed from false hopes, assume thy native powers,  
 And give to Reason's rule thy future hours ;  
 To her dominion yield thy trusting soul,  
 And bend thy wishes to her strong control ;  
 Till love, the serpent that destroy'd thy rest,  
 Crush'd by her hand shall mourn his humbled crest.

The

The sacred poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, distinguished by the names of *Orazioni*, and *Laude*<sup>u</sup>, have been several times printed in various ancient collections, from which they were selected and published (with others by different persons of the same family) by Cionacci at Florence, in the year 1680<sup>v</sup>. The authors of the other poems in this collection are Lucretia the mother of Lorenzo, Picr Francesco his cousin, and Bernardo d' Alamanni de' Medici; but the reputation of Lorenzo as a poet will not be much increased by our assigning to him a decided superiority over his kindred. The poems of Lorenzo need not, however, the equivocal approbation of comparative praise, as they possess a great degree of positive excellence. In the following beautiful and affecting address to the Deity, the sublimity of the Hebrew original is

tempered

C H A P.  
V.Sacred  
poems.

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<sup>u</sup> Of the union of poetry and music in the *Laude Spirituali*, or sacred songs, Dr. Burney has traced the origin in Italy, and has given a specimen of a hymn to the Trinity, with the music, so early as the year 1336, from the MS. which he had himself consulted in the Magliabechi library. *v. Hist. of Music, vol. ii. pag. 326.*

<sup>v</sup> RIME SACRE dal Magnifico LORENZO DE' MEDICI il Vecchio, di Madonna LUCREZIA SUA MADRE, e d' altri della stessa famiglia. Raccolte e d' osservazioni corredate per Francesco Cionacci. In Firenze 1680.

C H A P. tempered with the softer notes of the Italian  
 V. muse \* :

## ORAZIONE.

Oda il sacro inno tutta la natura,  
 Oda la terra, e nubilosi e foschi  
 Turbini, e piove, che fan l' aere oscura.  
 Silenzj ombrosi, e solitari boschi :  
 Posate venti : udite cielì il canto,  
 Perchè il creato il creator conoschi.  
 Il creatore, e 'l tutto, e l' uno, io canto ;  
 Queste sacre orazion sieno esaudite  
 Dell' immortale Dio dal cecchio sauto.

II

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\* Since the above was written, I have discovered this hymn to be a paraphrase of "*The Secret Song, or Hymn of Regeneration,*" in the *Pyramid* of Hermes Trismegistus, who is said to have been the lawgiver of Egypt, and the inventor of hieroglyphic writing, and to have lived sixteen centuries before Christ. In the Laurentian library (*Plut. xxi Cod. 8. v. Band. Cat. 1. 668.*) is a translation of this work from the Greek by Ficino, bearing the date of 1463, and dedicated to Cosmo de' Medici ; from which Lorenzo undoubtedly translated or imitated the ensuing poem. The translation by Ficino also appears in his printed works, *vol. ii. p. 789. ed. Par. 1641.* An English version of the same author, said to be from the Arabic, by Dr. Everard, was published at London by *Thomas Brewster, 1657.* I scarcely need to observe, that the authenticity of this work is doubtful, it being generally regarded as a pious fraud, produced about the second century of the Christian æra.

Il Fattor canto, che ha distribuite  
 Le terre, e 'l ciel bilancia; e quel che vuole,  
 Che sien dell' ocean dolci acque uscite  
 Per nutrimento dell' umana prole,  
 Per quale ancor comanda, sopra splenda  
 Il fuoco, e perchè Dio adora e cole.  
 Grazie ciascun con una voce renda  
 A lui, che passa i ciel; qual vive e sente,  
 Crea, e convien da lui natura prenda.  
 Questo è solo e vero occhio della mente,  
 Delle potenzie; a lui le laude date,  
 Questo riceverà benignamente.  
 O forze mie, costui solo laudate;  
 Ogni virtù dell' alma questo nume  
 Laudi, conforme alla mia voluntate.  
 Santa è la cognizion, che del tuo lume  
 Splende, e canta illustrato in allegrezza  
 D' intelligibil luce il mio acume.  
 O tutte mie potenzie, in gran dolcezza  
 Meco cantate, o spirti miei costanti,  
 Cantate la costante sua fermezza.  
 La mia giustizia per me il giusto canti:  
 Laudate meco il tutto insieme e intero,  
 Gli spirti uniti, e' membri tutti quanti.  
 Canti per me la veritate il vero,  
 E tutto 'l nostro buon, canti esso bene,  
 Ben, che appetisce ciascun desidero.  
 O vita, o luce, da voi in noi viene  
 La benedizion; grazie t' ho io,  
 O Dio, da cui potenza ogn' atto viene.  
 Il vero tuo per me te lauda Dio;  
 Per me ancor delle parole sante  
 Riceve il mondo il sacrificio pio.

Questo

C H A P.  
V.

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Questo chieggon le forze mie clamante :  
 Cantato il tutto, e così son perfette  
 Da lor l' alte tue voglie tutte quantc.  
 Il tuo disio da te in te reflette ;  
 Ricevi il sacrificio, o santo Re,  
 Delle parole pie da ciascun dette.  
 O vita, salva tutto quel ch' é in me ;  
 Le tenebre, ove l' alma par vanegge  
 Luce illumina tu, che luce se'.  
 Spirto Dio, il verbo tuo la mente regge,  
 Opifice, che spirto a ciascun dai,  
 Tu sol se' Dio, onde ogni cosa ha legge.  
 L' uomo tuo questo chiama sempre mai ;  
 Per fuoco, aria, acqua, e terra t' ha pregato,  
 Per lo spirto, e per quel che creato hai.  
 Dall' eterno ho benedizion trovato,  
 E spero, come io son desideroso,  
 Trovar nel tuo disio tranquillo stato ,  
 Fuor di te Dio, non è vero riposo.

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All nature, hear the sacred song !  
 Attend, O earth, the solemn strain !  
 Ye whirlwinds wild that sweep along ;  
 Ye darkening storms of beating rain ;  
 Umbrageous glooms, and forests drear ;  
 And solitary deserts, hear !  
 Be still, ye winds, whilst to the Maker's praise  
 The creature of his power aspires his voice to raise.

O may the solemn breathing sound  
 Like incense rise before the throne,  
 Where he, whose glory knows no bound,  
 Great cause of all things, dwells alone.

'Tis

'Tis he I sing, whose powerful hand  
 Balanc'd the skies, outspread the land ;  
 Who spoke—from ocean's stores sweet waters came,  
 And burst resplendent forth the heaven-aspiring flame.

One general song of praise arise  
 To him whose goodness ceaseless flows ;  
 Who dwells enthron'd beyond the skies,  
 And life, and breath, on all bestows.  
 Great source of intellect, his ear  
 Benign receives our vows sincere  
 Rise then, my active powers, your task fulfil,  
 And give to him your praise, responsive to my will.

Partaker of that living stream  
 Of light, that pours an endless blaze,  
 O let thy strong reflected beam,  
 My understanding, speak his praise .  
 My soul, in stedfast love secure,  
 Praise him whose word is ever sure ;  
 To him, sole just, my sense of right incline,  
 Join every prostrate limb, my ardent spirit join.

Let all of good this bosom fires,  
 To him, sole good, give praises due  
 Let all the truth himself inspires,  
 Unite to sing him only true.  
 To him my every thought ascend,  
 To him my hopes, my wishes, bend.  
 From earth's wide bounds let louder hymns arise,  
 And his own word convey the pious sacrifice.

