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Biography

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THE  
L I F E  
OF  
P E T R A R C H.

COLLECTED FROM  
MEMOIRES POUR LA VIE DE PETRARCH.

*By Mrs. DOBSON.*

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1797.

Rarò magni errores nisi ex magnis ingeniis prodire.

PETRARCHA.

THrice happy minds that feel the power of friendship !  
Oft do the Muses on a beauteous eve,  
The sky serene, and drowsy nature hush'd,  
Vouchsafe celestial sounds to friendly ears,  
And raise their kindred minds with such  
Warm fancy, and ethereal forms  
As 'scape the vulgar intellectual eye.  
Why need I launch into the praise of friendship !  
Friendship, that best support of wretched man !  
Which gives us, when our life is painful to us,  
A sweet existence in another's being.

THE  
L I F E  
OF  
P E T R A R C H.

B O O K IV.

WE have seen in the life of Petrarch that his sorrows seldom came single. His eyes were still wet with tears for the death of Laura, when (the 3d of July 1348) he lost cardinal Colonna, the man who had been so many years his friend and protector. Petrarch seems to think he was destroyed by grief, brought on by the disasters in his family. By some it was said he died of the plague. He lost in the space of five years his mother and six of his brothers. Some time before the tragical death of his brother Etienne, he had a conversation with Petrarch, in which he deplored the losses



he had sustained. 'Your father predicted them,' said Petrarch. The cardinal demanded an account of this prediction. Petrarch was unwilling to comply with his request: but the cardinal insisted. Struck with what he heard, 'Alas!' says he, 'I fear my father will prove too good a prophet.' This venerable old man was yet alive, and had attained almost the age of a hundred years. Petrarch wrote him a letter of condolence, as follows:

'Unfortunate old man! What crime have you committed? How have you merited the punishment of a tedious life? You resemble Metellus in your country, birth, riches, figure, and other qualities of mind and body, in an illustrious and fruitful wife, in the consular dignity, in the command of the Roman armies, in victories, and triumphs; in fine, in a great age and a fortune sustained to the end: for the distresses you have undergone serve only to raise your glory. But Metellus had no brother; you had five, more famed for their virtue than for their birth. He had four sons, who exercised the offices of censors, priests, and consuls, and enjoyed the honours of triumph: you had seven sons, one a cardinal, another who would have borne a higher rank had he lived to receive it, three bishops, and two generals, who, to

say all in one word, have almost equalled their father's reputation ; and six daughters, worthy of the greatest praise. From this numerous and flourishing family there has arisen a multitude of children and grand-children, which cause you to resemble the patriarchs of old. Wherever the Roman name is known, you pass for the happiest of men : but, as Solon said to the king of Lydia, " No man can be called happy before death. The ashes and the tomb are the only faithful witnesses of the happiness of life." You would have been the greatest example of human felicity if the end of your life had answered the course of it. A long life is like a voyage of a few days. The heavens alter, the wind changes, the rudder must be turned, and the sails folded up. Human life, like the sea, is exposed to frequent hurricanes, and the evening of the brightest day is often obscured and tempestuous. The wise ought to say of the world, as Palinurus, that famous pilot in Virgil, did of the sea, " Shall I confide in that monster ?"

' You alone bear the weight of your losses, and you prove your fortitude and courage. Your beloved wife was happy as the wife of Evander, in that death spared her the grief to behold her children perish. And as you re-

sembled Metellus in the beginning, so you may compare yourself to Priam in the end of life. The former was buried by his children, the latter lived to bury his whole family. The inconstancy of fortune is such, that we know not what we ought to fear or to hope. Shall I advise you to hope, or to despair? I will do neither: there would be too much presumption in the one, and too much weakness in the other. You cannot hope for more children. When old age is the season of marriage, it is as unnatural as harvest in winter. You need not despair on this account; for have you not yourself? What possession is more delightful than the enjoyment of a man's own soul? There have been fathers who have had a hundred children: Herotimes king of Arabia had that number. But rare as is such an instance, it is still more so to find men who enjoy themselves. You have lost the conversation of your children; converse with yourself. In a life, long and glorious as yours, how many things may you recall, honourable and agreeable to reflect on! You foresaw all that has happened to you. Recollect the conversation we had together at Rome: I have before my eyes that ancient monument on which we leaned as we conversed on this subject. Tears are due to na-

ture, but time should dry them up. Collect all the strength of your soul, and sustain with courage this last assault of fortune. She triumphs more frequently by terror than by strength. You have lost the pleasures you enjoyed, but in their stead you have gained a real happiness. You have learned to distinguish the felicities of nature from the chimeras of the world; to discover truth in the midst of the shades that surround it; to be convinced that the advantages of life were not your own; and to despise the empire of a blind goddess, the idol of vulgar minds. The more you have lost, the less you have to lose hereafter: you came naked into this world, and naked shall you go out of it.'

Petrarch, exhausted by grief, addresses himself to Death in these lines:

'Thou hast taken from me the two treasures who were my joy and my confidence: that stately column which served me for support, and that green laurel under whose shade my weary soul reposed! Nothing can restore to me what I have lost. What remains for me but to bemoan all my future days such irreparable losses? Our life is like the shadow of the sun passing over the plain. We lose in a moment what we have been years in acquiring.'

Soon after this letter of Petrarch's, old Etienne Colonna sunk under the weight of age, and of grief for the total extinction of his illustrious family.

The death of the cardinal was extremely felt at Avignon, where it left a great void, his house being the rendezvous of men of letters and of genius. Those Italians who composed his court could not support Avignon after they had lost their Mécænas. They dispersed. Three of these were the particular friends of Petrarch; Socrates, Luke Christian, and Mainard Accuise. Socrates was extremely embarrassed by the death of the cardinal: he felt it was impossible to live further from his dear Petrarch, and yet he could not determine to quit France for Italy: he wrote, without ceasing, the most pressing letters to Petrarch to return and settle in France.

Luke Christian was of a noble family at Rome. He had a benefice at Plaisance, and Petrarch had given him the canonship of Modena. He was a good companion, and had a very cultivated understanding. Mainard Accuise was descended from the great civilian of Florence, whom they styled the idol of the law. He was abbe of St. Antoine de Plaisance: an illiterate man, but of a most amiable, candid, and generous temper; and possessed of all those

kind and gentle qualities which contribute to the comfort of life. He determined with Luke to go to Italy to Petrarch, and settle with him the life they should lead, and the place in which they should fix their residence. They set out from Avignon in March 1349, and arrived at Parma in April; but they did not find their friend, he was gone a little journey to Padua and Verona. Luke and Mainard passed a day in his house, to rest themselves; and when they went away, left a letter in his library, wherein they told him they had taken the route of the Alps to come and see him at Parma, that they were going to make a tour through Italy to settle their affairs, and would then return and concert with him the means of living together. They begged him not to yield to the solicitations of Socrates, who wanted above all things to bring him back to Vacluse.

When Petrarch returned to Parma, what was his concern to find the loss he had sustained! He wrote to his friends to testify his regret:

‘You appear anxious lest Socrates should engage me to return to Vacluse. Moved by the repeated solicitations of this dear friend, it is true I did give him hopes of it, if what I

proposed succeeded: that is, had I gained an establishment which should furnish me with a just pretext to remain there, and procure me at the same time the means of living with my friends, and receiving conveniently all those persons who are used to visit me. But when I wrote with this view, our master was alive. You was at Avignon with Luke, Lelius, and the small number of friends death had yet left me: these were so many lovers who drew me thither. Since that time the face of things has changed: our master is dead, you are all dispersed, and poor Socrates remains alone in that city; he is attached to it by the force of habit. I doubt not he wishes to be with us, and to see me above all; but how can he have the courage to propose our coming into a country where the bond of union is broken, and we should be as strangers without support, and without habitation? If we were like those happy souls disengaged from the ties of the body, who inhabit the Elysian fields, who require only shady woods, beds of grass, or the banks of a river, and meadows watered by streams, Vacluse would furnish us. But something more is necessary for those souls who drag their bodies along with them. The vulgar think that poets and philosophers are

made of stone : but they deceive themselves in this, as in many other things ; they are really made of flesh. Vacluse would produce to us, as it did formerly, agreeable amusements when we are fatigued with our residence in the city ; but it is not the place for a continued settlement. It is charming in summer ; no one has proved this more sensibly than myself in a residence of ten years ; and, not to incur the censure of vanity, I will add, it ought not to repent it had me for its guest. I have improved it the best I could, and it is known to many by my verses rather than by its own fame. From my tender youth I loved that fountain,\*and it was afterwards the port in which I took refuge. Alas ! I knew not what I did ! I brought with me there the cares that consumed me. I filled those beautiful vallies watered by the Sorgia with my cries and my tears, which resounded every where. These remembrances endear that solitude : but alas ! they embitter it too !

‘ The beauties of Vacluse I still admire. But can they be paralleled with those pure fountains, those majestic rivers, those vast lakes filled with fish ; in fine, with those two seas which embrace Italy on every side ? not to speak of the other advantages of my country ;



above all, the wit, genius, and manners, of its inhabitants. I know all this; and yet my friendship for you will not permit me to hide it, I sigh in renouncing Vacluse, and feel myself still irresistibly impelled towards it. Our youth is passed: illusions are no longer to be indulged. What hinders us from gliding on the few days that remain in peace and study? We have lost the best of masters; and, being at liberty, why should we not enjoy it? From the great we may hope good will, but among them we cannot flatter ourselves with uniting in true society. Vanity, and that disparity of fortune which is the bane of friendship, prevents it. Fearing always to debase themselves, they will be adored rather than loved. Our master lived with us as his friends, and his service had nothing humbling or grievous: but we are now entirely free. We are not princes of the earth, or of the sea, as Aristotle says: but is this necessary to be happy? Have we not as much as those moderate spirits need who regulate their desires by the wants of nature? Suppose we were to join our little fortunes, we should live in abundance, and have much more to fear from envy than poverty. Why do we hesitate to do this? Why are we separated one from the

other by rivers, seas, and mountains? Why do not persons, so strictly united by friendship, who have but one heart and one soul, live also under the same roof? For my part, I have long fixed a term to my desires; and I fear not the reproach of my heir. I live for myself, and not for him with whose disposition and character I am not yet acquainted. What greater happiness can we propose than to pass our life with proved and united friends, with whom we think aloud, and who have but one will, one soul? Can any thing be more agreeable than faces always serene, minds always agreed, hearts always open; conversations where truth reigns without constraint, reserve, or preparation? This manner of life is the object of all my desires; if I can obtain it I shall have no cause for envy.

‘ My house is not large, but it will accommodate such friends; and if our society should increase, I have a larger in the city, to which we may repair. My domestic, who appears a world to me who love to be alone, is at present the only person who resides there. We have in the neighbourhood Bologna, where in the study of the law we passed the most delightful years of youth. With what pleasure shall we revisit the places we occupied in

the days of innocence and illusion ! But I mean not to prescribe to you. If you like Plaifance, where your abby is fituated, I will follow you there : or to the Milanefe, full of lakes and rivers, and furrounded by the Alps, which hang over thefe lakes, and are covered with fnow even in the midft of fummer : or to Genoa, where we fhall have the Appennine over our heads, the fea at our feet, and the Tritons dancing before us ; where our ears will be faluted with the voice of Neptune, the founds of the Nereides, and the dafhing of the waves againft the rocks. When we fhall be weary of this fpot, Padua presents a tranquil and charming fituation. What a felicity will it be to live with James de Corrare, the moft agreeable of men ! Virtue is always amiable : but it is ftill more fo in this age. Its rarity augments its value. We fhall then be near Venice, which appears to me, who have feen the fineft cities in Europe, the wonder of them all. Andres Dondolo, the prefent doge, is more illuftrious for his wifdom than his birth. Torvife is near this city ; it is a town furrounded with rivers and fountains, the centre of joy and pleafure. They fay, that famenefs is the mother of difquiet ; variety fhall then be the cure. Let us upite without lofs of time,

Come here, if that suits you ; if not, choose a place where we may live and die in tranquillity. I am ready to follow you every where, even to a barbarous clime if you make choice of it : I will renounce my own inclination to adopt yours : I shall be at ease any where, if I am but in your society.'

Petrarch, desirous of an early answer, sought among his servants a messenger whom he could best spare for this journey, and fixed upon his cook ; adding the following lines :

' The most vulgar peasant is qualified for my kitchen. I prefer the most simple meats prepared without art or labour. I think with Epicurus, that no cheer is more delicious than the fruits and herbs of my garden. I always approved a taste conformable to nature. Not that I dislike a good repast now and then ; but it should come very rarely. Among the Romans, before the conquest of Asia, the cook was the vilest of slaves : would to God they had never conquered that part of the world, which has subdued them by its softness and luxury ! Be so good to communicate this letter to our friends ; and, if you find an opportunity, send it to Socrates at Avignon.'

In June 1349, while Petrarch was revolving

in his mind the happiest idea of this future union with his friends, his cook came back in the midst of a heavy storm. Petrarch, not expecting him so soon, and knowing by his air that he brought bad news, was seized with consternation. He was writing, and the pen fell from his hand. 'What is the matter? What news do you bring me?' said he in haste. 'Alas! very bad,' replied the servant with a voice interrupted by his sobs. 'Your two friends fell into the hands of thieves on the top of mount Appennine. O God! what a sad accident! Mainard, who had stopped for something, they surrounded and murdered. Luke, hearing his cries, galloped back to him sword in hand: he alone fought ten of them; but at last he received so many wounds, that he fell almost dead to the earth. The thieves fled with their prey. Some peasants, drawn thither by the noise, would infallibly have taken them, if some gentlemen, unworthy to be called so, had not stopped their pursuit, and admitted the thieves into their castles. Luke was seen with sword in hand among the rocks, but no one knows what is become of him.' The condition of Petrarch, when he heard these dreadful tidings, cannot be described: he sent

couriers immediately to Plaifance, Florence, and Rome, to fee if they could hear any thing of Luke.

These thieves and banditti were villains and proſcribed perſons from Florence, who had fortified themſelves in remote and inacceſſible places, from whence they iſſued forth and committed the moſt horrid murders. They were backed by the Ubaldini, a very ancient and powerful houſe in Tufcany, who had ſeveral impregnable fortrefſes in the Appennine, near the city of Mugella, of which they were lords. Theſe were the gentlemen unworthy of being called ſo, ſpoken of by Petrarch's cook. They gave an aſylum to theſe banditti in their caſtles, favoured their conduct, and divided with them the ſpoil. Villeni, the hiſtorian of this age, from whom this account is taken, adds, that 'theſe thieves having learned that Mainard of Florence was returning from Avignon with two thouſand florins of gold, they lay in wait for him, killed and riſſed him in the county of Florence.' Petrarch thought it his duty to write to thoſe who governed the city of Florence, to engage them to purſue the villains into their entrenchments, and ensure the ſafety of the highways. After a compliment to the republic, he ſays :

‘ I have just received news which is grief to my soul. Mainard Accuife, one of your best citizens, and my dear friend, returning from the court of Avignon, and going to Florence, was assassinated near the gates of the city, in the bosom of his country, and, so to speak, in the face of his friends. This unfortunate man, after having traversed the earth, and suffered much in his youth, was coming to pass in tranquillity the remains of a laborious and agitated life; and he flattered himself with a quiet death and burial in that land where he received his birth. Barbarous men, or rather savage beasts, have envied him this consolation. O times! O manners! Who could have believed that this gentle and good man, after having travelled without accident through the midst of those cruel nations who inhabit the borders of the Rhone, traversed the deserts of Provence, the most desolate and depraved country in the world; after passing the night among the Alps, where are whole armies of banditti; should be sacrificed in open day at the very gates of Florence? Gold in ancient times, but blood now, is the object of these wretches. What else could induce them to plunge their swords into the breast of an innocent man, stripped and disarmed, who could



*Murder of Hammond - scene in the forest*





never have revenged their robbery ? For what have they to fear in those impregnable fortresses which serve them for caverns and asylums, from whence they brave Florence and Heaven itself ?

Justice is the basis of all grandeur and prosperity. Assassins threaten you to the face, who dared not conceive mischief in the time of your fathers. If you leave such actions unpunished, there is an end of your glory and of your republic. Its foundation overthrown, it must sink. But I feel that your justice will not tarry ; it will overtake them. You are distressed, 'tis true, by these banditti : but true virtue comes as pure out of adversity, as gold out of the crucible ; and your courage will increase in proportion to your difficulties. But what will relieve my grief ? The most eloquent words I can use, even the lyre of Orpheus itself, cannot restore to me the friend I have lost. I do not propose it to you to raise him from the dead, but to preserve his honour from burial ; and, which is a most important object, to free the Appennine from banditti, which is the general road to Rome. These mountains have been always steep and rugged, but formerly they were traversed with the greatest security. But if those that should be the guardians be-

come the robbers, and, instead of faithful dogs watching from their castles to protect, become wolves to destroy, terror will spread over the mind, the Appennine will become desert, and more uninhabitable than Atlas or Caucasus. Illustrious citizens! prevent this disgrace. Those that would pull up a tree begin at the roots; in like manner those who would exterminate thieves must seek them in their secret retreats. Have the goodness also to seek out the other friend of whose fate I am uncertain. But I dread the worst. God maintain the happiness of your republic.'

This letter had the success it deserved. The Florentines sent an army against the Ubaldini, and took in less than two months a great many of their castles, and made great havoc in their estates. The body of Mainard was found, and buried with honour; a poor consolation for Petrarch! He sought news of Luke from every one he met with, and trembled at each noise around him. He had lost all hope, when a Milanese merchant of his acquaintance called on him, saying, 'I was told you were here, and would not pass without paying my respects to you.' 'You are very polite, sir, may I inquire the road you came?' 'From Florence,' replied the merchant. 'I set out from thence

four days ago.' 'Good Heaven!' said Petrarch, 'which then was your route?' 'Not the high road,' replied the merchant; 'I was warned against that. I took a by-path through the woods. You know without doubt the accident that has happened to a citizen of Florence; the whole city is in arms to revenge his death. The army is already encamped on the Appennine.' 'I know it,' said Petrarch, 'but is it true that the persons who accompanied this Florentine have perished with him?' 'I only heard speak of one person who suffered,' replied the merchant; 'had there been several, it would have been mentioned: but I can affirm nothing, as I know only the public report.' This revived the hopes of Petrarch. In this uncertain and afflicted state of mind, and continually hearing of and beholding the devastations made by the plague, he wrote the following letter to his dear Socrates:

'Has any annals since the destruction of Troy shewn such terror and desolation as we now behold? Lands abandoned, cities depopulated, fields covered with dead bodies; the whole earth almost become one vast desert! Ask the historians; they say nothing. Consult the physicians; they are astonished and confounded. Address the philosophers; they shrug

up their shoulders, knit their brows, and put their finger on their lips. Our streets, heaped up with dead bodies, resemble a charnel-house rather than a city; and we are amazed when we re-enter our houses to find any thing remaining that is dear to us. Happy, thrice happy, the future age, who will perhaps look upon our calamities as a series of fables! In the most bloody war there is some resource; and an honourable death is a great consolation. But here we have none. And is it then true, as some philosophers have advanced, that God has no concern for what passes on the earth? Let us cast far from us so senseless an opinion. If he has not, how could the world subsist? Some philosophers have given this care to nature. Seneca justly views such as ungrateful men, who would hide under a borrowed name the benefits of the supreme Cause, and by an impious subtilty tempt men to deprive him of his just homage.

‘Yes, great God! thou carest for us, we cannot doubt it: but how impenetrable are thy judgments! If we are punished more than others, we are no doubt more culpable. Perhaps thou wouldst prove, thou wouldst purify us, and render us more deserving of thy benefits; but how little do we know! There may

be other causes of evil to which our weak intelligence cannot arrive.

‘Alas! my dear Socrates, we have outlived our friends, and almost outlived ourselves!’

Petrarch, willing to replace the voids which death had made in his heart, attached himself to Paganino Bezzozzi, a man of sense and conversation. The circumstances of the times had contributed to their immediate union. Distress softens the heart, and ties close the bonds of affection: the more we have lost, the more we are attached to what remains behind. ‘Our fortunes became common,’ said he. ‘After a short trial of his worth, I found he merited my confidence, and he proved a sort of Socrates in the friendship he shewed me.’ But death envied Petrarch this consolation in his misfortunes. Paganino was struck with the plague: but this did not hinder his supping with his friends. After supper, he discoursed with Petrarch as usual. He suffered with amazing fortitude all night the most violent pain, and expired before morning.

There remained at this time to Petrarch only three of his old friends; Gui Settimo, Lelius, and Socrates. Settimo was making his court at Avignon. Lelius was retired to Rome, his native city, some time before the death of car-

dinal Colonna. Petrarch was very uneasy about Socrates; he had written him several letters by safe hands, but had received no answer. He wrote again, with a letter enclosed to his brother Gerard, who had made great progress in the spiritual life in the seven years he had been among the Carthusians.

This month, September 1349, there was another scourge which oppressed mankind. The earth was agitated in a violent manner. These earthquakes in some places lasted several days, and the violence of the shocks caused great havoc in the city of Rome. Petrarch speaks thus of it in a letter :

‘ I tremble not only for Rome, but for all Italy. My blood freezes when I recall the last words of the prophecy of Balaam : “ They shall come from Italy in ships, they shall vanquish the Assyrians, and ravage the Hebrews.” This prophecy has been accomplished in the fall of the Roman empire. God send that these earthquakes do not foretell the loss of peace and liberty to our land !’

Petrarch paid a visit this year to Gonzagua, lord of Mantua, who had invited him so pressingly to reside at his court. Lewis de Gonzagua had associated his three sons in the government with himself, and assigned them

employments suited to their genius. Gui, the eldest, liberal, magnificent, and a lover of letters, was charged with all that concerns the interior government of the city, and its negotiations with strangers. Philipon, active, unquiet, warlike, had the department of war, and was general of the army: he had attended the king of Hungary in his expedition to Naples to revenge his brother's death, and was lately returned from thence. Feltrin, who loved the arts, had the direction of the buildings, fortifications, reparations of the highways, &c. Lewis de Gonzagua, sinking under the weight of years, for he was above fourscore, had resigned the government to his children; and they shewed in their admirable conduct what may be accomplished in a small state by three brothers firmly united.

Gui, who was the patron of letters, and had long known our poet, gave him a very distinguished reception. A dispatch being sent to Avignon; in the letters of the chancellor, who was the negociator, and Petrarch's friend, no mention being made of him, Gui reproached the chancellor, saying, 'You speak of our affairs, you tell us what passes at the Roman court, and you say nothing of Petrarch, in whom I am more interested than in them all.'



The chancellor communicated this sentiment to Petrarch, who expressed his acknowledgment by saying, 'The power of love extends from pole to pole, and binds men by invisible ties, however situation may separate them; as Augustus manifested in his affection for Virgil, the son of a Mantuan labourer, and Horace, son of a freed man, to whom he wrote with the most affectionate familiarity. If such examples render it less surprising that I should be so honoured, I feel not less sensibly the glory of being treated like these great men, when I fall so short of their merit. One of them said, "It is not a little matter to obtain favour of princes:" for my part, I know not how I come to please others, who could never please myself.'

Petrarch was at Mantua. He went to see that little village famous for the birth of Virgil: it is only a small league from that city. It was formerly called Andes: its present name is Pietola. On this spot his fancy kindled, and he wrote the following lines to Virgil:

'Great poet! the honour of Rome, the fruitful hope of the Muses! Tell me where you are at present? In what part of Avernus are you enclosed? Or are you not rather on Parnassus with Apollo and the Nine, who en-

chant you with their concerts? Perhaps you are walking in the woods, or in the Elysian fields, with Homer, whom you so much resemble, with Orpheus, and the other poets of the first rank: I except Lucan and Lucretius, and all those who, like them, put an end to their own lives. I would know the life you lead; wherein your dreams differed from truth, and where is the ivory door through which you caused *Æneas* to pass on his return from hell. I willingly believe that you inhabit that region of heaven allotted to happy souls.

‘ If any mortal shade is admitted to your celestial mansions, mine shall attend you there, and inform you what passes in the place dear to you, and the fate of your works. Mantua, whose glory you are, has been agitated by the troubles of its neighbours. Defended by princes full of valour, she has refused to come under a strange yoke, and will only be governed by her children. It is there I write these lines, in a solitary place near your tomb. I seek with ardour the rocks to which you retired, the meadows where you walked on the banks of the *Mincio*, the trees under which you sought a cooling shade, the woods which were your asylum against the heat, and the green banks where you were seated at the foot of your ri-

ver. All these things retrace your image. The unfortunate city of Naples, honoured with your ashes, groans for the loss of king Robert. In one day it was deprived of the felicity of years. Inquire not the fate of Rome ! Alas ! it is better to be ignorant of it. Learn rather the success of your productions : old Tityrus charms every one with the soft sounds of his pipe : nothing can be more beautiful than the cultivated fields of your Georgics : your *Æneid* is known through the world ; it is sung, it is delighted in every where : how much are we obliged to Augustus, who saved it from those flames to which you had condemned it !

‘ Adieu ! You will be always dear to me. Present my salutations to Homer and Hesiod.’

There was a great friendship between Gui and Petrarch. The former loved reading, and this confirmed the bond between them. He asked Petrarch one day for a foreign book in the vulgar tongue ; he sent him the romance of the Rose, with these lines :

‘ I send you a little book that France praises to the skies, and ranks with the first writings. It proves, in my opinion, how much Italy surpasses all other nations in eloquence except the Greeks.

‘ A Frenchman relates his dreams ; his de-

sign is to explain the power of love, the force of jealousy, the tricks of an old woman, and the stratagems of a lover : he shews the evils which love draws after it, the contrary feelings it meets with in its progress ; labour and repose, grief and joy, groans and laughter ; and he proves that pleasures are rare and mixed with tears. The author may well say he dreams ; one should never suppose him awake. How much more pathetic are the episode of Dido, and the lines of Catullus, Horace, and Ovid, without speaking of other ancient and modern authors who have described this passion. I send it however because I have nothing better, unless all France, and even Paris its capital, are in an error.' This poem was begun in the thirteenth century by William de Lorris, who died before he had finished it. John de Meun forty years after continued and completed it : it is full of satire on all conditions, of digressions and episodes, and the women in it are painted in the blackest colours.

From Mantua Petrarch went to Verona, and from thence to Padua, where James de Carrore gave him a canonship, which he held with his archdeaconry and canonship of Parma. There came to Padua during his stay there cardinal Gui de Boulogne, the pope's legate ;

he came from Hungary, whither the pope had sent him. The object of this embassy was the troubles of Naples occasioned by the tragic death of prince Andrew. Petrarch was much favoured by this cardinal. Guy de Boulogne was son of Robert the seventh count of Auvergne, and of Mary of Flanders; to this exalted birth he joined wit and talents, and had studied at Paris with success. The archbishopric of Lyons was given to him when he was only twenty years of age. Two years after Clement VI, who made him cardinal at the solicitation of Philip de Valois, wrote these lines to that prince: 'The subject you have recommended to me has a cultivated mind, his character is amiable, his manners honest, his life decent; in spiritual things he is enlightened and full of zeal; in temporal, wise and circumspect.' Notwithstanding his youth the pope confided to him several important affairs, in the discharge of which he answered the idea that had been conceived of him, which induced him to send him into Hungary on this difficult negociation. The king of Hungary, as we have seen, went to Naples with an army to revenge his brother's death, and to seize his kingdom, which he pretended belonged to him; he took with him duke Warner, a chief who

was the scourge of Italy, and who soon caused that kingdom to float in seas of blood. The king of Hungary conquered, and queen Joan fled into Provence from his fury. The princes of the blood went to Avicise, to acknowledge and pay homage to the king, who was their cousin. He received them very well: after which he ordered Charles Duras to conduct him to the place where his brother had been strangled, and there in his presence he had this prince assassinated, after reproaching him with having contributed to his death. The other princes of the blood he put in irons, and sent them into Hungary. After this expedition, the king sent ambassadors to the pope to justify his conduct, to solicit the investiture of the kingdom of Naples, and the punishment of queen Joan; and he complained bitterly of the cardinal de Taillerand, whom he accused of having imbrued his hands in the murder of his brother. Soon after this the plague obliged him to quit Naples, and return into Hungary.

The negotiation of this affair was very delicate. Gui de Boulogne was related to the king of Hungary, and had an insinuating disposition that the pope thought well suited to it. He was to propose peace between the king of Hun-

gary and the queen of Naples, to solicit the freedom of the princes of the blood, to desire the account of the proceeding, that he might judge of queen Joan's conduct, to justify cardinal Taillerand, and lastly, to engage the emperor Charles to support this negociation with his son-in-law. The cardinal legate, notwithstanding his talents, could do no more than obtain a truce: he was ordered on his return from Italy to go to Rome to the jubilee, and use his endeavours to procure peace. His legateship extended over all that part of Italy between the Alps and the Appennine. He arrived at Padua in February 1350, and was received with extraordinary honours. James de Carrore gave up his palace to him, and defrayed his expences, with all those of his train, which amounted to three hundred. He stopped some days in this city to remove the body of St. Anthony, which they drew out of the tomb to place it in a church he had built and dedicated to this saint. The cardinal had experienced his protection in a violent disease, and, to shew his acknowledgment, would be present and assist at this ceremony. He was glad to find Petrarch at Padua, whom he had known at Avignon, and took every opportunity of conversing with him. In one of these

meetings he shewed him a letter he had just received from a prelate in France attached to him, and who was also the friend of Petrarch. This was Philip de Vitri, celebrated for his French and Latin works, and his excellence in church music. He was chaplain to the pope and the cardinal of Boulogne, and archdeacon of Brie in the church of Soissons. He had applied himself when young to poetry and music, which contributed not a little to unite him with Petrarch. Philip de Vitri was of the opinion which the French, particularly the Parisians, were reproached with. He looked upon every journey out of France as an exile. He wrote in this manner to the cardinal, lamenting his residence in Hungary and Italy. The cardinal did not reflect upon the consequences when he gave this letter to Petrarch. To call a journey to Italy an exile was like blasphemy in the eyes of our poet. He took pen in hand immediately, and wrote to Vitri as follows :

‘ Why should not I dare to tell my dear Philip at a distance, what I should certainly say was he present ? Nothing is so free as friendship. “ I do not love my friend,” says Seneca, “ if I fear to offend him.” My dear friend, I do not know you again. I know that what rises must sink ; that all that are born grow



old : but I thought minds exempted from the fate of terrestrial bodies, because being formed of an ethereal substance, they rise by their own strength, or, to speak better, on the wings of nature. If the mind grows old, it may then die : old age may be the end of being, and the descent of it to the grave. Alas ! if we are thus deprived of the sweet consolation that this noble part of us will live for ever, what shall console us when we become the subjects of death ! You will guess what this long preamble leads to. We have here our illustrious father and common master, cardinal Gui de Boulogne, legate of the holy see. You blush, I see it ; your conscience is not without remorse. Confess that you did not think I should see the letter you wrote : if you had, you would not have spoken in a style so weak and unjust ; you would at least have respected the Muses, who live with me, and whose indignation you would have felt had the time permitted. What is become of that admirable ardour, that desire of all knowledge, which formerly distinguished you ? You would then if possible have drawn off from Nature the veil that covers her. What attempts did you not make toward discoveries in the northern and eastern ocean ! The earth itself was then too small for your curiosity. You raised

your desires even to heaven. The oblique path of the sun, the fixed and wandering stars, nothing escaped your indefatigable researches; not even the antipodes of heaven, if antipodes of heaven there be.

‘Is it possible that a man so eager after knowledge of all kinds should give the name of exile to a journey into Italy, out of which all would be banishment indeed, if the whole world was not the country of every thinking man? Shall I be frank with you? The little bridge of Paris has made too strong an impression on you; and your ears are too much delighted with the murmurs of the Seine, which runs under its arches. You have, no doubt, forgot the answer of the man, who, being asked from whence he came, “I am a Cosmopolite,” replied he. As for you, you are French, no one can deny that, and to such a degree French, that you consider every journey out of France as a banishment, whatever may be the motive of it.

‘I know that we all have an innate love for our country, and that the greatest men have been sensible to its attractions; but I know also, that it is only little minds that cannot shake off these fetters. How many heroes and philosophers have passed their whole lives in tra-

telling! Plato quitted Athens, where he was adored as a god, to travel over Egypt and Italy. The journies of Democritus are celebrated, and still more so those of Pythagoras, who never returned home; more inflamed by the love of truth than the love of his country, after going over Egypt, Persia, and many barbarous countries, he was twenty years in Italy; and you weep for one only that your master passes there. Awake, my dear friend, shake off the lethargy you are in. Elevate your soul, which is sunk under popular prejudices, and which, tied down to the globe of its native field, sees nothing beautiful, nothing rare, beyond Paris. Give me back that ancient Philip, in whose conversation I found so many charms. It is not to him I write, it is to one of his enemies; so he must not be offended if he finds in this letter remonstrances too strong for the softness and luxury of our age.

‘ But I will return to our exile. I wish you saw him in his present brilliant situation, surrounded by a concourse of people, and even princes applauding and calling him the restorer of peace. This is the state of your banished man. I know you love him with all your heart: cease then to lament his fate; rather lament your own as exiled and unhappy, that

you cannot behold his glory. He is in the flower of his age, his body strong, his mind eager after knowledge. It is experience, as artists know, that forms great men. What can those learn who never go beyond their paternal estate? Homer, desiring to give the Greeks a model of wisdom, presents them with a man who had visited several cities and studied many nations; and Virgil imitated him in the *Æneid*: and must not our master then delight in the lofty mountains which are the barriers of Italy; the magnificent cities it contains, and the beautiful rivers that water it? Our prelate to-day assisted in removing the body of St. Anthony; I admired the dignity and grace with which he performed his office: to-morrow he continues his route, and, after crossing the king of rivers, will see Ravenna, the most ancient city in Italy, and proceed to the capital of the world. As for you, my dear Philip, when you go from St. Germain on the mountain to St. Genievieve in the valley, you think you have been through the wide world; happy in your manner of thinking, if true happiness can consist with error: but in your letter you did not follow your own judgment, but the judgment of the vulgar, which is always mean and ignorant. Adieu! take care of your-

self, and do not forget me. Mark, the physician and the countryman of Virgil salutes you.'

Padua, February 14.

Petrarch went from Padua to Verona to see his son and his friends, from whence he wrote to Socrates, and besought him to come to him in Italy, and settle there, in any part of it he should make choice of; but he could not persuade him to leave Avignon. The few friends he had left were separated from him by necessity. Barbatus was established at Sulmone with his wife, and could not leave her. Lelius and Settimo were both settled at Rome and Avignon. He had lately cultivated a friendship with two Florentines, Francis Rinnuci and John Boccace, of whom we shall soon have occasion to speak; who were both so attached to the place of their nativity, that nothing could draw them from thence.

Petrarch returned soon after to Padua, to wait the arrival of the cardinal de Boulogne, who came there on his way home. After having distributed spiritual and temporal benefits with the greatest beneficence, he took the route of Milan and Genoa to return to Avignon: and he had in his train a vast number of

distinguished persons from every state in Italy, and received the greatest honours wherever he passed.

Petrarch, who was not a courtier, accompanied this prelate from attachment, and as an acknowledgment of the kindness he had shewn him. The cardinal delighted in his conversation, and bantered him sometimes on his enthusiasm for his country. When they came into the territory of Verona, near the lake of Gorda, struck with the beauty of the spot, they ascended a little hill, and stopped to view the fine objects around them: the Alps covered with snow, though in the month of June; the lake of Gorda, subject to the ebbing and flowing of the tide as the sea; on every side rich hills and fertile vallies. 'It must be owned,' said the legate, addressing himself to Petrarch, 'that your country is finer and richer than ours!' At these words the face of Petrarch brightened with joy! 'But you must agree also,' added the cardinal, to moderate perhaps the violence of his effusion, 'that ours is more tranquil.' 'That is true,' replied Petrarch, with that liberty which he always professed, 'but we can obtain that tranquillity you enjoy when we please, whereas it does not depend on you to procure those beauties of which nature

has been prodigal to us.' The cardinal smiled, and continued his route. Petrarch took leave of him here, and returned to Parma. At Mantua, which he passed through, he wrote another letter to his dear Socrates, to recommend to him a young abbe whom he became acquainted with among the attendants of the cardinal de Boulogne. He describes him as a young man of rare merit, whose friendship was a treasure he wished him to partake of.

'Joys of this kind,' says he, 'ought to be common between friends. Go and see him, you will instantly feel it is that Socrates of whom I have often spoke to you. You will be charmed with the society of such a man, whose equal I have rarely found. I feel what may be the consequence, of uniting two persons, who in tracing one another's virtues will easily lose sight of mine: but I shall console myself in the persuasion, that what I lose in merit I shall gain in friendship.'

After having finished this letter, Petrarch set out from Mantua in the evening to sleep at Luzora, five leagues from the Po. The Gonzaguas were lords of this city; they had sent a courier to Mantua, to desire he would honour them at supper. It was with difficulty he got there. The south wind which blew

had melted the snows; the Po had overflowed the country round, and filled the roads with a quaggy mud, in which the horses sunk at every step.

He got there late. They gave him a magnificent reception; rare meats, foreign wines, delicate cheer, welcome countenances, and much gaiety. A little matter will spoil a fine feast, and lose the fruits of a great expence. The supper was served in a damp hall, which flies and all sorts of insects had taken possession of; and, to complete the distress, an army of frogs, who had been attracted by the good odour of the meats, came forth and stunned the company with their importunate croakings: they could not sit in the room, and were obliged to leave the table before supper was ended. Petrarch retired to his chamber at midnight, very much fatigued: but a courier passing to Rome, he wrote a letter to Lelius, in which was this account of the supper. The next day he went to Parma. He waited till the great heats were over, to go to the jubilee held this year at Rome. He wrote to his friend William de Pastrengo, to take this journey with him. This friend wished for nothing so much as the society of Petrarch on this occasion; but he was established at Verona, and he had a wife and



children. All his family opposed this journey, and he could not overcome their fears. Instead therefore of William, Petrarch took with him an old abbe of respectable character and dignity, and some persons whose experience might save him much trouble. They took their route through Tuscany, and stopped at Florence. What impressions agitated the mind of Petrarch, to behold his native city, which he had left so young that he had retained only a confused idea of it! They had not yet restored him his estate, for the Guelph party still governed there. He found however several friends, who, though not of long standing, had made great progress in his heart, that had suffered many voids from death which he wished to fill up.

The first of these was Zanobi de Strata, born at Florence, where John his father had taught grammar all his life with success. Zanobi continued, and surpassed him in that profession. His talents for eloquence and poetry united him with the most distinguished persons for rank and wit in Tuscany.

Francis Rinucci was of a good house in Florence; his ancestors had been the first magistrates in that city. Francis had embraced the ecclesiastical state: he was first notary, judge,

and secretary of the bishop, and afterwards supreme vicar: and he was prior and preacher of the church of the Holy Apostles, which had been formerly the collegiate church. It appears that he was a wise and pious man, and much esteemed at Florence. Petrarch gave him the name of Simonides.

John de Certaldo, or John Boccace, whose family was of Certaldo, a village twenty miles from Florence, was born at Paris. His mother was a young woman with whom his father was secretly connected. He studied grammar under John de Strata, and the canon law under Cino de Pistoie. The taste which nature had given him for poetry and the belles lettres defeated the projects of his father, who designed him for a civilian. It is believed however he was made doctor of laws; after which he certainly went for a time into the church. His father sent him on some business to Naples, where king Robert, who soon discovered his talents, received him with kindness, and loved to discourse with him. That prince had a daughter, the fruit of the only weakness that his character is reproached with: she was called Mary of Arragon by the historians. Boccace fell in love with her, and has celebrated her in his works. During his situation at Naples he

heard Petrarch spoken of in such a manner, that it inspired him with a great desire to see him: he took the first occasion to form this union, and it lasted till death. They had each the same tastes and the same aversions, the same ardent desire of knowledge, frankness, truth of mind, and tenderness of heart; there was a similarity also in their love. We have seen that Petrarch became enchanted with Laura in the church of St. Clare, in the holy week. Boccace also saw and loved Mary for the first time in the church of the Cordeliers at Naples. On Easter-day these friends consoled Petrarch for his past losses.