C H A P.  
V.

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In ardent adoration join'd,  
Obedient to thy holy will,  
Let all my faculties combin'd,  
Thy just desires, O God, fulfil.  
From thee deriv'd, eternal king,  
To thee our noblest powers we bring :  
O may thy hand direct our wandering way,  
O bid thy light arise, and chase the clouds away.

Eternal spirit<sup>1</sup> whose command  
Light, life, and being, gave to all,  
O hear the creature of thy hand,  
Man, constant on thy goodness call :  
By fire, by water, air, and earth,  
That soul to thee that owes its birth,  
By these, he supplicates thy blest repose,  
Absent from thee no rest his wandering spirit knows

The *Be ni*  
of Lorenzo.

Rise of the  
jocose Ita-  
lian satire.

The Italian language had not yet been applied to the purposes of satire, unless we may be allowed to apply that name to some parts of the *Commedia* of Dante, or the unpublished poem of Burchiello before noticed. The *Beoni*<sup>x</sup> of Lorenzo de' Medici is perhaps the earliest

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<sup>x</sup> The *Beoni*, or *Simposio* of Lorenzo, was first published by the Giunti, at Florence, 1568, with the sonnets of Burchiello, Alamanni, and Risoluto; and was afterwards inserted in the third volume of the collection of the

earliest production that properly ranks under this title; the *Canti Carnascialeschi*, or carnival songs, which we shall hereafter notice, and which are supposed by Bianchini to have set the first example of the jocose Italian satire, being a very different kind of composition<sup>v</sup>. This piece is

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C H A P.  
V

the *Opere Burlesche*, printed with the date of (London) 1723. In the former edition many of the objectionable passages are omitted, which are, however, restored in the latter. The editors of the poems of Lorenzo, published at Bergamo in 1763, have again mutilated this poem, having totally omitted the 8th capitolo, as *mancante e licenzioso*. In all the editions the work is left imperfect, and ends in the midst of the 9th capitolo; after which, in the edition of 1568, it is added, “*Dicon ch' el magnifico Autore lasciò l'opera così imperfetta.*”

“ Or questi *Canti Carnascialeschi*, fatti per intrattenere allegramente il popolo, io gli considero come non solamente primi, ma grandi avvanzamenti altresì della giocosa satira Italiana, a quali aggiugnere dobbiamo *I Beoni*, e *La Compagnia del Mantellaccio*, componimenti dello stesso Lorenzo de' Medici, i quali furono scritti da quel grand' uomo per sollievo delle pubbliche gravose occupazioni, e dagli studj piu sublimi delle scienze, &c.” *Bianchini, della satira Italiana, p. 33. Ed. Fir. 1729. La Compagnia del Mantellaccio* was not however written by Lorenzo, though it has frequently been attributed to him. In the earliest edition I have seen of this poem, which is without a date, but was probably printed before the year 1500, it appears without

C H A P. <sup>v</sup> is also composed in *terza rima*, and is a lively and severe reprehension of drunkenness. The author represents himself as returning, after a short absence, to Florence; when, as he approached towards the *Porta di Faenza*, he met many of his fellow-citizens, hastening along the road with the greatest precipitation. At length he had the good fortune to perceive an old acquaintance, to whom he gives the appellation of Bartolino, and whom he requests to explain to him the cause of this strange commotion.

Non altrimenti a parete ugelletto,  
 Sentendo d' altri ugelli i dolci versi,  
 Sendo in cammin, si volge a quell' effetto ;  
 Così lui, benchè appena può tenersi,  
 Che li pareva al fermarsi fatica ;  
 Che e' non s' acquista in fretta i passi persi.

—As when some bird a kindred note that hears,  
 His well-known mate with note responsive cheers,  
 He recogniz'd my voice ; and at the sound  
 Relax'd his speed ; but difficult he found

The

the name of its author. A more complete copy is annexed to the sonetti of Burchiello, Alamanni, and Risoluto, by the Giunti in 1568, where it is attributed to Lorenzo de' Medici ; but it is by no means possessed of those characteristic excellencies that distinguish the generality of his works.

The task to stop, and great fatigue it seem'd,  
 For whilst he spoke, each moment lost he deem'd;  
 Then thus :

C H A P.  
 V.

Bartolino informs him that they are all  
 hastening to the bridge of Rifredi, to partake of  
 a treat of excellent wine,

—che presti facci i lenti piedi.

That gives new vigour to the crippled feet.

He then characterizes his numerous com-  
 panions, who, although sufficiently discrimi-  
 nated in other respects, all agree in their  
 insatiable thirst. Three priests at length make  
 their appearance ; Lorenzo inquires

Colui chi è, che ha rosse le gote ?  
 E due con seco con lunghe mantella ?  
 Ed ei : ciascun di loro è sacerdote ;  
 Quel ch' è più grasso, è il Piovàn dell' Antella,  
 Perch' e' ti paja straccurato in viso,  
 Ha sempre seco pur la metadella :  
 L' altro, che drieto vien con dolce riso,  
 Con quel naso appuntato, lungo, e stranco,  
 Ha fatto anche del ber suo paradiso ;  
 Tien dignità, ch'è pastor Fiesolano,  
 Che ha in una sua tazza divozione.  
 Che ser Anton seco ha, suo cappellano.

C H A P.  
V.

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Per ogni loco, e per ogni stagione,  
 Sempre la fida tazza seco porta,  
 Non ti dico altro, sino a processione ;  
 E credo questa fia sempre sua scorta,  
 Quando lui muterà paese o corte,  
 Questa sarà che picchierà la porta :  
 Questa sarà con lui dopo la morte,  
 E messa seco fia nel monumento,  
 Acciochè morto poi lo riconforte ;  
 E questa lascerà per testamento.  
 Non hai tu visto a procession, quand' elli  
 Ch' ognun si fermi, fa comandamento ?  
 E i canonici chiama suoi fratelli ;  
 Tanto che tutti intorno li fan cerchio,  
 E mentre lo ricuopron co' mantelli,  
 Lui con la tazza, al viso fa coperchio.

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With rosy cheeks who follows next, my friend,  
 And who the gownmen that his steps attend ?  
 —Three pious priests—the chief in size and place,  
 Antella's rector—shews his vacant face ;  
 He who, with easy smile and pointed nose,  
 In social converse with the rector goes,  
 Of Fesulé a dignified divine,  
 Has wisely placed his paradise in wine.  
 The favourite cup that all his wants supplies  
 Within whose circle his devotion lies,  
 His faithful curate, Ser Antonio brings—  
 —See, at his side the goodly vessel swings.  
 On all occasions, and where'er he bends  
 His way, this implement its lord attends ;

Or

Or more officious, marches on before,  
 Prepares his road, and tinkles at the door ;  
 This on his death-bed shall his thoughts employ,  
 And with him in his monument shall lie.  
 Hast thou not seen—if e'er thou chanc'd to meet  
 The slow procession moving through the street,  
 As the superior issues his command,  
 His sable brethren close around him stand ;  
 Then, whilst in pious act with hands outspread,  
 Each with his cassock shrouds his leader's head,  
 His face the toper covers with his cup,  
 And, e'er the prayer be ended, drinks it up.

The fiery temperament of an habitual drunkard is described by the following whimsical hyperbole :

Come fu giunto in terra quell' umore,  
 Del fiero sputo, nell' arido smalto,  
 Unissi insieme l'umido e'l calore ;  
 E poi quella virtù, che vien da alto,  
 Li diede spirto, e nacquene un ranocchio,  
 E inanzi a gli occhi nostri prese un salto.