About the middle of October 1350, Petrarch left Florence, and set out for Rome. He gives this account of his journey in a letter to Boccace. 'The 15th of October we set out from Bolsena, a small town in Etruria. Taken up with the thoughts of seeing Rome once more, I reflected upon the change that is made in our thoughts in a course of years. This, said I to myself, is my fifth journey to Rome; it was fourteen years ago I saw it for the first time, drawn by curiosity to behold its wonders. Some years after, a premature desire of the laurel brought me there a second time. The third and fourth journey was to render service

and shew affection to my friends. This ought to be the happiest of all, since its only object is my eternal salvation. While I was full of these thoughts, the horse of the old abbe, which was on my left side, going to kick at mine, struck my leg just under the knee; the stroke was so violent that it sounded like bones snapping asunder, and drew all our party round me. I felt extreme pain; but not daring to stop in so solitary a place, I made a virtue of necessity, got late to Viterbe, and was dragged to Rome by the aid of my friends. As soon as I got there I sent for the physicians, who having examined my wound, found the bone laid open, and the iron of the horse's shoe had left a mark on it. The smell of this neglected wound was so strong that I could scarcely bear it, though our familiarity with, and affection for ourselves, renders many things supportable we could not bear in others. How vile and abject is man, said I, if he does not compensate for the weakness of his body by the strength of his mind? The days I was obliged to pass wholly in bed appeared longer here than elsewhere. I consider this accident as a just punishment from heaven, who, after having fixed my unsteady soul, thought it proper thus to afflict my unworthy body. My confessor had

treated me with too much lenity; I stood in need of this mortification. If my accident affects you, the courage with which I support it shall be your consolation.'

Petrarch says he was in the happiest disposition for this sacred bath in which the soul was to be cleansed from all its stains. We have seen that pope Clement altered this jubilee from a hundred to fifty years, and in a clause of this bull (as some aver) he speaks as follows; 'The sovereign pontiff, in virtue of the authority he holds from the apostles, renews the souls of those who receive this indulgence to the same state they were in after baptism; and he orders the angels to introduce them immediately to paradise, without obliging them on their way thither to pass through purgatory.'

The custom of visiting Rome to receive a plenary absolution of all sins was begun in 1300, from a rumour that this had been practised before; it was not however to be found in the ancient records; but an old man, aged 107, being questioned about it, said he remembered that in the year 1200 his father, who was a labourer, went to Rome to gain this indulgence. It was accordingly confirmed by the bull of pope Boniface, and Clement gave it the name of the jubilee, because it resembled

the festival of the Jews celebrated every fifty years, at which slaves are set free, debts forgiven, and each person obtained the wealth and honour of their family.

The concourse of pilgrims at this jubilee was prodigious; they were reckoned near a million. The streets were so full that men were carried along by the crowd, whether on horseback or on foot. There was no appearance that the plague had depopulated the world. The people of quality came the last to it, and, above all, the ladies of the grandees from beyond the mountains; most of them took the route of Areona, and Bernardin de Polenta, lord of Ravenna, whose castle was on this road, joined, and made great confusion among them. 'This would not have befallen them,' says a contemporary historian, 'if they had remained in their houses; because a ship which is always in port cannot be shipwrecked. Indulgencies and journeys,' he adds, 'are not fit for young people.' Strangers who come from all countries, knowing only their own language, were embarrassed about confession. They therefore made use of interpreters, who often published what they heard, and it became necessary to buy their silence at a dear rate. To remedy this abuse, they established peniten-

tiaries at Rome who understood all the languages. The kings of Castile, Arragon, Portugal, and Cyprus, would fain have obtained indulgence without going to Rome. They wrote to the pope to beg he would dispense with this journey, but the cardinals opposing, he wrote this answer to these princes. 'My brethren, the cardinals, considering that this indulgence is granted not only for the salvation of souls, but for the honour of the saints, would not consent that any should be dispensed from this visitation to their churches.' The number of thirty days was fixed for the Romans, fifteen for the Italians, and ten for other strangers. Clement, whose goodness and courtesy was displayed on all occasions, extended his indulgence to those persons who had been prevented from, or stopped on, their journey, on this condition, that they should give to the church the money they would have expended in it. 'The inhabitants of Rome,' says Villani, 'were exorbitant in their impositions upon these strangers, and used such frauds and monopolies, that, joined to the fatigue and heat, caused a great mortality.' And Meyer, another historian of that age, assures us that, of all these pilgrims, the tenth part never returned to their habitations.

As soon as Petrarch could get out he visited all the churches with extreme ardour to gain the jubilee. He speaks of the good effects it had upon his soul: 'I went with fervour,' says he, 'determined to put an end to that sinful life which has often covered me with shame, and I hope nothing can make me change the firm resolutions I have taken.'

The rest of his time was much of it spent in all probability with his friend Lelius. After having gained the jubilee, he returned immediately to Padua. He took his route through Tuscany, and stopped at Arezzo, desirous to see the town in which he was born. Aretin says, that his townsmen, charmed with the sight of a man who was such an honour to them, went out to meet him, and paid him the same respect and obeisance they would have done to a king: this was in December 1350. He had the good fortune to find in this town the Institutions of Quintilian, which till then he could never meet with. The manuscript was mutilated, and in a bad condition: but it was an interesting discovery to him. He wrote some lines to Quintilian to express his joy: in which he tells him plainly, that he was fitter to form great orators, than to be an orator himself.

Some days after this, Petrarch going out of



Arezzo to pursue his journey, the principal people of the city, who accompanied him, led him to Orto, to shew him the house in which he was born. 'It was a little house,' says Petrarch, 'as befitted an exile.' They told him that the proprietor would have made some alterations in it, which the town had always opposed, that the place consecrated by his birth might remain always in the state it was in at that time. He relates this to a person who had written to know whether Arezzo was really the place of his birth; and adds, 'Arezzo has shewn more respect to a stranger than Florence to a citizen.'

Petrarch stopped at Florence to converse with his friends; and went from thence to Padua, where he had fixed his residence. There was great consternation, and an universal lamentation in this city, which had lost the best of all masters. James de Corrare had in his house a relation called William, whom he treated with kindness, and admitted to his table, though he was unworthy of that favour. The 21st of December, after dinner, when this lord was seated in his palace, surrounded with his friends, servants, and guards, William plunged a dagger into his breast with so much celerity, that no one had time to ward off the

stroke. Some hastened to raise up their lord, who was fallen, and who expired in their arms: the rest pierced the monster with a thousand strokes who had committed this parricide. 'At the same instant,' says Petrarch, 'there went out of this world two souls of a very different kind, and the routes they took were as opposite.' The motive of this action is unknown; but some think James had forbade him to appear abroad on account of his bad conduct.

Petrarch wrote on this occasion the following letter to Boccace:

'I have learnt by long habit to cope with fortune. I do not oppose her strokes by groans and tears, but by a heart hardened to repel them. She perceived me firm and intrepid, and took a lance to pierce me at the time I lay the most exposed by the death of those friends who had formed a rampart around me. By a sudden, horrible, and unworthy death, she has deprived me of another tender friend, of a man who was my consolation and glory. He was the most like king Robert in his love of letters, and in his favours to those who professed them. He was distinguished for a singular sweetness of manners, and was the father, rather than lord, of his people. I had given myself to

him. While I live, I shall never lose the remembrance of James de Corrare, and shall always speak of him with pleasure. I would celebrate him to you, and to posterity; but he is much above my praise.'

The death of James de Corrare rendered Padua disagreeable to Petrarch. The delightful situation of Vacluse presented itself, and he wished once more to behold it. But he continued the winter at Padua. He spent a great deal of his time with Ildebrandin Comti, bishop of that city; a man of high rank and great merit. One day, as he was supping at his palace, two Carthusian monks came there, and were well received by Ildebrandin, who loved their order. He asked them what brought them to Padua. 'We are going,' they said, 'to Trevisé, by the order of our general, to establish a monastery; the bishop of that city, and some of its pious inhabitants, desiring to have one of our order.' Ildebrandin, after several more questions, turned the conversation insensibly upon father Gerard, brother to Petrarch, and asked them if he appeared contented with his lot. The two monks, who did not know Petrarch, related wonders of his brother.

'The plague,' said they, 'having got into

the monastery of Montrieu, the prior, a man of exemplary piety, but seized with terror, told his monks that flight was the only part they had to take. Gerard answered with courage, "Go where you please; as to myself, I will remain in the situation in which Heaven has fixed me." The prior redoubled his instances; and to alarm him said, "When you are dead, there will be no person to bury you." "That is the last of my cares," said Gerard, "and the affair of my survivors rather than mine." The prior fled to his own country, where death followed and struck him. Gerard remained in his convent, where the plague respected and left him only, after having destroyed in a few days thirty-four of his brethren who continued with him. Gerard paid them every service, received their last sighs, washed their bodies, and buried them when death had taken those destined to this office. With only a dog left for his companion, he watched at night to guard the house, and took his repose in the day. The thieves, with which this country is infested, came several times to pillage this monastery, but he found some means to get rid of them. When the summer was passed, he sent to a neighbouring monastery of the Carthusians, to beg they would give him a monk to take care of

the house; and he went himself to the superior monastery of the Carthusians, where he was received with singular distinction by eighty-three priors, and obtained of them a great favour. They permitted him to choose a prior and monks to renew his house from the different convents of the order; and he returned triumphant, which he merited by his care, fidelity, and prudence.'

While the Carthusians were relating these wonders of father Gerard, the prelate cast his eyes, filled with tears of joy, from time to time on Petrarch. 'I know not,' says the latter, 'whether my eyes appeared so; but my heart was tenderly moved.' The Carthusians at last discovered him to be the brother of Petrarch, and with a holy effusion embraced him, saying, 'Ah! how happy are you in such a brother.' Petrarch could only answer with his tears: he was touched with this scene beyond expression, as he owns in a letter to his brother, from whence this account is taken.

About this time he made a review of all his manuscripts. Reflecting on the uncertainty of life, and recalling the losses he had sustained in a short time, he thought it necessary to arrange his affairs; like those who, on the evening that precedes a long journey, collect together

what they will take with them, burn the things that are unnecessary, and give the rest to their friends. He found much pleasure in reviewing his sentiments in the different periods of his life. When he discovered how many things he had begun and left unfinished, he considered such undertakings as a great folly in so short a life, and he threw into the fire directly a thousand epistles and poems on all subjects. 'I charged Vulcan,' says he, 'with the trouble of connecting them; but shall I own my weakness? it was not without sighs.' But recollecting that his dear Socrates had begged of him his prose works, and Barbatus his poetry, he saved the rest. To this we owe the eight books of his familiar subjects dedicated to Socrates, and the three books of his Latin verses dedicated to Barbatus, printed in the edition of Bale in 1581, the most complete edition there is of his works. Those he destroyed contained probably a thousand interesting anecdotes of his life. Petrarch writes thus to Socrates on this subject:

'I will not say to my readers as did Apuleius, read my works, they will please you: but you, my dear Socrates, will read them with ardour, and perhaps with pleasure, because you love me. If my style should amuse you, it will be

owing to your friendship, and not to my wit. A woman need not attend the toilette whose lover is to be judge of her beauty. You know I am not eloquent, nor does the epistolary style admit of it. The letters of Cicero are simple, plain, and easy: he reserved for his pleadings the thunders of his eloquence. If you will give me a mark of your friendship, keep these trifles to yourself; the world will not view them with your candour; even you must consider my situation. My life is that of a wanderer up and down in the midst of perils, fixed to no certain spot. This manner of life procured me a great number of acquaintance, of real friends perhaps but a few; but of this we cannot easily judge. This obliged me to write to people of all countries, and of every age and situation, whose characters and manners of thinking were quite opposite. You will therefore find seeming contradictions in these letters; for the attention of a writer ought to be fixed on the person to whom he writes, on his character and manner of thinking, and how he is likely to be affected with the subject before him. We must not write in the same manner to a brave man and a coward; to a young man without experience, and to a man of advanced years who has passed through the difficulties of

life ; to a happy man puffed up with prosperity, and to a wretched one depressed by adversity ; to a man of letters, and to a fool. There is an infinite variety among men, and their minds have as little resemblance as their faces. And were we to write only to one person, we must even then sometimes change our style and manner : a monotony in language will tire at length, as well as an uniformity in our food.

‘ I have suppressed in these letters those minute details which seldom interest those who were not concerned in them. But I am not altogether of the opinion of Seneca, who reproaches Cicero for such details, and who stuffs his own letters with morals and philosophy. I have rather followed the latter, and have mixed simple narrations with moral reflections, in the manner of Cicero. Give these trifles a corner in your cabinet, where they may be sheltered from those daring critics who, without producing any thing of their own, determine with assurance on the works of others.

‘ I have sketched out a picture of myself, which I destine for you. It shall be drawn with care : it will not be, as Cicero says, the Minerva of Phidias ; but when I have finished it, it shall not fear the critic. In this review you will be struck with my weakness and



effeminate complaints: you will say, I was a man in youth, and a child in mature age. I complained not however, like Cicero, of exile; sickness, a sum lost, a payment deferred, or an unjust decision: but when I lost my friends all at once, and the world was to me annihilated, there would have been more insensibility than strength of mind in being unmoved by such afflictions. At present I experience the change that Seneca tells us always befalls the ignorant. Despair has given me courage and tranquillity. Henceforth you shall behold me act, speak, and write, with more vigour. Even a falling world might crush, but it would not intimidate me.

‘I began this letter with the day, and with the day I will end it. I have prolonged my conversation with you, because it is delightful to me thus to enjoy your presence, notwithstanding the seas and the mountains that separate us. Could I procure a tranquil and fixed establishment, I would undertake some considerable work, that I might consecrate it to you. I would fain immortalise your name; but you stand in no need of my praise. Adieu! You are my Idomeneus, my Atticus, my Lucilius!’

Petrarch lodged when at Padua in the clois-

ter of St. Justine, close to the church of that monastery, which was built on the ruins of the ancient temple of Concord. Some workmen employed there found a stone on which was an inscription to the memory of Livy. Petrarch, who idolised this historian, took it into his head to address a letter to him as follows :

‘ I wish I had lived in your age, or rather that you had been born in mine. I should have been among those who went to seek you at Rome, or even in the Indies, had you dwelt there. I can now only behold you in your books ; and in them but in part, from the indolence of our age, who have never taken any pains to collect your works. I cannot reflect on this without feeling indignation at my countrymen, who seek after nothing but gold, silver, and the pleasures of sense.

‘ I am under great obligations to you, because you bring me into so much good company. When I read your works, I think I live with Brutus, Regulus, Scipio, the Fabricii, the Camilli ; and not with the banditti among whom my unfortunate stars have placed me. Salute on my part, among the ancients, Polybius, Quintus, Claudius, Valerius, and Antias, whose glory was clouded by yours ; among the

moderns, Pliny the younger, your neighbour, and Crispus Sallust, your rival; and inform them they have not been more fortunate than you with respect to the preservation of their works.

‘ I write this in the city where you were born and interred, in the vestibule of St. Justine the virgin, and on the stone of your monument.’

Padua was near Venice, and Petrarch went often to that city, which he called the wonder of all cities. He became acquainted with Andrew Dondolo, who was made doge in 1343, though he was but thirty-six years of age, which was an extraordinary thing. But he was a young man of great merit, and joined the talents necessary for governing with an agreeable figure and very enchanting manners. We have seen that he was in the good graces of the beautiful empress of Milan. His mind was cultivated and poetical: he had read the works of our poet, and was charmed with his acquaintance, to obtain which he had made considerable advances, which Petrarch answered with the highest sentiments of esteem and admiration.

The commerce of the Venetians increased under the government of Dondolo; they began at that time to trade to Egypt and Syria,

from whence they brought silk, pearls, aromatic spices, and other commodities of the east. This excited the envy of the Genoese, and a rupture ensued. Petrarch in a letter to the doge of Genoa says, ‘ I am troubled at the situation of your republic. I know the difference there is between the tumult of arms and the tranquillity of Parnassus, and that the lyre of Apollo ill accords with the trumpet of Mars. Hannibal himself said, that a certain peace was to be preferred to an expected victory. What distresses me the most is, that it is Italians you oppose. Would it not be better to wage war against Damas, Susa, or Memphis? Must the destruction of the Theban brothers be renewed in Italy?

‘ With grief I learn your league with the king of Arragon; and will you seek the aid of a barbarian to destroy your own countrymen? Your enemies, you say, have set the example; they are then equally culpable. Venice calls to her succour the tyrants of the west; Genoa those of the east! Wretches as we are! we buy venal souls to destroy our own children! Nature gave us for barriers the Alps and the two seas; avarice, envy, and pride, have opened these barriers to the Cimbres, the Huns, the Teutons, the Gauls, and the Spaniards. How

often have we recited with tears these lines of Virgil: " Strangers possess these cultivated fields! these harvests are the prey of barbarians!" Behold how discord has reduced the citizens of this wretched country! Athens and Lacedæmon had a rivalry like yours; the latter could have destroyed the former; but, " Heaven forbid," say they, " that we should put out one of the eyes of Greece." A fine answer, worthy of Sparta! In the midst of these agitations I cannot remain silent. While some are dragging along great trees to construct vessels of war, and others are sharpening their swords and their darts, I should think myself culpable if I did not take up my pen, which is my only weapon. I am conscious with what circumspection we ought to speak to our superiors; but the love of one's country is above all: this will plead my cause, and persuade you to pardon my presumption. I will prostrate myself before the chiefs of both nations, and thus beseech them;—throw down your arms, give each other the kiss of peace, unite your hearts, and your colours! Then will the Pontus, the Euxine, and the ocean, be opened to you, and your ships will arrive in safety at Taprobane, the Fortunate Islands, the unknown Thule, and at the Poles! Kings and

people shall go before you ; the Indian, the English, and the Ethiopian, shall dread your power. Let peace reign among you, and you will have nothing to fear ! Adieu, the greatest of dukes and the best of men !'

Andrew Dondolo in his answer speaks thus to Petrarch :

'The Genoese are not our brothers ; they have been guilty of a thousand wrongs to the republic of Venice ; they are domestic enemies, and worse they cannot be. They have abused our patience, tarnished the glory of Italy, and debased the diadem of its queen. They have rendered themselves odious to the whole universe. It is not astonishing they cannot agree with others, since they are never in harmony with themselves. We only undertake this war to procure an honourable peace for our country, which is dearer to us than our lives.'

The doge was delighted with the eloquence of Petrarch's letter, and the depth of his understanding. 'You are very dear to us,' said he, 'but you will be still more so if you will often regale us with such fine productions !'

The sixth of April this year, 1351, three years after the death of Laura, Petrarch wrote the following lines :

‘ Oh love ! Who has not proved thy mighty power ? Seek in the earth for my dear treasure that is hidden there ! Seek for that pure and chaste heart which was my sole delight ! Tear from the hands of death what he has forced from me, and fix once more thy precious ensign on her lovely face ! Rekindle that flame which was my guide ; that constant flame which enlightens me still, though it is extinguished itself.

‘ Never did thirsty stag seek the cooling fountain as I seek what I have lost. Amiable pilgrim ! Why did you set out before me ! The empire of death has now lost its hold over me ; for she who bound me to earth is ascended to heaven ! My chains are broken. I am free and miserable !’

In another sonnet he says, ‘ How blest should I have been had I died with Laura !’ But he would not have enjoyed one of the greatest pleasures he met with in the course of his life : his friend Boccace came to him on this day, to inform him he was recalled to his country, and restored to the inheritance of his family.

The friends of Petrarch at last obtained his cause, and sent Boccace with a letter to him from the senate, thus inscribed, ‘ To the re-

verend Signior Francis Petrarch, canon of Padua, crowned poet, our very dear countryman, prior of the arts, and Gonfalonier of Justice to the people of Florence.

‘ Illustrious branch of our country ! Your name has long sounded in our ears, and touched our hearts. The success of your studies, and that admirable art in which you excel, have decorated you with the laurel, and rendered you worthy to serve as a model to posterity. You will find in the hearts of your countrymen all those sentiments of esteem and friendship you deserve : and, that there may be nothing in your country to give you pain, of our own liberality, and inspired by that paternal tenderness we have always had for you, we return to you without any exception the lands of your ancestors, which have been redeemed with the public treasure. The gift is small in itself, and little proportioned to your merit : but it will be enhanced by regard to our laws, our customs, and the recollection of those who have not been able to obtain it. You may now inhabit when you please the city in which you was born. We flatter ourselves that, filled with love for your country, you will not go elsewhere to seek the applause that



you merit, and the tranquillity that you desire.

' We read admirable things of Virgil, and of some other authors, whom antiquity, whom even our own age causes us to regret. You will not find among us Cæsars or Mæcenases; these are titles unknown to us: but you will find countrymen, zealous for your glory, ardent to publish your praise, and extend your renown; extremely sensible of the honour our city obtains from having produced a man who has no parallel. Antiquity cannot boast, nor will his equal be found in posterity.

' We are not ignorant how rare, how splendid is the name of a poet. Ennius called poets holy, and they are in some sort inspired with a divine spirit: for which reason they were crowned, as were the Cæsars and heroes who triumphed. The latter are immortalised by their actions, the former by their works. It is praise-worthy, says Sallust, to do well for the republic, and it is not less so by eloquence to promote its glory. Thus men become illustrious both in war and in peace; and renown, as Lucan says, shelters both the one and the other from the outrages of time. If the soul of Virgil, if the eloquent spirit of Ci-

tero were again to appear in a bodily form among us, we should not venerate them more than we venerate you. Why are men more ready to praise those of whom they only hear, than those who are present with them? You excite our admiration, and we will sing your praise. Who would not be astonished to find so few good writers, and still fewer poets, in that crowd of wits among us who apply to so many different studies? Cicero explains this; It is owing, says he, to the greatness of the object, and the difficulty of success. But you have arrived at it by the strength of your genius, and great application. We have resolved, after mature deliberation, to advance the honour of our city in restoring the sciences and the arts, persuaded that they will give to it, as they did to Rome, a sort of empire over the rest of Italy.

What we desire, what was so rare among the ancients, you alone can produce. Your country conjures you by all that is most sacred, by all the rights she has over you, to consecrate to her your time, to preside over and direct these her studies, that they may excel those of others. You shall make choice of the authors you will explain, and shall act in the manner most suited to your occupations and

your glory. The greatest things have often arose from small beginnings: there are not wanting persons of merit among us, who under your auspices will give some poetic works to the public. Finish with us your Africa, that immortal poem; and bring back to us the Muses, whom we have so long neglected. You have wandered long enough about the world: you know the cities, and the manners of all nations. It is time for you to settle. Return to your country, which calls you with a loud voice after a long absence; a summons which perhaps no one ever received but yourself. Magistrates and people, great and small, desire your presence. Your household gods, your recovered lands, wait for you with impatience. Return to them, return to us. You are dear to us: you will be still dearer if you comply with our wishes. We have many other things to say, which we have confided to John Boccace, the messenger of these dispatches, to whom we beg you would give the same credit that you would do to ourselves.'

Villani relates, that the plague having depopulated the city of Florence, the inhabitants, to draw men thither, and restore its flourishing state, deliberated about establishing an university, where they should teach all the sciences,

and, above all, theology, and the civil and canon law. In consequence of which they built schools, assigned public funds for them, and called thither the best professors in every branch of study. The pope and the cardinals approved the plan, and granted this university all the privileges of those of Paris, Bologna, &c. The Florentines wished for Petrarch at the head of this establishment, to do them honour, and revive the taste for refined knowledge. And this produced the just restitution of his lands, and the obliging letter they sent him. Petrarch's answer was as follows:

‘ I have lived long enough, my dear countrymen. According to the maxim of the wise man, We should die when we have nothing left us to desire. I have never been ambitious of riches or honours; of this my whole life has been a sufficient proof. My prayers and my wishes have all centered in being a good man, and in meriting the approbation of worthy persons. If I have not accomplished the first point, your letter, which surprised and rejoiced me, is a proof I am not far from the last.

‘ As Plutarch said to the emperor Trajan, I rejoice in my own happiness, and felicitate you on your virtue. It is a prodigy in an age so deficient in goodness, and astonishing to

find so much of that public (so to speak) popular liberty in that vast body of which your republic is composed.

‘ Illustrious and generous men ! had I been present, could I have desired more than you have granted to me when I was absent and asked nothing ? Where is the country which has better treated the best of its citizens ? Rome recalled from exile Cicero, Rutilius, Metullus ; but she had exiled them unjustly. She recalled Camillus, but at a time when she could not do without him. The same reason engaged Athens to recall Alcibiades. But there is no example of an absent citizen’s being recalled voluntarily, but from the motive of service to their country. Augustus restored his land to Virgil : but have we ever seen a public senate restore to the son an inheritance which (for not being claimed at a certain time) was lost by his father ? With how many flatteries, caresses, and soothing entreaties, have you sweetened the restitution of my land, after having purchased it with the money of the public ! When I see it thus dressed out and enriched with the flowers of your eloquence, I envy not the most fertile spots of Africa or Sicily, or those lands of Campania where Ceres and Bacchus contend for the superiority. More

sensibly affected with your flattering address than the services you have done or wish to do me, nothing is wanting to my happiness but to deserve by my conduct what I owe to your generosity.

‘ It is a great consolation to find myself thus re-established in my country, where my father, my grandfather, and great grandfather, lived to old age, and distinguished themselves more by their fidelity and their zeal, than by the incense of adulation. As to myself, who have flown so far beyond it on the wings of nature or of fortune, you offer me an asylum where, after so many courses, I may repose in tranquillity. It is a precious gift; but what you have added is more precious still, and will be always a spur which will excite me to virtue and glory.

‘ Receive my grateful thanks, such as they are, and impute it to yourselves that they cannot equal your beneficence. I must be much more eloquent than I am, to express an acknowledgment that bears any proportion to your benefits. Whatever I can say will be ever unequal to my wishes. Overwhelmed with your favours, shall I dare to appropriate the answer of Augustus to the senate with tears? Arrived at the completion of my desires, what

can I ask of the gods, but that your good-will may last as long as my life? I recollect that I made this request to those who were at the head of your senate when I returned last year from Rome.

‘ John Boccace, the messenger of your letter and your orders, will acquaint you with my projects on my return; I have confided them to him. I beg you to consider what he shall say on my part, as if I spoke it myself.

‘ Heaven grant that your republic may be always flourishing!’

Notwithstanding this letter, Petrarch formed the design of going to Avignon and Vauchuse, and gives these reasons for it in a letter to one of his friends:

‘ What can I alledge as an excuse for the variation of my soul, but that love of solitude and repose so natural to me? Too much known, too much sought in my own country, praised and flattered even to disgust, I seek a corner where I may live unknown and without glory. Nothing appears to me so desirable as a tranquil and solitary life. My desert of Vauchuse presents itself with all its charms. Its hills, its fountains, and its woods, so favourable to my studies, possess my soul with a sweet emotion I cannot describe. I am no longer astonished that Camillus, that

great man whom Rome exiled, sighed after his country, when I feel that a man born on the banks of the Arno regrets a situation beyond the Alps. Habit is a second nature; and this solitude, from the strength of habit, is become as my country. What engages me the most is, that I reckon upon finishing there some works I have begun: I am desirous to revisit my books, to draw them out of the boxes in which they are enclosed, that they may again see the light, and behold the face of their master. In fine, if I fail in the promise I had given my friends at Florence, they ought to pardon me, since it is the effect of that variation attached to the human mind from which no one is exempted but those perfect men who never lose sight of the sovereign good.'

Petrarch set out from Padua the third of May 1351, and brought with him his son, whom he had taken from the school of Parma. 'I took him with me,' said he, 'that his presence might animate me to do him every good office. What would have become of this child if he had had the misfortune to lose me!' He arrived at Vicenza at the setting of the sun. He hesitated whether he should stop there, or proceed farther. Some persons of merit he met with, determined him to stay,



They entered into conversation, and night came on without Petrarch's perceiving it. 'I have often proved,' says he, 'that our friends are the greatest thieves of our time: but ought we to complain of this robbery, or can we make a better use of it than to pass it with them?' The conversation fell upon Cicero. Every one spoke as he thought of this great man. Petrarch, having praised his genius and eloquence, said something of his fickleness of character, and the inconstancy of his mind. Perceiving his friends astonished, he drew from his portmanteau two letters, in one of which he praises his genius, in the other criticises his character.

Most of the company were convinced of the justice of the criticism, except one old man. 'Ah! gentlemen,' says he, 'for mercy speak with more respect of so great a man, spare me the grief of hearing any thing said against him.' When they asked him if he thought Cicero incapable of erring, he shut his eyes, shook his head, and again repeated, 'What a misery for me to hear Cicero blasphemed!' 'You consider him then as a god,' said Petrarch, 'Yes,' replied he without hesitation, 'he is the god of eloquence.' 'You are then right,' replied Petrarch, 'if he is a god, he cannot err: but I

confess, this is the first time I ever heard Cicero turned into a deity. After all, since he deifies Plato, I do not see why you are to blame for doing the same by him if our religion permitted us to multiply gods at our pleasure.' 'I do but joke,' said the old man, 'I know well that Cicero is a man, but agree with me that his mind is divine.' 'Very true,' said Petrarch, 'you are now in the right: you speak like Quintilian, who called Cicero a heavenly man. It is sufficient however that he was a man liable to err, and errors you must own he committed.' At these words the old man gnashed his teeth, as if they had attacked his honour!

Petrarch's letters to Cicero united are as follows:

'I have read your works with avidity, which after a long search I found at last. You say a great deal, complain very much, and often change your manner of thinking. I know already what you taught to others: I know at present what you think yourself. Wherever you are, listen to the most zealous of your admirers. It is not advice I mean to offer; it is a complaint dictated by sentiment, and mixed with sorrow.

'Restless and unhappy old man! What do you mean by so many quarrels and contentions?

And why do you sacrifice to these a repose so much better suited to your rank and your age? What false idea of glory has precipitated your grey hairs into those wars which suit none but young men, and caused you to end your life in a manner unworthy of a philosopher? Forgetting your advice to your brother, and the precepts you gave your disciples, you are fallen into the very precipice you cautioned them to avoid. I speak not now of Dionysius, of your brother, of your grandson, or of Dolabella. Sometimes you praised them to the skies; sometimes you overwhelmed them with reproaches. I would be silent also concerning Cæsar, whose clemency was a certain port for all those who attacked him; and Pompey, to whom your intimacy gave you a right to speak freely. But why that violence against Anthony? Without doubt we must attribute it to your zeal for your sinking country. But what then could be the motive of your secret union with Augustus? You know what your own Brutus said of you: "Cicero does not dislike a master, he would only have one that suits him."

'How I lament for you, my dear Cicero! I pity, but I blush for your errors! I say with Brutus, "Of what use are so many talents, and

so much knowledge? Why does he speak so well of virtue, and so seldom adhere to its laws?" Would it not better suit a philosopher like you to renounce the fasces, the honours of a triumph, and those pursuits against Catiline which inspired you with so much vanity, to pass a tranquil old age at your villa, more occupied (as you speak yourself) with the future than with the present, which will swiftly pass away. Adieu for ever! my dear Cicero. I write from the other side the Po, on the borders of the Adige to the right, in the colony of Verona, the 12th of May 1345, from the birth of him with whom you are not acquainted.'

One of Petrarch's friends begged these reflections on Cicero, to examine them at his leisure, that he might form a clear judgment of them. Petrarch willingly consented, saying, 'I wish I may be found to have mistaken his character.'

Petrarch set out the next day for Verona, where he proposed only a short stay: but Azon de Corregge, William de Pastrengo, and some other friends, detained him the whole month. 'The prayers of my friends,' says he, 'are so many bonds on my affection. Nothing can be

sweeter than friendship. I have only to complain of being loved too much for my repose.' Before he departed from Verona he wrote the following letter to Boccace :

‘ You know, my dear friend, and every one knows, that, all things considered, if I was my own master, I should fix my residence at Vaucluse, and pass the rest of my days in that obscure retreat. Though deprived of that agreeable superfluity with which cities abound, it contains liberty, leisure, repose, and solitude, four things necessary to my happiness. It has however two great faults; it is too far from Italy, to which I am drawn by nature, and too near that western Babylon which I detest like Tartarus. But to pass over these objections, there are things I cannot commit to paper which will prevent my making a long stay at Vaucluse, unless something unforeseen happens. I cannot tell what; I only know there is nothing but may befall an animal frail and mortal as man is, so insolent even in the depth of misery.

‘ My project then is to go and visit the Roman pontiff on the borders of the Rhone, whom our ancestors went to adore on the banks of the Tiber, and whom our successors

will perhaps seek on the borders of the Tagus. Time changes all things: all things follow its passing stream.

But this is the affair of that holy fisherman who, acquainted with the Rhine, the Rhone, and the Tagus, chose the Tiber, to affix there his vessels and his nets. It is the affair of the pilot whose ship is agitated by the tempest, and of those who direct its helm. We are only passengers who run the same hazards with them without being responsible for their errors. I will then seek him where I may, whom I cannot find where I would; and, after having taken a last leave of some friends who remain to me, I will fly, as Virgil says, from barbarous lands and an inhospitable shore: I will go and settle at my fountain, in the midst of my woods, books, and gardens, which have expected me above four years: I will pass the remainder of the summer in retirement. If I was to betake myself to my ancient wanderings, I should fear for my health from the excessive heats, though accustomed to suffer much from my childhood. The next autumn I hope at least to return to Italy with my books, which will enrich my Italian library. These are my intentions, and I thought it right to inform you of them. Present my homage to our

senate. You know how much I owe it. Say a thousand things for me to those three dear and virtuous countrymen whose image and conversations I carry every where with me.'

In June 1351 Petrarch went through Mantua to Parma; he stayed here but a few days, for the friends he had here were dead: from thence he went to Plaisance, where, finding a conveyance to Avignon, he wrote to Socrates to acquaint him with his approach, and desire him to be at Vacluse to meet him. At mount Genevre, one of the Alps, he wrote these lines to John de Arezzo. 'Padua has taken from me the man who was all my joy and consolation; I have nothing to inform you of that can make you laugh. I seek with ardour for something that may produce that effect on me: it should seem that antiquity was more grave and serious, our age more gay and comic. Great affairs render men serious, it is only trifles that amuse and make them laugh. I am persuaded that Cassius would have laughed often if he had lived among us: and Democritus would have died with laughter could he have compared his own age with ours. We see nothing now but mad old men, doting old women, and young ones either foolish or extravagant. We should have had a fine tete-a-tete

of laughing at them all. My letter, for its narrow scrawling figure, perfectly resembles the strait passage of the Alps from whence I write it. I flatter myself that you will soon follow me: I would rather have had you for the companion of my journey, as I have often had before; but no pleasure is durable. I shall expect you at the fountain of Vaucluse, a place always agreeable and charming, but in summer it is the Elysian fields. We will breathe a little there, before we proceed to Babylon, that gulph of Tartarus.'—From the top of mount Genevre, June.

Petrarch arrived at Vaucluse the 27th of June; his first care was to notify his arrival to Philip de Cabasole, bishop of Cavaillon: he wrote to him these lines:

'Vaucluse is ever to me the most agreeable situation in the world, and which best suits my studies. I went there when a child: I returned again when a youth; and in manhood I passed in that retreat some of the choicest years of my life. I would, if possible, live here in old age, and die in your dominions. I am so impatient to see you after so long an absence, that when I have wiped off the dust of my journey, and bathed myself in the water of the Sorgia, I will come immediately to Cavaill-



lon.' A short time after his arrival, Petrarch says in a letter to Boccace ; ' I promised to return in autumn, but how can we judge at a distance ? time, place, and friendship, makes us change our resolutions : the gladiator can only determine his fate in the amphitheatre. By what appears I have business cut out for me during the space of two years in this country ; my friends must therefore pardon me if I do not keep my word ; the inconstancy of the human mind must be my apology.' Having passed a month at Vacluse, to refresh himself after his journey, Petrarch went to visit the pope and the cardinals at Avignon.

The court of Avignon was at this time in its greatest lustre. The viscountess of Turenne continued to have the same ascendant as ever, disposed of every thing, and lived in the greatest splendour. Eleanor, her younger sister, was just married to William Roger, count of Beaufort, nephew of the pope, to whom the viscountess had sold the viscounty of Turenne on this marriage. It was celebrated with a magnificence which answered to the quality of the persons, and the taste of Clement : and the arrival of king John of France increased its éclat. This prince had just succeeded Philip de Valois, and immediately after his consecration he came

to Avignon, to thank the pope for an essential service he had rendered him, and which is a memorable event in the history of France. Humbert, the dauphin of Viennois, whom Petrarch had reproached for his effeminacy, was a widower, and had no children. His dominions were very commodious for the king of France, and he had ceded them to him in 1343, and renewed the cessation to Charles the dauphin: but, always restless and unquiet, he wanted to break through this treaty, and sometimes he thought of marrying again. To put this entirely out of his power, and bind him to his contract, the pope, after having obliged him to take the habit of St. Dominique, conferred on him all the sacred orders on Christmas-day 1350; the under deacon at the midnight mass, the deacon at the mass said at break of day, and the priesthood at the third mass: eight days after, he consecrated him bishop and patriarch of Alexandria. By this means the dauphin was reunited to the crown; and it was an article in the treaty, that the eldest son of the king, and the presumptive heir of his crown, should from that time have the title of the Dauphin.

King John resided at Villeneuve, which is only separated from Avignon by the Rhone.

Continual feasts were celebrated on this occasion; and by his orders, a grand tournament, at which, says an ancient historian of Tholouse, all the Roman court were present.

King John, to express his gratitude to Clement for this important service, granted to William de Beaufort and his posterity the first privileges and appeals in the viscounty of Turenne; and stood godfather to Joan his sister, to whom he assigned five hundred livres yearly, a very considerable sum at that time. At this time the pope made a promotion of the twelve new cardinals, to fill the places of those who died of the plague. Among these the two cardinals of the crown were, for France, Gille Rigaud, abbe of St. Dennis, to whom at Paris the pope sent the hat by one of his nephews (a favour at that time without example); the other for Spain was Gille Alvari, archbishop of Toledo, who had great concerns afterwards in the affairs of Italy. The pope was reproached for admitting many young men into the sacred college, because related to him, who lived most dissolute lives. Pierre Roger, the pope's nephew, seems to be particularly referred to, who was only eighteen years of age when his uncle gave him the hat. But it was universally agreed he led a very exemplary life. He became af-

terwards, under the name of Gregory XI. one of the greatest popes that ever governed the church, and he re-established the holy see at Rome. There were two of these cardinals who eclipsed all the rest by their birth, their alliances with the greatest princes of Europe, their credit, their magnificence, the splendour of their court, and the superiority of their knowledge. These were Gui de Bologne and Elie de Tailerand: the former we are acquainted with, the latter was of the illustrious house of Pengord; he had principally applied to the study of the law, and was esteemed very skilful in it. Petrarch says of him that he was one of the brightest luminaries of the church; he was only thirty years of age when he was made cardinal. He had great influence in the election of Clement, and no person had more credit or authority in the sacred college. 'It is more honourable,' says Petrarch, speaking of him again, 'to make popes, than to be a pope oneself.' He was reckoned insolent and proud; and some have accused him of cruel and bloody actions.

Petrarch was more attached to the two cardinals I have mentioned than any others, and wrote a letter to the bishop of Cavaillon to thank him for his recommendation to them. In it he says, 'They are the two strongest

rowers of the apostolic bark.' Three great affairs at this time occupied the court of Rome: the enterprize of the lords of Milan, which they meant to suppress; the war between the kings of Naples and Hungary, which they desired to end; and the troubles of Rome, which it was necessary to appease. After the fall of Rienzi, the pope had again established the ancient form of government under senators and a legate; when the latter quitted Rome, the same disorders and violences arose as before, which encouraged the remaining partisans of Rienzi. In this situation of affairs, the pope named four cardinals to deliberate on the means of reforming this city, and making choice of that government that should best effect it. The cardinal de Boulogne desired Petrarch to give his sentiments of this important affair. After speaking in the highest terms of the sacred respect due to the city of Rome, as the centre of the faith, and the seat of empire, he writes as follows:

‘What has been the foundations of all its quarrels and miseries? I wish to Heaven it may not be found, ancient pride, joined to modern tyranny. An effeminate, presuming, and disdainful nobility undertakes to abuse a humbled and unfortunate people. They would

bind Romans to their car, and lead them in triumph, as if they were Carthaginians or Cambrians. Did any one ever hear of a triumph over citizens? Is there any law to authorise such an attempt?

‘That I may not be suspected of speaking from any secret animosity, I ought to say that of the two families who have been thought to give rise to this charge, I never hated the one, the other I have loved, respected, and served with affection. The family of no prince is so dear to me. But Rome, Italy, the liberties of good men, are dearer still; and, to speak the truth, it is what I owe to the living as well as to the dead. Behold this great city, destined by God to be the head of the church, and of the world, behold it torn in pieces, not as formerly by its own hands, but by strangers from the Rhine, whose tyranny has reduced it to the most deplorable state. How are we fallen! Great God! cast on us, though we deserve it not, an eye of pity and of mercy! Alas! who would have thought that it should be our misery to have it debated before the vicar of Jesus Christ, and before the successors of his apostles, whether Roman citizens were to be admitted into the senate, when strangers, when new Tarquins display their pride in the capi-

tol? This however is the question which employs the four pillars of the church.