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He sneez'd and as the burning humour fell,  
 The dust with vital warmth began to swell,  
 Hot, moist, and dry, their genial powers united  
 Up sprang a frog, and leapt before our sight.

C H A P.  
V.

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So expeditious was Lorenzo in his compositions, that he is said to have written this piece nearly extempore, immediately after the incident on which it was founded took place. Posterity ought to regard this poem with particular favour, as it has led the way to some of the most agreeable and poignant productions of the Italian poets, and is one of the earliest models of the satires and *capitoli* of Berni<sup>a</sup>,  
Nelli,

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<sup>a</sup> Ex Caregio suo in urbem rediens, Satyræ in bibaces, argumento e re nato, inchoavit simul et absolvit; opus in suo genere consummatissimum, salibus plurimis et lepore conditum. Fuit enim in hoc homine cum gravitate urbanitas multa. Quum jocabatur, nihil hilarius: quum mordebat, nihil asperius.

*Valor. in vitâ Laur. p. 14.*

<sup>a</sup> Francesco Berni, availing himself of the examples of Burchiello, Franco, Luigi Pulci, and Lorenzo de' Medici, cultivated this branch of poetry with such success, as to have been generally considered as the inventor of it; whence it has obtained the name of *Bernesche*. The characteristic of this poetry is an extreme simplicity of provincial diction, which the Italians denominate *Idiotismo*. The most extravagant sentiments, the most severe strokes of satire, are expressed in a manner so natural and easy, that the author himself seems unconscious of the effect of his own work. Perhaps the only indication of a similar taste in this country appears in the writings of the facetious Peter Pindar; but with this distinction, that the wit of the Italians generally consists in giving a whimsical

Nelli<sup>b</sup>, Ariosto<sup>c</sup>, Bentivoglio<sup>d</sup>, and others, who form a numerous class of writers, in a mode of composition almost peculiar to the natives of Italy.

C H A P.  
V.

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Italy

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sical importance to subjects in themselves ridiculous or contemptible, whilst that of our countryman is for the most part shewn in rendering things of importance ridiculous. The principal work of Berni is his *Orlando Innamorato*, being the poem of Bojardo, newly versified, or rather travestied; in the third book and 7th chapter of which he has introduced, without much ceremony, some particulars of his own history, which the reader may not be displeas'd to find in the Appendix, No. XXXVIII.

<sup>b</sup> The satires of Pietro Nelli were published under the name of Andrea da Bergamo Ven. 1546, 1584.

<sup>c</sup> In the satires of Ariosto, the author has faithfully recorded his family circumstances and connections, the patronage with which he was honoured, and the mortifications and disappointments which he from time to time experienced: whilst his independent spirit, and generous resentment of the oppressive mandates of his superiors, are exhibited in a lively and interesting style. In the *Orlando Furioso* we admire the poet; but in the satires of Ariosto, we are familiarized with and love the man.

<sup>d</sup> Ercole Bentivoglio was of the same family that for many years held the sovereignty of Bologna. His satires do him infinite credit as a poet, and are scarcely inferior to those of Ariosto, his friend and contemporary.

## C H A P.

## V

*Stanze Con  
tadinesche.*

Italy has always been celebrated for the talents of its *Improvvisatori*, or extempore poets. Throughout Tuscany, in particular, this custom of reciting verses has for ages been the constant and most favourite amusement of the villagers and country inhabitants. At some times the subject is a trial of wit between two peasants; on other occasions a lover addresses his mistress in a poetical oration, expressing his passion by such images as his uncultivated fancy suggests, and endeavouring to amuse and engage her by the liveliest sallies of humour. These recitations, in which the eclogues of Theocritus are realized, are delivered in a tone of voice between speaking and singing, and are accompanied with the constant motion of one hand, as if to measure the time and regulate the harmony; but they have an additional charm from the simplicity of the country dialect, which abounds with phrases highly natural and appropriate, though incompatible with the precision of a regular language, and forms what is called the *Lingua Contadinesca*\*, of which specimens may be found  
in

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\* Few attempts have been made in England to adapt the provincial idiom of the inhabitants to the language of poetry. Neither the *Shepherd's Calendar* of Spenser, nor the

in the writings of Boccaccio<sup>f</sup>. The idea of C H A P.  
V  
adapting this language to poetry first occurred  
to

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the *Pastorals* of Gay, possess that native simplicity, and close adherence to the manners and language of country life, which ought to form the basis of this kind of composition. Whether the dialect of Scotland be more favourable to attempts of this nature, or whether we are to seek for the fact in the character of the people, or the peculiar talents of the writers, certain it is, that the idiom of that country has been much more successfully employed in poetical composition, than that of any other part of these kingdoms, and that this practice may there be traced to a very early period. In later times, the beautiful dramatic poem of *The Gentle Shepherd* has exhibited rusticity without vulgarity, and elegant sentiment without affectation. Like the heroes of Homer, the characters of this piece can engage in the humblest occupations without degradation. If to this production we add the beautiful and interesting poems of the Ayrshire ploughman, we may venture to assert, that neither in Italy nor in any other country has this species of poetry been cultivated with greater success. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is perhaps unrivalled in its kind in any language.

<sup>f</sup> *Decam. Giorn. VIII Nov 2.* Bentivegni del Marzo being interrogated whither he went, replies, *Gnaffe, Sere, in buona verità io vo infino a Citta per alcuna mia vicenda, e porto queste cose a Sere Bonacorri di Ginestrato, che m'ajuti di non so che m'ha fatto richiedere per una comparigione del parentorio per lo pericolator suo al giudice del deficio.* That the ancient Romans had also a marked distinction between

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C H A P. V. to Lorenzo de' Medici, who, in his verses intitled *La Nencia da Barberino*<sup>g</sup>, has left a very pleasing specimen of it, full of lively imagery and rustic pleasantry<sup>h</sup>. This piece no sooner appeared, than Luigi Pulci attempted to emulate it, in another poem, written in the same stanza, and called *La Beca da Dicomano*<sup>i</sup>; but instead of the more chastised and delicate humour of Lorenzo, the poem of Pulci partakes of the character of his

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the written tongue, and the dialect of the country inhabitants, may be inferred from the following lines of Tibullius. *Lib. ii. Eleg. 3.*

Ipsa Venus laetos jam nunc migravit in agros,  
Verbaque aratoris rustica discit amor.

<sup>g</sup> *Nencia* is probably the rustic appellation of *Lorenza* or *Lorenzina*; thus from *Lorenzo*, in the same dialect, is formed *Nencio* and *Renzo*; and from the diminutive *Lorenzino*, *Nencino* and *Cencino*. In this poem, the rustic, Valerio, also addresses his mistress by the augmentative of *Nenciozza*. These variations are frequently used in the Florentine dialect to express the estimation in which the subject of them is held: thus *mo*, and *ma*, denote a certain degree of affection and tenderness, similar to that which is felt for infants; whilst the augmentatives of *uccio*, *uccia*, *one*, *ona*, usually imply ridicule or contempt.

<sup>h</sup> A few *stanze* from the original will be found in the Appendix, No. XXXIX.

<sup>i</sup> Published with *La Nencia*, in the *Canzoni a ballo*.