‘ If I am asked, I hesitate not to say, that the Roman senate ought to be formed of none but Roman citizens: and that not only strangers, but even the Latins, ought to be excluded. Manlius Torquatus should decide this question. When the Latins demanded a consul and senators of their nation, this great man, full of indignation, swore that he would never come into the senate without a poignard, which he would plunge into the breast of the first Latin who should dare to appear there. To what was this refusal owing, but because they would not grant to power or fortune what was only due to service and to merit? But for this, Macedonians and Carthaginians formerly, and all the nations under the sun at present, might pretend to this privilege. But some will say, We are Roman citizens. Ah! that they would prove themselves so, by being the guardians, and not the oppressors, of their fellow-citizens. But can they call themselves so who disdain the very name of men, and aim at nothing but the pompous titles of lords and princes? Will they build their claim upon their nobility or riches? In what the first consists is a question; if not in virtue, it is a false

idea. As to the last, they have drawn them from the church, their mother; let them use them therefore with moderation, as a fleeting good; but not to condemn the poor, or ruin that dear country from whose liberality they hold them. But to govern well, is it necessary to be rich? Was Valerius Publicola rich when he joined Brutus to expel the Tarquins? Was he not buried at the expence of the public, after having vanquished the Tuscans and the Sabines? Was Menenius Agrippa rich, when by his eloquence he reunited those fomented spirits who threatened the republic with a fatal schism? or Quintus Cincinnatus, when he quitted his little field to head the army and become consul of Rome? Curius and Fabricius, were they rich, when they fought Pyrrhus and the Samnites? Regulus, when he vanquished the Carthaginians? Appius Claudius, when he governed the republic, though deprived of sight? I should never finish was I to bring all the examples that Rome furnishes of a glorious poverty.

‘Virtue, (I fear not to say it) virtue has not a greater enemy than wealth. It was that which conquered Rome, after Rome had conquered the world. Every foreign vice entered



into that city by the same door at which poverty went out of it. Shall we say that from pride, and not riches, arises the desire of dominion? This also was the pest of ancient Rome: but it was then, and will now, I trust, be suppressed by your decisions. In the first ages of the republic the people demanded magistrates to defend that liberty which they found was invaded by the great. The nobles opposed this with all their might. To this was owing their first retreat to the sacred mount. The rights of the people prevailed over the pride of the nobles, and, notwithstanding their opposition, tribunes were created, the first public rampart against the violences of the senate. After this there was a new dispute; the nobility would not permit marriages between the patricians and plebeians; thus breaking asunder the strongest bond of union between one another, they divided the city into two parties; but the people obtained a law which should render marriages free, without any limitation. However, the former continued only to take from the Patrician families their first magistrates. The people saw they were mocked, they therefore demanded and obtained these offices; a small fact in itself, but which Livy

thought worthy of recital, as a proof of the pride of the nobles, and the glorious liberty of the people.

Cneius Flavius, the son of a scribe, a man of low extraction, but sharp wit and excellent speech, was made edile. The nobles, enraged at the elevation of such a man, laid down their ornaments of dignity. Flavius was not moved by this; he opposed the greatest firmness to their pride. One day, when he went to see his colleague who was sick, the young patricians who were there would not deign to rise and salute him: when he perceived this, he ordered his chair of state to be brought, sat down in it, and looking down on them from this elevated seat, he returned them disdain for disdain; while they sat on their stools, consumed with rage and jealousy. This instance, in my esteem, proved him worthy of being consul.

After many and violent contests, a patrician and plebeian consul were seen seated together, and dividing the government of Rome. If these things are true, and to be found in our best historians, follow the happy example of these illustrious times, when Rome, rising out of nothing as it were, was elevated almost to heaven. It is not to be doubted but that city contains a great number of citizens, superior in

birth and merit to those strangers who, on the strength of name alone, despise both heaven and earth. Were they virtuous, I would allow them to be noble; but Rome would never acknowledge them to be Romans: and were they both, they ought not to be preferred to our ancestors, the founders of this empire. What do the poor people demand? Only that they may not be treated in their own city as exiles, and excluded the public administration, as if they had the plague. Can any thing be more just.

‘ On this occasion it may be well to follow the counsel of Aristotle, and imitate those who undertake to straighten a crooked tree. Oblige those noble strangers not only to divide with the Romans the senatorship and the other charges they have usurped, but even to give them up till, the republic having taken a contrary bend, things shall insensibly return back to their former equality.

‘ This is my advice, this is what I supplicate you to do, and what Rome, sinking under her calamities, begs of you with weeping eyes. If you do not endeavour to re-establish her liberty, she summons you before the awful tribunal of the Sovereign Judge. Jesus Christ, who is in the midst of you when assembled, commands

you. St. Peter and St. Paul, who have inspired the pope to name you above others, desire it of you immediately. Listen to their secret petitions, and you will pay no regard to outward solicitations. Be only occupied with what will benefit Rome, Italy, the world, and yourselves. Our sins have rendered us little worthy of your protection : but the seat of the apostles deserves to be sheltered from the violence of tyrants ; the temples of the saints ought to be forced from those robbers who have invaded them ; that holy land, sprinkled with the blood of so many martyrs, merits surely to be saved from the blood of its citizens, which will be inevitably spilled, if you do not take some methods to suppress the fury of these tyrants.

This letter of Petrarch's was addressed to the four first cardinals.

The decision in consequence of this letter of Petrarch's to the four commissary cardinals is not certain, as the pope soon after this fell sick. It is probable this affair was not determined. The people of Rome themselves, wearied out with the anarchy in which they lived, assembled together, and elected John Cerroni, investing him with an absolute authority. He was a good citizen, wise and prudent, and respected for his probity. The nobles did not

dare to oppose this, and it was confirmed by the pope's vicar.

The next affair in debate at Avignon was the enterprize of John Viscomti, the brother and successor of Luchin. He was archbishop, as well as governor of Milan, and he aimed at being master of all Italy. The pope on this sent a nuncio, to re-demand the city of Bologna, which he had purchased; and to choose whether he would possess the spiritual or the temporal power, for both could not be united. The archbishop, after hearing the message with respect, said he would answer it the following Sunday at the cathedral. The day came; and, after celebrating mass in his pontifical robes, he advanced towards the legate, requiring him to repeat the orders of the pope on the choice of the spiritual or the temporal: then taking the cross in one hand, and drawing forth a naked sword with the other, he said, 'Behold my spiritual and my temporal: and tell the holy father from me, that with the one I will defend the other.'

The pope, not content with this answer, commenced a process against him, and summoned him to appear in person, on pain of excommunication. The archbishop received the brief, and promised to obey it. Imme-

diately he sent to Avignon one of his secretaries, ordering him to retain for his use all the houses and stables that he could hire at Avignon, with provisions for the subsistence of twelve thousand horse, and six thousand foot. The secretary executed his commission so well, that the strangers who came to Avignon on business could find no place to lodge in. The pope being informed of this, asked the secretary if the archbishop required so many houses: the latter answered, he feared those would not be sufficient; because his master was coming with eighteen thousand troops, besides a great number of the inhabitants of Milan, who would accompany him. The pope, terrified at this account, paid immediately the expence the secretary had been at, and dismissed him with orders to tell the archbishop that he dispensed him from this journey.

There is another anecdote related of this prince: and they all serve to shew his artful character, and with what apparent modesty and submission he covered his pride and resolution. The cardinal de Ceccano, going on his legateship to Rome, passed by Milan. The archbishop went out to meet him with so numerous and splendid a train, and so many led horses richly harnessed, that in surprise he said

to him, 'Mr. Archbishop, why all this pomp?' 'It is,' replied he, affecting an humble air and a soft tone of voice, 'to convince the holy father that he has under him a little priest who can do something.'

There was an anonymous letter that was also attributed to this prince; but it appears more likely to have been written by Petrarch, from the style of irony that runs through it. One day, when the pope was in full consistory, a cardinal, who is not named, let this letter fall in so cunning a manner, that it was brought to the pope, who ordered it to be read in the presence of all the court. The inscription was in these terms:

'Leviathan, prince of darkness, to pope Clement his vicar, and to the cardinals his counsellors and good friends.'

After an enumeration of very dreadful crimes which Leviathan ascribes to this corrupt court, and on which he makes them great compliments, exhorting them to continue in this noble course, that they may more and more merit his protection; he inveighs against the doctrine of the apostles, and turns their plain and sober life into the highest ridicule. 'I know,' says he, 'that, so far from imitating, you have their piety and humility in horror and

derision. I have no reproach to make you on this account, but that your words do not always correspond with your actions. Correct this fault if you wish to be advanced in my kingdom.' He concludes thus: 'Pride, your superb mother, salutes you; with your sisters avarice, lewdness, and the rest of your family; who make every day new progress under your encouragement and protection. Given from our centre of hell, in the presence of all the devils.' The pope and the cardinals took little notice of this letter, and continued the same course of life.

The third affair at the court of Avignon, was the peace between Hungary and Naples. Petrarch was particularly interested in this affair, from respect to king Robert, regard to queen Joan, and friendship for the grand senechal of that kingdom, who became his second Mæcenas. His name was Nicholas Acciajoli; his family was originally of Brixia, and obtained its name from a commerce in nets. It afterwards divided into several branches, which spread abroad to Sicily, England, Hungary, and even to Constantinople. One of these branches was established at Florence, and held a distinguished rank there, without abandoning the commerce it was engaged in. From this



branch descended Nicholas Acciajoli. At eighteen he married Margarita Spini, of a rich and illustrious family; and three years after his father sent him to Naples, where he had established a branch of his commerce, which succeeded so well, that he was able, whenever he wanted them, to lend large sums of money to king Robert. His son Nicholas had not his taste for commerce; he was very handsome, had a fine figure, and an amiable disposition; but his mind was filled with ambition, and his head turned on chivalry. He happened to please Catharine de Valois, the widow of Philip, prince of Tarentum, whom they called the empress of Constantinople; a woman of gallantry, according to Villani, and of very indifferent reputation. She was one of those who contributed to the death of prince Andrew. The handsome Florentine gained so much favour with this princess, that she confided to him the care of her affairs, the education of her children, and the government of her state. Villani says, she made him a rich and powerful chevalier. Lewis de Tarentum, son of Catharine, having been sent on an expedition into Calabria, at the head of five hundred horse, king Robert gave him Nicholas for governor, with orders to do nothing without consulting

him. The young Florentine executed this commission in a manner that did him great honour, and gained him the good graces of his pupil, who became extremely attached to him.

After the death of king Andrew, he contributed to the marriage of prince Lewis with queen Joan, who was too fond of her to act with the resolution necessary to accomplish it himself. On the arrival of the king of Hungary, having been prevented following the queen his wife, he threw himself with Nicholas Acciajoli into a small fisher-boat, in which, with great peril coasting the shore, they got to Ercole, and from thence to Sienna. Nicholas set out with the prince for Florence, where his brother was bishop; but when they entered the confines of the republic, the officers of the government stopped them, fearing to offend the king of Hungary, and they retired to an estate which belonged to the house of Acciajoli. Nicholas got together all the money he could, and they embarked in two Genoese galleys with the bishop of Florence for Aigues Mortes, where they landed, and proceeded to Ville-neuve, a town only separated from Avignon by the Rhone. Nicholas and the bishop went immediately to the pope, to inform him of the prince's arrival, and to concert with him the

means of delivering the queen from the castle of Aix, where the people kept her as a prisoner. By means of the pope, and the duke of Berri, who happened to be at Avignon, and who assured the people of Provence she had no design against them, which was their pretence for detaining her, she obtained her liberty, and was received at Avignon with the usual honours paid to crowned heads. She made her entry there under a canopy of state surrounded with eighteen cardinals, and several prelates who went out to meet her. The pope received her in full consistory, according to the general custom of receiving princes: and the prince of Tarentum, through the interest of the Acciajolis, was better treated than he hoped for. The pope granted him the necessary dispensations for his marriage, touched probably with the situation of the queen, who was big with child.

During these things the king of Hungary had been driven from Naples by the plague; and the Neapolitans, who loved their sovereign, and detested the Hungarians, invited her to return with her husband. Nicholas Acciajoli was sent thither to examine how things were situated, and prepare every thing necessary for their reception. When he came there he en-

gaged in the queen's service that famous duke Warner who had served the king of Hungary at the head of twelve hundred men, and was not satisfied with his former master. Finding every thing well disposed to the queen, he pressed her to set out immediately for Naples. But money was wanting for this purpose; and this determined her to sell the city of Avignon to the pope for fourscore thousand florins: This sum not being sufficient, she pawned her jewels; and, having collected a little army in haste, she embarked at Marseilles with her husband, and arrived at Naples in August; where she was received with transport. She loaded all those with benefits who had given her proofs of zeal and fidelity. Nicholas Acciajoli had the office of grand senechal, and the administration of public affairs, as a reward for his great services. There were however many troops in garrison in several of the principal towns; and war was carried on between these and the Neapolitans, till the king of Hungary, returning to Naples in 1350, became again conqueror; and Joan and her husband were obliged to take refuge at Gaiette, waiting for the negotiations of the pope to procure peace. At first, as we have seen, the king of Hungary would not hear of it: but at last,

whether he was weary of a war at such a distance from his kingdom, and which had cost him so much ; or whether his resentment was abated with time ; or out of complaisance for the pope, whom he regarded ; he consented to a truce, on condition that if after a process the queen was found guilty, she should be deprived of her kingdom ; if innocent, he promised to restore all the places he possessed belonging to her, on the payment of three hundred thousand florins for the expence of the war.

The process of Joan was not easy to determine. There were many depositions against her, but no witnesses. At last, an expedient was found to finish it. Joan proved, by the deposition of several persons, that they had given her a charm which had inspired her with such an extreme aversion for her husband, that the persons attached to her thought it would be serving her to put him to death ; and that she had thus influenced towards it, without being culpable. On this deposition the judges declared her innocent of the witchcraft and its consequences. The king of Hungary, quite tired out, agreed to a decision worthy of the age in which it was invented. The peace was signed at Avignon this year, 1352, by the ambassadors of the two powers, and ratified by the

pope. He acknowledged Lewis de Tarentum king of Naples, and gave orders for his coronation, but that he should claim no right to the crown. This gave the greatest joy to Nicholas Acciajoli, who might be said to have put the crown of Naples on the head of his pupil, by first accomplishing this marriage, then supporting him by his valour and skilful management, and protecting and befriending him in his greatest adversities. The union of Petrarch with the grand senechal seems to have been formed by Boccace, Zanobie, and the prior of the Holy Apostles, friends to both.

Petrarch wrote a letter to him on this event as follows :

‘ Illustrious man ! At last victory is yours ! Thanks to your zeal, your prince shall be enthroned, notwithstanding the efforts of envy. The lustre of his crown, and the serenity of his countenance, are going to dissipate the clouds with which Italy was covered. After so many labours and perils, do not think you may repose. What remains for you to do is far more difficult and more important than what you have done. You must collect all the strength of mind you are known to possess, to govern that kingdom with justice which you have acquired with glory. You have struggled with

fortune in adversity, and have been victor : you must now combat her in prosperity. She is the same enemy ; her appearance is only changed ; and she is more difficult to subdue under the form of an enchantress than any other. She has conquered mighty heroes ! Hannibal, who overcame at Canna, was enslaved by pleasure at Capua.

‘ Your prince is young : but his understanding is ripe, and he promises great things. After having weathered a thousand tempests by sea and by land, and conducted him over rocks and precipices to the utmost point of greatness, teach him to preserve the dignity he has acquired, and prove that the sceptre, hereditary in his family, was due to his virtue more than his birth. It is more honourable to be raised than born to a throne ; hazard bestows the one, but merit obtains the other. Teach him to serve his God, to love his country, and to render exact justice, without which no kingdom can endure. Let him accustom himself to desire nothing but honour, and to fear nothing but shame. Let him know that the higher he is elevated, the less he can be concealed ; that the more power he has, the less he ought to allow himself ; and that a king should be distinguished by his manners more than by his

robes. Keep him at a distance in general from the extremes either of prodigality or avarice; virtue lies between them both. Nevertheless, he should be sparing of his time, and profuse of his private money, that it may circulate in his kingdom, and not lie useless in his treasury. The master of a rich estate can never be poor. Let him never forget the speech of that Roman, "I will not have any gold, but I love to reign over those who have." Let him not think himself happy, or a true king, till he has relieved his kingdom from its calamities, repaired its ruins, extinguished tyranny, and re-established peace and freedom. Sallust says, that a kingdom ought to be always present to the mind of its master. The surest guard of kings is not armies and treasures, but friends; and they are only acquired by beneficence and justice. "We must deliberate before we choose them," says Seneca, "but when once chosen, place in them an entire confidence."

It is important, but not easy, to distinguish a true friend from an agreeable enemy; just praises are spurs to virtue, but flatteries are a subtle poison. We should not break lightly with a friend, nor of a sudden. According to the old proverb, We must unrip, not tear away. It is an error to suppose we shall be



loved by those to whom we are not attached, and an injustice to exact from them more than we can give. Nothing is freer than the heart: it will bear no yoke, it knows no master, but love. Never suffer your king to open his soul to suspicion, or lend his ear to informers: but let him despise slanderers, and confound them by the virtue of his conduct! Augustus wrote thus to Tiberius, "Let us permit men to speak evil of us; is it not sufficient that they cannot do it? Does the power of God himself shelter him from the blasphemies of the impious?" Let him permit others to seek to divine his secrets; but never let him seek to divine the secrets of others. Let him really be what he would appear; then will he have no interest to hide, and will no more fear the observations of his enemy than the regards of his friend. Scipio brought into his camp with the same confidence the spies of the Romans and Carthaginians. Julius Cæsar sent back Domitius, after taking him prisoner; despised Labienus the deserter, though acquainted with his secrets; and often burnt the dispatches of the enemies without reading them.

'The title of serenissime is given to kings, to teach them that their rank places them above the feat of the passions, and that they

ought to be inaccessible to all the tempests they raise. Nothing is more dangerous than a king who deceives; nothing more ridiculous for himself, or more fatal to his subjects. On his word is established their hope and tranquillity. Why should he be false whose interest it is that all under him should be true? Nor let him be ungrateful: for ingratitude destroys the very sinews of a state. He ought to refuse himself to no one. Teach him that he is not born for himself, but for the republic; and that he is in his proper employment when occupied with the affairs of his subjects. He must work for their happiness, and watch for their preservation. There is nothing more glorious; but nothing is more toilsome. It is a delightful and honourable servitude. Prompt to recompense, slow to punish, a good king ought to treat criminals as a good surgeon treats his patients, with all the care and tenderness possible, shedding tears for the pain he is obliged to give. A king must not punish a guilty subject as he would a proud enemy; but ever have this maxim engraved on his heart, "Clemency and virtue assimilate to God."

‘ In fine, a king ought to serve as the model of his subjects. By his character they ought to regulate their own. He is responsible for

all the crimes they commit after his example. Let your prince be irreproachable in his manners. Teach him to despise luxury, and trample voluptuousness under his feet. Let him suffer no debauchery in his kingdom, and, above all, in his armies. Horses, books, and arms, these ought to be his amusements ; war, peace, and justice, his occupations. Let him read the lives of illustrious men, that he may form himself after them. He should consider them as his models and guides in the path to glory. Their great actions will warm his soul, and spur him on to the like. O how glorious is that ambition that springs from virtue ! You may present to your prince a pattern of every virtue without going far. If love does not blind me, I know no one more perfect than that of his uncle, the divine king Robert ; whose death has proved, by the calamities that have followed it, how necessary his life was to his people. He was great, wise, kind, and magnanimous ! In a word, he was the king of kings ! His nephew can do nothing better than tread in his steps.

‘ You feel, my lord, the burden with which you are charged ; but a great man finds nothing hard or weighty when he is sure he is beloved. At the head of your pupil’s counsels,

the confidant of all his secrets, you are as dear to him as Chiron was to Achilles, as Achates to Æneas, and as Lelius to Scipio. Complete what you have begun: love accomplishes all things; he who partakes the honour should participate in the labour. Adieu! You are the glory of our country, and of your own. I have said a great deal; but I have left much more unsaid.'

Petrarch made use of the same courier to answer a letter of Barbatus de Sulmone, who lamented he had not found him at Rome when he went to gain the jubilee, and begged he would send him his Africa. 'You speak of our not meeting at Rome as a misfortune; I hold it to have been providential. If we had met in that great city we should have been more occupied with the arts and the sciences than with our souls; and should have sought to ornament our understandings rather than to purify our hearts. The sciences are most agreeable food for the mind: but what a void do they leave in the heart, if they are not directed to their true and perfect end! As to my Africa, if it ever sees the day it shall visit you; but it has languished of late through the negligence of its master, and the obstacles of fortune,

‘I am now freed from many embarrassments, and my mind approaches rather nearer that point to which it ought to arrive. I hope, however, to be always making some little progress, and to be learning something every day, till death closes my eyes: at least, as said a wise old man, I will strive so to do; and what gives me hopes I shall succeed is, the passions that troubled my soul have almost ceased to torment me; and I flatter myself in a little time to be wholly exempted from their power. Adieu, my dear Barbatus, if we should not be able to meet in this world, we shall see one another again in the heavenly Jerusalem!’ Avignon, 1352.

The pope’s sickness detained Petrarch a long time at Avignon, and retarded the decision of the greatest affairs: it began about autumn. A malignant humour broke out in his face, it swelled prodigiously, and he was judged to be in great danger. In the month of December his condition terribly alarmed those who were interested in him. He was a little better in January, and they profited by this gleam of health to assemble the consistories for necessary business; in one of which the affair of Naples was decided: but this was only a false hope; and we see, by a letter of Petrarch to the bishop

of Cavaillon, that he relapsed soon after. This prelate went and passed five days at Vacluse, without acquainting Petrarch, who complains of it in a letter, as follows :

‘ And could you pass five days without me in my Transalpine Helicon ? I was so near to you, that had you wanted any thing easy to procure, I should have heard if you had called me. Why did you envy me this sweet consolation ? I should complain bitterly if you had not compensated your negligence to me by your indulgence to my works, with which I find you have passed the days and the nights. It is not conceivable that, in the midst of so many poets, historians, philosophers, and saints, you should give the preference to my trifles. I owe this to your tender blindness for me. My housekeeper tells me you had a mind to carry away some of my books, and did not dare to do it without my consent. Ought I not from this to fear some coolness on your part ? Use your pleasure, my dear father ! Do not you know that all I have is yours ?

‘ I carried your letter to cardinal Taillerand, our master. He thanks you ; and orders me to tell you he has long determined never to importune the pope for any advantage to himself. He is inaccessible to all inordinate de-

fires: it is rather to the turn of his mind than the greatness of his fortune he owes this manner of thinking. You know the public news. The king of Sicily has at last obtained the crown he has sighed for so long. God grant that his peace with the king of Hungary may be lasting. Our pope came back from death's door, and is returned thither again. He would have been well long ago, if he had not about him a gang of physicians, whom I look on as the plagues of the rich. Cardinal d'Osie is this moment expiring: he has lived long enough, according to nature; but his death is a loss to the republic.'

In the beginning of March the pope sent a young man on some business to Petrarch. After inquiring about the pope's disorder, he charged the young man expressly to desire the pontiff from him to take care of the physicians, and recollect the epitaph of that emperor:

'I was killed by the multitude of physicians.'

The young man, who was extremely ignorant, related what had been told him in a very dark and confused manner. The pope, who highly esteemed the sentiments of Petrarch, sent the young man back to him, with an order to write

down what was told him. In obedience to this order, Petrarch wrote the following letter :

‘ Holy father ! I shudder at the account of your fever ! Compare me not, however, to those flatterers whom the satirist describes, who are drowned in tears if they see a friend cry, or who sweat when he says I am hot. I rather resemble the man of whom Cicero speaks, who trembled for the welfare of Rome because his own was concerned : my health depends upon yours. I will trouble you with few words ; conscious who it is that addresses the divine ears of his holy father, and of the state he is in at present.

‘ I tremble to see your bed always surrounded with physicians, who are never agreed, because it would be a reproach for the second to think as the first, and only repeat what he had said before. “ It is not to be doubted,” as Pliny says, “ that, desiring to raise a name by their discoveries, they make experiments upon us, and thus barter away our lives.” We see in this profession what we see in no other. We confide at once in those who call themselves physicians, though there is nothing so dangerous as a mistake in this matter : but a flattering hope hides the danger ; and there is no



law for the punishment of extreme ignorance, no example of revenge. Physicians learn their trade at our expence : by the means of killing they become perfect in the art of curing ; and they alone are permitted to murder with impunity.

‘ Holy father ! consider as your enemies the crowd of physicians that beset you. It is in our age we behold verified the prediction of old Cato, who announced that corruption would be general when the Greeks should have transmitted the sciences, and above all, the art of physic. Whole nations have done without this art, and were perhaps much better, and lived longer than we do. The Roman republic, according to Pliny, was without physicians for six hundred years, and was never in a more flourishing state. But since it is now decided that we are neither to live nor die without them, at least make a choice from the multitude, and select not the man who can display the most eloquence or knowledge, but who has the most attachment towards you. Forgetting their profession, they issue from their retreats to make irruptions into the forests of poets, and the fields of orators. More occupied with shining than with curing, they brawl round a sick bed, making a jumble of

the thoughts of Cicero, and the aphorisms of Hippocrates. *The sickness increases; no matter, if they succeed in fine sayings, and can gain a character for eloquence.* To avoid the reproaches your physicians might cast on me, I have uttered nothing which is not drawn from Pliny, who has said more of this profession than of any other; and who also writes thus, “A physician that has the gift of a fluent speech becomes the arbiter of our life or death.”

‘The interest that I take, holy father, in your preservation, carries me further than I intended. I will add but one word more: look upon that physician as an assassin who has more prate than experience, more noise than wisdom. Say to him as the old man in Plautus, “Go about your business: you was sent for to cure, and not to harangue.” Add to this, a good diet, and, above all, a cheerful mind, which is never discouraged. By these means, restoring yourself to health, you will preserve the welfare of your servants, and of the church, which, while you are sick, must languish and decay.’

Petrarch passed the month of April at Vaucluse. Every thing, particularly the sixth of that month, recalled to him the remembrance of Laura.

‘When I am seated on my green enamelled

bank, when I hear the warbling of the birds, the rustling of the leaves, agitated by the zephyr, or the murmurs of my clear stream, I think I see, I hear her, whom earth conceals, and whom heaven will bring to light. From afar she answers to my sighs, and asks me, with kindness, why I shed so many tears! "Ought you to complain?" says she. "My death has rendered me immortal; and my eyes, that appear closed, are opened to everlasting light!"

' There is no place so favourable to the state of my heart, or where I enjoy greater liberty. In these delightful valleys there are a thousand hidden retreats formed for tender sighs; love has not in Cytherus, Gnidus, or Paphos, such delightful asylums as these. All the objects around talk to me of love! All invite me to love for ever!

' How often, trembling and alone, do I seek Laura in these shades! Blest soul! who dost enlighten my dark and gloomy nights; what transports do I feel when you thus cheer me by your presence!

' Oh death! in one sad moment you burst asunder the bond that united the most virtuous soul with the most perfect form! In one sad moment you deprived me of my all! I am weary of every thing around me: but Laura

pities ; she sometimes comes to my relief. Ah ! could I paint her heavenly attractions, could I express the charms of her immortal mind, when she deigns to revisit earth, and consoles me with her divine converse, I should move to compassion the flinty heart !

‘ Zephyrus returns ; he brings with him the mild season, the flowers, herbs, and grass, his dear children. Progne warbles, Philomela sighs, the heavens become serene, and the valleys smile. Love reanimates the air, the earth, and the sea : all creatures feel his sovereign power. But, alas ! this charming season can only renew my sighs ! The melody of the birds, the splendour of the flowers, the charms of beauty, are in my eyes like the most gloomy deserts ; for Laura is no more !’

While Petrarch was leading this solitary life at Vaucluse, the physicians at Avignon, extremely irritated with what he had said of them in the pope’s letter, inveighed furiously against him. One of them, born in the mountains, and now grown old and toothless, thinking it necessary to revenge the cause of the faculty, caballed against him, and wrote a letter full of the most atrocious invectives, in which he threatened he would write phillipics against Petrarch, more pointed than those of Cicero

or Demosthenes. ‘I did not discover at first,’ says Petrarch, ‘the author of this letter: struck in the dark by Nisus, I feared lest returning it I might hit Eurialus. At last I found out it was the production of a mountaineer.’

At this time there was a report that the emperor was going to enter Italy. Petrarch, who was always solicitous for the glory of his country, and had long wished for this event, wrote the following answer to an abbe in Italy, who had informed him it was a false report:

‘I am sorry to hear it. The journey would have been glorious to Cæsar, and useful to the world. But I believe he is contented to live, and has no ambition to reign. If he shuts himself up in Germany, and abandons Italy, he may be emperor of the Teutons, but he will never be emperor of Rome. It is not surprising that neither letters nor discourses have made any impression on him, when glory, the merit of a good action, and the finest occasion of undertaking it, can have no effect. I should be surprised and distressed at this news, if I had not learned, by experience, that we ought not to embarrass ourselves with the things of this world, and that all done therein resembles a spider’s web. For what then should I grieve? I am only a pilgrim, a traveller on earth; for

few, or many years, as it shall be decreed. When I die, I shall go to my own country. Italy will be always where it is, between the Alps and the two seas. If an earthly emperor denies it succour, it will meet with aid from the Emperor of heaven !

All the world, and particularly the people of Avignon, were desirous of seeing Petrarch's letters. Those who received them were so delighted with their spirit, they could not help shewing them to their friends. As there was keen satire in many of them, this raised him enemies ; and they accused him of having attacked the authority of the pope, in his solicitude to have the holy see removed to Rome. One of his friends, who had been the innocent cause of these commotions, said to him, ' You are very hardy to attack the physicians : do not you then fear the maladies for which they must be consulted ? ' ' I am not immortal,' replied Petrarch, ' but should these disorders attack me, I expect nothing from their skill. I do not repent I have wounded them by the truth ; if this makes enemies, I shall have enough, or I must keep silence for ever. With respect to the holy see, I know that Peter's chair was every where with him, and that it is at present wherever his successor is found ; though

there are places more holy and convenient than others: the master of the house chooseth that which pleases him, and honours that which he prefers; the misrepresentations of my censurers never entered into my mind. I never presume to prescribe the seat where the master of all places should be fixed. I have not drawn my opinion from the slender fountain of the decretals, but from the source of St. Jerome; who says, if we seek for authority, the world is greater than a city. Wherever the bishop shall be, at Rome, Constantinople, or Alexandria, it is always the same power, and the same priesthood. What I say, and what I have said, is this: in whatever place the chair of St. Peter is fixed, it is honourable to be seated in it.' These aspersions gave rise to some letters of justification, which are called the invectives of Petrarch; and to a work solicitously desired by the friends of Petrarch, and much more valuable than the former, which he styled his letter to posterity, from whence many things in these memoirs are taken, and which were neglected by the former biographers of Petrarch.

At this time cardinal Gui de Boulogne lost his mother, the wife of Robert the seventh count of Auvergne and Boulogne. This pious princess, after having been at Rome to gain the

jubilee, retired into the convent of the Claristes, where she had a daughter who was a nun, and she died soon after. The cardinal, who was extremely fond of her, was sensibly touched with this loss, and received a consolatory letter from Petrarch, who in it mentions the great care of his mother from the beginning of life, and that she had even born the burden of this beloved son a month longer than usual.

The bishop of Florence, who was then at Avignon, and just setting out for his diocese, told Petrarch he would not quit the country till he had seen the marvellous fountain of Vaucluse. ‘I shall be glad also,’ added he, ‘to behold you in your hermitage, and to judge myself of the life you lead there. I am going to visit the monastery of St. Anthony; as I return you may depend on seeing me.’ Petrarch, who knew this prelate was a man of his word, and expeditious in his operations, made haste to Vaucluse to prepare for a person of his rank, and collected every delicacy the country afforded. On the day this prelate was expected every thing was ready. It struck twelve, but no bishop appeared. Petrarch, who had been at the expence of a great feast, grew very impatient, and in his agitation



imagined these lines to the prior of the Holy Apostles :

‘ There is no more faith in the world. We can depend on no one : the more I see, the more I feel this. Even your bishop, on whom I thought I might safely rely, he deceives me. He promised to dine with me to-day. I have done for him what I never did for any one : I have put my house into commotion to treat him well ; a conduct quite opposite to my character. He fears, no doubt, that he shall meet with the repast of a poet ; and deigns not to visit the place where the great king Robert, where cardinals and princes, have been, some to see the fountain, others, shall I have the vanity to say it ? to visit me. But if I am unworthy to receive such a guest, it seems to me he is still more so for breaking his word.’

While Petrarch was thus silently venting his perturbations, he heard a great noise ; it was the bishop, who was just arrived. When they were at table, the discourse fell upon Nicholas Acciajoli, the senechal of Naples. The bishop told Petrarch he had quarrelled with his best friend, John Barrili, one of the greatest lords in the court of Naples. ‘ I am grieved at this quarrel,’ said the bishop ; ‘ you are the friend

of both, and should make it up between them.' Petrarch undertook it; and, to bring it to bear, he wrote a letter to both united, which was to be only opened and read by them together: it contained the strongest motives for their reconciliation. At the same time he wrote one to each of them in private; which was kind, insinuating, and tending to the same end. He concluded by beseeching them to give one whole day to the reading of that letter addressed to both. The grand senechal had wrote to Petrarch that he would raise a Parnassus to him between Salernus and Mount Vesuvius. He replied, though he had already two, he would not refuse that he offered him; 'Consecrated under your auspices,' says he, 'this new Parnassus cannot but delight me.'

All these letters, dated the 24th of May, 1352, were given to the bishop, who took leave of Petrarch, and set out for Florence. Some months after he received answers from the grand senechal, which informed him his stratagem had succeeded beyond what he could have hoped, and that it had brought about a perfect reconciliation.

Petrarch obtained for his son John, this year, a canonship at Verona. He might have procured him elsewhere a more advantageous si-

tuation; but as this young man was at that critical age when the passions begin to unfold, he rather chose to put him under the care of his two friends, William de Pastrengo and Renaud de Villefranche, both established at Verona. He ordered him to set out immediately to take possession of this benefice, with the letters for his friends, to whom he recommended the young canon, and besought them earnestly to watch over his conduct. To Renaud he committed the improvement of his understanding; to William, the forming of his character, and regulation of his manners. This is the picture Petrarch gives of his son in his letter to Renaud:

‘ You well know the young man I send you, unless a sudden alteration in him should prevent it. You are well convinced how dear he is to me. It was his destiny to quit an able master at a very tender age. As far as I can judge he has a tolerable understanding: but I am not certain of this, for I do not sufficiently know him. When he is with me, he always keeps silence: whether my presence confuses or is irksome to him, I know not; or whether the shame of his ignorance closes his lips. I doubt it is the latter; for I perceive but too clearly his antipathy for letters: I never saw it stronger in any one;

he dreads and detests nothing so much as a book : yet he has been brought up at Parma, at Verona, and Padua.

‘ I sometimes direct a few sharp pleasantries at this disposition. “ Take care,” I say, “ lest you should eclipse your neighbour Virgil !” When I talk in this manner, he looks down, and blushes. On this behaviour alone I build my hope. He has modesty, and a docility which renders him susceptible of every impression made on him.’

In the month of June, 1352, the people of Avignon beheld a very extraordinary spectacle : this was the entrance of that formidable tribune, Rienzi. We shall here relate the circumstances that befell him after his fall, and that brought him to the tribunal of the pope.

After he left the capitol, he hid himself in the castle of St. Ange. But, still in hopes of some change, he got an angel painted on the walls of a church, with the arms of Rome, holding in her hand a cross with a dove at the top, and trampling under her feet an asp, a basilisk, a lion, and a dragon ; and he went in disguise to behold the effect this painting produced. When he saw the people cover it with mud, he found his power was at an end : he

set out the next day for Naples, where he arrived in January 1348. The king of Hungary, then master of it, received Rienzi kindly, with whom he had some time had a secret correspondence. The news of this disturbed the pope, who by his legate desired the prince to send to him that perverse and excommunicated heretic. Whether the king of Hungary feared to displease the pope, or perceived that Rienzi was a madman not to be relied upon, he forsook him. He then went over to duke Warner, and desired him to re-establish him at Rome; but this did not succeed. Perceiving himself abandoned by all the world, and without resource, he wandered about Italy for some time, and then retired among the hermits of Mount Majella, where he passed the year 1349. In the year of the jubilee, 1350, he mixed in disguise with the strangers who went to Rome, and found that city more likely to favour his attempts, from the disorders that again took place in it. There was a sedition supposed to be of his raising. A mob besieged the legate's palace, and two arrows were drawn upon him from an iron grate, one of which pierced through his hat, but did not wound him. The cardinal, who knew that Rienzi was at Rome,

wrote to the pope what he thought of this matter, and sent him the arrow with his letter.

The pope wrote to the legate to continue the proceedings against Rienzi; and, if he could lay hold of him, to send him to Avignon: in the mean time, to declare him incapable of any office, and to interdict him fire and water. Rienzi, on this, was determined to throw himself on the protection of the emperor Charles, though he had offended him when he was governor in Rome, by citing him to his tribunal; but he believed this prince was too generous to take revenge on an enemy who delivered himself up to his mercy.

He set out therefore from Rome, disguised as usual with the caravans of pilgrims; and went to Prague, where the emperor, who was also king of Bohemia, held his court. He went first to the house of a Florentine apothecary, whom he desired to go with him to the emperor, to whom he addressed this singular speech: ‘ There is at Mount Majella a hermit called brother Ange, who has sent an ambassador to the pope, and who sends me to you to inform you, that till now God the Father and Son have reigned in the world; but that for

the future it will be the Holy Ghost.' At these words the emperor discovered it was Rienzi; and replied, 'I believe you are the tribune of Rome.' 'It is true,' said Rienzi, 'I am that tribune whom they have driven out of Rome.' The emperor sent for the ambassadors, bishops, and doctors, and made Rienzi repeat in their presence what he had said; to which he added, 'The person sent to the pope will use the same language; the pope will have him burned, and he will be raised again the third day by the power of the Holy Ghost. The people of Avignon will take up arms, and kill the pope and the cardinals; and they will elect an Italian pope, who will transport the holy see to Rome: that pope will crown you king of Sicily, and of Calabria, with a crown of gold; and he will crown me king of Rome, and all Italy, with a crown of silver.'

They made him write down what he had said. The emperor sent it to the pope, sealed with his own seal; and had the tribune carefully guarded till he should receive an answer from the pope. As Rienzi was accused of heresy, the emperor, in respect to the authority of the church, put him into the hands of the archbishop of Prague, who also wrote to the

pope to know his will concerning him : in the mean time he treated his prisoner with kindness, but took care to have him well guarded.

Clement returned the emperor thanks for the important service he had rendered the church in stopping this son of Belial ; and desired he might be sent him under a good guard, or take his trial at Prague, if he chose it. But Rienzi, when he heard this, demanded to be sent in person to the pope ; said he was ready to submit to his judgment, and to be punished if he was found guilty. He wrote for this purpose a long letter to cardinal Gui de Boulogne, whose immense bounty, says he, I have proved ; and to desire that after his examination he might be permitted to take the habit of St. John of Jerusalem, having wished ever since his fall to consecrate himself to that holy order : my marriage ought not to be an obstacle, added he, because my little wife will become a religious as well as myself. It appears by this letter of Rienzi, that his wife, his children, his nephews, and his sister, were hid at Prague, and lived upon charity. From the prisons of Prague he was brought to those of Limoges, and did not get to Avignon till this year. In all the places through which he passed the people came out to meet him, and offered him deli-



verance, to which he always answered, that he went freely and of his own accord to *Avignon*. His march had more the air of a conqueror than a criminal. Petrarch speaks of it thus : ‘ This tribune, formerly so powerful, so dreaded, now the most unhappy of men, has been brought here as a prisoner ; I praised and I advised him ; I loved his virtue, and I admired his courage : I thought Rome was going to resume under him the empire she formerly held ; and that in exciting the emulation of *Rienzi* I should participate his glory. Ah ! if he had continued as he began, he would have been praised and admired by all the world. This man, who made the wicked tremble, and who gave the brightest hopes to the good, is come before this court humbled and despised. He who was never seen without a train of the greatest lords in Italy, and a multitude of people, marches now between two serjeants ! The populace run out to meet him, eager to see the man of whom they have heard so much.

‘ The moment he arrived, the sovereign pontiff committed his cause to three princes of the church, to determine his punishment.

‘ In entering the city, he asked if I was there ? I knew not whether he hoped in me for succour ; or what I could do to serve him.

‘In the process against him they accuse him of nothing criminal: they do not even impute to him the having joined with bad men, the abandoning the public cause, or the having fled from the capitol, when he might have lived and died there with honour. It is his undertaking, not the end, they reproach him with. In my mind what they accuse him of is to his glory; that the republic should be free, and that at Rome only they should treat of the affairs of the republic. And is this a crime worthy of the wheel and of the gibbet? A Roman citizen afflicted to see his country, which is by right the mistress of the world, become the slave of the vilest men! This is the foundation of his charge! It now remains to be determined what is the punishment due to such a crime. His beginning was glorious; but all on a sudden he changed his conduct. I wrote him a severe letter on the occasion: he abandoned the good and delivered himself over to the wicked, but of this he is not accused: whatever be his end, his beginning is ever to be admired.

Clement was glad to have Rienzi in his power; he was brought before him, and did not appear the least disconcerted. He maintained that they accused him unjustly of heresy,

and demanded that his cause should be re-examined with more equity. The pope made him no answer, and ordered them to put him in the prison prepared for him. It was a high tower in which he was shut up, fastened by the foot with a chain which hung from the top: excepting this he was treated with mildness, and supplied from the pope's kitchen; and they gave him books, among others Livy and the bible, for of these he was particularly fond. We are not told who were the three princes of the church to whom his cause was committed, but it is supposed they were the cardinals of Boulogne, of Taillerand, and of Deux.

The crimes imputed to him were, drawing away the city of Rome from the dominion of the pope; declaring it free; and pretending that the rights of the Roman empire resided still in the people of Rome. Some said he merited death, and others that he should be declared infamous, and incapable of transmitting any estate to posterity. Rienzi demanded a judgment according to law, and to be allowed an advocate to defend his cause: but this was denied him. This enraged Petrarch, who wrote a long but secret letter to the people of Rome to do something in his favour; but it produced no effect. The contents of it were, that Rome

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happened, had no occasion for it. His ~~studies~~ changed on a sudden; and he owed his preservation to a most extraordinary circumstance, which shews the spirit that prevailed in the court of the pope. It is Petrarch who informs us of it, in a letter to the prior of the Holy Apostles.

‘ I have learned,’ says he, ‘ by the letters of my friends, it being rumoured at Avignon that Rienzi was a great poet, they thought it a kind of sacrilege to put a man to death of so sacred a profession; as Cicero speaks in his oration for the poet Licinius Archias, who had been his master. I own I am overwhelmed with joy to see that men, who are not acquainted with the Muses themselves, should grant them this singular privilege; and under the shadow of their name should save a man from death, odious to his judges, and whom they had agreed to find guilty of a capital crime. What could they have obtained more under the reign of Augustus, in the time when the greatest honours were paid them, and they came from all parts to behold this unparalleled prince, the master of kings, and the friend of poets! I felicitate the Muses and Rienzi! Heaven for-

bid I should envy him a name which is of such service to him. But if you ask me what I think? I answer, that Rienzi is a very eloquent man, skilful, insinuating, and a good orator, with few thoughts, but an agreeable vivacity in his compositions. I believe he may have read all the poets, but I think he no more merits the name of a poet, than he would that of an embroiderer for wearing an embroidered habit. Horace says, that to be a poet it is not sufficient to make verses; and I even doubt whether Rienzi ever made a single verse! I thought you would be pleased to hear of an event in which the life of a man was in danger because he wished to save the republic; and to learn that the same man escapes the peril under the name of a poet, though he never made a single verse.

‘ Virgil himself would not have obtained such a redemption! For it is certain, that before such judges Virgil would have passed for a forcerer rather than a poet.’

In another letter wrote to an abbe not named, he shows what a rage for poetry prevailed at this time in the city of Avignon.

‘ Never were the words of Horace more exactly verified, “ Wise or ignorant we all write verses!” It is a mournful consolation to have

so many sick companions: I had rather be diseased alone; I am tormented by my own disorders and those of others; they do not let me breathe. Verses and epistles rain in upon me every day from all parts of the world, from France, Germany, Greece, and England. I do not know myself; they take me for the judge of all human understanding. If I answer all the letters I receive, no mortal will be so full of business: if I do not, they will say I am disdainful and insolent. If I censure, I shall be an odious critic; if I praise, a nauseous flatterer. But this would be nothing, if this contagion had not reached the Roman court. What do you think of our lawyers, and our physicians? They no longer consult Justinian or Esculapius: deaf to the cries of the sick, and of their clients, they will listen to none but Virgil and Homer. What do I say? Even labourers, carpenters, and masons, abandon their hammers and shovels to lay hold of Apollo and the Muses. Do you ask why formerly poets were so rare, and this plague so common at present? It was because poetry demands an elevated mind; superior to every thing, and free from the cares of this world: it must have a soul made on purpose, which it is rare to meet with, from whence it happens that there

are such a number of versifiers in the streets, and so few poets on Parnassus : they go to the foot of the mountain, but scarcely one ascends it. Judge what pleasure those must have who attain its summit, since those who only view it at a distance abandon for it their affairs and their wealth, however avaricious they are ? I felicitate my country for having produced some spirits worthy to mount upon Pegasus, and rise along with him : if love to it does not blind me, I see such at Florence, at Padua, at Verona, at Sulmone, and at Naples ; every where else we behold nothing but rhimers, who creep along upon the ground.

‘ I reproach myself for having by my example contributed to this madness. My laurels were too green, and I am now tormented for my desire of obtaining them. In my house, and out of doors, wherever I set my feet, versifying frantics surround me, overwhelm me with questions, brawl and dispute, and talk of things which would have been quite beyond the aim of Homer or of Virgil. I am afraid lest the magistrates should accuse me of having corrupted the republic. The other day a father came up to me in tears, and said, “ See how you treat me, who have always loved you. You have been the death of my only

son." I was so struck with these words, and the air of the man who spoke them, that I remained some time motionless. At last, recovering myself, I replied, that I neither knew him nor his son. "It is of little consequence whether you know him or not," replied the old man: "he knows you too well. I have ruined myself to bring him up to the law, and now he tells me he will follow no steps but yours. I am thus disappointed of all my hopes; for I much fear he will never be either a lawyer or a poet." I smiled at this, and those who were with me; but the old man went away in grief and rage. Happily this contagion has not yet reached Vacluse, the air of which is perhaps not very susceptible of foreign impressions; there is only my fisherman, who, though old, advises himself, as Persius says, to dream on Parnassus. If this delirium should spread, shepherds, fishermen, labourers, and the beasts themselves, will ruminate and bellow out verses.'

In the beginning of August 1352 the cardinals of Boulogne and Taillerand sent by the pope's order for Petrarch: he obeyed the summons, and found it was in order to receive the place of secretary to the pope. He represented



to his patrons and friends that he could never give up liberty and leisure for any worldly gain: 'This wealth,' says he, 'would be a real misery: a yoke of gold or silver would not be lighter to me than one of wood or of lead. I despised riches when I stood in need of them, and it would be a shame to run after them now I can do without them. We should proportion the provisions for our journey to the length of our route: I am approaching the end of my race, and ought to be more occupied with the place of rest, than the accommodations on the way.' To this he adds, that it would have been more honest, and more excusable, to desire these advantages when he had a brother and friends who were indigent; that he was no longer in this situation, his brother being a Carthusian, and all his friends dead or well-placed: that he wanted nothing at present; but, should he once open the door to worldly desires, he should want every thing. He therefore with tears conjured these friends, who had laid a thousand snares to gain this point, to let him live in his own way, to preserve his honour, and not to impose a burden, the weight of which would overwhelm him. All his representations and prayers were to no purpose;

they dragged him to his footstool who, as one says, opens the heavens with his finger, and governs the stars by the motion of his cap.

The pope, who loved Petrarch, and always received him with pleasure, said many obliging things to him. He had always wished to attach a man of his merit to his court; and he thought it was incumbent on him to sacrifice his liberty for an office at once honourable and advantageous. 'Single I stood,' says he, 'mournful and dismayed; my head was presented to the sacrifice, when fortune befriended, and opened to me the door of liberty.'

All the world agreed that Petrarch was well fitted to discharge the employment to which they destined him, for his wisdom and fidelity. They only reproached him with one fault, that his style was too elevated for the church of Rome. He thought at first they meant this in irony: but his friends, and particularly the cardinals Boulogne and Taillerand, assured him that he must lower his tone, and not take such high flights. When he heard this, his joy was that of a prisoner, who views his prison-door set open to him. He was desired to write something in a more easy style: instead of doing this, he stretched the wings of imagination to their utmost extent, that he might soar

above every idea of those who wished to enslave him.

They gave him the subject. 'Though it was not a work of imagination and poetry,' says he, 'Apollo and the Muses did me good service. Most of those who read my composition said, they could not comprehend a word of it. Others said, they supposed I wrote in Greek, or some other barbarous language: they would send me to school at my age to learn a low and creeping style. With Cicero, I know but three styles; the sublime, which he calls grave; the moderate, which he calls middling; and the simple, which he calls extenuated. In this age, scarce any one has attained the first, and few arrive at the second; the third is the style of the many. They tell me to lower my style: that is impossible, I answer, because I am at the lowest already; lower than that is no style at all, but a base and abject manner of speaking: thus I am out of the difficulty, and my liberty is preserved. I feel the pleasure more sensibly, for having been on the brink of slavery. I am delighted that people who believe themselves elevated, have discovered that I flew beyond their sphere: I will never more expose myself to the same peril; nothing shall ever tempt me; I will be deaf

to the prayers of my friends, and consult myself alone in matters so essential to my peace.'

Petrarch having thus escaped the greatest danger he had ever run, after having thanked God for his deliverance, set out for Vacluse, where he passed the remainder of August in a delightful tranquillity, waiting with impatience for the autumn to return to Italy. Writing to a friend, he gives this pleasing account of his calm employments at Vacluse :

' Nothing pleases me so much as my perfect freedom. I rise at midnight, I go out at break of day : I study in the fields as in my closet ; I think, read, and even write there. I combat idleness : I chase away sleep, indulgence, and pleasures. In the day I run over the craggy mountains, the humid valleys, and shelter myself in the profound caverns. Sometimes I walk, attended only by my reflections, along the banks of the Sorgia : meeting with no person to distract my mind, I become every day more calm ; and send my cares sometimes before, sometimes I leave them behind me. I recall the past, and deliberate on the future. Fond of the place I am in, every situation becomes in turn agreeable to me, except Avignon. I find here Athens, Rome, and Florence, as my

imagination desires: here I enjoy all my friends, not only those with whom I have lived, but those who have long been dead, and whom I know only by their works.'

The cardinal de Boulogne set out for Paris in the beginning of September, to negotiate a peace between the kings of France and England. Petrarch went to take leave of him, and request his orders for Italy. The cardinal told him he should be only a month away, and he hoped he should find him at his return. He took with him his faithful Achates, Peter, abbe of St. Benigne. The cardinal wanted to procure Petrarch some good establishment in France; and wrote upon the road to desire him to wait at least till he should have written to him from Paris, upon a great affair which concerned him. 'I ask you,' says he, 'only to wait one month.' In obedience to these orders Petrarch passed September and October at Avignon.

At this time nothing was spoken of but the cruel war between the Genoese and the Venetians: their losses were on each side extreme.

Petrarch wrote a letter to the Genoese, who were the victors, to induce them to peace;

and collects together the motives for their union with the Venetians in a very artful manner :

‘ I applied at first,’ says he, ‘ to the Venetians my neighbours : I thought it my duty. As a man, I cannot but be touched with the miseries of humanity : as an Italian, I ought to be sensible to the calamities of my country ; and I believe no one feels them more. I address you with the more confidence, knowing with whom I have to do. No nation is more terrible in war, or more amiable in peace. You have conquered, it is now time to repose. In the heat of combat it is valour that spills the blood of men ; but after it is over humanity should close their wounds. There are none but savage beasts with whom carnage succeeds victory ! Who can read, without shuddering, of a battle which lasted two days and one winter night ? Who can represent the horrors of it ? The dreadful blustering of the wind, the rattling of the sails, the clash of arms ! The dashing of the vessels against one another, the hissing of the arrows flying through the darkness, and the cries and groans of the wounded ! To you may be applied what Virgil said of that famous night in which Troy was reduced to cinders : “ Who can paint

the shocking carnage which she covered with her mantle, or shed tears enough to bewail the blood spilt in it ?”

“ Reflect at present that your enemies, as well as yourselves, are Italians ; that you were once friends, and that your quarrel is only about rank and superiority. Would to God that, renouncing a war which has so slight a foundation, you would unite your arms to punish the perfidious instigators of it, and then turn them to the deliverance of the holy land from the Turks. This would indeed be useful to the world, and to posterity ! Great cities in peace are like those strong bodies who appear healthy without, but have many internal maladies, occasioned by a too long repose. Motion and agitation are necessary to cities as well as to men, to dissipate the bad humours these inward diseases produce, and which are much more dangerous than those which appear without. This merits your attention : it is best to live in peace, when we can ; but when that is impossible, a foreign war is preferable to a war at home.

“ I cannot read the stars ; but I venture to predict, that in foreign wars you will always have the advantage, and that you have only to fear interior enemies. How many examples

are there of cities whom nothing could have destroyed but wars with one another! You are becoming a proof of this yourselves. Recollect the time when you were the most flourishing of all people: I was then a child, and remember it only as a dream. Your country appeared a celestial paradise: such surely were the Elysian fields! What a beautiful object towards the sea! Those towers which rose to heaven! Those palaces where art excelled nature! Those hills covered with cedars, vines, and olives! Those houses of marble built under the rocks! Those delicious retreats on the shore, whose sand shines like gold, on which the foaming waves, dashing their crystal heads, attract the eyes of the pilot, and stop the motion of the towers! Can we behold without admiration the more than mortal figures that inhabited your city, and all the delights of life with which your woods and fields abounded! Those who entered it thought they were got into the temple of felicity and joy. It might be said at this time of Genoa, as anciently of Rome, it was the city of kings!

‘ You were then masters of the sea, and without your leave no one dared to sail on it. From this happy period descend to the time



when pride, luxury, and envy, the common effects of prosperity, subdued your nation, and reduced it to that misery your enemies attempted in vain. Great gods! What a difference! That beautiful shore, that magnificent city, appeared uncultivated, deserted, and ruined! Those superb palaces, become the trading-places of thieves, struck the passenger with horror instead of admiration! In fine, your city, besieged by its exiles, the Dorias and Spinolas on the side of the Gibbelines, assisted by the Milanese, suffered all the plagues of war; when king Robert, the glory of our age, who came to its succour, remained blocked up in it a whole year. They fought (a thing incredible and unheard of before) not only on land and sea, but in the air and under the earth.

‘ After this you were agitated several years by intestine commotions, having no enemies but those within your walls; till at last, instructed by past misfortunes, you elected a chief, which is undoubtedly the best situation for a republic. This changed the face of your city; your clouds were dissipated, your quarrels extinguished, and peace, harmony, and justice, were re-established.

‘ You may now with ease take warning for the future. There is an old proverb which

says, "How many things are ill done, because they are done but once!" You may recover what you have lost. You have learned from experience that human prosperities are slippery and uncertain, and that you owe your misfortunes to interior discord. You begin as it were to live again; take care of those rocks on which you have formerly split. Be united among yourselves; love justice and peace; and if you cannot live without war, carry it into foreign countries, where you will always find enemies to contend with.—Avignon, November 1352.'

A few days after writing this letter, Petrarch, tired with waiting for the cardinal de Boulogne, went secretly from Avignon, giving it out he was gone for Italy; and he hid himself at Vaucluse. On his arrival there he wrote thus to the cardinal:

'You ordered me to wait for you. You was to be absent but a month; but the grand monarch, who is attached to you by the bonds of love as well as of blood, the charms of Paris and of the Seine, have made you forget your promise. I am not astonished at it. For my part, the dreary city of Avignon, and the boisterous Rhone, have detained me till now their prisoner: but, no longer able to support that

situation, I am come to take refuge in my retreat, and wait your commands. If you continue at Paris, I shall soon set out for Italy, without bidding adieu to my friends, who will detain me a prisoner in that vile city, from whence my spirit takes its flight, and leaves my body to its fate. The two months I have passed there have appeared to me to be years. The service you would do me is, I doubt not, considerable: your bounties are always so. I trust my absence will not hurt the interest you take in my friends: if you will bestow upon them what you have destined to me, you will confer on me a great obligation. I have enough, and too much for the few years that remain of life: I wish for nothing more. You are the kindest, the best of patrons. I flatter myself you will pardon me, if I yield to necessity, to which the greatest kings have submitted. I have obeyed you as long as I could.—*Vaucluse, November.*

After having been some days at *Vaucluse*, with no news of the cardinal, and despairing of his return, Petrarch determined to set out for Italy. The autumn of this year was uncommonly dry; it had not rained for several months. The weather was bright and serene; he thought he might depend on its continu-

ance; 'though there is nothing,' says he, 'we can less reckon upon in winter.' He had in all his former journeys always endured excessive heats or violent rains.

He set out the 16th of November with his books and papers, which he meant to transport to his Parnassus in Italy. He was got a very little way, when the weather clouded, and a heavy rain came on. He was at first tempted to go back; but he took courage, a port being not far off, and continued his route. He must pass through Cavaillon; and he wished to stop there, to take leave of Philip de Cabaffole. It was almost night when he arrived: the bishop was sick, and had concealed his disorder from Petrarch, that he might not afflict him: he received him as his good angel; tears of joy ran down his face. 'I am no longer in pain for myself,' said he to his brother; 'with my friend Petrarch health has re-entered my habitation.' He was ignorant that Petrarch was going to Italy, and that he meant to reach Durance that night. When he was informed of this, he appeared in such extreme grief, and was so urgent with Petrarch to stay at least that night, that he could not deny him. It poured all night, which distressed Petrarch, who had designed to set out early in the morning; and he

feared for his books and papers. At last he determined on leaving them behind, and exposing himself alone to the injuries of the weather, to which he was hardened by custom, when an unforeseen obstacle stopped his progress. Some of the bishop's servants told him that the banditti of the Alps were come down to the Var on the side of Nice, and laid every thing waste, which rendered it impossible to go that road to Italy; and this was Petrarch's route, that before he quitted France he might pass through Montrieux to see his brother Gerard. The bishop expressed great joy at this news; he was persuaded it would induce Petrarch to renounce his project. Petrarch continued for some time irresolute: but the repeated requests of the bishop, and the violent rains which continued and rendered the roads impassable, at last determined him to stay. He retired to his chamber to sleep for an hour; but the rain had made way through the roof and come down upon him. He rose therefore, and said matins; and then went into ~~the~~ the bishop's chamber, whom he found awakened.

He spent two days at Cavaillon, and then sent a part of his servants to Italy, that he might be the more retired, and set out himself for Vauchuse. The dread of spoiling his books and

papers influenced him to this determination; 'we see,' says he, 'what a constraint are riches on peace and liberty.' The fine weather returned just as his people were got too far to be recalled. 'It seems,' says he, 'as if Providence would put a rein on my desire to pass into Italy: he knows better than we do what is for our good, which is not always what is most agreeable to ourselves.'

Petrarch passed the rest of November at Vacluse, and all the month of December, in which there happened an event that interested all Europe.

Clement VI. was forced at last to yield to the disease which had so long oppressed him; 'he forgot,' said Petrarch, 'or despised the advice I had given him. The physicians delivered him from the embarrassments of the papacy by improper remedies, and too frequent bleedings. He died the 6th of December, 1352. Villani says he died of a lingering fever, others of an abscess; and some said that he was poisoned: his body was carried the next day to the church of Notre Dame, where they bestowed on it a very pompous funeral. Various have been the opinions concerning this prince. Villani speaks only of his faults, and the ecclesiastical historians reproach him for not transf-

lating the holy see to Rome; but others own he was one of the greatest men that ever sat in St. Peter's chair; and though he had faults, he had likewise very great and amiable virtues; that he was too fond of women, but he governed his estates in a manner that was a model for all princes. One instance of his influence over a foreign prince does him honour. He ordered Casimir, king of Poland, to send back his mistresses, and to be faithful to his wife. This prince refused at first, but submitted at last, and underwent the penance imposed on him.

Clement had the pleasure of bestowing kingdoms, and gave away more benefices than any one of his predecessors. Nothing was so painful to him as to refuse a request; and when it was not in his power to grant it, he always found some expedient to send the persons away not only contented but obliged by his behaviour. He distributed the treasures of the church with a liberal profusion, and expended considerable sums in useful buildings, in marrying orphans, and in relieving noble families who had fallen to decay. Petrarch assures us no one better merited the name he bore; and his clemency was so great, that a person who had offended him grievously, having pre-

sumed afterwards to ask a favour of him, instead of revenge for his former behaviour, he instantly granted his petition.

Clement was naturally eloquent, and spoke without preparation in a very elegant manner; his consistorial discourses, which are in the library at Paris, prove this. He had a singular talent in conveying his sentiments; they appeared the sentiments of those he conversed with, whose hearts he could move at pleasure. He delighted in peace and harmony, and as much as possible stifled every seed of war. He attempted to establish peace between France and England; he accomplished it between Hungary and Naples; and was preparing to unite the Greek and Latin churches.

But Petrarch was never fond of this pope, who was not an Italian, and who had completed the palace of Avignon instead of removing the holy see to Rome. A few days after his death he wrote to the bishop of Cavaillon as follows:

‘ I send you three natural curiosities of a very different kind; a golden fish with silver scales called turtura; my fisherman’s son took it in the beautiful water of my fountain. The second is a flat drake who has been long an inhabitant of its banks; neither the air nor water



could save it from the pursuit of my dog. The third is an epistle which I have fished myself with the nets of my mind, in the waves where my soul swims in the midst of dangerous rocks; you will have the goodness to keep the two first, and return the last when you have enough of it: you know my reason; truth begets hatred. If this was true in the time of Terence, how much more is it so at present! Read it then in private, and send it back till we shall see what God or fortune shall do for us. I would show it to no other person; you will judge by that of my confidence.'

The bishop of Cavaillon returned it, and assured Petrarch it gave him much pleasure. 'I am delighted,' replied he, 'my letter has pleased you. I find I like it better now it has obtained your suffrage. It is addressed to you, because you are the declared enemy of every vice. I send you a second letter to the clergy of Padua, on the death of Ildebrand our bishop. His virtues were above our highest praise. Compare this letter with that I sent yesterday, and see if my style is as proper for praise as censure. The faults that you will find ascribe to myself, and my excellencies to the nature of the subjects; for in truth it is as easy to praise the one as to blame the other. Who would

not be eloquent in the treating of such subjects ?

The first of these letters was a satire on Clement. Petrarch had before censured him, under the name of Pamphylius, for the little care he took of the flock confided to his trust by Jesus Christ, and for the soft and vain-glorious life that he led, so opposite to the conduct of the primitive Christians ; and he threatens him that his Master will soon come and call him to an account.

Clement, under the name of Mitian, replied thus to Pamphylius :

‘ No one can be more churlish and severe than you are : but know, it is easier to censure the manners of others, than to justify one’s own. Ungrateful traitor ! Have not you denied your Master, and abandoned your flock, to avoid persecution ? Did the flock, given to your care by Jesus Christ, ever suffer more than under you ? Not a valley in Rome but you have filled with blood. I should be ashamed to lead the sorry life in which you glory. “ I have chests full of money ;” true ; and can I do better than make use of it for the sweets and conveniences of life ? I would choose my spouse, the church, should be adorned ; that at her toilet should be seen that fine looking-glass

presented me by the shepherd of Bifance ; and that every one should know her to be a queen. I will not lead my flock as you do among thickets and rocks, but into fat pastures. I would have them want for nothing, and enjoy every thing. Heaven forbid that I should be so cruel to separate the he and she goats, the bulls and the heifers ! They were intended for companions to each other. Your threatenings give me no concern ; the Master I serve is good as well as powerful.'

On the death of Clement, the cardinals felt the necessity of making some reformation in the Roman court : and to do this, they cast their eyes on John Birel, the general of the Carthusians, for his successor. He was a Limosin, famed for the sanctity of his life, and his zeal for the glory of God. No human influence affected him : he preached repentance with power, and he wrote to princes with the utmost freedom to exhort them to reform their lives. The cardinal de Taillerand was alarmed when he saw them inclined to such a choice ; 'What are you going to do?' said he : 'do not you perceive that this monk, accustomed to govern anchorites, will oblige us all to live like them ? he will make us go on foot as did the apostles, and our fine horses he will send to the plough.'

The cardinals were embarrassed, and the election would have been spun out to a great length, had not king John of France arrived at Avignon to procure the election of a prelate devoted to him. This hastened their choice. The cardinal de Taillerand, who had the greatest interest in the conclave, caused it to fall upon Alberti cardinal d'Ostie, who took the name of Innocent VI. He was born in a village of Limoges, of parents little known. This pontiff owed his elevation to the reputation he had for integrity and a good life, and his capacity for reforming the Roman court by his example still more than by his laws. In effect, soon after his election, he suppressed the reserves of benefices, fixed bounds to pluralities, obliged the incumbents to residence, and diminished his table and his train; an example the cardinals made no haste to follow.

Petrarch was not much pleased at this election. An old ignorant cardinal, but a great civilian, maintained that Petrarch was a magician, because he read Virgil, and he had persuaded cardinal Alberti to think so too, though he had been professor of the canon law with success in the university of Tholouse. He was a man of good life and little knowledge, says Villani.

Petrarch in his eclogue on Clement VI. puts these words into his mouth; ‘ There shall come after me a dull and gloomy man, who by his four refusals shall repair the wrongs I did the church by my over-abundant facility. He shall fatten the Roman pastures with the smoke of Auvergne.’ After the coronation of Innocent, the cardinals de Taillerand and Bologna wrote to Petrarch that he must come immediately to kiss his feet, and compliment him upon his exaltation. Petrarch had often seen him at the cardinal de Taillerand’s, who amused himself with joking Petrarch before him on his powers of magic. Whatever repugnance he had, Petrarch thought it necessary to obey these orders: but his chief concern was the leaving his faithful fisherman who was fallen sick. Soon after he got to Avignon, one of his servants, whom he had left at Vaucluse to take care of his beloved friend, came post to inform him he was dead. He wrote instantly to the two cardinals as follows:

‘ If Regulus, the terror of the Carthaginians, being in Africa, and charged with an important negociation, blushed not to ask his dismissal of the senate, because the man was dead who cultivated his field: why should I blush to make such a request to my two illustrious pa-

trons, who am charged with no public, and who have few private affairs? Yesterday I lost the guardian of my retreat: he was not unknown to you: he cultivated for me a few acres of very bad land. I fear not from you the answer made to Regulus by the senate, "Continue to work for the republic, she shall take care of your field." The field of Regulus was at Rome; mine is at Vaucluse; a place you are scarcely acquainted with. Scipio, the other scourge of Africa, and commanding with success in Spain, asked his dismissal also, because his daughter had no portion. I am in the same case at present; my library, which I consider as my daughter, has lost its friend. That rustic man, whom I can never lament as he deserves, had more prudence and even urbanity than is often to be found in cities, and besides this, he was the most faithful animal that the earth ever produced: to him I confided my books, and all that was most dear to me. I was absent three years from Vaucluse; at my return nothing was wanting, nor a single thing displaced. He could not read, but he loved letters: he preserved with extreme care my choicest books, which he knew from being long accustomed to them, and how to distinguish my works from those of the ancients.

When I gave a book to his care, he expressed great joy, and pressed it to his breast with a sigh; sometimes he named the author in a whisper. To behold him at this moment, one would have thought that the sight or the touch of a book rendered him wiser and happier. I have spent fifteen years with him, and confided to him my most secret thoughts, as I would have done to a priest of Ceres; and his breast was to me the temple of faith and love. I left him two days ago slightly indisposed, to obey your orders; his old age was sound and vigorous, and he is dead. Yesterday he died, asking for me continually, and calling upon the name of the Lord. His death affects me extremely, but I should have regretted him still more if his age had not foretold that I must soon have lost him. Illustrious prelate! let the man depart who is useless to you, but of very great importance to his field and to his library.'

Petrarch obtained the favour he desired without much difficulty; and it was not possible to draw him again to Avignon, notwithstanding the solicitations of the cardinals, of his friends, and particularly his dear Socrates, to accept an establishment in the court of the pope; to the latter of whom he wrote thus:

‘ I am content, I have enough for life, I have put a rein on my desires, and I will have no more. Cincinnatus, Curius, Fabricius, Regulus, after having subdued whole nations, and led kings in triumph, were not so rich as I am. If I open the door to the passions, I shall always be poor. Avarice, luxury, and ambition, know no bounds ; but avarice, above all, is an unfathomable abyss. I have clothes to defend me from the cold, food to nourish me, horses to carry me, a clod of earth to sleep on, to walk on, and to cover me when I die ; what more has the emperor of Rome ! My body is healthy ; subdued by labour, it is the less rebellious to my soul. I have books of all kinds ; they are my wealth ; they feast my soul with a voluptuousness which is never followed with disgust. I have friends whom I consider as my greatest treasures, when they do not aim to deprive me of my liberty. Add to this the greatest security, for I have no enemies but those created by envy ; and I am not perhaps sorry for those, though I despise them. I reckon still in the number of my possessions the approbation and kindness of all good men, even of those whom I have never seen. These are riches which you may deem poverty ; I believe you do : but by what means would you have



me gain others? By lending out to usury; by treading on the seas; by brawling at the bar; by the sale of my tongue and of my pen; thus fatiguing myself incessantly to amass those treasures I should preserve with inquietude, abandon with regret, and which another would dissipate in extravagance? In one word, what do you require of me? I am rich enough for my own satisfaction; must I also appear rich for the satisfaction of others? In fact, is it not my own affair? Does any one consult the taste of another in the food he is to eat? Keep then for yourself your manner of thinking, and leave me to mine; it can never be shaken, for it is established on solid foundations.'

Gui Settimo distressed Petrarch more than any of his friends concerning this matter; his temper was naturally ambitious, and he had constantly adhered to the court of the pope. 'He loves persons of merit,' says he. 'I wish it may be so,' replied Petrarch, 'but this is nothing to me; if the pope loves only such, he loves a very few, and I cannot flatter myself with being one of them, though I would prefer this honour to that of being pope.'

Petrarch passed all the winter at Vauchuse, where he was like a bird upon the branch ready

every moment to take wing for his dear country. He waited the return of some servants whom he had sent to Italy, to learn what passed there; he was informed that his friends were all assembled and waited his coming. Italy appeared to him preferable to all other places; but this account made him tremble for his liberty; and he determined to send another servant, to see if he could not discover some secret retreat where he might enjoy tranquillity. In the mean time he prepared for a journey to Montricux to see his brother Gerard, that he might not quit the country without bidding him farewell; and before he set out he wrote the following letter to one of his friends:

‘On whatever side I turn my eyes I find nothing but difficulties. It is time for me to go to the other world, for I cannot obtain ease in this. Is this my fault, or that of the world around me? Perhaps of all together. One part of the earth is desolated by war; in another they possess peace, but are more cruel and miserable than in war. Here is famine, there is gluttony; here the air, there the manners are infected: here they groan under slavery, there they suffer from the licentiousness of liberty: this land is dry and barren, the other is exposed to the inundation of furious rivers;

there they freeze, here they burn: here is a dreadful solitude, there an importunate multitude; these men are a prey to savage beasts, those to the deceits of one another: it must be allowed, that a situation of ease and tranquillity is not to be met with upon earth.'

Petrarch set out for Montrieux the seventh of April 1353. When he was between Aix and St. Maximin, he met with a company of Roman ladies, who were going on a pilgrimage. By their air and gait he distinguished at a distance their country and their birth. Drawing near to them, and finding by their language he was not deceived, he stopped and politely asked them from whence they came, and whither they were going. The sound of an Italian voice spread joy through this little company. The oldest of them answered, 'Rome is our country, we are going on pilgrimage to St. James. And you, sir, are you a Roman, are you going to Rome?' 'I am not going there immediately,' replied Petrarch, 'but my heart is always there.' This answer inspired the pilgrims with confidence; they surrounded Petrarch, and replied to a thousand questions he asked them concerning the state of the republic. They told him that John Ceroni had resigned his post, his nature being too

quiet for the Romans, who were disgusted with a uniform government; he retired therefore to the castle of Abruzzo. The nobles on this established the ancient form of government, and named two senators taken out of the houses of the Urfini and the Colonna, and these were in place when Clement died. Soon after they accused them of buying up the corn in a time of dearth, to enrich themselves. This enraged the people, and they besieged the capitol: one of the senators saved himself by escaping at a back door, the other was stoned to death. This happened in February 1353. After this account, Petrarch inquired after his friends, particularly concerning Lelius. ‘How does he do? In what does he employ himself?’ ‘We left him in good health,’ they replied; ‘he is very happily married, and his wife has brought him some fine children.’ Petrarch then asked these ladies if he could be so happy as to serve them in any respect. ‘Every thing,’ says he, in a letter to Lelius, ‘urged me to make them this offer, God, virtue, their country, and their love of you. I wished to divide with them the sum I had brought with me for my journey: their answer was, “Pray to God that our journey may be successful, we ask only

this of you." This reply delighted, but it did not surprise me. I perceived in it the dignity and disinterestedness of Roman ladies, differing in this respect from women of all other nations, who, so far from refusing what is offered them, request with importunity what they have been refused.' Petrarch, charmed with the discourse of these pilgrims, would have passed the day with them, but they were bent on hastening toward their pious design, and he was also eager to behold his brother. 'While our discourse lasted,' adds he, 'I believed myself at Rome conversing with Cecile, the wife of Metellus, Sulpitia, the wife of Fulvius, Cornelia of Gracchus, Marcia of Cato, Emilia of Scipio Africanus, and all those famous heroines who were the glory of ancient Rome. Or, to speak more suitably to our age and our religion, I thought I saw those holy virgins who made so distinguished a figure in our Christian annals, Prisque, Praxedes, Prudentiane, Agnez, &c.'

Petrarch arrived at Montrieux the 20th of April 1353. His presence rejoiced this sacred house. Gerard was considered as its second founder, and was become a perfect anchorite, disengaged from every thing upon

earth; consummate in piety, and longing for the joys of heaven. 'I blushed,' said Petrarch, 'to behold a younger brother, who was formerly my inferior, now risen so far above me. At the same time, what a subject of joy and glory is it to have such a pious brother!'

After conversing about their old friends, and what had happened to them since their last interview, Gerard acquainted his brother with the melancholy situation which Montrieux was in at present. These good monks were persecuted by some neighbouring lords, who had made frequent attempts to pillage and ruin their order. Charles II. king of Naples, and count of Provence, king Robert, and a bishop of Marseilles, who loved them, had protected and guarded them from the insults of these petty tyrants. 'They are worse,' says Petrarch, 'than great tyrants; the last are commonly generous, and give with one hand what they take away with the other; but the former are famished harpies, who the more they have, the more eager they are to devour.'

On the death of the bishop of Marseilles these hostilities were renewed, and that church

had at its head a tyrant, whose troops were encamped near the monastery. When the holy monks before break of day were singing the praises of God, a shepherd all in tears came to inform them they had robbed him of his flock; when they were renewing on the altar the memory of their Saviour's passion, a frightened tenant came to acquaint them that a drove of cattle belonging to the tyrants ravaged their vines, their meadows, and their gardens; when they just began to taste the consolation of that short sleep their laws allowed, they were awakened out of it by the cries of a servant, or the sacristan, who were attacked and beaten by these banditti. With difficulty they had saved their books, and the ornaments of their church, from these robbers. Such was their situation when Petrarch came among them. He could not hear this account of their distresses without tears. They begged he would intercede for them with the king and queen of Naples, that they would be pleased, after the example of their predecessors, to protect their house, and to send them a guard to defend them from these insults. Petrarch wrote directly to Zenobi to desire he would implore the protection of the grand senechal, who loved this or-

der so much, that he had just built a fine house for them near Florence, and he expressed to him in the most affecting terms the misery of their situation,

The Carthusians, hoping all things from the credit of Petrarch, contrived every method most grateful and obliging to express their acknowledgment for his letter, and their attachment towards him: and, when he left them, they went with him as far as they dared, and shed many tears at parting. Petrarch returned to Vacluse, and prepared soon after for his journey to Italy. He received from all parts the most seducing proposals of establishment. Nicholas Acciajoli pressed him to settle in Naples: many things suited him in this kingdom; the beauty of the climate, and the friends he had there, who promised him the tranquillity he wished, and were persons on whose word he could rely: but the air of this country disagreed with his constitution, from its excessive heat. Andrew Dondolo, doge of Venice, had written to him to establish his residence at Venice, and proposed many pleasures to him there. 'It is time for you to settle,' says he; 'come to Venice, and you shall find nothing to trouble your repose.' Petrarch,



in his answer, thus apologizes for his wandering life.

‘Heroes, philosophers, and apostles,’ says he, ‘have led this life. I speak of the primitive apostles; for the modern ones luxuriously repose on beds of gold, and travel in mind only over the earth and the sea. The insatiable desire of seeing and knowing all things has led me from my youth to run over the world. This desire is quenched by age. I wish to fix; but where is the difficulty. I am like a man on a hard bed, who shifts from one side to the other, but finds no place of rest. If to be motionless is constancy, gouty men are the most constant, death more steady than they, and mountains firmer than them all.’

John, king of France, a kind and amiable prince, invited Petrarch to Paris. He owed this favour to the cardinal de Boulogne; the reasons he gave for not accepting it were, the situation of public affairs in France at war with England, and his dislike to the manners and customs of France. In this state of suspense he wrote to Lelius to consult him, and to know whether he proposed continuing at Rome.

‘I wait,’ says he, ‘your answer with impa-

tience; if you advise me not to go there, I will seek a port between the Alps and the Appennines: should I find none, I will imitate those who, having many years been voyagers on the ocean, will no more expose themselves to its tempests. I will behold only the Sorgia, and live and die with the peasants of Vacluse. One thing only will concern me; to reflect that my resurrection will be so near Avignon, that Babylon of impiety.'

Lelius replied he should not continue at Rome; and Petrarch went to Avignon the 26th of April, to take leave of his patrons and his friends. He learned there that the grand senechal of Naples had lost his son, who was the most accomplished young man of that age. His father, though he had the greatest tenderness for him, supported this affliction with firmness, and an entire resignation to the will of God. His body was carried with the pomp of royalty to the Carthusian monastery near Florence. The removing it thither cost five thousand florins. The city of Florence rendered him the greatest honours.

Petrarch wrote to Zenobi, desiring he would express to the grand senechal the interest he took in his affliction. 'I came here,' says he, 'the day before yesterday, to take my final

leave of this place. The people I have sent to Italy give me hopes I shall meet there with the retreat I wish. I shall leave this tempestuous country, never to return to it more.

‘I am going to pass eight days at Vaucluse, to prepare for my departure.’

Petrarch went from Avignon without seeing the pope. The cardinal de Taillerand used every argument in vain to engage him to fulfil this duty. The reason he gave for his refusal was this: ‘I feared I might infect him by my forceries, or that he should infect me by his credulity.’

## B O O K V.

PETRARCH departed from Vaucluse at the beginning of May, 1353, and took the route of mount Genevre to go into Italy. When he had passed that mountain and was in sight of his country, he cried out in an ecstasy, 'I salute you, holy land! dear to God and good men! I am come back to you after a long exile, never to quit you more, in the hope you will procure me an agreeable asylum while I live, and a little earth to cover me when I am dead. With what joy do I return to the embraces of my dear parent, and leave behind me the clouds and the fogs, to breathe this serene air!'

As he passed through Milan, he thought it necessary to pay his homage to John Visconti, who, we have before seen, was both king and priest there. This prince loved men of letters, and gave Petrarch the most distinguished reception; designing to fix him in his court. 'He took me affectionately by the hand,' says

Petrarch, ‘ and conversed with me on the place of my abode, introducing by degrees his desire I would settle at Milan. “ I am not ignorant,” said he, “ of your objections to cities, and your taste for solitude ; I promise you that you shall enjoy it, even in the bosom of Milan. You shall be troubled with no employment : I ask only your presence to do honour to my person, and to be the ornament of my court.” Petrarch could not resist such marks of favour : overwhelmed with the goodness, and struck with the majesty of this prince, which impressed all who beheld him, he was silent. At last he consented on these two conditions : the one, that they should give him a situation as retired as possible ; the other, that he should not be obliged in any way to alter his manner of life.

The archbishop very readily granted these requests.

The house chosen for him was at the end of the town, on the west side, near the gate of Verceil, and close to the magnificent church of St. Ambrose. The air on this spot was very good. At the entrance there were two handsome towers ; in front the battlements of the church ; and behind, the walls of the city, and a fine view of a rich country beyond them,

extending even to the Alps: he remarked that, though it was the middle of summer, they were covered with snow. What a joy for Petrarch to live near a church dedicated to his favourite saint, of whom St. Augustine had attested so many miracles! He never entered this temple without feeling an extraordinary fervour. There was a statue of St. Ambrose, said to resemble him perfectly, and which appeared alive. Petrarch was never weary of beholding it: 'It was a most agreeable object,' says he. 'This great archbishop appeared to give me his blessing. What majesty in his countenance! What sweetness and expression in his eyes! This sight spread over my heart a lively and inexpressible tranquillity; I rejoiced that I came to Milan.' Petrarch's house was also near a little chapel where St. Ambrose and St. Augustine sung together that sacred *Te Deum*, from them spread through all the Italian churches; and it was also near the garden where St. Augustine was converted. These circumstances rendered Milan a delightful situation to Petrarch.