*Flor. 1568.*

his *Morgante*, and wanders into the burlesque and extravagant. In the following century, Michelagnolo Buonaroti, the nephew of the celebrated artist of the same name, employed this style with great success in his admirable rustic comedy, *La Tancia*<sup>k</sup>; but perhaps, the most beautiful instance that Italy has produced, is the work of Francesco Baldovini, who, towards the close of the last century, published his *Lamento di Cecco da Varlungo*<sup>l</sup>; a piece of inimitable wit and simplicity, and which seems to have carried this species of poetry to its highest pitch of perfection.

C H A P.  
V.

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If, during the darkness of the middle ages, the drama, that great school of human life and manners,

State of  
the Italian  
drama.

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<sup>k</sup> The learned Anton Maria Salvini has given an excellent edition of this comedy, with another by the same author, intitled *La Fiera*. Firenz. 1726. The annotations of Salvini upon these pieces are highly and deservedly esteemed.

<sup>l</sup> An elegant edition of this poem was also published at Florence in 1755, in quarto, with copious notes and illustrations by Orazio Marrini; in which the editor has, with great industry and learning, traced the history of rustic poetry in Italy, from the time of Lorenzo de' Medici, to whom he attributes the invention of it (*Pref. p. 10.*), to that of his author Baldovini; and has illustrated the text in the most judicious and satisfactory manner.

C H A P.             
 V  
 manners, as established among the ancients, was totally lost, it was not without a substitute in most of the nations of Europe, though of a very imperfect and degraded kind. To this factitious species of dramatic representation, which led the minds of the people from the imitation of the ancient Greeks and Romans, and closed their eyes to their excellencies, we are probably to attribute the slow progress which, in the revival of letters, took place in this important department. Innumerable attempts have indeed been made to trace the origin of the modern drama, and the Italians, the Germans, the Spaniards, the French, and the English<sup>m</sup>, have successively claimed

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<sup>m</sup> Several of our most celebrated critics have warmly contended for the antiquity of the English stage, which they suppose may be traced higher than the Italian by 150 years, in proof of which is adduced the miracle-play of St. Catherine, said to be written by Geoffry, abbot of St. Alban's, and performed at Dunstable in the year 1110. *v. Malone's Shakspeare, in Pref.* Hence we might be led to conclude that this miracle-play was composed in dialogue; but there is reason to conjecture that the whole consisted of dumb shew, and that the author's only merit lay in the arrangement of the incidents and machinery. Of the same nature were the grotesque exhibitions, well known in this country under the name of the harrowing of Hell (*Tyrwhit's Chaucer, v. iv. p. 243.*); and the representations at Florence, mentioned by Villani (*lib. viii. c. 10.*) and Ammirato (*lib. iv.*), who inform

claimed priority of each other. But questions of this kind scarcely admit of decision. Imitation is natural to man, in every state of society; and where shall we draw the line of distinction between the polished productions of Racine, and

C H A P  
V

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inform us, that in the year 1304 the inhabitants of the district of S. Bologno publicly proclaimed that they would give an insight into the next world to those who would attend upon the bridge of Carrara. A great number of people were accordingly collected together to witness a representation of the infernal regions, which was displayed in boats or rafts upon the river. In this spectacle the damned appeared to be tormented by demons in various forms, and with dreadful shrieks struck the spectators with terror: when, in the midst of the performance, the bridge, which was of wood, gave way, and the unfortunate attendants became the principal actors in the drama. The interludes preserved among the Harleian MSS. said to have been performed at Chester in 1327, and adverted to by Mr. Malone, are manifestly antedated by nearly two centuries; nor do I conceive it possible to adduce a dramatic composition in the English language that can indisputably be placed before the year 1500, previous to which time they were common in Italy; though possibly not so early as Mr. Malone allows, when he informs us, on the authority of the *Histriomastix*, that pope Pius II. about the year 1416, composed, and caused to be acted before him, on Corpus Christi day, a mystery, in which was represented the court of the kingdom of heaven. Æneas Sylvius, who assumed that title, was not raised to the pontifical dignity till the year 1458. In the extensive catalogue of his writings by Apostolo Zeno (*Dissert. Voss.*) I find no notice of any such composition

CHAP. V. and the pantomimes of Bartholomew fair?

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This propensity to imitation, operating upon the religious or superstitious views of the clergy, produced at length that species of exhibition which was formerly known throughout Europe by the name of Mysteries; but it is probable, that for a long time they were merely calculated to strike the eyes of the spectators. In the city of Florence they were often prepared at the public expence, and at times by rich individuals, for the purpose of displaying their wealth, and conciliating the public favour. Four days in the year were solemnly celebrated by the four districts of the city, in honour of their patron saints; but the feast of St. John, the tutelary saint of Florence, was provided, not at the expence of the particular district which bore his name, but of the city at large. The fabrication of these spectacles employed the abilities of the best artists and engineers of the time".

It was not, however, till the age of Lorenzo de' Medici, that these ill-judged representations began to assume a more respectable form, and to be united with dialogue. One of the earliest examples of the sacred drama is the *Rappresentazione*

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" Vasari, *vita di Cecca Ingegnere e di Filippo Brunelleschi.*

*sentazione* of *S. Giovanni e S. Paolo*<sup>o</sup>, by Lorenzo de Medici. Cionacci conjectures that this piece was written at the time of the marriage of Maddalena, one of the daughters of Lorenzo, to Francesco Cibo, nephew of Innocent VIII. and that it was performed by his own children; there being many passages which seem to be intended as precepts for such as are entrusted with the direction of a state, and which particularly point out the line of conduct which he and his ancestors had pursued, in obtaining and preserving their influence in Florence<sup>p</sup>. The  
*coadjutors*

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<sup>o</sup> Of this piece I have two ancient editions without date; one of which, printed at Florence by *Francesco Bonacorsi*, bears sufficient evidence of its having been published during the life of the author. “Se errore alcuno,” says the editor, “trovate nella impressa opera, quello non ascriviate alle occupazioni del nostro magnifico Lorenzo; sed indubitatamente lo imputate allo impressore; perochè chi è solerte, che significa in omni re prudente, in nessuno tempo è occupato; ma occupato è sempre che non è solerte.” It is also republished by Cionacci amongst the sacred poems of Lorenzo and others. *Fir.* 1680.

<sup>p</sup> Sappiate che chi vuol popol regere,  
 Debbe pensare al bene universale,  
 E chi vuol altri dalli error correggere,  
 Sforzis prima lui di non far male;

C. H. A. P.  
V.

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coadjutors of Lorenzo, in this attempt to meliorate the imperfect state of the drama, were Feo Belcari, Bernardo Pulci and his wife Madonna Antonia de' Tanini<sup>9</sup>. That Lorenzo had it in contemplation to employ dramatic composition in other subjects is also apparent. Among his poems published at the end of the present work will be found an attempt to substitute the deities of Greece and Rome, for the saints and martyrs of  
of

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Però conviensi giusta vita eleggere,  
Perchè lo esempio al popol molto vale ;  
E quel che fa il Signor, fanno poi molti,  
Che nel Signor son tutti gli occhi volti.

It must be observed, that St. John and St. Paul, the heroes of this drama, are not the personages of those names mentioned in the sacred writings, but two eunuchs, attendant on the daughter of Constantine the Great, who are put to death by Julian the apostate, for their adherence to the Christian religion.

<sup>9</sup> A considerable collection of the ancient editions of the *Rappresentazioni* of the fifteenth century, printed without date, and formerly in the Pinelli library, has fallen into my hands. I may say of them, with Apostolo Zeno, "trattone alcuni che hanno qualche suco di buon sapere, mescolato però di agro & di spiacevole, son rancidumi ed inezie ; cavate anche da legende apocrifte, e da impure fonti, con basso e pedestre stile, e d'arte prive, e di grazia poetica."