His friends however thought in a different manner. Socrates, Gui Settimo, Philip de Cabassole, said one to the other, 'What! this proud republican! who desired nothing but

ed : on his father's side, from Alphonso V. king of Leon ; and on his mother's, from James king of Arragon. He was made, when very young, archbishop of Toledo ; and was in the camp of Alphonso XI. in his war against the Moors, and fought by his side. Alphonso dying in 1350, just as he was going to drive the Moors out of Spain, Albornos went to Avignon, and Clement VI. made him a cardinal. When he returned to Spain, he found that kingdom desolated by the cruelties of Don Pedro, the son of Alphonso, who, inflamed with a violent passion for Mary Padilla, treated Blanche of Bourbon his wife with the utmost contempt, and put all those to death who opposed his measures. Albornos spoke and wrote to him with a freedom truly apostolic, which was so ill received by this blinded prince, that the cardinal retired to Avignon in 1353.

When Innocent cast his eyes on him to execute his project in Italy, all the world agreed he could not have made a better choice, as besides his knowledge in the military art, Albornos had other great qualities. He was well acquainted with the human heart, and knew how to avail himself of the foibles of men to compass his ends. He had a mind capable of forming great designs, and of executing them with sur-

prising celerity; and with all this, a patience that could wait the favourable moment for their ripening, when that was necessary to their success. Modest when a victor, he opened his arms to a submissive enemy: full of resources and expedients, he knew how to make advantage of the reverses of fortune: affable, though firm, he united an amiable sweetness with a just severity. Innocent VI. who knew him well, opened to him his treasures, and confided to him his spiritual and temporal authority.

The legate set out with the pope's letters to the lords of Italy, traversed the Alps, and arrived at Milan in September. This enterprise did not please John Visconti, who held a secret union with the usurpers, and feared he must give up Bologna, which he held only from a treaty with the former pope. Things were now changed, and women no longer governed. Innocent, of an austere temper, and determined on reformation, pursued a very different plan from his predecessor. The legate was however received at Milan with infinite respect and submission, agreeable to the policy of its prince. His expences and those of his numerous train were defrayed, and he was treated with all possible magnificence. John



Viscomti, with his two nephews, went to meet him two miles from the city, attended by an immense concourse of people, expressing the greatest joy! Petrarch was with the Viscomtis on this occasion, and in the violence of the crowd, his horse slipping with his hind legs into a ditch, he would have been crushed had he fallen: but Galeas Viscomti dismounting, saved him from this imminent danger.

The legate treated Petrarch, who little expected it, with the utmost distinction; and, after granting all he asked for his friends, pressed him to ask something worthy his own acceptance. Petrarch replied, ‘When I ask for my friends, is it not the same as for myself? Have I not the highest satisfaction in obtaining favours for them? I have long put a rein on my own desires; of what then can I stand in need?’

After the departure of the legate, Petrarch went into the country, to unbend his mind from the fatigues it had undergone; from whence, some time after, he wrote this letter to a friend:

‘You have heard how much my peace has been disturbed, and my leisure broken in upon, by an importunate crowd and unforeseen occupations. The legate has left Milan, and

was received at Florence with general applause; and I am again in my retreat: I have been long free, happy, and master of my time, but I feel at present that liberty and leisure are only for souls of consummate virtue. Alas, that is not my state! Nothing is more dangerous for a heart subject to the passions than to be free, idle, and alone. The snares of voluptuousness are then more dangerous, and corrupt thoughts gain an easier entrance: above all love, that seducing tormentor from whom I concluded I had nothing more to fear. I shall consult a faithful physician, and suffer with patience the rudest applications of his skilful hand to remove every lurking disease.' Petrarch doubtless refers here to his old passion for Laura, reviving in solitude, and not a new attachment.

Soon after the departure of the legate, there arrived news at Milan, that the fleet of the Genoese was entirely destroyed by the Venetians and Catalonians, near the island of Sardinia. The courier that brought this news to Milan gave a moving account of the state of the Genoese. Not a family in it but had lost some relation. A great part of the nobility perished: nothing but cries and groans were heard in the streets. Petrarch was going to

write to console and reanimate them, but he was told they were driven to despair. He trembled at this news, and flung down his pen.

‘Cities,’ says he, ‘and the world itself have their old age, and like men they tend onward to destruction. Sallust with reason says, that all that rises sets, and every thing which grows decays.’ John Viscomti had views on Genoa, which was a port conveniently situated for him. He invested it on all sides by land, and the enemies blocked it up by sea; so that they were reduced to famine. His partisans insinuated to the Genoese, that they had no other remedy but to put themselves under the protection of this lord. The Genoese did not long deliberate; they sent a solemn deputation to John Viscomti. ‘There was a decent and even respectable grief,’ says Petrarch, ‘in these messengers. Statius says, there is even dignity in the unhappy.’

John Viscomti convened his counsellors: Petrarch was one of them. The chief of the deputation spoke, and said, ‘We come by order of the people of Genoa, to offer you the city of Genoa, its inhabitants, their sea, and their land, their goods, their hopes, and estates, and every thing that belongs to them, both sacred and

profane, from Corvo to Monaco, on certain conditions that shall be agreed on.' The prince answered, that he knew the difficulties of the enterprize, but, depending on divine more than human aid, he would accept their proposals; that he would engage to protect them, and to render justice to all the world; and that not to extend his dominion, but out of compassion to an oppressed people. He concluded by beseeching God and all the saints to succeed his designs. Petrarch was desired to prepare an answer, but he excused himself on the shortness of the time assigned for composing it.

The event justified the step they had taken: The city changed its appearance the moment the archbishop took possession: plenty was restored; and, after deposing the doge, he took the reins of government into his own hands. He gave them money to arm their galleys, and renew their commerce: he had the road widened from Genoa to Nice, which alarmed the people of Provence, so much was his power dreaded even out of Italy. Among other improvements, he gave a clock to the city, a great curiosity in this age.

Petrarch, fatigued with the tumults of the city, went a little tour to the castle of Colomaban, built by the emperor Barbarossa in his

journey to Italy, 1164. It belongs now to the Carthusians. He thus describes it :

‘ This famous castle, fortified by nature and art, is situated on a rich hill, at the bottom of which runs the Lambro, a small but clear river, which washes the town of Monca, and then falls into the Po. Towards the west there is a view of Pavia, Plaisance, Cremona : to the north, the Alps which separate Italy from Germany, which are always covered with snow. The Appennine, and its numberless cities, are to the south ; and the Po, taking an immense course, winds its stream along, and fertilises this beautiful country.’

1. Petrarch could not view this spot without recalling the idea of his beloved solitude at Vaucluse. He had just received a letter from Socrates, who informed him he was there with Gui Settimo. The latter was to have accompanied Petrarch into Italy, but was prevented by sickness ; and when he recovered the heats were too violent to attempt it. Petrarch wrote to him, to express his regret that he was not there to do the honours of his little house. ‘ You are now,’ says he, ‘ in the temple of peace, and the asylum of repose. If you take my advice, you will often come thither to relieve yourself from the fatigues and bustles of

a court. Make use of my books, who weep for the absence of their master, and the death of their guardian. My garden implores your care, and that of Socrates, to comfort it for my absence, and to keep it in repair. Plant some trees that shall be a shade to us in old age, which we will pass there together if the destinies shall permit. My house is yours, my little bed will not miss its master, if you vouchsafe to sleep in it.' This letter he formed on that delightful mountain seated on the lawn, under the shade of a chestnut, and wrote it in the castle, where he slept that night. They prepared for him a magnificent chamber, and a bed which was not, says he, the bed of a poet or a philosopher.

Petrarch, when he called Vacluse the temple of peace, did not foresee the disaster that happened soon after. A band of robbers, who had committed many robberies in that part of the country, went to Petrarch's house, which they set on fire, and took every thing they could find. An old arch stopped the rage of the flames. The son of the fisherman, who had feared this, and was now its keeper, had carried to the castle some books Petrarch had left behind him. The thieves, imagining it was well defended, dared not attack it. 'Hea-

ven would not permit so invaluable a treasure,' says Petrarch, 'to fall into such vile hands.'

Petrarch found on his return to Milan a letter from the emperor, in which he gives many political reasons for not coming sooner to the assistance of Italy. 'You have read,' says he, 'the answer of Augustus in the happiest years of Rome to those who offered him the sceptre. You know not the burden of empire: we who are charged with it feel this truth. It is love for mankind alone that can surmount the difficulties of government. Viewing the disorders of Rome and Italy, we have resolved, notwithstanding our own weak condition, to lend our aid: but it appeared as a capital disease to deserve a very attentive examination. Friend, we must compare the present with the past, to re-establish the lustre of the one, and to purge the infamy of the other. But physicians have agreed, and Cæsars have proved, that before we employ instruments every method should be tried. We advise, therefore, and wait for succours, that we may do nothing unworthy or unbecoming of an emperor. We wish to discourse with you who hold so high a rank on Parnassus, and we look upon you as one of our most faithful subjects.'

As this letter was long in coming, Petrarch begins his answer with a pleasantry. 'I find,' says he, 'it is as difficult for your couriers and dispatches to pass the Alps, as your persons and your legions.' He had pressed the emperor some time before this to come immediately into Italy, and take possession of the empire. 'I hoped,' adds he, 'I had persuaded you; but I perceive my error. You think differently from me, and will be believed; for you hold the reins of the earth and the helm of the sea. What consoles me is, that, though you do not adopt my opinion, you will approve my zeal; and I cannot receive a greater recompense than this.'

In this answer he speaks thus concerning Rienzi: 'How much easier is it for you to re-establish the empire of Rome, than it was for Romulus to lay its foundation on the rocks, in the midst of those nations who opposed him; or for Cæsar to become master of this empire, at the time when its republic was most flourishing! As a proof of this, behold the man who rose up in its most declining period; and though neither king, consul, nor patrician; nay, scarcely known as a Roman citizen; neither distinguished by the titles of his ancestors, nor by his own virtues, yet dared to declare



himself the restorer of the public liberty. What title could be more splendid for a private man? Tuscany submitted to him immediately; Italy followed her example: Europe, and the whole world, were set in motion. We have seen this; it is not a thing that we only read of in history. Justice, peace, faith, and safety, returned; and the traces of the golden age began to appear upon earth. In the most brilliant moment of success he gave up his enterprise. I accuse no one; I will neither condemn nor absolve. This man took the least title in Rome. If the name of tribune could produce such an effect, what cannot be done with the title of Cæsar?’

1354. Soon after this a league was formed by the lords of Padua, Modena, Mantua, and Venice, with the emperor, who was to be crowned at Rome. This confederacy alarmed John Visconti, and he sent to invite the emperor to come and receive the crown at Milan, and he chose Petrarch for this embassy. He wished for repose, and did not care to traverse the mountains in winter, but he could not resist the insinuating manners of this prince. Before he set out on this embassy, he received the present of a Greek Homer from the proctor of Romania, whom he knew at Avignon,

when sent there by the emperor of Constantinople to negotiate the union of the Greek and Latin churches. He was a man of merit and genius; and the present he made to Petrarch was rare; there was not one besides this in Italy; they had only the bad translation of Homer by Pindar in Latin verse.

Petrarch acknowledged the favour in the following lines:

‘ You could not have made a present more agreeable to me, or more noble and worthy of you; why am I not able to add also, as well deserved by me? Could you have joined yourself with it to serve me as a guide, it would have been inestimable. But I lost the two ears through which I understood Homer; the one by death, the other by absence. The Homer you have sent is, however, dear to me; and still more so, because it is the pure original emanations from his celestial mind. Macrobius calls this poet the source of all imagination. I embrace this divine author, and return you a thousand thanks for having adorned my house with this king of poets and prince of philosophers.

‘ I shall be proud of two such guests as Homer and Plato in their own habit, and I despair not of understanding them more per-

fectly hereafter; Cato was older than I am when he began to learn Greek. Command me, if I can serve you in any thing; and grant me some opportunity of repaying the many debts I owe you. Success, they say, inspires confidence: I find it so, and dare yet beg you to send me, at your convenience, Hesiod and Euripides. I know not why my name is more spoken of in the west than it ought to be: if you judge it proper, make it known in the east; that by your means the emperor of Constantinople may not disdain the man who has been honoured by the emperor of Rome.

John Cantacuzene was at this time emperor of Constantinople, and he merited such a compliment from Petrarch. He was a man of genius and letters, and has left us a well written history of what passed under his own reign, and that of Andronicus Paleologus his predecessor.

A few days after this Petrarch went on his embassy, one great point of which was to treat with the Venetians: but, notwithstanding his eloquence and his friendship with the doge, he could not succeed. The consequence was, that the Genoese, by the assistance of John Visconti, armed twenty-three galleys, with which they made great havoc in a descent on the

Venetian coast, who thought themselves secure from all attack. This news spread horror and dismay : Andrew Dondolo took every measure that wisdom could suggest at this juncture ; but his precautions were ineffectual. The shock this surprise gave him impaired his health ; he languished from this time, and died the 8th of September 1354, extremely regretted by all.

‘ He was,’ says Petrarch, ‘ a man of virtue and integrity, full of love and zeal for the republic ; wise, eloquent, prudent, kind, and affable. He had but one fault, he loved war, and it was not suited to his character or manners : I spoke and wrote to him on this subject with the greatest freedom ; he had the goodness to receive it kindly, for he knew my heart ; but the confidence he was inspired with from his last victory against the Genoese caused him to reject my advice. He judged of the goodness of a cause by the event ; and often repeated to me what Scipio said to Hannibal, and Lucan puts into the mouth of Cæsar : “ The success of this army shall prove the justice of its cause, the vanquished shall be the guilty side.” Fortune conferred a favour on this prince in the death it sent him, for had he lived a little longer he would have seen the total ruin of his

country, over whom the Genoese gained, soon after this, a complete victory.'

In October 1354 Petrarch lost a friend whose bounty and favour towards him had sincerely attached his heart; this was John Visconti. He had a small lump on his forehead, just above his eyebrow; he had it cut off, and died in the night, without having time to receive the sacraments. Petrarch speaks favourably of this great man, in which he agrees with many contemporary historians. Except Villani, they all allow that John Visconti treated his subjects with great humanity; that he distributed justice with exactness, and was very charitable to the poor. It is owned he was ambitious, and every thing he did was accompanied with dignity. His name was renowned in the most distant countries, and respected even by the Turks. He was formed to please the fair sex, for he was handsome, gay, generous, and courageous; but his great passion was ambition, and he was feared throughout Italy. It is reported, however, that when the Romans would have yielded to his authority he refused them, saying, 'Rome belongs to the pope, and to the emperor.' He was interred in the great church of Milan, where his mausoleum remains with this epitaph:

‘Passenger, wouldst thou know the nothingness of all human power and grandeur, learn what I was, and behold what I am. I had immense treasures, vast palaces, superb cities: my name alone made all Italy tremble. Of what use is all this to me now? Behold me shut up within a stone, and devoured by worms.’

John Viscomti had three nephews, who were his heirs, and took possession of his estates, without the least contention, on the day marked for that purpose by an astrologer, without whose art nothing of any importance was undertaken in this age. Petrarch was desired to address the people convoked to this ceremony. In the middle of his harangue the astrologer cried out, the moment was come, and it would be dangerous to let it pass. Petrarch, though he had the greatest contempt for this superstitious science, gave way to their prejudices, and stopped directly. The astrologer, astonished at it, said to him, ‘There is yet one moment more you may go on.’ ‘I have nothing more to say,’ replied Petrarch; ‘and I know no tale with which I can amuse the assembly.’ The astrologer was disconcerted and rubbed his forehead, while some of the auditors were laughing, and others wondering at his assurance;

when he cried out again, 'The happy instant is come : ' on which an old officer carried three white stakes like the pallifades of a town, and gave one to each of the three brothers, which finished the ceremony.

'The astrologer,' says Petrarch, 'was older and wiser than me ; I loved, and should have been still more attached to him if he had not been an astrologer. I sometimes joked and sometimes reproached him for this profession. One day, when I had been sharper with him than usual, he replied with a sigh, " Friend, you are in the right ; I think as you do ; but I have a wife and children." This answer touched me so much, that I never spoke again to him on that subject.'

There was a great difference in the character of the three Viscomtis. Matthew, the eldest, hated business, and led an idle drunken life ; all his pleasure was hawking, and every amusement which women could partake of. It is recorded in the annals of the church that he passed the days and nights in continual debauchery, always surrounded by the infamous part of the sex.

Barnabas, the second brother, was cruel and morose, breathing nothing but war and slaughter ; the exercise of which, added to his natural

ferocity, made him afterwards a monster of tyranny and cruelty. He married the daughter of Martin de Lescale, who was called the queen from the great airs she put on, and her love of pomp and ostentation. She lay-in this year of a boy, and did Petrarch the honour to choose him for its godfather. He called him Mark, gave him a cup of gold, and made a Latin poem on the occasion, in which he celebrated all the great men who had born that name.

Galeas, the younger brother, had great sweetness of temper and goodness of mind: he loved hunting, but only as an amusement. He made war with courage and judgment, but he preferred peace: handsome, well made, and agreeable, he pleased and he loved the fair sex, but he kept this affection within bounds. He idolized Petrarch, and engaged him to continue at Milan. Petrarch attached himself sincerely to this prince, whom he speaks of in the highest manner.

These brothers perceived of what consequence it was to be firmly united against the league that threatened them, headed by the emperor. Barnabas was charged with the military affairs; all the rest lay upon Galeas. Matthew, or the eldest, presided over all in name, but did not interfere in any thing. They did



nothing of any importance without consulting Petrarch, and this confidence retained him at Milan.

The deaths of the doge of Venice and John Visconti were followed by that of Rienzi, whose tragic end we will briefly relate. He continued in prison during the life of Clement. Innocent viewed Rienzi in a different light from his predecessor, who had suffered him to live, but thought his madness required confinement. Rome was at this time in a worse state than ever; it was a scene of violence and bloodshed. The pope sent Rienzi to cardinal Albornos, with orders to the cardinal to re-establish him at Rome when he saw a convenient opportunity; and wrote these lines with him.

‘As a remedy for the evils of Rome we have sent our dear son, Nicholas Rienzi, a Roman chevalier, in the hope that, being enlightened by adversity, he will renounce all his fantastic visions, and employ the great talents God has given him to suppress the wicked, and to establish peace. We have absolved him from the censure and punishment he was under, and send him to you freed from all bonds.’

Cardinal Albornos, who knew mankind better than the pope, thought differently of Rienzi, and made no great haste to re-establish him.

Francis Baroncelli, the writer for the senate, took it into his head to set himself in Rienzi's place without his eloquence and talents. But this novelty lasted only four months. He abandoned himself to excess and cruelty, and was massacred; after which the people submitted to the legate.

Rienzi being thus set aside, desired leave to go to Rome, which the cardinal granted, giving him the letters patent from the pope. Thus established senator, he obliged the nobility to take the oath of fidelity; the successor of the Colonnas, shut up in his palace at Palestrina, a place of such strength that it required an army to besiege it, refused, and braved his deputies to the very gates of Rome. Rienzi had no money to raise houses, but the chevalier de Montrial, the chief of the banditti who infested the country round, coming to Rome to see his brothers, Rienzi had him stopped and beheaded, and seized a part of the treasures he had amassed: the people were displeased at this, but much more so when he put to death Pandolf, a good man loved and respected by all. They rose up against Rienzi. Abandoned by every one, he put on his armour and came on the balcony, where he used to harangue, making signs to be heard, and crying out, 'Long live the people;'

but finding all in vain, he ordered the doors of the capitol to be thrown open, hoping to save himself during the pillage. He blackened his face, put on the habit of a peasant, and, throwing a pillow over his head which covered his face, he ran down the stairs crying out, 'Ascend! ascend! there is good spoil.' Some one, who knew his voice, snatched off the pillow, saying 'Stop! whither art thou running?' His bracelets of gold, which he had forgot to take off, betrayed him. They brought him to the place where he had passed so many sentences of death. In this ridiculous disguise he was an hour exposed to the rabble, without saying a word, or being insulted by any one: such was the awe in which they stood of him! At last one of them plunged a poignard into his breast, and it was immediately followed by a thousand others. Such was the end of this mad tribune!

It does not appear from the writings of Petrarch that he had the least connection with, or concern in, Rienzi's re-establishment; he was wholly engaged at present with the arrival of the emperor, who was expected every day in Italy. He came to Mantua in October, after having been at Padua, where he was magnificently received. From Mantua he wrote

to Petrarch, to invite him to come there, and expressed an extreme desire to see him. Petrarch, delighted with so flattering a distinction, was not stopped by the extreme bad weather. It froze so hard, that they said the emperor had brought with him the German frosts. The old men in Italy declared they had never felt such severe cold. The roads were like glass; the horses, though frost-shod, could scarcely keep on their feet. Happily there fell a great quantity of snow, which made the roads passable. Petrarch set out in so thick a fog, he could not distinguish one object around. Some armed soldiers came now and then out of their ambuscades. 'They alarmed, but did me no hurt,' says he, 'as they belonged to the lords of Milan.' The first night he was obliged to stop on the banks of the river Chiofi, it being too late to pass over it. The next day he would set out before sun-rise: his attendants murmured at being exposed to so violent a cold, which could hardly be supported even in bed. As he came out of the inn he saw the emperor's messenger: he came that night from Cremonia; his people were frozen, and could not move a step farther: 'As to himself,' says Petrarch, 'he had the air of a man who is walking by moon-light in a fine summer's

night.' Never was there a body more hardened to fatigue, or less sensible of the injuries of the weather. Petrarch with all his diligence was four days upon the road. The emperor expressed his obligation to him for coming in such weather, and told him he had seldom felt so sharp a frost in Germany. Petrarch answered, that Providence would inure the Germans by degrees to the climate of Italy. He thus relates his reception and discourse with this prince. 'The emperor received me with such kind and easy manners, as had neither the appearance of imperial pomp, nor German formality; he lived with me as with his equal. We passed sometimes whole days in discoursing, from the break of day till night, as if he had no other employment: he spoke to me of my works, and expressed a great desire to see them, above all, that which treats of illustrious men. I told him that I required leisure and repose to finish this work; he gave me to understand he wished it to appear with his name: I replied with that freedom with which nature endued me, and which custom has confirmed, and years have strengthened, "Great prince! there requires for this, only virtue on your part, and leisure on mine."

'He desired me to explain myself; and I

said, "Time is necessary for a work of this kind, in which I propose to insert great things in a little space. On your side you must labour to merit your name at the head of my book. It is not sufficient for that to wear a crown, or bear a superior title; your virtue and great actions must rank you among those famous men whose characters will be sketched out in this work. Live in such a manner that, after having read the lives of your illustrious predecessors, you shall deserve that yours also should be read by posterity."

'The emperor shewed by a smile and a serene countenance that my liberty had not displeased him. I took this occasion to present him with some medals of emperors in gold and silver, which were my delight. In the collection there was one of Augustus in high preservation; he appeared alive! "Here," said I, "are the great men whose place you occupy, and who ought to serve you as examples. These medals are dear to me, I should not have given them to any other, but they are yours by right." I then gave him an abstract of their lives, with a word here and there to excite his imitation of them: he seemed to listen to me with pleasure, and said he had never received so agreeable a present. I should never end was I to

give an account of all the conversations I had with this prince. He desired me one day to relate my history from infancy ; I made every possible excuse, but he would be obeyed : he was very attentive, and, if I omitted any thing from forgetfulness, or the fear of tiring out his patience, he reminded me of it. I was astonished to find him better informed than myself of the minutest circumstances of my life.' [It will be, no doubt, recollected, that this was the prince who, on a visit to the pope with his father, then emperor, selected Laura from the ladies around her, to pay her the most particular marks of respect and attention.]

After this, the emperor asked me what were my projects, and my future plan of life ? " My will is good," said I, " but habit prevails over it. I am like the sea, buffeted by contrary winds." " I understand you," said he, " but you do not answer my question : what kind of life would be most agreeable, and that you would prefer to all others ?" " A life of solitude," I replied without hesitation ; " there is none more sure, more tranquil, more agreeable, or which suits me so well. If I am able I will seek it at its source ; that is to say, in woods and in mountains, as I have already done : if not, I will try to enjoy it even in the midst of cities."

"This," said he, smiling, "is what I wished to bring you to, and that you should own an error I would undertake to combat, though I am partly of your way of thinking." "Take care," replied I, "you will not fight with equal weapons; I know the vulgar think differently on this head, but I have the greatest of authorities on my side, beside experience, that it becomes not a prince like you to think as the vulgar; and I would even take the inhabitants of cities themselves for my judges in this cause, I have just written a little treatise on this subject." "I know it," returned the emperor with vivacity; "and if I find that book I will throw it into the fire." "I must then take care," replied I, "it never falls into your hands."

'We had long and frequent disputes of this sort, always seasoned with the salt of good humour; and I must confess that the emperor combated my solitary system with surprising energy, and boasted he had gained the victory. He begged of me to accompany him to Rome: "It is not sufficient for me," said he, "to see that celebrated city with my own eyes; I wish to see it through yours, which are so much clearer than mine; I shall want you also in some of the cities of Tuscany." "Rome and Cæsar, these are indeed my idols," I replied,



“and it would have delighted me to go to Rome with Cæsar, but many obstacles oppose :” and this was a new subject of dispute till we separated. He used every obliging persuasion ; and I may well boast that Dionysius the tyrant was not kinder to Plato than Cæsar was to me.’

1355. This pacific prince, who came into Italy entirely to make peace, negotiated one with the Viscomtis in particular, who had thirty thousand troops in good order. They made the emperor presents, but exacted that he should not enter Milan ; and that the troops that followed him should be disarmed. Charles had the weakness to submit to these conditions : his love of peace prevailed over every other consideration. The Viscomtis ordered that his expences should be defrayed while in their territories, and that of his three thousand disarmed cavaliers ; commanding none of their subjects to receive any payment or reward, Galeas Viscomti came out to meet him, and conducted him to the palace destined for him. The next day the emperor went to the abbe of Chioravalle, where dinner was prepared for him, and where Barnabas presented him, on his own part and on his brothers, with thirty fine horses, richly harnessed. When

they came to the gates of Milan, the emperor, invited by the two brothers to enter, answered, that could not be, for he would keep the word he had given. The Viscomtis politely told him that it was a favour they had asked, because they supposed the troops of the confederate lords would attend him; but that such a precaution could never regard his person, whose presence would do them great honour; and that, if he judged it necessary, they would absolve him of the promise he had made. The emperor insisted no farther, and entered with them the fourth of January, 1355. He was received with drums, trumpets, and other instruments, which made so loud a noise, that 'had Heaven thundered, he could not,' says Petrarch, 'have been heard: it was more like a tumult than a feast.' They gave the prince and his attendants a palace magnificently furnished, and every thing he could desire. The three brothers then paid homage to him, and declared they held all they possessed from his authority, and would only employ it in his service.

The next day, willing to give the emperor a high idea of their power, they made a general review of all their troops, the cavalry and infantry, to which they joined some companies

of citizens, well mounted and magnificently dressed, to add to the parade; and they told him that, besides these, their forts and castles were all furnished with good garrisons.

The emperor was not much at his ease in the midst of so many troops, shut up in the city, and at the mercy of those whom he had some reason to suspect: however, he put a good face on the matter, and appeared every where with a countenance which hid the feelings of his heart. Petrarch scarcely ever left him, and the prince employed every moment in conversing with him he could steal from public affairs and these fatiguing ceremonies. He received the iron crown in the church of St. Ambrose from the hands of Robert Visconti, archbishop of Milan, in the presence of the patriarch of Aquilon, his brother, and a great number of lords and bishops. In this ceremony the emperor made knights of John Galeas, son of Galeas Visconti, and Blanche of Savoy; and Mark son of Barnabas and his queen; and two infants only two years old. The three brothers were declared vicars of the empire for all the estates they possessed in Italy. They gave to the emperor fifty thousand florins of gold, twelve horses covered with a fine cloth lined with ermine, and six hundred sol-

diers to escort him to Rome. A bishop had predicted that the eagle should submit to the viper, as the viper was painted on the Milanese standards; this prophecy seemed to be verified. The emperor looked upon himself at Milan to be in a magnificent prison; he got out of it as soon as he could, and his impatience caused him to lose his imperial gravity. Villani says, that he ran through the states of the Viscomitis with the precipitation of a merchant who is going to a fair; and he did not fairly breathe till he was out of their dominions. Petrarch accompanied him five miles beyond Placentia; the prince renewed his entreaties that he would go with him to Rome. Petrarch excused himself with all the civility possible, and with much difficulty obtained leave to depart. When they were bidding farewell, a Tuscan knight, in the train of the emperor, took Petrarch by the hand, and, turning to the emperor, said to him, 'This is the man of whom I have so often spoken to you; he will sing your praise, if you deserve it; but be assured he knows when to speak and when to be silent.' Such freedom of speech did the emperor indulge to those who were attached to his person.

On his return to Milan, Petrarch desired nothing so much as to go and enjoy in solitude

the repose he had so long been deprived of; he compares his condition to that of a thirsty stag, who, stunned with the noise of the dogs, seeks the cool stream and the silent shade. In his retreat he reflected on the corrupt manners of the age he lived in: the excesses he witnessed in the Germans who were in the emperor's train gave rise to these soliloquies. Seneca says, every one complains of his own age.

At this time Lelius wrote a letter to Petrarch from Avignon, to inform him of his departure for Pisa and Rome, and to desire a letter of recommendation from him to the emperor. Petrarch immediately wrote this letter.

‘ Great prince! your goodness emboldens me to present to you my other self. The bearer of this letter to your footstool is a Roman citizen, ennobled by birth, but still more ennobled by his virtues. I should never end was I to speak of his prudence, his fidelity, his industry, and eloquence; and I would rather you should form an idea of him from your own judgment, which nothing escapes, and which cannot be deceived. If you honour me with so much confidence, be assured that he is a man worthy of your favour. Add to this that

he has been always attached to your person, your friends, and your empire. Stephen Colonna, that renowned hero, whose zeal for the emperor Henry VII. your royal grandfather, is known to all the world, loved Lelius as his son. Alas ! that good old man sighed for your arrival, as Simeon did for that of the Messiah ; but death defrauded him of this pleasure. His children cherished Lelius as their brother, and John Colonna, his grandson, looked upon him as his father. I remember to have seen you at Avignon, leaning familiarly upon his shoulder, and caressing him with the greatest affection. Lelius possessed the confidence of all this noble family ; after passing his infancy with one branch, and his youth with another, he consecrated to them every moment of his life, and would have ended it with them, if death had not cut down almost at one stroke a family devoted to your service. Imagine them all at your feet, beseeching you to protect the man they loved and esteemed, and whom they had as it were adopted.

‘ I will further add that Lelius was favoured with the good graces of pope Clement, whom you respected as your father, and who loved you as a son ; of the king of France, who is united to you by blood and by friendship ; and

of the cardinal de Porto, who does honour to the purple by his birth and great qualities, and with whom you are also tenderly united. After so many great names, shall I presume to add my own, and recommend him to you as my friend? Behold how far zeal and attachment can heighten my confidence!

It is not astonishing that such a man as Petrarch describes Lelius, and the bearer of a letter from him, should be well received by the emperor. This prince treated him with the greatest distinction, carried him to Rome with him, and vouchsafed to admit him into the most intimate friendship. The emperor set out from Sienna in March with the empress and all her train, and arrived at Rome on Holy Thursday, the second of April. The two following days he visited the churches in the habit of a pilgrim. On Easter Sunday he was crowned with the empress, and in the ceremony he confirmed all the privileges of the Roman church, and all the promises he had made to the popes Clement and Innocent. When he came out of St. Peter's church, he went with a great retinue to St. John's of Lateran, where he dined, and in the evening went to sleep at St. Laurent out of the walls, which was one of the promises he had given and faith-

fully adhered to. Some historians have said, the Romans offered to make him master of Rome, or desired he would re-establish it in its former state. He replied he would think of it; but when he was out of the city he answered, 'It was not expedient to change the government so often, and that they should recollect their oath to the pope.' The fall of the emperors and rise of the popes may be placed at this period. Petrarch thought this promise of the emperor's, not to sleep in Rome, a very dishonourable one. 'The emperor,' says he, 'came only into Italy to be crowned. The successor of St. Peter, who wears his tiara on the banks of the Rhone, with as much confidence as he would on the banks of the Tiber, not only suffers but orders him to go out of Rome; that is to say, he permits him to bear the title of emperor, and forbids him to discharge the offices that belong to it. With one hand he opens to him the temple where he is to receive the imperial crown, and with the other he shuts on him the door of the city which is the capital and seat of the empire! What a contradiction is this!'

Neri Morandi, a friend of Petrarch's, going to Rome with the emperor, had asked of Petrarch letters of recommendation: he gave him



one to his friend Paul Annibaldi. Paul had a son in the flower of his age, who was a youth of great hopes; he happened just at this time to be killed in a fray, and his enemies committed all sorts of insults on his body. The father, who beheld the sight, was struck with such horror that he fell dead upon the spot. 'I believed,' said Petrarch, 'that the loss of so many friends, and the total extinction of the house of Colonna, had exhausted all my tears, but I have found some to shed for a man who had acquired my friendship by his virtues.'

The emperor returned to Sienna in April, where he had great conferences with cardinal Albornos, and gave him troops to reduce the tyrants of Romania; from thence he went to Pisa, where was Zanobi de Strata, the friend of Petrarch, and of the grand senechal of Naples.

Nicholas Acciajoli, who loved Zanobi, presented him to the emperor as an orator and poet of the first rank, and desired him to give him the crown of laurel, as Petrarch had received it at Rome. The emperor, who piqued himself on encouraging men of letters, granted his request, and crowned Zanobi himself, after declaring he was a great poet. To tes-

tify his acknowledgment, he made a discourse in which he thanked the prince for having renewed in his favour the ancient custom, and promised to dedicate his talents to convey his glorious actions to posterity. After this he walked through the streets of Pisa with his laurel-crown, accompanied with the German barons, and other distinguished persons. Villani the historian, after a short relation of this ceremony, adds a reflection very honourable to Petrarch.

‘There were in this age,’ says he, ‘two poets crowned, both of them from Florence; master Zanobi de Strata, and signior Francis Petrarch, of an ancient and worthy family in that city: this last was crowned at Rome; his name is more known than that of Zanobi, and his reputation more extensive; he has composed a great number of works, and discoursed on the most elevated subjects: also it must be owned he began earlier, and his fame was before that of Zanobi. Neither the one nor the other are known as much as they deserve, and the taste for theological studies which occupies our age, makes their productions appear frivolous, notwithstanding the pleasure they are capable of producing.’

There appears no work of Zanobi which

could put his name in any competition with that of Petrarch, or that gives us room to suppose he could deserve the honour done him: but the request of the grand senechal was not to be refused, and the emperor could give a crown of laurel at a much easier rate than troops or supplies. After this ceremony Nicholas Acciajoli went for some days to Florence, where he lost the great reputation he had acquired, by the soft and dissolute life he led; passing his days and nights in feasts, balls, and other parties of pleasure, with the beauties of that city. The Florentines received him with honour, but refused him the succours he asked, which but for his conduct, says Villani, they would have granted. Petrarch, who had conceived a high opinion of him, was grieved when they informed him of the grand senechal's conduct, and the injury he did his reputation by such behaviour; and he ceased corresponding with his favourite the new poet, and soon after his elevation received this letter from the prior of the Holy Apostles.

‘ I reserve my conversation on that shadow of a Cæsar till I shall have the pleasure of seeing you. I would have wrote you what I thought, if I could have given to my style all the energy I feel at my soul; you will lament

his conduct; for my part, I cannot pardon him for having crowned one of our citizens, who troubled the fountain of Parnassus. He has turned his head in raising him to an honour he did not deserve. He was no doubt ignorant of the wrong he did you thereby, and not only you, but all the world.'

Boccace was of the same opinion with the prior: he reproached Petrarch that in his letters he gave him the name of poet. 'I do not merit this title,' said Boccace, 'having never had the honour to be crowned with laurel.' 'What,' replied Petrarch, 'if there were no laurel, must the Muses then keep silence? Do not you think as fine verses may be made under an oak or chestnut?' And, speaking of this coronation in another letter, he adds, 'a barbarous laurel ornaments a head nourished by the Muses of Anania; a German censor dares to give his judgment of the fine Transalpine wits: really this is not supportable!'

Some days after this the emperor granted honours and rewards of another nature to the famous Bortoli, then at Pisa, the greatest lawyer of his age: he made him his counsellor, gave him the arms of Bohemia, and several other privileges. In the emperor's return through Italy, he and his empress met with

many affronts. The gates of most places were shut against him. Enraged at such treatment, after being crowned emperor, he made haste to pass the Alps with great treasure, but little honour: 'his riches were increased,' says Villani, 'but his fame was diminished.' Petrarch, who wanted him to reside in Italy, struck with his sudden departure, took up the pen, and in indignation wrote him this letter:

'Ah Cæsar! how ungrateful are you! How little do you know the value of things! What your grandfather and others have pursued with labour and blood, you have obtained with ease and safety, and have as readily abandoned. You renounce all to return to your barbarous country. I dare not say all I could, all I ought to say; persuaded that your flight causes you much chagrin, I will not augment it. Go then, since you will, but never forget, that no prince before you ever renounced so well founded, so glorious a prospect!

'Wisdom is not an hereditary portion, I see it; not that I dispute your knowledge of government and your military talents, of which you have given us so many proofs; it is inclination you want: it is emulation, the source of all great and glorious actions. Listen to what your grandfather and father would say,

were they to present themselves before you as you pass the Alps. "You have gained much, great Cæsar, by a journey so long expected, and by so precipitate a return! You bring back with you a crown of iron, a crown of gold, and an empty title. They call you emperor of the Romans, though you are in reality only king of Bohemia; would to God you were not even that: perhaps your ambition, enclosed in narrower bounds, would make some effort to extend itself, and that your wants would excite you to recover your patrimony." Lelius brought me your farewell; it cut me to the heart, and he presented me from you with an antique of Cæsar: if that medal could have spoken, what would it not have said against your making so shameful a retreat! Adieu, Cæsar! compare what you have forsaken to what you are going to possess!

Peace was at this time concluded between the Venetians and Genoese, through the mediation of the Viscomtis. It cost two hundred thousand florins to the Venetians while the treaty was in agitation. The doge that succeeded Dondolo, and was called Marin Fabier, a venerable old man about fourscore years of age, was beheaded, it is supposed, on the following account. He had a handsome wife

who was unfaithful to him : a young Venetian nobleman of great fortune, who made love to one of the maids of honour, having received a very rough reprimand from the doge for some misconduct he had been guilty of, to revenge the affront he got this motto wrote over the ducal chair, ' Marin Fabier has a handsome wife he maintains, and another possesses her.' The enraged doge could obtain no more from the council than the imprisonment of this young nobleman for a month. Stung with the little regard the people shewed for his authority, he plotted to exterminate the order of the nobles, and make himself sole lord of Venice. The conspiracy was discovered, and Marin Fabier was beheaded. He was fond of Petrarch, who says, ' I knew him formerly : he had more reputation than merit, more courage than prudence. Let his example teach his successors that they are the chiefs, but not the masters of the republic, or rather its honourable servants.'

When Petrarch was re-established at Milan, he sent for his son John from Verona, who was now eighteen years of age, to have his education finished under his own eye. John had a great affection for a young man whom he had known at Parma and at Verona, where

he was secretary to Azon de Corregge; his name was Modio. He was a youth of genius and knowledge, and a tolerable poet.

Petrarch thought he could not do a better thing than engage this young man to come and live with him, to finish the education of his son, and to assist him in his literary works. Accordingly he wrote him this letter of invitation :

‘ I do not know what my son has written, but I know he wishes to be informed whether you can come and take up your residence with us. That you may determine with the more ease, I will acquaint you with the nature and conditions of the situation we propose to you, I am sensible the courts of princes are open to you : but if I know your character, you would prefer our poverty to their riches, a humble independence with a friend above the treasures of the east under a master. It is not a servant I seek in you, it is a friend. I propose not to you to labour for us, but to live as we do ; to be the master of your employment, and to hold the reins of your life. I flatter myself that my son, who has loved and admired you from his infancy, will make a great progress under your direction. If you choose it, you shall be also the associate of my studies, and at liberty to



copy my trifles; they will please me better when wrote out by your hand: you will discover the faults that have escaped me. I do not offer you mountains of gold, palaces of marble, or purple robes; but a comfortable mediocrity, a temperate and almost philosophic cheer, retirement, leisure, and liberty. It may surprise you I should offer to another what I possess not myself; but do we not every day behold physicians, who are indisposed themselves, give relief and health to others? The lustre of an empty name, which importunes me though I do not desire it, prevents my enjoyment of freedom and solitude; but you will possess both, at least till you are known. This is all I can offer you; I shall be happy if you can make it agreeable to you to partake my studies, and engage in this manner of life. I forgot our being near St. Ambrose, which may perhaps have more influence with you than all I have said.

Modio did not accept this kind invitation. A principle of gratitude to Azon de Corregio prevented him: in a great revolution at Verona, Azon had been obliged to leave that city; his estates were confiscated, and his wife and children imprisoned. Modio, whose heart was filled with affection and honour, and who loved

Azon, would not abandon him in this condition. He followed him, and devoted himself to the education of his children. This increased Petrarch's esteem for his character, and a very affectionate correspondence took place between them.

The month of September was always critical to Petrarch; he generally suffered in this season from a tertian fever. 'I was obliged,' says he, 'the fits were so violent, to pass the whole of the month in bed. Had it lasted much longer, it must have outlived me.' In this sickness news was brought him that the eldest of the Viscomtis was found dead in his bed. His brothers were accused of poisoning him, from the following circumstance: One evening, when they were supping together, Galeas and Barnabas said to Matthew, 'It is a fine thing to be a sovereign.' 'Yes,' replied Matthew, 'when one has no partners.' From this answer it was supposed he meant to get rid of them, and that they got the start of him. Villani says, that he died like a dog without making confession: and that his end was worthy of his life, which was spent in such horrible debauchery, that it does not seem necessary to ascribe the death that followed it to poison. Petrarch, though he was not touched with the

death of such a man, was extremely affected with the rumour that reflected on Galeas, to whom he was tenderly attached: he would doubtless have left his court if he had thought him guilty. As to Barnabas, there was no cruelty he was not capable of: he had put to death, for some unknown reason, a priest, sent by the pope to preach the crusade against the tyrants of Romania: he had him roasted alive in a sort of iron tub, with bars like a gridiron, and a handle by which they kept turning it before the fire like a spit. Galeas and Barnabas divided the estates of Matthew.

Petrarch began to recover in October, and his health was quite re-established by a letter from his dear Barbatus. It was full of enthusiasm and friendship, and addressed to Francis Petrarch, the king of poets. The monks had told Barbatus that in all Italy he had this title. Petrarch, after politely joking his friend for his blind partiality, and refusing with some heat the title he assigned him, wrote as follows:

‘ Before the Muses passed from Greece to Italy, it was easy to be the king of poets. What respect was paid to the poet Lucilius! To dare to criticise him was sacrilege! What a reputation had Revius and Plautus! We do them justice at present, but their wit and talents do

not equal their fame: to read their epitaphs, you would believe them as great as Homer and Virgil! Our age is not so easy; it exacts from poets works more correct and refined. We are surrounded with dainty wits, who are not lavish of their praises. Take care, my dear Barbatus, that you do not wrong me by your friendship, and overwhelm me with a false title. I should fear the being accused of high treason, if I took the honour you would give me! Where do you pretend my kingdom is placed? Which are its boundaries? There are but two kingdoms of poets, Greece and Italy. The venerable sire of Mæonia occupies the first, and the shepherd of Mantua the last. For myself, I can only reign in my Transalpine solitude, and on the banks of the Sorgia: it is there alone I can say with Ovid in his exile among the Scythians, Here there is no one wittier than myself.'

At the beginning of the year 1356, there came to Milan, to serve under Galeas, who made him general of his cavalry, Pandolphe, a descendant of the ancient house of Malateste. He was a cavalier of a noble figure, and a fine countenance; and, though brave and warlike, he loved letters and the Muses. The works of Petrarch had made such an impres-

sion on him, that he sent a painter to take his picture, who made him pay very dear for a bad likeness. He was delighted with the society of Petrarch, with whom he spent every leisure moment. The great fatigues he had suffered, encamped in winter among the snows, and in summer exposed to the scorching heats, had brought upon him a severe indisposition which had like to have cost him his life. Petrarch never quitted his room during his illness; and when he began to recover he was carried by his servants to Petrarch's house at St. Ambrose, and finding him in his library in the midst of his books, 'Here it is,' said he, 'that I delight to behold you.'

Galeas was fond of Pandolphe, and confided in his valour and skill; but the brutality of Barnabas obliged him to leave Milan. Galeas being attacked with the gout, ordered Pandolphe to review the cavalry; this displeased Barnabas, who sent for him immediately. Pandolphe kneeling down to pay his homage, Barnabas struck him with the hilt of his sword, and would have killed him, but he avoided the stroke. Queen de Lescale, who was present, told her husband it was a base action to attempt the life of a gentleman in his own house. Barnabas had him put in irons, and command-

ed his head to be cut off. Galeas sent his wife, and two of his officers, to beseech a pardon for Pandolphe. Barnabas answered, that he would send him to his brother, for him to take revenge for his offence, on which Galeas sent him back to his own country.

A rumour prevailed at this time that the king of Hungary was coming into Italy against the Venetians, and that he had made a league with the emperor. The Viscomtis were extremely alarmed, and begged Petrarch to be their ambassador to the emperor, to justify their conduct, and to penetrate into his designs. 'They send me into the north,' says he, 'when I have most need of repose. Man is made for labour: I love the man who sends me, and shall be repaid for the fatigue if I am so happy as to succeed in my negociation.' Petrarch went to Bastia, where he waited a month for the emperor. 'This prince finishes nothing,' says he, 'I must go seek him at the bottom of Barbary.' His departure was most fortunate, for the city of Bastia was destroyed a few days after by an earthquake, which overthrew at the same time more than fourscore castles on the banks of the Rhine. Petrarch describes this river in affliction, that 'its stream must now run over these ruins.' These commotions con-

tinued a great part of the year. Straßbourg, Treves, Spire, and all the towns on the Rhine, were more violently agitated than the rest: the inhabitants of these towns, not daring to continue in them, wandered about in the fields.

Petrarch arrived at Prague in July; he found the emperor employed about the famous golden bull which he had just bestowed on the princes of the empire at the diet of Nuremberg. This singular charter, which is at present the fundamental law of the empire, shews the turn of that age. It begins by an apostrophe to Satan, to pride, to luxury, wrath, and envy. The style by no means answered the dignity of the subject.

Petrarch made but a short stay at Prague, notwithstanding the kind reception and request of the emperor. This prince, though displeased with the Viscomitis, did not intend to make war against them. His affairs in Germany fully employed him, and the embellishment of the city of Prague. He had with him two prelates of distinguished merit, who possessed all his confidence, and went every where with him; Ernest de Pardowitz, archbishop of Prague, and John Oefko, bishop of Olmutz. Petrarch formed a short union with them during his stay at Prague, and corresponded with

them afterwards. Ernest said to him sometimes, ' Friend, I am concerned to see you among barbarians.' ' Nothing was however,' says Petrarch, ' less barbarous than these prelates, and the prince they served; they were as gentle, polite, and affable, as if they had been born at Athens.'

Petrarch returned to Milan in the beginning of September; he would not pass this critical month in a foreign climate; when he received from his friend Simonides the following letter:

' You are returned in health, my dear Petrarch, thanks be to God! This is the most agreeable news I could receive. Life would be nothing to me without you. I dreaded for you the intemperature of the air, and still more the barbarous manners of the country you was in, so different as they are from these of our beloved Italy. You inquired of me for a good housekeeper; I found just such a one as you wanted, a woman above forty years of age, neat, skilful, of good manners, and understanding in a kitchen. I have used every argument, but cannot persuade her to come to you: she says she will be a servant no longer, as she can live by her distaff.'

Some days after Petrarch's return there ar-

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rived a courier at Milan, who brought the news of the battle of Poitiers, in which four-score thousand French were conquered by eight thousand English, and king John and his son made prisoners. Galeas Visconti, who loved France, and was attached to the family who governed there, wished to write to prince Charles the dauphin, and to the cardinal of Bologna, to express his grief; and he begged Petrarch to compose these letters. That to the prince is as follows:

‘Serene prince! If on one side grief forces from me lamentation, on the other I am petrified and reduced to silence, when I reflect on the caprice of that blind goddess who governs the human race. If by a turn of her wheel she has overthrown your illustrious father, with his son your brother, who can hope to be saved from her strokes?’

‘I speak not of the losses all France has sustained in that fatal day, which obscured the sun of that great kingdom, and eclipsed the greatest part of the stars that enlightened it.

‘Great prince! Your affliction has reached me at this distance: God is my witness that I share it with you. Of what is not that insolent hand capable who dares touch with sa-

crilegious hands the diadem of France? With all the princes of Europe I feel this sad event: but, besides this, I have a particular concern in it. Your majesty will not believe me capable of ever forgetting the marks of goodness I received from your grandfather, your father, and yourself. There was in your family a sort of contest who should be kindest to a man but little known to you. So many benefits are engraved on my heart in lines that time cannot efface, and that ingratitude shall never cover with her clouds! And can I then fail to deplore your calamity, or, under the weight with which you are charged at your age, endeavour to moderate your grief, and give you the consolation I should wish to receive in your place! Providence has given to your youth what he seldom grants to the old age of princes, to know the emptiness of all things human, and the perfidy of fortune; whose power can only be resisted by a virtuous soul. You have received that soul from nature, and have perfected it by study and experience: on this is founded the public hopes and the safety of your kingdom. Heaven has spared you to deliver and revenge your father, and to hold the reins of empire for him; if the weight is above your years, it is not beyond your courage. The af-

fairs with which you are overwhelmed will not permit me to intrude on your time. I conclude with offering to your service my person and possessions. Happy shall I be if I can afford any succour to your majesty, whom I pray Heaven to console in granting freedom to his father, and victory over his enemies.'

The letter to the cardinal was in these words :

' Very reverend father and lord ! The horrible catastrophe of the king my master has made so deep an impression on me, I have hardly power to speak. If love does not blind me, all the human race ought to grieve for this disaster, and princes more than others ; but those who are attached like me will be inconsolable !

' I feel tenderly for the dauphin, but I hope every thing from his courage and virtues : with the divine aid he shall deliver his father, and steer the helm of his abandoned kingdom. I thought it my duty, as it was my inclination, to express these sentiments to him, and to you, my lord, who, next to him, are the most sensibly concerned in this unhappy event. Vouchsafe to engage him to use with confidence what I have most freely offered. The Lord preserve and make you prosper.'

Petrarch could scarcely believe it possible that an invincible hero, the greatest of kings, should be vanquished by so inferior an enemy. The Viscomtis at this time had enemies on all sides, and their city was like a vessel buffeted by the tempest. 'For my part,' says Petrarch, 'I am tranquil in the midst of these storms; and if I did not hear the roaring of the waves, if I did not behold others in agitation, I should be ignorant that I was sailing on a tempestuous sea, and seated at the feet of the pilot. Firm without being motionless, I wait without fearing; no wind is contrary to me; on every shore I find a safe asylum. If I dared compare myself to Cato, I should say I am in the state in which he was found by his nephew Brutus; uneasy for others, but careless about himself.' In fact, while the city of Milan was the theatre of war, Petrarch revised several of his Italian poems.

Soon after this he received a letter from Avignon, written by Socrates, Lelius, and Gui Settimo together. They all inhabited the same house, and lived in the greatest union. Petrarch replies, 'I should never have believed I could have envied people who dwell in Babylon. Nevertheless, I wished to be with you in your house, shut up from the poisonous air of that

infamous city. I look upon your dwelling to be like the Elysian fields in the middle of Aver-nus.' Some time after this he received a very singular letter from young Agapit Colonna, who had formerly been his pupil, but who had profited very little by his instructions. The letter was in a sharp unpolished style. He thanked him for the pains he had taken with his education, but adds, ' Fortune has elevated and overwhelmed you with benefits. Proud of your treasures, and the elegance of your houses, you despise a poor exile fallen from his prosperous state, ill clothed and worse provided for, leading a miserable life in a little house near Bologna. You fly from, and think no more of me in this poor situation.'

Petrarch answered these reproaches in the following manner :

' I am neither rich nor poor. I have every thing that is necessary, and I desire nothing more. It is true that my income is somewhat increased, but my expences are increased in proportion, and I lay nothing up at the end of the year. You say you are poor : I can scarcely believe that a person of your name and merit can be so. But was this the case, how could you ever think that poverty rendered you despicable in my eyes? This is very opposite to

my character. I despise no one, and have always had a singular regard for you. If I was capable of contempt, it would fall upon the rich rather than the poor: not that riches are contemptible in themselves, but because they bring so many vices in their train.

Your letter has astonished me beyond expression: I cannot recover my surprise, and I look upon it as a dream. You cannot think all you wrote: you only meant to punish me for my neglect in writing to you. I will not justify myself in that particular: I am flattered in your chagrin on that account, and kiss the hand that wounds me. But you ought to attribute my silence to my idleness of disposition well known to you, to my occupations which increase every day, and to the difficulty of conveying my letters. I do not comprehend what you mean by the magnificence of my houses: I dwell in a retired corner of Milan; often a wanderer in the fields, I am ignorant of what passes in the city. Adieu! And, if it is possible, be persuaded that, whether rich or poor, whether I write to you or keep silence, I shall always be sincerely attached to you.'

In the beginning of the year 1357 Petrarch received a diploma sent to him by the bishop of Olmutz, chancellor of the empire, by which

the emperor created him count Palatine, with all the privileges of that dignity, which consisted in creating doctors and lawyers, legitimating the natural children of citizens, crowning poets, giving dispensations of age, &c. These counts were sometimes also stewards of the estates of the prince, and receivers general of his finances. The emperor had added to this dignity some particular privileges and very flattering encomiums.

Petrarch in his letter of thanks says: 'I am very grateful for the singular favour the emperor has vouchsafed me, and the obliging expressions with which you have heightened this grace. My expectations from his goodness and your friendship are more than satisfied: but I will not receive any gold; be not displeased that I return that on the bull by your friend who brought it to me.'

The diploma was enriched with a bull, or seal of gold, on one side of which was the figure of the emperor seated on his throne, with an eagle and a lion; on the other, the city of Rome, with its temples and walls.

Petrarch sustained a loss at this time, which he thus speaks of in a letter to Lelius: 'An old Milanese of fourscore, who called me his father, and came almost every day to dine with

me, has paid the tribute of nature. He was a man of condition but little fortune, of a good character and a lively disposition, though he was almost in his second childhood. His questions were so droll and uncommon, they would have moved a dead man to laughter. He disputed on philosophy and religion, and had an inexhaustible storehouse of arguments. He submitted to no one but myself, and that rather from friendship than conviction. He fatigued every one with his questions, especially the monks: he inquired of them at first sight, Have you studied? If they said No, he shook his head, and went away without a word more; if they replied Yes, then he began his disputations, turned a question on all sides with an inexhaustible volubility, and violent peals of laughter. I asked him sometimes, with an air of surprise, from whence he obtained his knowledge, and where were all his books? "Here, here!" replied he, "rubbing his forehead, here is my library: it is from hence I draw my knowledge. Books were only invented to aid the memory, and are only the supports of its weakness." This odd assertion diverted us extremely. He said nothing but what he firmly believed, and his opinions were the joys of his life. He held in absolute contempt the rules



of grammar, spoke incorrectly, and disputed under the armour of ignorance. He undertook to write a book in your name; I wish he had lived to finish it, it would have been a notable and most singular production. Three days before his death he came to seek me with a melancholy countenance; I asked him what concerned him; he answered, "I am this day fourscore; how many years think you remain for me; perhaps twenty-five years, or thereabouts?" "Go," said I to him with a smile, "be easy, and you may very well reach thirty." "If so," replied he, "I am content, I desire no more." He went away, and I saw him no more. Three days after this they informed me he was brought to my church to be interred. He had no sickness, no other disease but old age. I regret his loss; he loved me, called me father, and his singularities amused me. Characters of this sort are necessary to divert me from more serious and interesting occupations. After having succoured his old age as much as I was able, I shed some tears on his tomb, which is in my church of St. Ambrose. This good old man loved and called you his son.'

Petrarch had for some time perceived in the letters of Lelius a sort of confusion and concern: at last he was informed that a quarrel

had happened between him and Socrates, after having lived twenty-eight years in the strictest friendship. It was occasioned by one of those busy malicious people who are the plagues of society. They told Lelius that Socrates spoke ill of him, and had even written unkind things of him to Petrarch. Lelius too easily believed so unlikely a report. Petrarch on this occasion wrote him a sharp letter, in which, after having justified Socrates, he conjured him to go to his friend immediately, for he was persuaded with good reason nothing more was necessary to reconcile such old friends. It is to be lamented this letter is not inserted, which might have served for a model to others in such situations. It had all the effect that was to be expected from such an interposition; Lelius could not read it without a deluge of tears: he went in his flood of grief to Socrates, fell upon his neck, and wept; Socrates embraced him in the tenderest manner; those who were by could hardly stand this affecting reconciliation. Petrarch was full of joy when he was informed of it, and wrote to congratulate them both.

In the violent heats of this year Petrarch retired to a little village near the river Adda, three miles from Milan. 'The situation,' says he, 'is charming, and the air very pure. It is

on a little elevation in the middle of a plain, furrounded on all sides with fountains, not rapid and noisy as those of Vaucluse, but smooth and gentle in their motion. The course of these waters is so intermingled, that their beginnings or endings cannot be discovered. As if they would imitate the dance of the nymphs, they approach, retire, unite, and separate alternately in a most agreeable and singular manner. After forming a sort of labyrinth by these meanderings, they go all together, and empty themselves into the same reservoir.

John Viscomti had chosen this situation to found a Carthusian monastery. Petrarch designed at first to lodge in it, and the Carthusians consented: but as he could not do without horses and attendants, he feared that the noise, and, above all, the drunkenness of servants, would give trouble and distress in this holy retreat. He therefore hired a house in the neighbourhood, near enough to go there any hour of the day. He gave this house the name of Linterno, in memory of Scipio Africanus, whose country house was so called; and in joke sometimes he called it the Inferno.

1358. While Petrarch was in this retirement, he received a letter from his friend Set-

time, who desired he would inform him of all the occupations and projects of his son John. Petrarch wrote this answer.

‘ The train of my life has been uniform since the frozen hand of age has extinguished the ardour of youth, and that fatal passion which so long tormented me ! But what do I say ! It is the dew of heaven that has produced this blessed effect. Do we not every day behold, to the shame of humanity, old men plunged in debauchery ? What a horrid and dangerous spectacle for youth ! Like a weary traveller, I double my steps as I hasten to the end of my course. I read and write day and night ; one is my refreshment after the other ; and my labours grow continually. Novelty pushes me on, obstacles increase my ardour. God, who knows my intentions, will assist me, if he sees it for the good of my soul. Labour is certain, success hazardous ; I feel this in common with those who follow the same painful course of life. I wish posterity to know and approve me : if I do not succeed there, I shall be known in my own age, or at least by my friends. Nothing more is necessary ; it would be even sufficient to know my own character, if it was such as it ought to be ; but with this, alas ! I cannot flatter myself. Whatever shall

be the success of my labours, I pray that God will not abandon me in old age, and above all at my death. My health is so good, my body so strong, that neither increase of years, serious occupations, abstinence, nor the strokes of grief, have been able to subdue this stubborn ass, on which I make continual war.

‘As to fortune, I possess that happy medium which is equally distant from both extremes, except in one point, that I am more sought after than I would be, or than suits with my repose. I am loved without being known or seen, and that is perhaps the reason of it. I have already passed an olympiad at Milan, a thing which neither myself nor my friends thought possible; so true it is, we ought never to say, here I will live, or there I will die, for we can be certain of nothing in this world. The kindness I have received at Milan attaches me not only to its inhabitants, but to its houses, land, air, and even its walls, not to speak of my friends and acquaintance. I reside in a very retired corner of the city towards the west.’

‘An ancient religious custom draws the people on Sundays to the church of St. Ambrose, who is my neighbour; the rest of the week this spot is a desert. Behold what this great saint does for his guest; he consoles me by his

presence, he gives spiritual succour to my soul, and saves it from disgust: under the shelter of his wings I see the tempests, and hear the noise of the waves, but they come not near to trouble me. When I go out to pay my duty to my master, or for some other business (which rarely happens), I salute every one on the right side and on the left, by a simple motion of my head, without stopping or speaking to any: my increase of fortune has made no alteration in my diet or sleep, which you know was always slender; on the contrary, I retrench still, and shall soon have nothing more to diminish. I am only in bed while I sleep, except I am sick. It appears to me that sleep so strongly resembles death, and the bed our tomb, that the idea gives me a disgust to my bed, from which I rise the moment I awake, and go into my library. I generally do this in the middle of the night, except when the nights are at the shortest. I grant to Nature only what she commands imperiously, and which it is not possible to refuse her.

‘ I am always fond of solitude and silence; but when I am with my friends I am disposed to converse a great deal: this happens, perhaps, because I see them seldom, and I would compensate for the silence of a year by the prate

of a day; and when my friends depart I become dumb again.

‘ Nothing is so fatiguing as to converse with many, or with one whom we do not love, and who is not conversant with the same subjects as ourselves. I resemble those people of whom Seneca speaks, who take life in detail rather than in the gross. I have taken a house at a league from Milan, to shelter me from the heats, in a fine clear air, where I am still more at liberty than in the town: here my table is abundantly supplied; the peasants are ambitious which shall bring me most fruits, fish, ducks, and all sorts of wild fowl. There is in my neighbourhood a fine monastery of the Carthusians newly founded, where I can enjoy at all hours of the day the pure and delightful pleasures of religion. The gates are always open to me, a privilege few people possess: but we should take care not to give trouble to others in seeking our own convenience, and this prevented my lodging there. It appears to me that it is here we most frequently fail in delicacy; and it is because we are more occupied with ourselves than solicitous for our fellow-creatures. In this happy retreat I wish for nothing but my old friends; I was rich in many such formerly, but death and absence

have diminished these possessions, and they are only to be regained in imagination. Your society, and that of Socrates, I long flattered myself with obtaining: if you persist in your rigour, I must draw all the consolation I can from my pious monks; their conversation is neither bright nor wise, but it is innocent and holy: their repasts are not inviting, but there is a perfect freedom in their company, and their prayers will be my great consolation both in life and at death.

‘ Solomon has told us that riches draw parasites. I have never obtained so much of them as to experience this truth. The little gold I have passes through my fingers, and my coffer is rather a passage than dwelling-place for it. I know that it is made to solace the wants, and not to nourish the passions, of men. In this view it was originally sought from the mines, purified, struck, and stamped. He who expends it properly is its master, he who lays it up its keeper, he who loves it a fool, he who fears it a slave, he who adores it an idolater: the truly wise man is he who despises it. You wish to hear news of our young man; I don’t know what to say about him: his manners are gentle, and the blossoms of his youth promise fruit; of what sort it will be I cannot



yet guess; but I think I can flatter myself he will be an honest man. I know he has understanding; but of what use is understanding if not cultivated by study? He flies from a book as he would fly from the face of a serpent.

‘ If his disposition pleases me, I see with grief that idleness will reduce it to nothing. Prayers, caresses, menaces, and pains, all have been tried by me without success: nature has always surmounted my endeavours. I have nothing, however, to reproach myself with; and I shall be satisfied if, as I hope, he turns out a good man. The glory that letters bestow is, no doubt, greatly desirable; but it is difficult to acquire: it is more easy to live a life of virtue than a life of fame. We pardon a man if he is not wise, but we never forgive him if he is defective in goodness; and Themistocles said, he loved the man much better who was without letters, than letters without the man.’

This year the Viscomtis laid siege to Pavia. There was in this city a man of singular character, who was called James Boffaloro: his father was a trunk-maker. He early abandoned the world to live in a desert the life of a hermit, and afterwards took the habit of the order of St. Augustine, and acquired great re-

putation for knowledge and piety; nothing was talked of at Pavia but the eloquence of brother James. Encouraged by these attentions, he declaimed with vehemence against usury, monopolies, and the ornaments of dress; and the effect of his preaching was a thorough reformation. Usurers were no more seen at Pavia; and even the ladies renounced their finery. After this he began to attack tyranny and tyrants, and exhorted the Pavians to establish a republican government. The people listened to him greedily, complied with all his regulations, and gave him sixty men for his guard; so that the lords of Beccaria, then governors of Pavia, did not dare to oppose him, and he became master in fact, though without any change of his monastic life, and his commands were considered as blessings. ‘The sermons of a little monk,’ says Villani, ‘did all this.’

Petrarch wrote a letter to brother James, representing to him how ill war suited the habit of a monk; and that it was incumbent on him to promote peace, rather than sow the flames of discord: but it made no impression on him. When the Viscomtis laid siege to Pavia, the citizens were pressed by famine, and began to be discouraged. Brother James never ceased to animate them by his preachings, and with

a prophetic tone announced victory. One day their money failing, he spoke with so much force against luxury, that the ladies brought him their jewels and rich habits, and the men all the gold and silver they possessed. He got the former sold at Venice, and obtained a considerable sum for them, which served to support them for some time : but they were at last obliged to capitulate. Brother James treated with Galeas, who shewed him the utmost respect, and granted all his demands. After having concerted with him the necessary regulations, he brought him to Milan, where, as soon as he arrived, he delivered him up to the monks of his order, by whom brother James was shut up in a strong prison, with very little light, says Villani, and a great many wants ; where, no doubt, he repented he had not followed the good advice of Petrarch.

The year 1358 was almost wholly employed by Petrarch in his treatise on the remedies of good and bad fortune. It is dedicated to his friend Azon de Corregge, whose past life and present situation occasioned him to undertake this work. In his dedication he describes it as follows :

When I consider the instability of human affairs, and the variations of fortune, I find

nothing more uncertain or restless than the life of man. Nature has given to animals an excellent remedy under disasters, which is the ignorance of them. We seem better treated in intelligence, foresight, and memory: no doubt these are admirable presents; but they often annoy more than they assist us. A prey to un-  
useful or distressing cares, we are tormented by the present, the past, and the future; and, as if we feared we should not be miserable enough, we join to the evil we suffer the remembrance of a former distress, and the apprehension of some future calamity. This is the Cerberus with three heads we combat without ceasing. Our life might be gay and happy if we would: but we eagerly seek subjects of affliction to render it irksome and melancholy. We pass the first years of this life in the shades of ignorance, the succeeding ones in pain and labour, the latter part in grief and remorse, and the whole in error: nor do we suffer ourselves to possess one bright day without a cloud,

‘Let us examine this matter with sincerity, and we shall agree that our distresses chiefly arise from ourselves. It is virtue alone which can render us superior to fortune: we quit her standard, and the combat is no longer equal. Fortune mocks us; she turns us on her wheel,

she raises and abases us at her pleasure, but her power is founded on our weakness. This is an old rooted evil, but it is not incurable; there is nothing a firm and elevated mind cannot accomplish. The discourse of the wise, and the study of good books, are the best remedies I know of; but to these we must join the consent of the soul, without which the best advice will be useless. What gratitude do we not owe to those great men who, though dead many ages before us, live with us by their works, discourse with us, are our masters and guides, and serve us as pilots in the navigation of life, where our vessel is agitated without ceasing by the storms of our passions! It is here that true philosophy brings us to a safe port, by a sure and easy passage, not like that of the schools, which, raising us on its airy and deceitful wings, and causing us to hover on the clouds of frivolous dispute, lets us fall without any light or instruction in the same place where she took us up.

‘ Dear friend, I do not attempt to exhort you to the study I judge so important. Nature has given you a taste for all knowledge, but fortune has denied you the leisure to acquire it: yet, whenever you could steal a moment from public affairs, you sought the conversa-

tion of wise men; and I have remarked that your memory often served you instead of books. It is therefore unnecessary to invite you to do what you have always done; but, as we cannot retain all we hear or read, it may be useful to furnish your mind with some maxims that may best serve to arm you against the assaults of misfortune. The vulgar, and even philosophers, have decided that adverse fortune was most difficult to sustain: for my own part I am of a different opinion, and believe it more easy to support adversity than prosperity; and that fortune is more treacherous and dangerous when she caresses, than when she dismays; experience has taught me this, not books or arguments. I have seen many persons sustain great losses, poverty, exile, tortures, death, and even disorders that were worse than death, with courage; but I have seen none whose heads have not been turned by power, riches, and honours. How often have we beheld those overthrown by good fortune who could never be shaken by bad! This made me wish to learn how to support a great fortune. You know the short time this work has taken; I have been less attentive to what might shine, than to what might be useful on this subject. Truth and virtue are the wealth of all men,

and shall I not discourse of these with my dear Azon? I would prepare for you, as in a little portable box, a friendly antidote against the poison of good and bad fortune. The one requires a rein to repress the sallies of a transported soul; the other a consolation to fortify the overwhelmed and afflicted spirit.

‘ Nature gave you, my friend, the heart of a king; but she gave you not a kingdom, of which therefore fortune could not deprive you. But I doubt whether our age can furnish an example of worse or better treatment from her than yourself. In the first part of life you was blest with an admirable constitution, and astonishing health and vigour: some years after we beheld you thrice abandoned by the physicians, who despaired of your life. The heavenly Physician, who was your sole resource, restored your health, but not your former strength: you were then called iron-footed, for your singular force and agility; you are now bent, and lean upon the shoulders of those whom you formerly supported; your country beheld you one day its governor, the next an exile. Princes disputed for your friendship, and afterwards conspired your ruin. You lost by death the greatest part of your friends; the rest, according to custom, deserted you in cala-

mity. To these misfortunes was added a violent disease, which attacked you when you were destitute of all succours, at a distance from your country and family, in a strange land invested by the troops of your enemies, so that those two or three friends, whom fortune had left you, could not come near to relieve you. In a word, you have experienced every hardship but imprisonment and death: but what do I say? you have felt all the horrors of the former, when your faithful wife and children were shut up by your enemies; and even death followed you, and took one of those children, for whose loss you would willingly have sacrificed your own.

‘ In you have been united the fortunes of Pompey and Marius; but you were neither arrogant in prosperity as the one, nor discouraged in adversity as the other. You have supported both in a manner that has made you loved by your friends, and admired by your enemies. There is a peculiar charm in the serene and tranquil air of virtue, which enlightens all around it, in the midst of the darkest scenes and the greatest calamities. My ancient friendship for you has caused me to quit every thing to perform a work, in which, as in a glass, you may adjust and prepare your soul for all events,



and be able to say, as *Æneas* did to the Sybil, "Nothing of this is new to me; I have foreseen and am prepared for it all." I am sensible that in the disorders of the mind, as well as those of the body, discourses are not thought the most efficacious remedies; but I am persuaded also that the malady of the soul ought to be cured by spiritual applications. If we see a friend in distress, and give him all the consolation we are able, we perform the duties of friendship, which pays more attention to the disposition of the heart than the value of the gift. A small present may be the testimony of a great love. There is no good I do not wish you; and this is all I can offer toward it, I wish this little treatise may be of use to you; if it should not answer my hopes, I shall however be secure of pardon from your friendship: it presents you with the four great passions, Hope and Joy, the daughters of Prosperity, Fear and Grief, the offspring of Adversity, who attack the soul, and lance at it all their arrows. Reason commands in the citadel to repulse them: your penetration will easily perceive which side will obtain the victory.'

This treatise of Petrarch's made a great noise: the moment it appeared every one was eager to obtain it. It is full of genius, erudition,

and true philosophy, and enlivened by a thousand examples from ancient and from modern history. We must add, in justice to Petrarch, that the misfortunes of Azon de Corregge never lessened his friendship for him to his death. The course of his sufferings and exile is not very certain: three of his servants were hanged, and he only saved his life by retiring to Ferrara; and at last went to Mantua, to live with the relations of his wife.

In June 1358 a peace was concluded between the Gonzaguas, lords of Mantua, and the Viscomtis, to which Petrarch, by his influence, greatly contributed. One of the articles of it was, that Ugolin Gonzagua should espouse Catharine Viscomti, the daughter of Matthew Viscomti. The marriage was celebrated at Milan with great magnificence: at the same time Barnabas had a child baptised. The feasts on these occasions lasted several days, with games and tournaments, and all kinds of rejoicings.

Petrarch was a great part of the summer at Linterno. The Carthusians, with whom he spent much of his time, talked of nothing but the sanctity and virtues of their general; this was John Bircl, whom the cardinals would

have made pope after the death of Clement, if the cardinal de Taillerand had not opposed it. Petrarch was pressed by these monks to write to John Birel, as the prior of the Carthusians at Milan was going to a general chapter held in the great monastery of that order. His letter is dated, 'From the Monastery of the Carthusians at Milan, where I dwell.'

'Full of astonishment and admiration, I speak to you as I would speak to Jesus Christ himself, who, no doubt, dwells in your heart: for the heart of the just, is it not the temple of God? They say you are an angel, and that you lead the life an angel would do if he was on earth. For my part, I behold you as a star which rises from the monastery of the Carthusians to enlighten a sinful world, as we see the morning sun rise from the eastern mountain to illuminate the world. How happy are you! How miserable am I! While I am struggling with the tempestuous waves of time, in continual view of the death I dread, you are arrived safe in port, and, so to speak, entered into the porch of paradise, with the hope, or rather the assurance, of a blessed and endless life!'

After beseeching the blessing of his prayers

that God would inspire his mind with unfeigned charity, perfect piety, and holy religion, he finishes his letter thus :

‘ From whence can my confidence arise to a man I have never seen ? It is not my merit which gives it, but my love for you and your pious flock. It is the idea of your piety which makes me hope an easy access to your favour. We sometimes love those the best we do not personally behold. Sinner as I am, I see you in Jesus Christ, who views us all, and whom we behold in all things. I would however that my eyes also rejoiced in this sight, and, though I daily hear of your pious words, that my ears could enjoy them from your own mouth. In fine, though I embrace you tenderly with my soul, I wish to enfold you in my arms, and kiss that hand I revere, that hand consecrated to God. I know you better than you imagine. Placed on a sacred elevation, your virtue makes you known of many with whom you are not acquainted. To this is joined that precious pledge I have confided to your care, that only brother enrolled in the militia of Jesus Christ, under the banners of your protection. Of all the gifts I have received from nature or fortune, none is so dear to me as he is : I know that you love him as your son :

you have taken him from me : I am comforted, I rejoice, nay, I glory in a brother worthy to serve Jesus Christ in your holy family ; this has inspired me with confidence towards you. The prior of the Carthusians at Milan, who will present you with my letter and my homage, will confirm my affectionate sentiments for you and your order.'

John Birel, in his answer to Petrarch, reprimands him severely for the praises he had given him, saying, that it was not right to praise any one to their face. He exhorts Petrarch to employ the great talents God had given him in works on morals and devotion, and in particular desired he would write a treatise on the dignity of human nature, which pope Innocent III. had promised to the world when he published his treatise on the misery of man.

Petrarch, after justifying himself for the praises he had bestowed by the examples of the greatest saints, Augustin, Jerome, Ambrose, &c. says, ' I could make you the same reproaches with much better foundation : I neither claim nor merit the praises you have bestowed on my genius. You desire me to make good the promises of others, who have not time to fulfil my own. Perhaps also, it was a subject too difficult for the great pope, and

what then will it be for me? Innocent III. was one of the wisest men of his age, and did honour to the holy see. He knew that human misery was an extensive, and human felicity a short and delicate subject.

‘ I am engaged in a treatise on the remedies of good and bad fortune, in which I try to suppress or extirpate, if possible, the passions of the soul. I was in the chapter of grief and misery when I received your letter. I apprehend that the malady of the soul called grief, can only be cured by the subject of joy we are furnished with from the dignity of human nature. One would have imagined you knew what I was about when you wrote, and that you meant your letter as a spur: it is certain I am animated by it. The honour of your notice, and the pleasure of obeying your commands, shall inspire me with courage; and if I cannot treat the subject in particular as you desire, you will accept it as considered more generally in the treatise I have mentioned.’

The correspondence of Petrarch with John Birel was short. This general of the Carthusians died soon after with the highest reputation for his piety and good works.

Petrarch had an inflammation in his leg while he was at Linterno, occasioned by a large

volume of Cicero's epistles falling on it as he was reaching it down; and this happened more than once. 'I could not help,' says he, 'asking Cicero, with a smile, why do you strike the man who loves you so much?' His leg was so bad through neglect, that advice was sent for, and the physicians thought it must be cut off; but by rest and fomentations he recovered. 'It is singular,' adds Petrarch, 'that from my childhood the accidents I have met with have always chosen this leg; which has made one of my servants call it pleasantly, the leg of ill fortune: in reality these are motives to believe in fate; and why not, if by this word we understand providence?'

As soon as he recovered, Petrarch took a little journey to Bergamo, eight leagues from Milan. The occasion of it was this. There was in that city a goldsmith of excellent skill in his trade; he was born with a lively genius, and would have made a great progress in letters, if he had applied to them early; but he was somewhat advanced in life when this humour took hold of him. It soon absorbed his whole attention, and caused him to neglect his trade. Struck with the renown of Petrarch, he was determined, whatever it cost him, to become acquainted with so great a man, and

to merit his esteem: he tried several methods to introduce himself, and at last succeeded. 'It would have been barbarous,' says Petrarch, 'to have refused him what cost me so little, and delighted him so much.' The favourable reception that Petrarch gave him quite turned his head; his joy was expressed in his countenance, gait, and gestures; he spent a great part of his fortune in having the name and arms of Petrarch either chased, carved, or inlaid upon every thing in his house; and at a great expence he got all his writings copied; for Petrarch had given to his ardent entreaties what he had denied the greatest princes. By degrees he entirely changed his character and manner of life, and abandoned his trade, which was a very profitable one.

Petrarch repeatedly told him it was too late to devote himself to study, and that he ought on no account to quit his business. Obedient to his advice on every other subject, and listening to him as an oracle, he would not be persuaded in this matter to alter his resolution, but shut up his shop, and spent all his time in the schools of the professors, in which that city abounded.

He was passionately desirous that Petrarch should visit him at Bergamo; 'One day only,'



said he, ' would he honour my house with his presence, it would be my glory and felicity for ages.' Petrarch kept him in suspense for some years, but at last, moved with his earnest supplications, and the pleasure he felt in bestowing happiness, he went to Bergamo, though some of his friends were against it, and thought it would be demeaning himself. The jeweller, whose name was Henry Copra, came to fetch him, and, that he might be amused upon the road, he brought with him some men of genius whose conversation might be agreeable to him ; some of Petrarch's friends followed, curious to observe the event of this singular visit. When they came to Bergamo, the governor, commanding officer, and principal people of the city, came out to meet Petrarch, and rendered him the greatest honours. They would have lodged him in the city hotel, or some palace. The goldsmith was terrified lest he should not be preferred ; but he was unjust to Petrarch, who was faithful to his promise, and went with the friends who followed him to his house. He had made vast preparations ; the house was magnificently decorated, the chamber destined to Petrarch hung with purple, the bed gilt, and the banquet was a royal one. His library was more like a scholar's devoted

to letters, than a tradesman's who had spent his life in a shop.

Petrarch went away the next day, satiated with honours and good things. Never was a host so delighted with his guest: his joy was so immoderate, that his relations feared he would fall sick, or turn fool. The governor, and a great train, accompanied Petrarch much further than he desired. The goldsmith could not quit him, and they were obliged at last to force him away.

Petrarch arrived that night at Linterno, where he passed the rest of the autumn, 1358. He had a letter from Lelius, in which he informs him that the office of apostolic secretary was conferred on Zanobi de Strata, but had been solicited for him by his friends. Petrarch, after repeating what he had so often said on this subject, adds:

‘ It gives me pleasure Zanobi has this employment: I love, and am sure of being beloved by him. Among so many enemies of God and man, we shall at least have one friend in that court. But I lament the loss of the Muses, and I pity his fate. In accepting this office, he has had more regard to riches than reputation, life, or repose. It was not long

ago he joked me in a friendly manner for choosing a turbulent and noisy city for my Helicon. He was ignorant of the free, retired, and tranquil life I lead at Milan. He disapproved also of my situation in Provence, supposing it impossible for any one to be happy on that side the Alps. Nevertheless, at Vaucluse, if respecting my body and my errors I led the life of a man, with respect to the peace of my mind I led the life of an angel. When Zanolini talked in this manner, he did not foresee he should soon be an exile from Italy, and an inhabitant of the Babylonian Parnassus. If I know him, he will often regret his country, and the leisure he enjoyed at Naples, and will envy the freedom I possess at Milan. He will be richer, no doubt, but he will be less happy.'

1359. It was most severe weather when Petrarch wrote this letter; his ink was frozen, his hand benumbed. It snowed violently: so great a quantity had never been seen between the Alps and the Appennine. Many villages and houses in the country suffered extremely. At Bologna the snow lay sixty feet deep, and they made a vault under it, where the young people had feasts and diversions. Villani, and

other historians, speak of this snow, which fell in February, as exceeding what had been known in the memory of man.

Petrarch's son was at this time at Avignon. Simonides, who was there also, after speaking of their common friends Lelius, Socrates, &c. with all the warmth of friendship, talks to him of his son, whom he calls John Petrarch. 'He hardly ever leaves me,' says he; 'he amuses me by his conversation, and teaches me many things. I find him gentle and modest; a good sign in a young man, if we may believe Seneca. I conjure you not to give ear too lightly to what may be said against him; either I am much deceived, or you will see him one day almost such as you wish him to be.' We are not told why Petrarch's son went to reside at Avignon, or what he had done to incur his father's displeasure.