*Annot. alla Bib. Ital. di Fontan. v. i. p. 489.*

of the Christian church ; but the jealous temper of the national religion seems for a time to have restrained the progress which might otherwise have been expected in this important department of letters. Some years after the death of Lorenzo, a more decided effort was made by Bernardo Accolti, in his drama of *Virginia*, founded on one of the novels of Boccaccio ; and this again was followed, at a short interval, by the *Sofonisba* of Trissino, and the *Rosmunda* of Giovanni Rucellai ; two pieces which are  
justly

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<sup>r</sup> *Decam. Gior. iii. Nov. 9.* The argument of this piece is given by Accolti in the following sonetto, prefixed to the edition of Flor. 1514 :

Virginia amando el Re guarisce, e chiede  
 Di Salerno el gran principe in marito ;  
 Qual costretto a sposarla, e poi partito  
 Per mai tornar fin lei viva si vede :

Cerca Virginia scrivendo, mercede,  
 Ma el principe da molta ira assalito  
 Gli domanda, s' a lei vuol sia redito,  
 Due condizion qual impossibil crede.

Però Virginia sola, e travestita,  
 Partendo, ogn' impossibil conditione  
 Adempie al fin con prudentia infinita.

Onde el principe pien d' amirazione  
 Lei di favore, e grazia rivestita  
 Sposa di nuovo con molta affectione.

C H A P. V. justly considered as the first regular productions of the drama in modern times.

The musical drama.

The origin of the musical drama, or Italian opera, is by general consent attributed to Polittiano, who gave the first example of it in his *Orfeo*. The idea of this species of composition seems to have been first suggested by the Eclogues of the ancient Greek and Roman authors; nor does there appear to have been any extraordinary exertion of genius in adapting to music the sentiments and language of pastoral life; but it should be remembered, that the intrinsic merit of any discovery is to be judged of rather by the success with which it is attended, than by the difficulties that were to be surmounted. Of the plan and conduct of this dramatic attempt, a particular account has been given by a very judicious and amusing author\*. Little, however, is to be expected in point of arrangement, when we understand that it was the hasty production of two days, and was intended merely for the gratification of Gonzaga, cardinal of Mantua, before whom it was first represented. Accordingly, its principal merit consists in the simplicity

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\* v. Dr. Burney's *Gen. Hist. of Music*, v. iv. p. 14.

simplicity and elegance of some of the Lyric pieces with which it is interspersed. From the early editions of this poem, it appears that the character of Orpheus was first exhibited by the celebrated *Improvvisatore* Baccio Ugolini, whose personal obligations to the cardinal occasioned the introduction of the beautiful Latin ode, in which, by a singular exertion of the *quidlibet audendi*, the Theban bard is introduced singing the praises of the cardinal, but which was afterwards superseded by the verses in praise of Hercules, generally found in the subsequent editions.

C H A P  
V.

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In a dedicatory epistle prefixed to this piece, and addressed to Carlo Carnale, the author, whilst he professes himself willing to comply with the wishes of some of his friends by its publication, openly protests against the propriety of such a measure<sup>t</sup>. A species of conduct which, in modern times, might perhaps savour of affectation; but of this we may safely acquit Politiano, who, in the midst of his learned labours,

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<sup>t</sup> Viva adunque poi che così ad voi piace, ma ben vi protesto che tale pietà è una expressa crudeltà; e di questo mio giudizio desidero ne sia questa epistola testimonio. *Pol. in Pref.*

C. H. A. P. labours, certainly regarded a slight composition  
 V. in the vulgar tongue as much below his talents  
 and his character.

*Cant: Car-  
 nalescibi.*

During the time of carnival, it was customary to celebrate that festival at Florence with extraordinary magnificence. Among other amusements, it had long been usual to collect together, at great expence, large processions of people, sometimes representing the return of triumphant warriors with trophies, cars, and similar devices; and at other times some story of ancient chivalry. These exhibitions afforded ample scope for the inventive talents of the Florentine artists, who contended with each other in rendering them amusing, extravagant, or terrific. The pageantry was generally displayed by night, as being the season best calculated to conceal the defects of the performance, and to assist the fancy of the spectators. "It was certainly," says Vasari, "an extraordinary sight, to observe twenty or thirty couple of horsemen, most richly dressed in appropriate characters, with six or eight attendants upon each, habited in an uniform manner, and carrying torches to the amount of several hundreds, after whom usually followed

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<sup>u</sup> *Vasari, vita di Piero di Cosimo.*

“lowed a triumphal car with the trophies and  
 “spoils of victory”—of imaginary victories  
 indeed, but not on that account less calculated  
 to display the ingenuity of the inventor, or less  
 pleasing in the estimation of the philosopher.  
 The promised gaiety of the evening was some-  
 times unexpectedly interrupted by a moral  
 lesson, and the artist seized the opportunity of  
 exciting those more serious emotions, which the  
 astonished beholders had supposed it was his  
 intention to dissipate. Thus Piero di Cosimo,  
 a painter of Florence, appalled the inhabitants  
 by a representation of the triumph of Death, in  
 which nothing was omitted that might impress  
 upon their minds the sense of their own mor-  
 tality<sup>v</sup>. Prior, however, to the time of Lorenzo  
 de'

C H A P.  
 V.

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<sup>v</sup> Of this exhibition, which took place about the year  
 1512, Vasari has left a very particular account. (*Vita*  
*di Piero di Cosimo*.) The same author has preserved the  
 following lines of the *Carro della Morte*, sung upon this  
 occasion, which was the composition of Antonio Ala-  
 manni :

“ Morti siam come vedete,  
 “ Così morti vedrem voi.  
 “ Fummo già come voi siete,  
 “ Voi sarete come noi.”

The whole piece is published in the *Canti Carnascialeschi*,  
 p. 131. Ed. 1559.

C H A P. V. de' Medici, these exhibitions were calculated merely to amuse the eye, or were at most accompanied by the insipid madrigals of the populace. It was he who first taught his countrymen to dignify them with sentiment, and add to their poignancy by the charms of poetry<sup>w</sup>. It is true, the examples which he has himself given of these compositions, in the *Canti Carnascialeschi*, or carnival songs, being calculated for the gratification of the multitude, and devoted only to the amusement of an evening, exhibit not any great energy of thought, nor are they distinguished by an equal degree of poetical ornament with his other works. Their merits are therefore principally to be estimated by the purity of the Florentine diction, which is allowed to be there preserved in its most unadulterated state<sup>x</sup>. The intervention and patronage of  
Lorenzo

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<sup>w</sup> Questo modo di festeggiare fu trovato dal Mag. Lorenzo de' Medici, uno dei primi e più chiari splendori ch' abbia havuto non pure la illustrissima e nobilissima casa vostra, e Firenze, ma Italia ancora, e il mondo tutto\* quanto; degno veramente di non esser ricordato mai nè senza lagrime, nè senza riverenza.

*Il Lasca, ad Sig. Francesco de' Medici. Canti Carnascialeschi, in pref. Flor. 1559.*

\* These pieces, as well as the other poems of Lorenzo de' Medici, are frequently cited by the academicians della  
Crusca,

Lorenzo gave new spirit to these amusements. Induced by his example, many of his contemporaries employed their talents in these popular compositions, which were continued by a numerous succession of writers, till the middle of the ensuing century, when they were diligently collected by Anton Francesco Grazzini, commonly called *Il Lasca*, and published at Florence in the year 1559<sup>y</sup>.

The

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Crusca, in their celebrated dictionary, as authorities for the Italian tongue; and consequently compose a part of those works selected for the purity of their style, and known by the name of *Testi di lingua*.

<sup>y</sup> This was not, however, the first edition of the *Canti Ciurnascaleschi*. Zeno, in his notes on the *Bibl. Ital.* of Fontanini (v. ii. p. 83.), has cited two editions printed without note of date or place, but prior, as he thought, to the year 1500; the first intitled *Canzone per andare in Muschera*, the latter *Ballattette del Magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici, di M. Agnolo Poliziano, e di Bernardo Giamburlari*. The edition of 1559 is, however, the first general collection of these pieces, towards which a great number of the natives of Florence contributed. Of this edition the greater part of the copies are mutilated, having been deprived of 100 pages about the middle of the book; viz. from page 298 to page 398, in which space were contained the pieces of Battista dell' Ottonajo, whose brother Paolo having remonstrated against their publication in a surreptitious manner, and in an inaccurate state, had sufficient

C H A P.  
e v.

*Canzoni a  
ballo.*

The *Canzoni a ballo* are compositions of a much more singular and inexplicable kind. From their denomination it is probable, that they were sung by companies of young people, in concert with the music to which they danced; and the measure of the verse appears to be so constructed as to fall in with the different movements and pauses. It may perhaps be thought that

sufficient influence with the government of Florence to obtain an order that the printer, Torrentino, should deliver up all the copies in his hands, which appeared to be 495; after a year's litigation the poems of Ottonajo were ordered to be cut out from the book, and Paolo was left at liberty to publish another edition of them, which he accordingly did. This dispute gave rise to another contest during the present century, between the Canonico Biscioni, late librarian of the grand duke's library at Florence, and Sig. Rinaldo Maria Bracci, who published at Pisa, under the date of Cosmopolis 1750, a new edition of the *Canti Carnascialeschi*, in two volumes quarto, including those of Ottonajo, from the impression of his brother Paolo; in the introduction to which he justifies the decree that suppressed these pieces in the edition of 1559, contrary to the opinion of Biscioni, who considered it as severe and unjust. The dispute seems of little importance; but the result of it was unfavourable to the modern editor, whose elegant and apparently correct edition of these poems has never obtained that credit amongst the literati of Italy, to which, on many accounts, it appears to be entitled. I shall give one of these poems in the Appendix, being the Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne, by Lorenzo de' Medici. v. *App. No. XL.*

that the extreme licentiousness of some of these pieces militates against such an idea, but in the state of manners in Italy at that period, this objection can have but little weight. Indeed, if we trace to its source this favourite amusement, we shall probably discover, that a dance is in fact only a figurative representation of the passion of love, exhibited with more or less delicacy according to the character and state of civilization of those who practise it. To improve its relish, and heighten its enjoyment, seems to have been the intention of the *Canzoni a ballo*. From the known affability of Lorenzo de' Medici, and the festivity of his disposition, as well as from other circumstances<sup>z</sup>, there is  
reason

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<sup>z</sup> In the edition of the *Canzoni a ballo*, published at Florence in 1568, the title-page is ornamented with a print in wood, of which the following is a copy, representing twelve women dancing before the palace of the Medici, known by the arms affixed to it, and singing, as we may presume, a dancing song. Towards the front of the print appears Lorenzo de' Medici; two females kneel before him, one of whom presents him with a garland taken from her head, of which he seems to decline the acceptance. Behind Lorenzo stands Agnolo Politiano, his associate in this work. This print seems to have a more particular reference to one of the songs written by Lorenzo, which became extremely popular by the name of *Ben venga Maggio*, and which the reader will find in the Appendix, No. XLI. In an ancient collection of  
*Laude*,

CHAPTER V. reason to conclude, that he was accustomed to  
 mingle with the populace on these mirthful occasions,



*Laude*, or hymns, printed at Venice in 1512, I find that several of these devout pieces are directed to be sung to the air of *Ben venga Maggio*. From this collection it appears

sions, and to promote and direct their amusements. Nor are we to wonder that the arbiter of the politics of Italy should be employed in the streets of Florence, participating the mirth, and directing the evolutions, of a troop of dancing girls. On the contrary, this versatility of talent and of disposition may be considered as the most distinguishing feature in the character of this extraordinary man; who, from the most important concerns of state, and the highest speculations of philosophy, could stoop to partake of the humblest diversions of the populace, and who in every department obtained, by general consent, the supreme direction and control.

Thus far we have taken a review of the chief part of the poems which yet remain of  
Lorenzo

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appears that it was then a general custom in Italy, as it now is, or lately was, the practice of a certain sect in this country, to sing pious hymns to the most profane and popular melodies, for the purpose of stimulating the languid piety of the performers, by an association with the vivacity of sensual enjoyments. Thus the hymn *Jesu sommo diletto*, is sung to the music of *Leggiadra damigella*; *Jesu fammi morire*, to that of *Vaga bella e gentile*; *Genitrice di Dio*, to that of *Dolce anima mia*; and *Crucifisso a capo chino*, to that of *Una Donna d'amor fino*, one of the most indecent pieces in the *Canzoni a ballo*.

C H A P. e<sup>v</sup>. Lorenzo de' Medici, and have seen him, by his own example, stimulating his countrymen to the pursuit of literature. The restorer of the Lyric poetry of Italy, the promoter of the dramatic, the founder of the satiric, rustic, and other modes of composition, he is not merely entitled to the rank of a poet, but may justly be placed among the distinguished few, who, by native strength, have made their way through paths before untrodden. Talent may follow and improve; emulation and industry may polish and refine; but genius alone can break those barriers that restrain the throng of mankind in the common track of life.

Critique  
of Pico of  
Mirandula,  
on the  
poems of  
Lorenzo

The poetical merits of Lorenzo de' Medici were perceived and acknowledged by his contemporaries. Were we to collect the various testimonies of respect and admiration that were produced in honour of him in different parts of Italy, they would form a very unreasonable addition to the present volume. We must not, however, omit to notice the opinion of Pico of Mirandula, who, in a letter addressed to Lorenzo, has entered into a full discussion of the character of his writings, comparing them with those of his predecessors Dante and Petrarca, and contending that they unite the vigour of thought apparent in the former, with the harmony

mony and polish of the latter<sup>a</sup>. Succeeding critics have, however, appealed against a decision, which seems to attribute to Lorenzo de' Medici a superiority over the great masters of the Tuscan poetry; and have considered the opinion of Pico either as an instance of courtly adulation, or as a proof of the yet imperfect taste of the age<sup>b</sup>. •Without contending for the opinion

C H A P.  
V.

<sup>a</sup> This letter, which has occasioned so much animadversion, is given in the Appendix, No. XLII.