Petrarch had a visit this year from his friend Boccace. United by the same genius and disposition, they wrote often, and had a tender regard for each other. They had been but little together before, and this reunion confirmed their friendship. Boccace called Petrarch his master, and expressed great obligations to him for the knowledge he had communicated to him. His character had been

dissipated and libertine, and he confesses that to Petrarch he owed the conversion of his heart. His *Décameron*, which he wrote in 1348, is a proof of the freedom of his sentiments in the early part of his life. He was about forty-five years old when he came to Milan. Petrarch convinced him it was shameful at his age to lose his time among women ; that he ought to employ himself in more serious pursuits, and turn his solicitude towards Heaven, instead of fixing it upon the earth. His eclogues, like those of Petrarch, are obscure and enigmatical.

After passing some days at Milan, his affairs obliged him to return to Florence in the beginning of April. The weather was stormy, and the waters out. Petrarch begged he would write to him as soon as he had passed the Po and the other rivers, which he did.

Petrarch writing to Simonides, speaks thus of this visit :

‘ We have passed our days delightfully, but they slid too fast away. We only wanted you to complete our society. I could not be easy at my friend’s setting out in such bad weather, till I learned he had passed safely the king of rivers ; he has only after this to cross the Appennine, that father of the mountains. This

friend knows all my thoughts, and will give you a faithful account of my transactions.'

Simonides answered Petrarch from Florence: 'Be at peace, our dear Boccace has passed the king of rivers and the father of mountains, and is arrived here safe and in good health.'

Soon after his arrival at Florence, Boccace sent Petrarch a fine copy of Dante's poem, which he had taken the pains to copy, and he apologises for the praises he gives him, by saying he was his first master, the first light which illuminated his mind. It was generally thought Petrarch was jealous of Dante, because he had no copy of his works. Petrarch was concerned that Boccace should adopt this opinion, and wrote to him as follows.

'The praises you have given to Dante are well founded, worthy both of him and you, and much more flattering than those applauses of the vulgar, which disturb the peace of his manes.

'If we owe much to the fathers of our body, how much more are we indebted to those who have formed our mind. I unite with you in praising this great poet, whose style is vulgar, but whose sentiments are noble and beautiful. I am only displeased that you know me so

little, by whom I wish to be perfectly known : of all the plagues of the soul, I am the least assaulted by envy. My father was strictly united with Dante, and the same ill fortune pursued them : neither injustice, exile, nor poverty, neither the love of his wife or children, could take this poet from his studies, though they required silence and repose : for this I can never enough admire him. I see many reasons for loving, but none for hating or despising him. His genius, sentiment, and humour, excellent in their kind, place him very far above contempt. I feared when young to read writers in the same language, lest by hazard I should copy their sentiments or manner. I have always avoided with care every kind of imitation, and if it has happened, it has been by accident ; this was the reason I did not read Dante then, though I admire him sincerely now ; and was I envious, it must be of the living, for death is the tomb of envy as well as of hatred. All that I can be reproached for is, that I have said, he succeeded best in the vulgar tongue, both in verse and prose ; that he rises higher, and pleases most in this, you will agree with me ; and what author is there who has succeeded equally in every style ? This was not even granted to Cicero, Virgil,

Sallust, or Plato, when eloquence, now dead, was at its height. It is sufficient for a man to excel in one species of writing. I had this upon my mind, and I am consoled now that I have expressed it to you.'

In May 1359 Petrarch received a letter from the empress Ann, to inform him of the birth of a daughter, and the joy this event had given her. She had been married five years without any children.

Petrarch in his answer expresses his gratitude for the great honour she had done him; and enumerates the illustrious women whose virtue, courage, and great actions, have given them such just renown.

Petrarch being informed his friend the bishop of Cavaillon was returned from Germany to his diocese, after he had been in quality of nuncio to the pope, wrote to congratulate him on his arrival; and says, 'I dread more than death those long and dangerous journeys you take so often; it is time for you to repose yourself. I cannot express the ardent desire I have to behold you again; it is now seven years that we have been separated. I was in my youth absorbed in love; in age I am wrapped up in my friends, chilled in one period, and warmed in the other. I resign what



I once adored, and I adore those I then only loved. At the moment when you least think of it, you will perhaps see me in your library ; on the banks of my river, or in my cave, I wait for my Socrates, or rather your Socrates. Love him, treat him as your dear child, as you have always treated me, and never forget your servant.'

Some malicious people persecuted Socrates. Petrarch wrote to encourage him, and invite him to Milan. 'I know,' says he, 'you wish to see me ; never have we been so long separated ; nothing indeed can divide souls united by virtue and the faith of Jesus Christ : but, after all, there is nothing like the presence of a beloved friend. Come, you are expected and longed for ; you will find friends unknown to you, and a reputation ; your society will increase, and not diminish : come, the way is short ; let nothing stop you : either you must fix with me, or I must come to you. Your journey will not be unuseful ; you will see me ; you will see Italy : the Alps, which separate you at present from your friend, will serve you as a barrier against those envious serpents who pursue your peace.'

Socrates did not accept this invitation : he loved Petrarch above all men ; he detested

Avignon, and wished to see Italy; but he could not resolve to quit France, and run the hazard of ending his days in a foreign country.

When Petrarch returned from Linterno, he met with an accident in his house at Milan, which distressed him very much. As he arose one morning he found he had been robbed of all but his books; as he perceived it was a domestic robbery, he could suspect none but his son John, who was returned from Avignon, and his servants. He was become extremely libertine, and it was the necessities his debauched life reduced him to that had brought him to this action: he fought every day with his father's servants, and Petrarch could not keep either him or them within any bounds, so that he lost all patience, and turned them all out of his house; his son begged to be received again, but Petrarch would not for some time consent to it. This event had occasioned him to quit his retired house at St. Ambrose, in which he did not think himself in safety; and he took a small mansion in the middle of the city, where he remained but a short time: his love of solitude and repose soon induced him to seek a more retired habitation; he found one in the monastery of St. Simplicien, situated out of the

walls. 'I have here,' says he, 'a long covered walk separated from the fields by a narrow woody path, from whence I can go round the city without meeting any one; for such is the solitude of this place, that you seem to be in the middle of a wood, if the view of the city in some parts, and the noise we sometimes hear, did not remind us we are near it.'

Petrarch asked one of the monks for a life of St. Simplicien: 'He brought me a book,' says he, 'which the author had compiled from the Confessions of St. Augustine, but in a very flat and injudicious manner. I threw it aside in anger; but it brought to my mind a good saying, "The glory of saints depends not upon the eloquence of biographers. Those saints want not the pen of mortals who are written in the book of life." But, if we suppose a good writer capable of the work, who wishes to animate the living rather than honour the dead, where will he meet with facts, if we find none in the house of the saint himself? It is only from the testimony of St. Augustine we learn that Simplicien was all his life a faithful servant of God, well versed in the duties of an evangelical life; that he contributed to his conversion, and was chosen to succeed St. Ambrose by the direction of that great saint.

This is all I could discover of my sacred host; God knows the rest.'

A physician, called Albin de Canobio, who was fond of Petrarch, wrote to invite him to his country house at the foot of the Alps. The air of Milan was become infectious: 'Come hither,' says Albin, 'the air is very good, and you will have always near you a physician and a friend.' Petrarch replied, 'It becomes not one of my age to fly from death: it is needless so to do, because it comes every where. I would sooner visit you as my friend than my physician. The art of physic may be useful to preserve health, and cure lesser disorders; but in violent diseases it is of little use: we see physicians themselves despair and run away, which proves the ignorance or the weakness of men.'

Gui Settimo was appointed this year, 1359, to the archbishopric of Genoa. As he was extremely beloved, it caused great joy in Genoa. Petrarch wrote to congratulate him: 'I know not,' said he, 'whether I should rejoice or grieve for your exaltation; you will have more honour and revenue, but you will lose that freedom you are so fond of. But why do I say this? You did not enjoy liberty, you was the servant of the public; you are now the

fervant of God ; your condition is to be rejoiced in.'

He was scarcely settled in his new dignity, which brought him back with such honour to his country, when he was attacked with violent fits of the gout, and begged Petrarch to write him some consolations against pain, assuring him that he suffered with patience. Petrarch answered him with his usual spirit and philosophy, and then adds : ' I would have sent you my remedies of good and bad fortune, but I have no person at present who can copy it. The young man whom we have both taken so much pains with, that he might be the honour, relief, and joy of my old age, overwhelms me with shame and grief. This is contrary to my former predictions : alas ! they must be now effaced ; he is the slave of his passions, envious, and disobedient ; he hates knowledge and virtue. But we must suffer all things with patience. Augustus, esteemed the happiest of men, did not he lament the giving birth to three poisons ? I, that have but one, should do wrong to complain.'

This son of Petrarch did every thing he could to obtain his father's forgiveness, and to be received into his house ; he acknowledged his faults, and promised to correct them. Pe-

trarch wrote him a very sharp letter, in which he refuses to receive him then, but that he should be ready to do it when he gave proofs of his reformation. In effect, he permitted him soon after this to return home, and appears as much rejoiced as his son at this reunion.

In 1360, Galeas Visconti removed from Milan to Pavia; the cruelties of his brother had rendered his society insupportable. He embellished his new city, and rendered it a very agreeable and magnificent situation: Petrarch often passed a part of the summer with him there. He built a citadel of astonishing size, and at an immense expence; a covered bridge over the Tesin, ornamented with marble, which is still the favourite walk of the Pavians; and he made a fine park, which was twenty miles in circumference, and stored it with deer and game of all sorts. He established an university for all the sciences, engaged able professors, and ordered all his subjects to send their children to study there. All that he did was great; and Petrarch says of him, referring to the citadel of Pavia, ‘Galeas surpassed other men in most things, but in the magnificence of his buildings he surpassed himself.’

This year Nicholas Acciajoli, who had been

for some time at the court of Avignon, where he was on a public business from the king of Hungary, was sent by the pope to Milan, to negotiate a peace with Barnabas, who had invaded Bologna. The grand senechal was extremely desirous to see Petrarch, who gives this account of their interview to Zanobi: 'Your Mæcenæ is come to treat with my Augustus, and has been twice to see me: neither the number of visits, the multitude of affairs, nor the distance, could prevent him. This great man came to my remote dwelling, and entered into my little house, as Pompey entered into that of the philosopher Possidonius; the fasces downward, the head uncovered, bowing with respect. What could an inhabitant of Parnassus do more, was he to enter into the temple of Apollo and the Muses? This generous humility moved me, and some persons of distinction who followed him, almost to tears: such was the majesty of his air, the softness of his manners, the dignity of his language, preceded by a silence more expressive than words! We conversed upon all subjects, and spoke of you in particular. He examined my books with condescension, staid a long time, and went away with concern. He has honoured my dwelling so much, that not only Romans and

Florentines, but every lover of the sciences, pays homage to it. His presence, his noble countenance, has spread joy and peace in this royal city: he has completed the favour he always expressed for me, and his presence has raised rather than diminished the idea I had of him. How happy are you to have such a friend! Adieu! Do not forget me.'

The dispute about Bologna between the pope and Barnabas Visconti was more violent than ever, and a proceeding was commenced against the latter. Galeas was not to be included in it, on condition he should not aid his brother. Galeas consented, having in view an alliance with France, and being very unwilling to break with the pope.

King John was still a prisoner at London; the truce was expired between the French and English. Edward entered France with a powerful army, persuaded that nothing could resist him, and that before the end of the campaign he should become master of that kingdom. He laid siege to Rheims, but was obliged to raise it, and approached Paris, where he sent to defy the regent to battle, and ravaged the country around it: but his army being straitened for provision, he removed toward Chartres. On a sudden there arose so terrible a storm, accom-



panied with thunder and hail-stones of such a prodigious size, that it crushed to death both men and horses; and so violent a rain deluged the camp, that a thousand soldiers and six thousand horses were buried in it. The violence of the winds, and the rapidity of the torrents, carried all before them. The English historian says, that the troops looked upon this storm as a mark of God's wrath, and that the king himself was of this opinion. It is affirmed that he turned towards the church of Chartres, and made a vow to consent to peace, which was concluded some time after. One of the articles of it was, that king John should pay three millions of gold crowns for his ransom; six hundred thousand at Calais, four months after his arrival; and four hundred thousand every year till all should be paid. The performance of this agreement was very difficult. France was desolated, and without resources. Money did not circulate: those who had any concealed it: all sorts of means were employed to bring it forth. The good cities taxed themselves; the financiers and Jews were laid under contribution; and the pope granted two tenths from the clergy. Philip de Comines speaks of leather money being used at this time, with a nail of silver in the middle.

Galeas Viscomti took advantage of John's embarrassing situation, to demand his daughter Isabella for John Galeas, his son. Historians assure us this honour cost him dear. Villani says, the king sold his daughter for six hundred thousand florins; and makes a singular reflection on this subject. 'When we consider the grandeur of France, who would have imagined that, by the attacks of a king of England, a petty monarch in comparison, its king should be reduced to sell his own flesh as at a public auction!'

Isabella was twelve years old, and John Galeas not eleven, but of ripe understanding for that age. When he was but five years old, being in his father's court, in the midst of the great persons assembled, he was observed to examine their faces and appearance very attentively: his father asked him which he thought the wisest person there; after looking again at every one of them, he went to Petrarch, took him by the hand, and brought him to his father.

Isabella made her entrance into Milan the 8th of October, 1360, attended by the count of Savoy. She was dressed in royal habits, received all the honours paid to queens, and had a royal court; at which no ladies appeared be-

fore her with any covering on their heads. This ceremony lasted till the celebration of the marriage, when, setting this royalty aside, she did homage to the Viscomtis and their wives. The marriage was celebrated with the greatest magnificence; the Viscomtis invited all the lords of Italy, who came to it with all readiness, and brought their wives along with them. The rejoicings lasted three days, and were concluded by a sumptuous feast given by Barnabas; six hundred ladies, and more than a thousand lords, were served at tables of three courses with the greatest elegance and profusion. There were every day tournaments, where they prepared booths for the ladies, whose fine dresses, with the pompous ornaments of the knights, and the vast concourse of princes, nobles, and people of all nations, formed all together a most superb spectacle.

Petrarch set out for Paris when these rejoicings were over, as ambassador from Galeas Viscomti, to compliment king John on his return to, and on the recovery of, his kingdom. Petrarch gives this account of the dreadful condition of France :

‘ When I viewed this kingdom, which had been desolated by fire and sword, I could not persuade myself it was the same I had formerly

beheld fertile, rich, and flourishing. On every side it now appeared a dreadful desert; extreme poverty, lands untilled, fields laid waste, houses gone to ruin, except here and there one that was defended by some fortification, or which was enclosed within the walls: every where were seen the traces of the English, and the dreadful havoc they had made. Touched by such mournful effects of the rage of man, I could not withhold my tears.

‘ I am not among those whose love of their own country causes them to hate or despise all the rest of the world. As I approached Paris, it appeared with that melancholy, disfigured air, as if it still dreaded the horrors it had been a prey to: and the Seine, which bathes its walls, wept over its late miseries, and shrunk at the idea of new disasters. Where, said I, is Paris now? Where are its riches, its public joy, its crowds of scholars disputing even in the streets? To the buz of their syllogisms has succeeded the din of arms, troops of guards, and machines of war: in the stead of libraries, we behold nothing but arsenals: and Tranquillity, who formerly reigned here as in her own temple, is now banished and fled from this unhappy land. The streets are deserted; the

highways covered with weeds and brambles; the whole is one vast desert.'

Preparations were making at this time for the re-entrance of king John into his kingdom. He came first to Calais, and from thence set out for Paris. Petrarch relates a circumstance of this journey not in other historians. 'The king and his son,' says he, 'in traversing Picardy, were stopped by those troops of banditti who were soldiers of all nations united under several chiefs, and called companies, who ravaged the whole kingdom; and they were obliged to make a treaty with them to continue their journey in safety.' The king made his entrance into Paris in December 1360. Villani says he was received with great honours, and that the city presented him with a thousand marks in silver plate.

The streets were carpeted, and the king walked under a canopy of cloth of gold. He went immediately to the church of Notre Dame, to return thanks to God, where ever since the battle of Poitiers a wax-light was kept burning night and day before the altar of the Virgin. They said it was rolled round a wheel, and in length would have comprehended the city of Paris.

Petrarch having witnessed the joy of the Parisians, went to compliment the king on his deliverance, in the name of the lords of Milan. John, who knew his reputation, and had heard him much spoken of by the cardinal of Bologna, was happy to see him, and gave him a very distinguished reception. This prince, though brought up by his father in ignorance, loved letters and wise men; but his son Charles, to whom he had given for his preceptor the most learned man in his kingdom, was a prince of great genius and fine taste. Petrarch was astonished to find in him a mind so highly cultivated; he admired his perfect politeness of manners, and the wisdom and moderation with which he conversed on the most important subjects. He only says of king John, that he was brave and humane.

Most of Petrarch's friends, whom he had gained at Paris in 1333, were dead; but he had the happiness to find Peter le Berchier still alive, that wise Benedictine he had known at Avignon, and who visited him at Vacluse. This monk was prior of St. Elay, and, as he held a distinguished rank among men of letters, he rendered Petrarch's residence at Paris very agreeable to him. In a discourse which the

latter held with the king and the dauphin, he said, it was not to be wondered at that Fortune, who diverts herself with all things human, should reduce a flourishing kingdom, formerly the object of envy, to so miserable a condition. The king and the dauphin fixed their eyes upon him with surprise, when they heard him speak of fortune as a real being: the dauphin, who had a lively imagination, was curious to know what Petrarch thought of fortune; and he said to Peter le Berchier and some other persons there, 'Petrarch and his colleagues are to dine here to-day; we must attack him after dinner, and get him to explain himself on the subject of fortune.' One of his friends warned him of the dauphin's intention. Petrarch had no books with him, but he collected his thoughts, and proposed to represent fortune as a being of reason, and not a divinity who governed the world at pleasure, which was the common opinion of this age.

After dinner the king was so occupied with doing the honours of his court to the ambassadors from Milan, that, to the great regret of the dauphin, he was prevented from discoursing with Petrarch. When the court broke up, Peter le Berchier, and three other learned men

not named by Petrarch, went home with him, and entered upon a conversation which lasted till vespers.

In the beginning of February, 1361, Petrarch, in haste to return to Italy, went to take leave of the king and the dauphin. They expressed extreme regret at his departure, and made some attempts to retain him at their court. The dauphin pressed it in particular, and wished ardently to have a man of Petrarch's merit near him. But neither their arguments nor offers had any effect; he loved his country too well, and the court of France was too illiterate for him. King John, though he loved letters, had hardly twenty books in his library: his reign, and that of his son, was the period of their revival in France. Peter le Berchier was engaged to translate Livy; this work was much admired, though never printed: there is a copy of it, with very pretty drawings in water colours, in the library of the Sorbonne. Jane, duchess of Burgundy, the niece of the cardinal of Bologna, who was second wife to Philip de Valois, concurred with John in the translation of several works. This princess, who had as much wit as beauty, died this year: if she had lived longer, she would have done much towards the revival of letters. Jane of Bour-



bon, wife of Charles V. followed her steps: it was she who engaged Philip de Vitry, the friend of Petrarch, to translate into French verse the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.

Peter le Berchier's best work was his translation of Livy, in which it seems probable he was assisted by Petrarch. He composed another work called a *Moral Reductory*, a sort of *Encyclopedia*, where, in the taste of this age, every thing is allegorically represented, and ends with a moral: one passage may serve for an idea of it. He says, that 'at Orange the frogs never croak except one, and the reason of this is, St. Florent, bishop of that city, fatigued with the noise of these animals, commanded them to be silent; but afterwards, touched with compassion, he allowed them all to croak again. The clerk who was to carry this permission to the frogs, gave it in the singular instead of the plural, and so but one poor frog was ever heard in that city.' I have mentioned the romance of the rose, a famous work of this age in the same style. There was also a history of the three Marys, full of absurd fables. An abbe published, in three dreams, the pilgrimage of human life, the pilgrimage of the soul when separated from the body, and the pilgrimage of Jesus Christ,

From this view of letters in France we cannot be surprised at Petrarch's refusing to stay in it; he quitted the dauphin however with regret, and presented him with his Treatise on good and bad Fortune, which the prince had immediately translated by his preceptor; and this book held a distinguished rank in his library, which was said to contain nine hundred volumes; a prodigious number at a time when books were so scarce.

1361. Petrarch set out for Milan at the end of February. In the bad inns he met with it was his custom to write to his friends; and, recollecting the conversations he had had with Peter le Berchier, he wrote him the following letter:

' In my youth the inhabitants of Great Britain, whom they call English, were the most cowardly of all the barbarians, inferior even to the vile Scotch. On the contrary, the French militia was then in the most flourishing state. At present the English, become a warlike people, have subdued the French by frequent and unlooked for successes. Would you know in two words the cause of this change? Listen to Sallust; he says, ' Fortune changes with manners, and empire goes from the wicked to the good; strength, genius, vir-

tuc, renown, circulate like money, and pass from one people to another.'

Petrarch then, describing the luxury of the French, gives this picture of their militia :

' When you enter into the camp you would believe yourself in a tavern. They are even delicate, and will be drunk with foreign wines ; and when there are none they complain that the army wants for every thing, that they are dying with drought, and it is no wonder that the soldiers desert. The military emulation has passed from arms to glasses : it is no longer the question with what weapons they shall fight, but with what glasses they shall drink ; those who can take off the largest draughts, and bear the most wine, are victors, and gain the laurel crown. Seneca predicted this ; " There shall come a day," says he, " when drunkenness shall be honourable, and it will be esteemed a virtue to excel in it." Thus they abide in their tents, eating, drinking, playing, snoring, and swearing, and plunged in debauchery with the women who follow the camp. If called out to fight, they know no chief, obey no command, but run here and there without order, like bees that have lost their hive, fawning, cowardly, ignorant, and boasting : when called upon to attack the foe,

they do nothing for glory, or from valour, but are wholly swayed by interest, vanity, and the love of pleasure.'

Petrarch adds to this an account of the severity of discipline among the Romans, and that from the time it began to relax they may date their overthrow.

Some months after writing this letter he sent it by a monk who was going to France, having had no opportunity before, who found Peter le Berchier just dead in his priory at Elay.

This year the empress Ann was delivered of a son. The joy of the emperor was so great, that, instead of the avarice generally imputed to his character, he distributed gold by handfuls, and made presents to all the world. He sent sixteen marks of gold to Aix-la-Chappelle, which was the weight of the child, to put him under the protection of the holy Virgin, patroness of the church which Charlemagne had built in that city. He loved Petrarch too well to forget him on this occasion. He sent him a golden cup of admirable workmanship, and a very affectionate letter with it, pressing him to come and live in his court. Petrarch replies to these great favours:

‘ Your letter is conceived in terms too condescending for your rank, and too high for my condition: the cup, valuable in itself, and still more so for its high workmanship, is a present worthy of you, but unmerited by me. Who will not be astonished to see transferred to my use a vase consecrated by the mouth of Cæsar? But I shall take care not to profane this sacred cup by applying it to my own use: I would destine it to make libations on altars, if this ancient rite was still observed among us. It will be the delight and ornament of my table on solemn days, and when I give feasts my friends shall behold it with pleasure. I shall preserve it all my life with your letter, as a monument of your goodness and of my glory. You propose a very agreeable journey to me, but I cannot quit Italy without the consent of the master under whose law I live: but my greatest obstacle is my library, which without being immense is much above my genius and knowledge; how will my books be able to traverse the Alps, infested as they are by thieves? The longer I live, the more I feel the truth of that saying, “ All is trouble and vexation of spirit:” he who doubts it, has only to live to a certain term of years, and he will be perfectly convinc-

ed of its truth. Nevertheless, I design to obey your orders before the summer is over, if my master permits, and I find a companion for my journey; and I will remain what time you please in your court. The presence of my Cæsar will console me for the absence of my books, my friends, and my country.'

This letter of Petrarch's is dated from Padua, where he was now fixed. Probably this removal was owing to the plague, which ravaged the Milanese, and to the inroads of troops of robbers, called the companies, many of whom were disbanded troops not paid, who had pillaged France, and were now come into the provinces of Italy under several different chiefs, some of whom were in league with the great men in power, who either from fear or interest connived at these disorders. Petrarch laments the distresses they occasioned in a very pathetic manner. It is easy to imagine what desolation must arise from villains familiar with blood, and bound by no law either human or divine. A Milanese historian says, 'They ravaged the lands, killed the men, forced the women before the eyes of their husbands, violated the daughters in the presence of their parents, and reduced all around them to ashes.'

What was Petrarch's grief to behold all these distresses in his dear country ! ' I speak,' says he, ' because I cannot keep silence ; it is some consolation to my heart to vent its sorrows, though I know I speak in vain. Yet who can tell ? Though my words are cast into the air, some favourable wind may convey them to a beneficent ear, where they may become fruitful. Alas ! I desire, more than I hope, this ; for there remains nothing now to hope. Great God ! thy regards formerly rendered us the most envied of mortals, the most illustrious of men ! A handful of Romans went every where displaying their victorious standards ; to the east, to the west, to the north, and to the south : there subduing pride, here confining ambition ; reprimanding voluptuousness in one land, and leaving the most glorious traces of their footsteps in all. The whole world acknowledged Rome as its chief, and fell prostrate before her. Now a troop of banditti, rushing from a thousand different retreats, spreads devastation over this queen of provinces, this mistress of the world !

' All-powerful God ! Thou art the last and the greatest hope of man. Thou hast created, and thou governeest the world by thy power.

If we have not answered thy goodness, punish and disgrace us : if prosperity has rendered us proud, let thy arm make us humble ; but suffer us not to be a prey to these wretches, and our yoke their portion. Good Lord ! oppose thy supreme defence to the torrent of their wickedness and cruelty ; confound that impious people who say in their heart, “ There is no God.” Assist thy children, who are indeed unworthy, but who invoke thy aid with tears, and trust in God alone.’

1362. The occasion of their leaving France for Italy, was not only the pope’s money, and the solicitations of the marquis de Montferrat, but also the plague, which was returned with such violence to the city of Avignon, that between the 29th of March and the 25th of July there perished seventeen thousand persons, among whom were nine cardinals, a hundred bishops, and a great number of officers belonging to the Roman court ; it came after the famine which the city of Avignon suffered from the invasion of the companies.

Historians remark, that more persons of condition perished in this plague than in that of 1348 : but it was not so general ; nor of such long continuance. It was brought into Italy by the companies. The city of Milan, which



the former plague had respected, was worse treated by this than any other. Villani says, there died in it every day a thousand, twelve hundred, and some days fourteen hundred people. All the great lords abandoned it. Galeas Visconti went to Monza. Barnabas shut himself up in his fine castle at Marignan, a place surrounded with woods, in a very pure air, and which he had carefully guarded: that no one might come near it, he placed a centinel in the bell-tower, who had orders to ring when any one should appear on horseback. Some Milanese gentlemen having entered Marignan, and the bell not sounding, Barnabas sent his soldiers in a violent rage, with orders to throw the centinel immediately from the top of the tower; but when they came, they found him dead at the bottom of it. Barnabas, in the utmost terror at this news, fled into the thickest part of the forest, and lay a long while there for dead.

The plague had not yet reached Padua, but was very severe at Parma. The son of Petrarch was one of its victims. Petrarch would have been much less touched with his death, on his own account, had it happened sooner; for this young man had expressed so much grief for his misconduct, and appeared so true a pe-

nitent, that Petrarch was well-pleased with his penitence, and sincerely lamented his loss. He had just gained for him a benefice bestowed by the lord of Verona. In a letter to a friend he says :

‘ Death takes my friends as usual, while I march cheerfully on. Your lord has restored the benefice about which you took so much pains ; but death has taken it from me, and the young man who was to possess it ; he died the same day he was to have been re-established in his rights. I am thus delivered of a great burden, but it is not without grief. Adieu !’

It was upon this that Petrarch determined to marry Frances his daughter. It is no where said in his works where she lived or was brought up. He chose for her the son of a gentleman of Milan, a most accomplished and amiable young man, of the sweetest temper and the best dispositions. Boccace says of him, ‘ His figure was striking, his countenance calm and agreeable, his conversation discreet, and his behaviour gentle and polite.’ Frances had an agreeable figure, and resembled her father in person. She was submissive, and faithful to her husband. Simplicity, modesty, attachment to the duties of her station, and a

contempt of the pleasures of the world, formed her amiable character. Two such friends were delightful society for Petrarch ; he took them into his house, and this affectionate union was uninterrupted to his death.

## B O O K VI.

THE plague which raged this year, 1361, with violence, carried off Zanobi de Strata, who enjoyed his place of apostolic secretary only three years. The grand senechal, who had the tenderest friendship for him, and the greatest idea of his talents, could hardly support this stroke. 'The world,' says he, 'has lost a man who has not had his equal for a thousand years: I except only signior Francis Petrarch.' The grand senechal offered to Simonides, the prior of the Holy Apostles, the place Zanobi held under him at Naples, and, with many entreaties, engaged him to accept it. He had not on this occasion consulted Petrarch; but when he arrived at Naples he wrote him the following letter:

'You will be astonished at receiving a letter from me here, and at my long silence, which has been occasioned by a variety of affairs.' He invites Petrarch to come to him. He was then at a country house of the grand senechal's,

of which he gives this fine description. ‘Do you seek solitude? Here are deserts that seem to have been contrived for poets, by art and nature united. Do you wish the cheerful society of cities to unbend from studies? You have Amalphi to the right, Salerno to the left. Do you love the sea? You are on its banks near enough to throw in your nets, and count the fish they enclose. I speak not of the fine gardens all around, exceeding in neatness and beauty all the rest of Italy. In the middle of a delightful valley, a river rolls its transparent waters, with an agreeable murmur over the shining pebbles. The magnificent villas, scattered on all sides, appear to rise out of the rocks, rather than to have been the work of man. The air is delightfully temperate, and the land produces every year fruits of most exquisite taste. In short, here is every thing that can delight the senses, springing upon the spot, and brought from other countries, both by land and by sea.’

The grand senechal joined his entreaties to those of Simonides, to which Petrarch replied :

‘I have learnt with pleasure that you are in Campania; my better half then, as Horace says of Virgil, is there also, provided you are happy : but how should you be otherwise, with

such a host as our common Mæcnas, with a mind like yours, and those virtues which follow you to every clime? I need no temptations to accept your offers: your requests, and those of your Mæcnas, would be my only inducements; but I wonder you are not fatigued with asking what I am weary of refusing: I can only beg you to recollect what I have said a thousand times on this subject.' The charge of apostolic secretary, through the influence of the cardinal de Taillerand, was again offered to Petrarch, with additional advantages annexed, and the most ardent solicitations he would accept it: but he persisted in his refusal; in which he notices very keenly the pope's opinion of him as a forcerer, and recommends Simonides and Boccace as more worthy of the office.

'Pardon me,' says he, in a letter to the former, 'if I have done wrong in naming you; if you accept this employment, you will procure wealth and fame; if you refuse it, the refusal will do you honour; as they have thought me capable of it, they will suppose me also a judge of this capacity in others: whether they despise or concur with my judgment, I have seized this occasion of saying what I think of you; and, though it would be more in cha-

rather another should have told you this, I have not deferred writing, that you might have time to prepare your answer. I have not forgot to join with your praise that of your Mæcenas, and that to him they must address themselves if they wish to obtain you. What idea ought they not to have of a man who raises up such subjects for the church as yourself and Zanobi! This glory reflects also on our country, which produces both the one and the other.

At the beginning of the year 1362, the plague deprived Petrarch of his beloved friend Socrates. 'He was,' says he, 'of all men the dearest to my heart; my first, my darling friend: from the first hour we met we loved with mutual tenderness. His sentiments and dispositions towards me have never varied during the space of one and thirty years: a rare and astonishing thing to say of a man born among barbarians; but the habit of living with me, my society and friendship, had inspired him with such a taste for our manners and opinions, that he was become a perfect Italian. Yes, he was our Socrates, the Socrates of Italy: and his singular transformation was the joy and honour of my life, and the admiration of all the world!'

The plague and war rendered Italy at this

time so disagreeable to Petrarch, that he had resolved on a journey to Vacluse, as soon as the severe frosts would permit him to pass the Alps. But when he came to Milan he found it impassable. Barnabas was come out of his den, and had again attacked Bologna. The plague had enriched his coffers, because he had taken possession of the estates and wealth of those who died without heirs. Become prouder than ever, he made exorbitant demands to the pope, who engaged in a league with several of the Italian princes against him. Barnabas hearing of it, said, 'They are children, I will have them all whipt.'

The emperor of Germany sent to Petrarch, at this time, a third invitation in very pompous and flattering terms, which Petrarch promised to accept, but was prevented by the impossibility of a safe passage. The grand senechal of Naples wrote also to Petrarch, to thank him for his attention to Simonides; in his letter he says, 'Since Providence permits me not to obtain what I have long wished for, I beseech you earnestly, my master and my friend, the honour of my country, that you judge me worthy of your admirable letters, which will not only render my name honourable to posterity, but



the few days of life that remain to me delightful to myself.'

In Petrarch's answer he mentions the death of Lewis king of Naples, and how little honour he did to the advice given him through Nicholas Acciajoli: 'We may say with reason,' adds he, 'that virtue is not obtained by precepts. This prince had little dignity, and less authority; he had neither knowledge nor prudence, and gloried in deceit. He loved a debauched life, and was avaricious of money to an extreme: he often suspected his greatest friend the senechal; but had recourse to him in every critical conjuncture. He slighted the queen his wife, and treated her as one of his subjects; and he tired all around him with the detail of his great actions both in peace and war.'

Boccace, hearing that Petrarch proposed going to Germany, was much alarmed, and reproached him for his intention of dragging the Muses into Sarmatia, when Italy was the only true Parnassus. In this letter he gives Petrarch an account of a singular adventure which had just happened to him.

'A Carthusian of Sienna, whom I know not, came to me at Florence, and asked to



*Proverbia christiana by a fortune-teller - 1700.*



ſpeak to me in private. “ I came hither;” ſays he, “ from the deſire of the bleſſed father Petroni, a Carthuſian of Sienna, who, though he never ſaw you, by the illumination of heaven knows you thoroughly : he charged me to repreſent to you your extreme danger, unleſs you reform your manners and your writings, which are the inſtruments the devil uſes to draw men into his ſnares, to tempt them to ſinful luſts, and to promote the depravity of their conduct. Ought you not to bluſh for ſuch an abuſe of the talents God has given you for his glory ? What a reward might you have obtained had you made a good uſe of that wit and eloquence with which he has endowed you ! On the contrary, what ought you not to fear, for devoting yourſelf to love, and waging war with modeſty, by giving leſſons of libertinism both in your life and writings ! The bleſſed Petroni, celebrated for his miracles, and the ſobriety of his life, ſpeaks to you by my voice. He charged me in his laſt moments to beſeech and exhort you, in the moſt ſacred manner, to renounce poetry, and thoſe profane ſtudies which have been your conſtant employment, and prevented you diſcharging your duty as a Chriſtian. If you do not follow my directions,

be assured you have but a short time to live, and that you shall suffer eternal punishments after your death. God has revealed this to father Petroni, who gave me a strict charge to inform you of it."

The Carthusian who spoke thus to Boccace was called Joachim Ciani; he was the countryman and friend of father Petroni, who died in a religious rapture May 1361; and, it was said, wrought several miracles before and after his death. Father Ciani was with him when he was on his death-bed, and heard him utter several predictions concerning different persons, among whom was Petrarch. Boccace, terrified at what father Ciani had said, asked him how his friend came to know him and Petrarch, as they had no knowledge of his friend; to which the good Carthusian replied: 'Father Petroni had resolved to undertake something for the glory of God, but death preventing him, he prayed to God with fervour to point out some one who should execute his enterprise: his prayer was heard; Jesus Christ appeared to him, and he saw written on his face all that passes upon earth, the present, the past, and the future. After this he cast his eyes upon me for the performance of this good work,

and charged me with this commission for you, with some others to Naples, France, and England; after which I shall go to Petrarch.'

To convince Boccace of the truth of what he said, the holy father acquainted him with a secret which Boccace thought none knew but himself. This discovery, and the threat that he had not long to live, impressed him so strongly, that he was no longer the same man: seized with a panic terror, and believing death at his heels, he reformed his manners, renounced love and poetry; and determined to part with his library, which was almost entirely composed of profane authors. In this situation of his mind he wrote to his master Petrarch, to give him an account of what had happened to him, of the resolution he had made to reform his manners, and to offer him his library, giving him the preference to all others; and begging he would fix the price of the books, some of which might serve as a discharge of some debts he owed him. Petrarch's reply to this letter was as follows:

'To see Jesus Christ with bodily eyes is indeed a wonderful thing! it only remains that we know if it is true. In all ages men have covered falsehoods with the veil of religion, that the appearance of divinity might

conceal the human fraud. When I have myself beheld the messenger of father Petroni, I shall see what faith is to be given to his words ; his age, his forehead, his eyes, his behaviour, his clothes, his motions, his manner of sitting, his voice, his discourse, and the whole united, will serve to enlighten my judgment.

‘ As to what respects yourself, that you are not long for this world, if we reflect coolly, this is a matter of joy rather than of sorrow. Was it an old man on the borders of the grave, one might justly say to him, Do not at your years give yourself up to poetry, leave the Muses and Parnassus, they only suit the days of youth. Your imagination is extinguished, your memory fails, your feelings are lost ; think rather of death, who is at your heels, and prepare yourself for that awful passage. But for a man in the middle age of life, who has cultivated letters and the Muses with success from his youth, and who makes them his amusement in riper years, to renounce them then is to deprive himself of a great consolation. If this had been required of Lactantius, of St. Augustin, or St. Jerome, would the former have discovered the absurdities of the heathen superstition ? would St. Augustin with so much art

have built up the city of God ; or St. Jerome combated heretics with so much strength and success ? I know, by experience, how much the knowledge of letters may contribute to produce just opinions ; to render a man eloquent ; to perfect his manners ; and, which is much more important, to defend his religion. If men were not permitted to read poets and heathen writers, because they do not speak of Jesus Christ, whom they never knew, how much less ought they to read the works of heretics, who oppose his doctrine ; yet this is done with the greatest care by all the defenders of the faith. It is with profane authors as with solid food, it nourishes the man who has a good stomach, and is pernicious only to those who cannot digest it ; to the mind that is judicious they are wholesome, but poison to the weak and ignorant. Letters may even render the former more religious, of which we have many examples, and to them they will never be an obstacle to piety. There are many ways of arriving at truth and heaven ; long, short, clear, obscure, high, and low, according to the different necessities of men ; but ignorance is the only road the idle walk in : surely wisdom may produce as many saints as folly ; and we should be careful that we never compare a lazy



and blind devotion with an enlightened and industrious piety. If you resolve, however, to part with your books, I will never suffer them to fall into base hands: though separated in body, we are united in mind: I cannot fix any price upon them, and I will make only one condition with you, that we pass the remainder of our lives together, and that you shall thus enjoy my books and your own. Why do you speak of debt to me? You owe me nothing but friendship, and herein we are equal, because you have always rendered love for love. Be not, however, deaf to the voice of a friend who calls you to him. I cannot enrich you, if I could you would have been rich long ago; but I have all that is requisite for two friends, who are united in heart, and sheltered under the same roof.'

It was doubtless the Decameron of Boccace which drew upon him the adventure we have related; it consists of a hundred novels which are related as the amusement of seven ladies and three gentlemen, who went to pass some days in the country, two miles from Florence, to escape the infected air of that city. Among these novels there are some true stories that Boccace had been a witness of, or had learnt from good information; the rest are only tales

he had read or heard of. He possessed the talent of story-telling in perfection. Nothing can be more plain and natural, skilful, or elegant, than his compositions; his words seem formed on purpose for his descriptions. Men of wit in Italy agree that the Decameron exceeds in style every other book in their language; and that it is very remarkable that Boccace should carry the vulgar tongue all at once to its perfection, which had been left to the people, and the rust of which had been but in part rubbed off by Dante.

No book perhaps had ever so many readers, and so many censurers, as the Decameron: the devotees were for having it burnt, and the monks were enraged against him, because he had taken many of his tales from the convents, and had severely satirized their licentiousness of manners. To attack the monks, said they, is to attack religion itself; and to publish their infamy, is to be guilty of impiety. To this they added that Boccace was an atheist. He did not take the pains to answer them seriously, but turns them into ridicule in a very pleasant manner at the end of his Decameron. He composed this work as an amusement only, and was far from beholding it as the ground of his reputation: what would have been his af-

tonishment if he had been told, ‘ Your other works will remain buried in obscurity, while your Decameron will go through more than two hundred editions, will be translated into all languages, and will be read by all the world !’