<sup>b</sup> “ A questo s’aggiunge che Giovanni Pico Conte della Miranda, uomo di singolarissimo ingegno e dottrina, in una lettera latina, la quale egli scrisse al Mag. Lorenzo de’ Medici vecchio—non solo lo pareggia, ma lo prepone indubitamente così a Dante come al Petrarca, perchè al Petrarca (dic’ egli) mancano le cose, cioè i concetti, e a Dante le parole, cioè l’eloquenza; dove in Lorenzo non si desideremo nè l’una nè l’altre. Le quali cose egli mai affermate così precisamente non avrebbe, se i giudicj di quel secol fossero stati sani, e gli orecchi non corrotti.” *Varchi Ercolano*, p. 27. *Ed Com.* 1744. The same author, however, after acquitting Pico of the charge of adulation, subjoins: “ Nè sarebbe mancata materia al Pico di potere veramente commendare Lorenzo, senza biasimare non veramente il Petrarca, e Dante; perchè nel vero egli con M. Agnolo Poliziano, e Girolamo Benevieni furono i primi i quali cominciassero nel comporre a ritirarsi e discostarsi dal volgo, e, se non imitare, a volere, o parere di volere imitare il Petrarca, e Dante, lasciando in parte quella maniera del tutto vile, e plebea, la quale  
“ assai

CHAP. V. opinion of Pico in its full extent, we may be allowed to remark, that the temper and character, both of him and of Lorenzo, are equally adverse to the idea, that the one could offer, or the other be gratified, with unmerited approbation and spurious praise; and that Pico was not deficient in the qualifications of a critic may appear even from the very letter which has been cited as an impeachment of his taste. For although he there treats the writings of Dante and Petrarca with great severity, and asserts not only the equality, but, in a certain point of view, the superiority of those of Lorenzo, yet he clearly proves that he had attentively studied these productions, and by many acute and just observations demonstrates, that he was well qualified to appreciate their various merits and defects. Nor does Pico, in avowing this opinion, stand alone amongst his countrymen. Even in the most enlightened period of the ensuing century, the pretensions of Lorenzo de' Medici to rank with the great fathers of the Italian tongue, are supported by an author whose testimony cannot be suspected of partiality, and whose authority will be acknowledged as

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“ assai chiaramente si riconosce ancora eziandio nel  
 “ *Monfante Maggiore* di Luigi Pulci, e nel *Curfio Calvaneo*  
 “ di Luca suo Fratello.”

as generally as his writings are known<sup>c</sup>. The most celebrated literary historians of Italy, in adverting to the age of Lorenzo, have acknowledged the vigour of his genius, and the success of his labours; Crescimbeni, in tracing the vicissitudes of the Tuscan poetry, informs us, that it had risen to such perfection under the talents of Petrarca, that not being susceptible of farther improvement, it began, in the common course of earthly things, to decline; and in a short time was so debased and adulterated, as nearly to revert to its pristine barbarity. “ But at this “ critical juncture,” says the same well-informed author<sup>d</sup>, “ a person arose who preserved it “ from ruin, and who snatched it from the “ dangerous precipice that seemed to await it. “ This

C H A P.

V.

Opinions of other authors on the same subject.

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<sup>c</sup> Non so adunque come sia bene in luogo d' arricchir questa lingua, a darle spirito, grandezza, e lume, farla povera, esile, umile ed oscura, e cercare di metterla in tante angustie che ognuno sia sforzato ad imitare solamente il Petrarca e'l Boccaccio, e che nella lingua non si debba ancor credere al Poliziano, a Lorenzo de' Medici, a Francesco Diaceto e ad alcuni altri, che pur sono Toscani, e forse di non minor dottrina e giudizio, che si fosse il Petrarca e'l Boccaccio.

*Castiglione Il Cortegiano, lib. i.*

<sup>d</sup> *Della volgar Poesia. v. ii. p. 323.*

CHAP. V. " This was Lorenzo de' Medici, from whose

abilities it received that support of which it then stood so greatly in need; who, amidst the thickest gloom of that barbarism which had spread itself throughout Italy, exhibited, whilst yet a youth, a simplicity of style, a purity of language, a happiness of versification, a propriety of poetical ornament, and a fullness of sentiment, that recalled once more the graces and the sweetness of Petrarca."

If, after paying due attention to these authorities, we consider, that the two great authors with whose excellencies Lorenzo is supposed to contend, employed their talents chiefly in one species of composition, whilst his were exercised in various departments; that during a long life, devoted to letters, they had leisure to correct, to polish, and to improve their works, so as to bear the inspection of critical minuteness, whilst those of Lorenzo must in general have been written with almost extemporaneous haste, and, in some instances, scarcely perhaps obtained the advantages of a second revisal; we must be compelled to acknowledge, that the inferiority of his reputation as a poet has not arisen from a deficiency of genius, but must be attributed to the avocations of his public life, the multiplicity of his domestic concerns, the interference of other studies and amusements, and his untimely death.

death. When therefore we estimate the number, the variety, and the excellence of his poetical works, it must be admitted, that if those talents, which, under so many obstacles and disadvantages, are still so conspicuous, had been directed to one object, and allowed to exert themselves to their full extent, it is in the highest degree probable, that, in point of poetic excellence, Italy had not boasted a more illustrious name than that of Lorenzo de' Medici.

CHAP.  
V.

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In dismissing this subject, it may yet be allowed to point out one tribute of respect to the poetical character of Lorenzo, which may serve at the same time to illustrate a passage in an author, who, though a modern, deserves the appellation of classical. This will be found at the close of the *Sylva* of Politiano, intitled *Nutricia*, which will scarcely be intelligible to the reader, without some previous acquaintance with the writings of Lorenzo, as the author has there, in a small compass, particularly celebrated most of the productions of his patron's pen.

The name of Lorenzo is celebrated in the *Nutricia* of Politiano.

Nec

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Se la sua vita fosse più lungamente durata, e se quella che egli menò, fosse stata più sciolta dalle cure famigliari, e politiche, sto per dire, che avrebbe ancor quel secolo avuto il suo Petrarca.

*Marat. della Perfetta Poesia Ital. v. i. p. 20.*

C H A P. Nec tamen ALIGERUM fraudarim hoc munus  
 V.  
 DANTEM,

Per Stygiâ, per stellas, mediique per ardua montis  
 Pulchrâ BEATRICIS sub virginis ora volantem.  
 Quicquid cupidineum repetit PETRARCHA triumphum.  
 Et qui bis quinque centum argumenta diebus  
 Pingit, et obscuro qui semina monstrat amoris :  
 Unde tibi immensæ veniunt præconia laudis,  
 Ingenius, opibusque potens, FLORENTIA mater.

Tu verò æternum per avi vestigia COSMI,  
 Perque patris (quis enim pietate insignior illo ?)  
 Ad famam eluctans, cujus securus ad umbram  
 Fulmina bellorum ridens procul aspicit Arnus,

Nor ALIGHIERI, shall thy praise be lost,  
 Who from the confines of the Stygian coast,  
 As BEATRICE led thy willing steps along,  
 To realms of light, and starry mansions sprung ;  
 Nor PETRARCH thou, whose soul-dissolving strains  
 Rehearse, O love ! thy triumphs and thy pains ;  
 Nor HE, whose hundred tales the means impart,  
 To wind the secret snare around the heart,  
 Be these thy boast, O FLORENCE ! these thy pride,  
 Thy sons ! whose genius spreads thy glory wide.

And thou LORENZO, rushing forth to fame,  
 Support of COSMO's and of PIERO's name !  
 Safe in whose shadow ARNO hears from far,  
 And smiles to hear, the thunder of the war ;

Mæoniae caput, O LAURENS, quem plena senatu  
 Curia, quemque gravi populus stupet ore loquentem,  
 Si fas est, tua nunc humili patere otia cantu,  
 Secessusque sacros avidas me ferre sub auras.  
 Namque importunas mulcentem pectine curas,  
 Umbrosæ recolo te quondam vallis in antrum  
 Monticolam traxisse deam; vidi ipse corollas  
 Nexantem, numerosque tuos prona aure bibentem:  
 Viderunt socii pariter, seu grata Dianæ  
 Nympha fuit, quamquam nullæ sonugre pharetræ:  
 Seu soror Aonidum, et nostræ tunc hospita sylvæ.  
 Illa tibi, lauruque tuâ, semperque recenu  
 Flore comam cingens, pulchrum inspiravit amorem,  
 Mox et Apollineis audentem opponere nervis  
 Pana leves calamos nemoris sub rupe Pheræi,

Endow'd with arts the listening throng to move,  
 The senate's wonder, and the people's love,  
 Chief of the tuneful train! thy praises hear,  
 —If praise of mine can charm thy cultur'd ear;  
 For once, the lonely woods and vales among,  
 A mountain-goddess caught thy soothing song,  
 As swelled the notes, she pierc'd the winding dell,  
 And sat beside thee in thy secret cell;  
 I saw her hands the laurel chaplet twine,  
 Whilst with attentive ear she drank the sounds divine.  
 Whether the nymph to Dian's train allied,  
 —But sure no quiver rattled at her side;  
 Or from th' Aonian mount, a stranger guest,  
 She chose awhile in these green woods to rest—

C H A P. Carmine dum celebras <sup>f</sup>, e<sup>q</sup>dem tibi virgo vocanti  
 Astitit, et sanctos nec opina affavit honores.  
 Ergo et pæcticanum per te Galatea Corinthum <sup>g</sup>  
 Jam non dura videt: nam quis flagrantia nescit  
 Nota, Cuprlineoque ardentem igne querelas? <sup>f</sup>  
 Seu tibi, Phœbeis audax concurrere flammis <sup>h</sup>  
 Claro stæla die; seu lutea flore sequaci

Thro' all thy frame while softer passions breathe,  
 Around thy brows she bound the laureate wreath;  
 —And still—as other themes engaged thy song,  
 She with unrivall'd sweetness touch'd thy tongue;  
 To tell the contest on Thessaly's plains,  
 When Pan with Phœbus tried alternate strains  
 Or Galatea, who no more shall slight  
 Corynthus' song, that soothes the ear of night <sup>g</sup>.  
 —But who shall all thy varying strains disclose,  
 As sportive fancy prompts, or passion glows?  
 When to thine aid thou call'st the solar beams,  
 And all their dazzling lustre round thee flames <sup>h</sup>,

Infelix

*Capitolo del Canto di Pda, a dramatic pastoral.*

<sup>f</sup> The address of the Shepherd Corynthus to Galatea,  
 commencing,

“ *La luna in mezzo alle minori stelle.*”

<sup>h</sup> *Schietto* 66.

“ *O chiara stella ch. to' raggi tuoi.*”

Infelix Clytie <sup>l</sup>, seu mentem venter oberrans  
 Forma subit dominæ <sup>k</sup>, seu pulchræ gaudia mortis <sup>l</sup>,  
 Atque pium, tacto jurantem pectore amorem <sup>p</sup>,  
 Atque oculos canis <sup>n</sup>, atque manus <sup>o</sup>, niveisque capillos

C H A  
 V.

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Or sing' <sup>st</sup> of Clytie, suward still inclined <sup>l</sup> ;  
 Or the dear nymph whose image fills thy mind  
 Of dreams of love, and love's extremest joy <sup>l</sup> ;  
 Of vows of truth and endless constancy <sup>m</sup> ;  
 Or of those eyes a thousand flames that dart <sup>n</sup> ;  
 That hand <sup>cl</sup> binds in willing chains thy heart <sup>o</sup> ;  
 . In <sup>l</sup>

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<sup>l</sup> Sonetto 67.

“ Quando il sol giù dall' oriente scende.”

<sup>k</sup> Sonetto 103.

“ Lasso, or la bella donna mia che fuge ”

<sup>l</sup> Sonetto 86.

“ O veramente felice e beata  
 Notte.”

<sup>m</sup> Sonetto 99.

“ Amorosì sospir, e quali uscite.”

<sup>n</sup> Sonetto 89.

“ Ove Madonna polge gli occhi begli ”

<sup>o</sup> Sonetto 78.

“ O man mia spavissima e decora.”

C H A P. Infusos humeris<sup>p</sup>, et verberibus<sup>q</sup>, et lene sonantis  
 Murmur aquarum<sup>r</sup>, violæque comarum<sup>s</sup>, blandumque sopor-  
 Lætæque quam dulcis suspiria fundat amarorum<sup>t</sup>;

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The tresses o'er those ivory shoulders thrown<sup>r</sup>;  
 The secret promise, made to thee alone<sup>q</sup>;  
 The stream's soft murmur<sup>r</sup>, and the violet's glow<sup>s</sup>,  
 And love's embittered joys and rapturous woe<sup>t</sup>;

Quantum

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<sup>p</sup> Sonetto 73.

“ Spesso mi torna a mente anzi giammai.”

<sup>q</sup> Sonetto 91.

“ Madonna io veggo ne' vostri occhi belli.”

<sup>r</sup> Sonetto 75.

“ Chiar' acque i sento del vostro mormorio.”

<sup>s</sup> Sonetto 80.

“ Belle fresche e purpuree viole.”

Or perhaps 114.

“ Non di verdi giardin ornati e colti.”

Son. 110 39.

“ Io son sì certo amor di tua incertezza.”

Quantum addat formæ pietas<sup>u</sup>, quam sæpe decenter  
 Palleat, utque tuum ~~de~~beat cor pectore Nymphæ  
 Non vacat argutosque sales, Satyraque Bibacca,  
 Descriptos memorare senes<sup>w</sup>; non carmina festis  
 Excipienda choris, querulasve animantiâ chordas<sup>x</sup>.  
 Idem etiam tactæ referens pastoris vitæ  
 Otia<sup>y</sup>, et urbânos thyso extimulante labores;  
 Mox fugis in cælum, non cum per lubrica nisus,  
 Extremamque boni gaudes contingere metam<sup>z</sup>.

How pity adds to beauty's brightest charms<sup>u</sup>;  
 And how thy bosom beats with soft alarms<sup>v</sup>  
 Nor wants there sprightly satire's vivid beam,  
 Whose lustre lights th' inebriate fools to fame<sup>w</sup>;  
 Nor choral songs whose animating sound  
 Provokes the smile, and bids the dance go round<sup>x</sup>,  
 —Then free from babbling crowds, and city noise,  
 Thou sing'st the pleasures rural life enjoys<sup>y</sup>;  
 Or with no faltering step, pursuest thy way,  
 To touch the confines of celestial day<sup>z</sup>.

Quodque

<sup>u</sup> Sonetto 56.

“ Talhor mi prega dulcemente amor.”

<sup>v</sup> Sonetto 141.

“ Lura memor, perchè non te spogli ”

<sup>w</sup> The *Beoni*, or satire against drunkenness.

<sup>x</sup> *Canzoni a ballo*.

<sup>y</sup> *Altercazone*, or a dialogue between a shepherd and a citizen.<sup>o</sup>

THE POET, ETC.

H A P. Quodque alii studiumque vocat, durumque laborem;  
Hic tibi ludus erit: fessus civilibus actis,  
Huc is' meritas acuens ad carmina vires.  
Felix ingenio, felix qui pectore tantas  
Instaurare vires, cui fas tam magna capaci  
Alterius animo, et varias ita nocere curas.

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—These the delights thy happiest moments share,  
Thy dearest liberties of public care:  
Blest in thy genius! thy capacious mind  
Nor to one science, nor one theme confin'd  
Useful interchange fatigue beguiles,  
In private studies and in public toils.

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