Boccace was not arrived at a mature age when he composed the Decameron : its lively air was suited to tales, and its free representations to the vices it censures ; and at the time when he wrote it, the plague had made a great change in the manners and customs of society : the women, of whom only a few remained, having most of them lost their husbands, their parents, and all who had authority over them, thought themselves no longer subject to those rigid decorums which formerly restrained their conduct. Having no persons of their own sex to attend them during the plague, they employed men as their servants ; which introduced a violation of the laws of modesty and reserve. With respect to the convents, it is not surprising that Boccace should find subjects in them for his licentious tales. The plague had opened their gates, and the monks and nuns coming forth into the world and living without restraint, had lost the spirit of their profession ; and when the plague ceased they continued the same course of life. The historians of

those times give us dreadful pictures of their debauchery; and the ecclesiastical writers look upon the plague of 1348 as the true period of the relaxation of monastic discipline.

The Decameron gives an animated view of those times, satirizes the vices that prevailed, and contains some lively images of human life, and very judicious representations of the characters of men; but the judgment of Petrarch respecting profane authors may be very usefully applied to the readers of this work: and it is probable this book did a good deal of mischief in Italy, since the wise fathers of the council of Trent forbade the reading of it till it should be corrected.

Father Ciani's visit and conversation occasioned so great a revolution in the mind of Boccace, that he was not only for renouncing poetry and pagan authors, but it was reported he was going to turn Carthusian, and a sonnet on this subject was addressed to him by Franco Sacchetti, one of the best poets of that time. It appears that Petrarch's well-judged answer re-established the peace of his mind, and made him renounce his chimerical projects: he kept his books, and continued his studies; but it is certain he also reformed his life, and did all he could to suppress his Decameron; but that

was impossible, there were too many copies of it spread abroad.

In the month of June, 1362, the plague spread to Padua, and made such havoc there, that Petrarch removed to Venice; it had not yet reached that city. Villani says, 'It came like hail, which, after ravaging the fields to the right and to the left, spares those in the middle.'

The war did not permit Petrarch to go to France or Germany, and the plague drove him from Milan and Padua. Venice appeared to him the surest asylum against these two scourges. 'I fled not from death,' says he, 'but I sought repose.'

Petrarch always took his books when he went any long journey, which rendered travelling so incommodious and expensive to him, as he required for their conveyance such a number of horses. When he had been some time at Venice, it came into his mind not to offer these books to a religious order, as he once proposed, but to place this treasure in the care of the republic, to whom he wrote as follows:

'Francis Petrarch desires to have the blessed evangelist Mark for the heir of those books he has and may have, on condition that they shall

neither be sold nor separated; and that they shall be all placed in safety, sheltered from fire and water, and preserved with care for ever for his honour, and the use and amusement of the noble and learned persons of this city. If he makes this deposit, it is not because he has a great idea of his books, or believes he has formed a fine library; but he hopes by this means the illustrious city of Venice will acquire other trusts of the same kind from the public; that the citizens who love their country, the nobles above all, and even some strangers, will follow his example, and leave their books to this church at their death, which may one day become a great library, and equal those of the ancients. Every one must see how honourable this will be to the republic, Petrarch will be much flattered with having been the original source of so great a good. If his design succeeds, he will explain himself more minutely hereafter upon this subject; in the mean time he offers to execute this his promise.'

This proposal having been examined and approved, and the procurators of the church of St. Mark having offered to be at the necessary expences for the placing and preserving these books, the republic gave the following decree :

‘Considering the offer that messire Francis Petrarch has made us, whose reputation is so great, that we do not remember to have met in the Christian world with a moral philosopher and poet united who can compare with him; persuaded that this offer may contribute to the glory of God and of St. Mark, and do much honour to our city, we will accept it on the conditions he has made; and we order such a sum to be taken from our revenue as will purchase him a house for his life, according to the advice of the governor, counsellors, and chiefs.’

In compliance with this decree Petrarch had assigned for his dwelling, and that of his books, a large mansion called the Palace of the Two Towers, belonging to the family of Molina. It is at present the monastery of the monks of St. Sepulchre.

This house was of an immense size, and had two very high towers. It was delightfully situated fronting the port. Petrarch was delighted to see the vessels come in and go out: ‘These vessels,’ says he, ‘resemble a mountain swimming on the sea, and go into all parts of the world amidst a thousand perils, to carry our wines to the English, our honey to the Scythians; our saffron, our oils, our linen, to

the Syrians, to the Armenians, to the Persians, and the Arabians; and, which is more incredible, they carry our woods to the Achaians and Egyptians. From all these countries they bring merchandises which they carry all over Europe. They go even to the Tanais: the navigation of our sea extends no farther than that towards the north; but when they are there, they quit their ships, and go to trade in the Indies and to China, and, after having passed the Ganges and the Caucasus, they go by land as far as the eastern ocean. Behold what men will do for the thirst of gold!

Petrarch's view towards the republic was fulfilled; several cardinals left their libraries to it after his example, and it appeared the best and safest perpetuation of many valuable authors: but by the humidity of the place they were almost all destroyed, together with a precious manuscript written by the evangelist St. Mark.

At this time there happened a great event at Avignon, which disconcerted all Petrarch's measures for his friend Simonides. Pope Innocent VI. died the 12th of September 1362; he was a good and simple man. The cardinals cast their eyes on his brother Hugues Roger, a man of great worth, whose virtue and



modesty had gained him universal respect; but he refused this dignity. They then elected William Grimoard, abbe of St. Victor. All the world was astonished, and even the cardinals themselves, at the choice of a pope who was not of the sacred college. Petrarch says to Urban in a letter some time after, 'It was the effect of divine inspiration; it was God, not the cardinals, elected you to the papacy, making the hands and tongues of men the instruments of his good pleasure. Your name,' adds he, 'was pronounced without their intention. Full of pride, they esteem themselves alone, and despise all others. Each one aspires to the supreme dignity, and thinks himself the only one who deserves it: but, as he cannot name himself, he elects another, from whom he expects the same return. How should it come into their mind to bestow on a stranger what they aimed at themselves; to raise so high the chief of a simple monastery, though they had every proof of his holiness and faith? How should they think of placing over them as a master the man whom they had been used to command? No: it was God who placed you in their ballots without their design. What must have been their surprise, and that of all the world, when they beheld an abbe elected,

while there were so many cardinals who might pretend to the papacy !

As William Grimoard was in Italy, the cardinals sent a courier to inform him of his election, and agreed to keep it secret till he had accepted it. He had been sent to Naples with a compliment of condolence to queen Jane on the death of king Lewis, and to watch over her conduct. He was at Florence when he heard of the pope's death ; and when he went from thence Villani assures us he said, ' If I beheld a pope who will re-establish the holy see, and overthrow the tyrants, I should be content to die the day after.' The courier, having overtaken him on his route, received his answer. He arrived himself at Avignon soon after, and was enthroned the next day by the name of Urban V. which he preferred to all others, because all who had borne that name were distinguished for their piety. Petrarch says, this choice proved the goodness of the pope, and his design to shew kindness to all the world. At his coronation he forbade the cavalcade that used to pass through the city, though all was ready for it according to custom, because it appeared to him vain-glorious. He was very learned in the canon law, had been employed by Innocent in several pub-

lic negociations, and had acquired so great a reputation for faith and piety, that every one applauded this election.

King John, who was at Villeneuve, made his entrance into Avignon, and dined with the new pope. He took this occasion to make him four demands; the tenths of the benefices for six years, the disposal of the four first hats, the mediation of peace between the holy see and Barnabas Viscomti, and the consent of the pope for the marriage of his son Philip with queen Jane of Naples. Urban, with great skill, eluded all these demands. The king staid at Villeneuve to the end of December. Nicholas Areme, who was in his train, pronounced a discourse before the pope and the cardinals with great pathos, in which he draws a frightful picture of the manners of the Roman court. This gave him the honour of a place among the witnesses for the truth against the popes.

Petrarch was full of joy at this exaltation, knowing the great qualities of the pope, and his design to re-establish the holy see at Rome. He was again solicited by Urban to accept the place of secretary, still vacant, but he continued immoveable. While he was rejoicing in this public event, he was informed of a private one that grieved him exceedingly; this was the

death of Azon de Corregge, who had been for some time in a languishing state, but the strength of his constitution had struggled through every disorder, till the plague put an end to his life. He left a widow of the house of Gonzagua, and two children, Gilbert and Lewis de Corregge, who had been brought up by Modeo, that generous young man at Parma. They all wrote to Petrarch to acquaint him with their loss, and to seek some consolation in his friendship. The children said in their letter, 'We look upon you at present as our father and our master.' 'I accept,' replied Petrarch, 'the first with pleasure, though I merit not such children as you are; but I reject the second, which does not become me. Ever since you came into the world I have adopted you for my children, and revered you as my masters. I have not changed my sentiments, and I shall feel all my life for you as I have done for your father. I exhort and conjure you, with tears in my eyes, to live in such a manner that the world may be able to say that your father has left children worthy of him, and that, instead of one friend and one master that I have lost, I may gain in you two friends and two masters resembling him. This will be easy for you to accomplish, if you are obedient to the counsels

of your respectable mother, and submissive to her orders.'

In his letter to Modeo Petrarch speaks thus of Azon's friendship for him; 'He loved no one as he did me, and said I was the only person who had never given him any cause of complaint, either by my words or actions: that he had sometimes little domestic uneasinesses, even with his wife, that pious and amiable woman, and with his children, though gentle and obedient; but that his affection increased every day for me, and he interested himself tenderly in all my concerns.

'All who would obtain any thing of him disclosed their errand by first speaking kindly of me. I found in him the assistance of a master, the advice of a father, the submission of a son, and the tenderness of a brother. I passed with him a great part of my life; every thing was common between us, good or bad fortune, the pleasures of town or country; his glorious labours, his happy leisure, nothing was excepted: when we journeyed together he would expose his life for mine. Alas! why did he not take me with him in the last journey he will ever make?'

These letters were transcribed from a manuscript in the Medicis library. The widow of

Azon wrote also, but her letters are lost. She was a lady of the greatest merit. Soon after the death of her husband, her brother Hugolin de Gonzagua, a man of great genius, and possessed of a most graceful person, was assassinated by his brothers, who were jealous of the authority his father had left him in at Mantua. Petrarch says, 'I did not dare to touch upon this string in my letter, the poor woman is afflicted enough already.'

The plague having gained Florence, Boccace went to Naples, where he was invited by Nicholas Acciajoli; but not enduring any dependence, he stayed but a short time with the grand senechal at Amalphi, where he lived like a sovereign prince. He came to Venice to his friend Petrarch, who was rejoiced to see him, and shewed him every mark of friendship.

Boccace brought with him a man of a very singular character; he was a Greek of Theffalonica, called Leonce Pilate; he gives us this description of him. 'He had a very ugly face, and a terrifying countenance; he had a long beard, and stiff black hair, which he scarce ever combed. Plunged in continual meditation, he neglected all the rules of society, was rude and clownish, without the least civility or good manners. But, to make up for these

defects, he was perfect in the Greek tongue, and his head was full of the Grecian history and mythology: he had but a superficial knowledge of the Latin; but, persuaded it was honourable to claim a foreign original, he called himself a Greek in Italy, and an Italian in Greece.' Boccace met with him in 1360, going from Venice to Avignon: he took him to his house at Florence, and procured him a professorship for the Greek language in that university. Leonce explained the poems of Homer there for two years, and gave lessons upon them in private to Boccace. This Greek was not unknown to Petrarch; Boccace had often spoken of him, and joined with him in a letter to Petrarch in the character of Homer, complaining that his works were very little known in Italy, and his name had hardly reached the Alps; and that even in his own country they had lost a great part of them. He then speaks of the ingratitude of his imitators, above all Virgil, who has not so much as named him, though ornamented with his spoils; that his name, revered in former times by lawyers and physicians, is at present the sport of the public; that Leonce Pilate has dragged him to Florence, where he is as it were exiled, having only three friends: he concludes by beseeching Petrarch

to take him under his protection, and shelter him from the insults of the vulgar.

Petrarch begins his answer with this address:

‘ Petrarch, little man, to the prince of the Greek Muse:’ and then proceeds to answer his complaints. ‘ As to the loss of your books, this is the fate of all human things: and who shall complain hereafter in the same situation, since the sun of eloquence has suffered an eclipse? As to your imitators, always sure of the first place, you ought to be pleased with those who try to equal you, and fall so short: for my own part, I wish for some who surpass me; as to Virgil, he had the most generous of souls, and, if we believe Horace, was incapable of ingratitude. He has spoken of Theocritus in his *Bucolics*, and of Hesiod in his *Georgics*, whom he copied: how came he then not to speak of you in his *Æneid*? It was because he destined to you the most honourable place, and would conclude his poem with your eulogy. Death prevented him, of that alone you can complain.

‘ Do you forget the answer he made to those who accused him of pillaging your verses? “ He must be strong indeed who can take the club from Hercules.” You feel the salt of this



reply. As to the contempt in which you have been held by some ; there are persons whom it is an honour to displease : it happens to you as to the sun ; weak-eyed people and the birds of night cannot support its lustre : all who have possessed a ray of genius have regarded you not only as a philosopher, but as the first and most sublime of philosophers.

‘ You are not to wonder you have met with three friends only in Florence, a city immersed in trade ; but I am astonished you should call it an exile to be brought out of Greece into Italy. Consider, however, you will find a fourth, and we may add a fifth, friend there, who have received the laurel crown : as the world goes, five friends in one city is something to boast of. Look among the other cities, you find one at Bologna, the mother of science, two at Verona, and one at Mantua, if he has not quitted your colours, to follow those of Ptolemy. Perugia produced but one lover of science, and he abandoned Parnassus, the Appennine, and the Alps, to run about Spain. At Rome I know of none at present, but I knew many there and elsewhere formerly, who exist no longer upon earth. But are not persons of this character rare even in your country ? The friend who exiled you to Florence is perhaps the only

Greek attached to you ; you had another who was my preceptor, Borlaam, the famous Greek, who died soon after I had obtained him a bishopric. You ask my protection, and seek a refuge in my house ; but what can I do for you when I cannot defend myself ? If you were persecuted through envy in the learned city of Athens, what can we hope for from these cities plunged in ignorance and voluptuousness ? Though I do not merit a guest like you, I am seeking your acquaintance with ardour ; and if the Thessalian perfects his instructions, I shall soon complete the friendship which I have so long desired. I have prepared you a habitation in my inmost heart ; nothing can equal the love and esteem I have for you.'

Petrarch and Boccace passed the summer together in the most delightful manner. Benintendi, chancellor of Venice, came frequently to visit them in the evening when he had finished his public affairs, and took them upon the water in his gondola ; he was a man of letters, an excellent companion, and a sincere friend and admirer of Petrarch. There were some other persons of genius who joined this little refined society ; Donat de Albanzani and Peter de Muglo ; the former was a grammarian, born in the mountains of the Apennine, a man

of very amiable dispositions and agreeable conversation: he was poor, says Boccace, but full of honour, and one of my best friends. The latter was a celebrated rhetorician; he was formerly a professor at Padua, and called himself the scholar of Petrarch; in his old age he went to Bologna, and had for his pupil the famous Coluccio Salutati.

The affairs of Boccace required his return to Florence; and when he heard the plague was less violent he left Venice. Petrarch, who loved him affectionately, feared the air was not yet purified, and was extremely grieved at his departure. Boccace would have taken with him Leonce Pilate, but he wanted to return to his country, and waited for a ship to set sail for Constantinople. Petrarch wished to detain him somewhat longer, but he embarked soon after. Petrarch adds to the picture Boccace gave of him, that he was sour, arrogant, and sometimes crazy; and so filthy as to disgust every one, and very inconsiderate and rude in his expressions, of which he gives us an example. One day, when they were together at a solemn feast, where they sung high mass according to the Roman ritual, with all the accustomed ceremonies: 'I cannot support,' said the Greek, 'the nonsense of these Latins.' Pe-

trarch was extremely offended and alarmed with his want of delicacy in this solemn situation. 'If the people had heard these words,' says he, 'they would have stoned the unfortunate Greek; though I wished more instruction from him, I was not sorry for his departure. I feared I might catch his sour, melancholy humour; it is a disease of the soul as contagious as the disorder of the body.' Petrarch treated him, however, with great kindness; and, as he perceived he read the comedies of Terence with pleasure, he gave him a copy of them to amuse him upon his voyage; 'Though I cannot imagine,' says he, 'how the most gloomy of the Greeks can relish the most lively of the Africans'.

In the year 1363 a priest, whom Petrarch had charged with a letter for Lelius, called on his return from Rome, and with a mournful silence put Petrarch's letter into his hand without speaking a word. Petrarch, perceiving his own characters and seal, cried out hastily, 'What does this mean? Why is this letter still sealed up? What is Lelius about? Where is he?' The priest kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and made no reply. Petrarch too well comprehended his meaning, and gave himself up to grief. He had lived thirty years in the greatest friendship with Lelius. This loss was

followed almost immediately by that of Simonides, who died at Naples of the plague. The person who had closed his eyes brought the news to Petrarch. He sought in the bosom of his friend Boccace a consolation under these distresses, and beseeches him to come to Venice. 'You are dearer to me than ever, you are almost the only friend left me ; I know not what is become of Barbatus, death ravages the country he inhabits ; comply with my request ; you know my house, it is in a good air ; Benintendi will pass his evenings with us, and our Donat, who has quitted the mountains of Tuscany for the banks of the Adriatic. An absolute solitude is contrary to humanity ; but to a philosopher and a man of letters two or three friends are sufficient, because at the worst he can be satisfied with his own company. If you wish to vary your situation, we will go and spend some time at Trieste, or Capo de Istria, where they tell me the air is good. Let us join together in reviewing the works of Simonides, and fitting them for posterity ; this is what I hoped from you and from him.' A few days after this he received the news that Barbatus was dead of the plague ; the person from whom he received this account had passed his life with him, and besought Petrarch to write his

eulogy. Petrarch replied to his letter as follows :

‘ I ought to do what you desire ; Barbatus well deserves it ; the sun never shone upon a kinder and more elevated soul. Letters were his food, and he fled from pomp and pleasure ; he was neither proud nor envious ; he had great knowledge, and a memory to retain it ; a lively genius, and a flowing style. He preferred me to all the world, but fate separated us ever since the death of that incomparable prince who united us : we have lived at a distance from each other, so that I am ignorant of his manner of life, what passed in his house, what he did for the republic, or his writings since that time. You who have passed your life with him can do nothing more honourable for your country, or yourself, than to make his works known : never was there a better citizen. I do not except Ovid, whose manners were not answerable to his genius. Barbatus had more understanding than Ovid, and his manners were irreproachable. The letters I have written to him are a proof of the singular esteem in which I held him.’

The place of apostolic secretary being still vacant, Francis Bruni wrote to Petrarch that he was known to the pope, who had often shewn

him favour, and that he begged he would write a letter of recommendation for him to his holiness. Petrarch replied, that it would be impertinent in a man like him to recommend one known and beloved by the pope; he wrote however to Avignon, and it was, no doubt, owing to the character he gave of him, that this office was conferred upon Bruni. When Petrarch was informed of it, he gave him some admirable advice on his conduct in this important place: and, speaking of the Roman pontiff, he says;

\* There is not a greater or more respectable character; his peer is not in the world; but he ought, in his very elevated station, to be more humble and meek than he was before. He ought not to forget that he holds on earth the place of him who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." Does it then suit the vicar of a humble lord to be proud and arrogant in spirit?

Petrarch writing to Boccace, at this time speaks of the Italian jugglers, who were poets and musicians joined; they went to the palaces of princes, or the castles of great lords, to sing their praises: their songs were sometimes satirical, on various subjects; and they accompanied them with the harp or some other in-

strument. 'They are a set of people,' says Petrarch, 'who have little genius, great memories, and still greater impudence. Having nothing of their own, they cover themselves with the spoils of others, and declaim with emphasis the verses they have learned by heart: they hereby conciliate the favour of the great, who give them money, clothes, and sometimes considerable presents. They seek these means of living among authors, whose verses they obtain by prayers and money, when the necessities of the author, or his covetousness, will part with them on these conditions. I have often been troubled with their importunities; but, silenced by my refusals, they come rarely to me at present: now and then, touched by the misery of the petitioner, I give him a production to procure him food. Some, who have gone from me naked and penniless, have returned some time after dressed in silk, their purse well filled, to give me thanks for having relieved their distress. I asked one of them, why he always came to me, why he did not go to others, to Boccace for instance; he replied, he had often, and without success. As I was surprised that a man so prodigal of his wealth should be so avaricious of his poetry, they told me he had burnt all his verses in the vulgar



tongue, because they were inferior to mine. Tell me, is it from pride or modesty you have done this? Did I even precede you, who should be so happy to walk in the same line, would there not be too much presumption in refusing the second or third place, and beholding with impatience the superiority of two or three fellow-citizens?’

The first rank in letters had been given to Dante, the second to Petrarch, and the third to Boccace. Petrarch proceeds in his letter to comment upon the ignorance of his age:

‘ Age obscure and inglorious!’ says he. ‘ Thou despisest antiquity, thy mother, the inventress of all the arts; thou darest to compare thyself to her, and even arrogate the preference. I speak not of the people in general, whose opinion is always to be despised; or of the military, who think their art in its perfection when it is in the decline, and who go to combat dressed out as for a wedding, more occupied to please their mistresses than terrify their enemies; their ignorance is their excuse: I pass over in silence also those kings who make royalty consist in gold and purple, the sceptre and the diadem, while they are governed by their own passions; prosperity blinds them, and how then should they penetrate into an-

tiquity ? But what can men of letters alledge, who are guilty of the same error ; who condemn Plato and Aristotle, make a mock of Socrates and Pythagoras, despise Cicero, that god of eloquence, think slightly of Varro and Seneca, and look upon the style of Livy and Sallust to be rude and vulgar ? I had a conversation one day with a philosopher of this kind, who went beyond all that I have said, and had the horrid presumption to blaspheme against Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of his gospel. I was talking with him in my library, and I happened to quote some passages from the sacred books : he replied, his brows bent with displeasure, “ Keep to yourself your doctors of the church ; I know very well who ought to be followed.” “ You speak,” said I, “ with the authority of the apostle Paul ; I wish you thought as he did.” “ Your St. Paul,” he replied, “ is a fool, and a fower of words.” “ It is true,” said I, “ that the seed he has sown has had great success, cultivated by his successors ; and, watered with the blood of the martyrs, it has produced an abundant harvest.” With an air of compassion, and a contemptuous grin, he replied, “ Be a good christian as long as you please ; for my part, I believe nothing about it ; your Paul, your Augustine, and all

the others you boast of, were only idle babblers : oh ! if you could read Averroes, you would see how superior he is to them all !” I own that this blasphemy put me into such a passion, it was with difficulty I could contain; “ Go,” said I to him, “ hold elsewhere such discourses as these ; and, taking him by the cloak, I put him out of my house with more roughness than suited my character. There are a multitude of such people as these, whose insolence and ignorance nothing can suppress; neither the respect due to Jesus Christ, nor the fear of inquisitors, prisons, or faggots, nothing can make any impression upon them. These are the people, my dear friend, with whom we live, and who take upon them the office of our judges: not content with having lost the works of the ancients, they insult their manes; eager after novelties, they attach themselves to new guides, spread abroad new doctrines, and despise all that are ancient. We cannot hope for better judges in posterity: licentiousness increases every day, and the number of its philosophers: the schools, market-places, and streets, are full of them.’

Soon after writing this letter, Petrarch went and passed the autumn at Pavia; Galeas Visconti had built there the finest palace in the

world. At Easter he went always to Padua, to discharge at that holy time the office of his canonry. The Florentines, who asked him to reside in his own city, applied to the pope to grant him a canonry there: the pope had something better in view for him; but the rumour of his death being spread over France, the pope disposed of that, and the benefices of Petrarch, many of which the latter, unknown to him, had given away to his friends; this caused a great disturbance in the Roman court. This false report had spread to Italy, and they wept for him at Milan, and even at Padua, which is so near Venice, 'that had I been dead,' says he, 'they might have heard my last sigh there.' He had a sort of complaint which was very troublesome, and occasioned so great an itching, that he was unable to write, or employ himself in his usual affairs: this was the only ground of the report.

In 1365 Boccace went to Avignon on some public affair: he wrote to Petrarch, giving an account of his friends whom he saw at Avignon, and particularly Philip de Cabasole, now made patriarch of Jerusalem. As soon as he saw Boccace, though he knew him not, he ran to embrace him in the presence of the pope

and the cardinals, asking with impatience for news of his dear Petrarch.

Petrarch some months after this sent his Treatise on Solitude to Philip de Cabassole, which he had long promised, but could not before get copied. This prelate wrote to Petrarch to thank him for his book: he assured him the pope and the cardinal Gui of Bologna were desirous of it; that the archbishop of Embrun, and the bishop of Lisbon, had read it with great pleasure; 'As to myself,' adds he, 'I delight in it so much that I make them read it to me at my repasts.'

'You have the eyes of a lynx,' replies Petrarch, 'but your friendship for me has blinded you; it is always equally ardent. You will cause me at length to esteem my own works; for why should I suppose that so many great men are deceived in their judgments? Truly you will inspire me with confidence and emulation!'

Donat, the friend of Petrarch at Venice, came one morning to inform him of the tragical death of Leonce Pilate. When he was got to Greece, he wrote Petrarch a letter as long and as dirty as his hair and his beard, in which he praised Italy to the skies, said every

ill thing he could devise of Greece, and cursed Byzantium: he concluded by desiring from Petrarch a letter of recommendation to the emperor of Constantinople, by whom he assured him he was as well thought of as by the emperor of Rome. Petrarch made no answer to this letter. The Greek, who sighed after Italy, and wanted to be recalled there by Petrarch, wrote several times to acknowledge his error in returning to Greece, and to desire him to pardon it; but Petrarch, who knew his natural inconstancy of humour, and believed him too old to alter, agreed with Boccace to give him no answer. 'This Greek,' said he, 'who would have been useful to our studies if he were not a savage beast, shall never be recalled by me. It is but just that a man who, though in misery, trampled under foot the delights of Italy, should drag out a miserable life at Byzantium: let him go, if he will, with his filthy beard, his ragged cloak, and his brutish manners, and keep the labyrinth of Crete, where I know he passed several years.'

Notwithstanding Petrarch's continued silence Leonce embarked for Venice in the first ship he could meet with, persuaded that Petrarch and Boccace would behold him again with pleasure, or at least that they would not shut

their doors against him. Having safely passed the Bosphorus, the Propontis, the Hellespont, the Egean and Ionic seas, he was entered happily into the Adriatic, when there arose on a sudden a dreadful storm: while every one was employed in the necessary business of the ship, the terrified Greek had bound himself to a mast, when a flash of lightning setting fire to the cords of the sails, he was consumed in a moment. The people in the ship were seized with terror, but no one perished except Leonce. The shapeless and half-roasted body of this miserable Greek was thrown into the sea, and devoured by the fish of Italy instead of the worms of Greece, to whom Petrarch had destined it. He was touched, however, with this event, and wrote to Boccace to impart it to him. 'This unfortunate man,' said he, 'is gone out of this world as mournfully as he came into it. I believe he never experienced one serene day. His physiognomy seemed to announce his catastrophe; I cannot divine how any sparks of poetic fire could ever penetrate into a soul enveloped with such thick darkness. His clothes and his books are not lost; I will have them sought, for perhaps there may be an Euripides, and a Sophocles, and some other books he promised me.' Petrarch was

ever assiduous in his search after the best Greek authors. He begged Boccace to send him the translation of Homer made by Leonce. It was written out fair by the hand of Boccace, who had worked at it with the Greek. The manuscript comprehended the whole Iliad and a part of the Odyssey. Leonce had not finished the last. Petrarch had sighed for this Latin Homer many years. 'The Greek and Latin authors,' says he, 'which were in my library, received him with transports of joy.'

In February, 1366, there was great rejoicing in the house of Petrarch at Venice; Frances his daughter was brought to bed of a son, to whom Donat stood godfather, and to whom they gave the name of Francis. She had a daughter before this, born in 1363.

Every letter Petrarch received from Avignon, above all from Philip de Cabassole, whose opinion weighed with him more than all the rest, was filled with the praises of Urban. The church resounded with his fame; nothing was talked of but his wit, his eloquence, his piety, his love of justice, his zeal for order, his bounty to the good, and his aversion to the wicked. He began his pontificate with the wisest regulations. He sent back the courtly prelates, and repressed the greediness of the ecclesiastics,



obliging most of them to be content with one benefice. He extended his care also to the reformation of luxury in the habits of the monks and clergy. The black monks had taken it into their heads to place upon their cowls high crooked bonnets, which they called horns. He forbade them to wear these bonnets, and the officers of his palace had orders to take them off by force if they appeared there in them. Petrarch highly approved these regulations, and only wished this great pope would extend his reformation to the dress of all the world, but principally in Italy. 'Who can behold,' says he, 'with patience, the shoes with pointed toes, so long that they will reach the knee; head-dresses with wings to them, the hair put into a tail; the foreheads of the men furrowed with the heads of those ivory needles with which the women fasten their hair, and their stomachs squeezed in by machines of iron, &c.'

One of the best reforms of Urban was the suppression of asylums. A man guilty of the greatest crimes had only to take refuge in the court of a cardinal's palace, and he could not be pursued by justice. The cardinal de Taillerand, who knew the characters of men, foresaw this would be a great pontiff; for, a little

time after his exaltation, he said to some one who asked him his opinion of Urban, 'We have now indeed a pope.' Petrarch could not hear these things without shedding tears of joy, and was tempted to write to this great man. After some hesitation he was encouraged to do it. The chief of his letter is an ardent request that, after so many excellent works, he will put the finishing hand to all, by removing the holy see to Rome; and he speaks with the utmost freedom, and even presumption, on the subjects he was led to examine by the hope of this great event.

The answer of Urban was agreeable to the benevolence of his character. 'I received your letter,' says he, 'with pleasure, and read it with attention: I find many things in it worthy of praise, for the beauty of the thoughts and the elegance of the style. I admire your eloquence, your wisdom, and your zeal, for the public good. I shall be charmed to see you, and to have it in my power to give you some tokens of my favour.'

Urban, who was more versed in the canon law than in history and the belles lettres, desired Francis Bruni to make some comment upon Petrarch's letter, that he might understand it with more ease. Every body at Avig-

non was astonished with this request. Soon after he received this letter the pope, whose inclination was in perfect accord with it, declared his resolution to depart for Rome the Easter of the following year, and ordered the apostolical palace to be repaired, which had been long neglected, and that they should prepare lodgings for him at Viterbo, where he would stop. The king of France, who found it advantageous to have the pope in his neighbourhood, sent Nicholas Oreme, who made a very flat oration in full consistory. The pope replied to it with gravity, and in few words, and shewed the impression it had made by hastening the preparations for his departure.

In 1366, Petrarch went to pass the hot months at Pavia. The court of Galeas Visconti was in the midst of joy and festivity at the baptism of a daughter, whom Isabella of France lay in of in May. Petrarch found Galeas himself in a pitiable state with the gout, which tormented him more than ever : he had it in his feet, hands, and shoulders ; the other parts of his body were without motion, and his nerves so shrunk that he could not hold himself upright. The pains he suffered were so terribly sharp and severe, that his friends could not behold him without tears : his courage and

patience astonished all the world. It was indeed wonderful to behold a man of his rank, still young, of a delicate constitution, brought up in softness and pleasure, deprived of all his limbs, and suffering such agonies, without the least complaint. He looked upon his distempered body with as tranquil and serene an air as if it had been the body of another man. He sent to Florence for Thomas de Garbo, the greatest physician at this time in Italy. Thomas joined to a great knowledge in his profession a very extensive practice; he told Petrarch he had never seen so strong and so healthy a constitution as his in his life.

The 20th of July, 1366, Petrarch awaking at midnight, as was his custom, to say matins, recollected that just at that time he entered into his sixty-third year, which is looked upon as the most critical period of human life. 'I was born,' says he to Boccace, 'at Arezzo in 1304, on Monday the 20th of July, at the break of day. Many princes, philosophers, and saints, have died at this period: observe what happens to me, and judge from my fate.'

At the end of October, 1366, Petrarch received a visit from Stephen Colonna the younger, the only remaining branch of that illustrious family. He came from France, and was going

to Rome, to wait the arrival of the pope. After many hours of conversation, not having met for such a number of years, Stephen, in haste to depart, asked Petrarch if he should carry no message from him to the pope. Petrarch replied, ' After presenting my humble duty to the holy father, relate to him the following history, which is taken from Seneca. Alexander having acquired the name of great by his victories in Asia, the Corinthians sent ambassadors to him to offer him the freedom of their city, a thing ridiculous in itself, but which they had never done to any but Hercules. This determined Alexander not to despise the present they made him. There are things mean in themselves which obtain value from their rarity. This example authorises me to offer my heart to the pope; though I am only a worm of the earth before him, it may be acceptable perhaps, because, of all the popes of this age, to him alone have I offered it. If he asks why such wise, eloquent, and generous men as have been among them, and whose kindness I have experienced, have never obtained this from me, you may answer, because, according to my judgment, he is the only one of them who has done his duty.'

The twenty-fifth of October this year Ni-

cholas Acciajoli, the great friend and patron of Petrarch, died at Naples. His biographer relates that St. Bridget, coming to that city, lodged with dame Jaquette, sister of the grand senechal, and that she said to her one day, 'Your brother will die shortly.' The sister, distressed at this prediction, went to seek her brother, and found him with the queen in good health, but he died a few days after of an abscess in his head. His body was carried, by his order, to that magnificent monastery of the Carthusians he had built near Florence, and to which he had sent a great number of precious manuscripts, intending to establish a library, and finish his days in that delightful spot.

In the beginning of the year 1367 Petrarch underwent a domestic chagrin, which (as it regarded a person of great consequence to the republic of letters after the death of Petrarch, and most writers of that person's life have mistaken many circumstances in it) shall be inserted here from Petrarch's letters; I speak of John Malphigi, known of some by the name of John of Ravenna. His father, though he had neither birth nor fortune, sent him when very young to study at Venice; he was so fortunate as to have Donat de Prato for his master, who conceived a particular friendship for him. Petrarch

took him into his house in 1364. He describes him thus to Boccace :

‘ A year after you went from me, I took to live with me a young man of good character ; he has a lively and penetrating genius, and an extraordinary memory. He learned my twelve Eclogues by heart in eleven days, and recited them without hesitation. Notwithstanding this strength of memory, he has fire and imagination, qualities rarely united. If he lives, I hope he will be something great. He hates and flies from money as much as others love and desire it ; it is to no purpose to offer it, he will hardly receive the necessaries of life. As to the love of retirement, fastings, and watchings, he goes far beyond me. Shall I own it ? By these dispositions he has insinuated himself into my heart to such a degree, that I love him as if he was my own son, and even more ; for my son would be master, according to the fashion of the age ; and this young man is all obedience, more occupied with pleasing me than himself. He acts from feeling, and not from interest : he seems to desire nothing but to improve by my assistance. My familiar epistles were in the utmost disorder ; four of my friends had undertaken to arrange them, but were soon tired of the employment ; he

accomplished this task : there are three hundred and fifty, including this I am writing ; you shall have them written by his hand, which is clear and distinct, and not like that of most writers. He has a talent for poetry, and, if he cultivates it, he will succeed admirably. The timidity of his youth gives him an air of embarrassment, and his expression is not easy, but his sentiments are sublime and delicate. He loves to imitate at present, which is agreeable to his age ; in time he will cease to copy, and from the styles of others form one of his own that shall excel them.'

Malphigi seemed to be formed expressly for Petrarch : he took him with him every where in all his journeys and amusements ; and, to attach him still more, he caused him to take upon him the ecclesiastical state. The bishop of Ravenna, who conferred it on him, commanded him to love and honour Petrarch, never to leave him, and to look upon the happiness of falling into his hands as a particular favour of Providence. Petrarch procured for him the certain reversion of a benefice, which should enable him to buy books, clothes, and all he wanted, without recourse to any one, and intended to do much more for him.

This young man, amiable as he was, and the



delight of Petrarch, went into his study, and told him plainly he could not stay any longer with him, and that he designed to go away immediately. Petrarch, astonished beyond measure, dropped his pen, and looking attentively at him, and perceiving in his countenance the disorder of his soul, he asked him what all this meant, and whether he had any cause of complaint against him, his friends, or his servants? John declared he had not; and added with tears that he well knew he should never be situated so happily and honourably as with him.

‘ If this is the case, unhappy young man,’ said Petrarch, ‘ if nothing is wanting, nothing displeases you with me, why would you leave me? Where do you propose to go?’ John, with a voice interrupted by tears, replied, ‘ I only leave you because I can write no longer.’ ‘ How then? do your hands tremble? does your eye-sight fail you?’ ‘ Neither one nor the other; but I have taken such a disgust to writing, that I cannot bring myself to take up the pen again.’ ‘ I told you so,’ replied Petrarch; ‘ you wrote too much. It is excess that produces disgust. Leave off writing, repose yourself, and you will find that your taste for it will return.’ ‘ No,’ replied John, with a

melancholy air, ' I shall never more write for you or any one.' ' So much the better, do not write ; I did not take you for my secretary, but my son. You shall read, you shall chat with me, you shall accompany me every where, and be the ornament of my little house.'—' I inhabit a house where I do nothing ? Eat bread I have not earned ? I have too much heart for that. Your arguments are vain : let me go freely, or I shall depart without your permission.'

Petrarch, hurt by this answer, replied to him with some sharpness, ' Wretched young man ! And do you then think so poorly of yourself, that you cannot be useful to me unless you write ? You have deceived me : I had conceived a better opinion of your understanding. But what will our friend Donat say, who gave us to each other ?' ' He may say what he will ; what have I to do with Donat ?' ' Ungrateful as you are, is it thus you respect your master, and the father of your soul ? When he shall see you without me, he will ask you where you have left your father ; he will believe either that I am dead, or that your head is turned.' Petrarch then recalled to his remembrance the exhortations of the bishop, and tried to convince him of his comfortable situation. ' It

is all in vain,' said John; 'nothing can move my resolution.' Saying this, he went out immediately, and directed his steps to the gate; but he could not get off, because the city of Padua is furrounded with double walls and two rivers. He came back very melancholy: Petrarch begged he would acquaint him with the true cause of his departure, promising to let him go, and to give him money for his journey, and letters of recommendation. He still protested that he had no other reason for leaving him than that he named. 'For my own part,' says Petrarch, 'I think he must have been tempted by some other prospect, or that he is turned fool. His eyes wander, and are different from what they were. When he walks through the city, the people point at him, and say, "Do you see that young man? Learning has turned his head." I am just now informed it is his design to go to Naples: who knows? perhaps from the cinders of Virgil of Mantua may rise up a new Virgil of Ravenna. He has been spoiled with praise: to give him emulation we have fed him with pride. This will be a lesson hereafter to praise none but persons of approved virtue, and not to depend on persons of his age.

Petrarch hastened to put this young man

again into the hands of Donat, hoping he might cure him of this folly. He appeared better at first, but it soon returned. There was nothing fixed or regular in his designs: sometimes he would go to Naples, to see the tomb of Virgil; sometimes into Calabria, to seek the bower of Ennius; in fine, to Constantinople and Greece, to learn the Greek tongue. Petrarch in vain represented to him that he did not perfectly understand Latin; that the voyage was full of peril; that he had no money, and that he would find nothing but ruins at Athens, and ignorance in Greece. When he was thus opposed, he bent his brows, talked in a confused manner, and changed his intention. Every moment his body appeared to be agitated by many contending souls. The conclusion of all was, he went away one day, saying, he would go and see the western Babylon.

In crossing the Apennine to go to Pisa he suffered much from violent rains. When he found on his road any one who knew Petrarch, he told them he went to Avignon by his order. Several pitied him, and blamed Petrarch for sending so young a man without experience or a companion on so long a journey. When he came to Pisa he waited some time for a ship;

there was none ; he was tired of waiting, and repassed the Apennine amidst a thousand dangers. As he crossed the Taro he was near being drowned ; but a person who saw him sinking drew him out of the water by his feet almost dead with famine, fatigue, and misery. When he came back to Pavia he had the air of those shadows that glided round Virgil on the banks of the Styx. Petrarch says on this occasion, ‘ I no longer confide in this young man ; I expect every moment he will leave me again. He will find a little provision I have made him, and the door open. I shall not even attempt to retain him. I know what I ought to think ; but you know me, and that there is nothing that I do not pardon and forget ; no enemy, whoever he be, that I cannot love, if I find in him repentance and shame ; this softness of nature may sometimes be dangerous, but it will never make me blush.’

John, as Petrarch foresaw, did not remain one year in peace ; the rage of journeying came upon him again ; he determined to go to Calabria, and Petrarch gave him a letter of recommendation for Hugues de St. Severin, whom he knew at Naples, and who held a distinguished rank in that province.

‘ I recommend this young man to you,’

said he; ' he has genius, and an excellent disposition: seized with the madness of running about the world, he is determined upon travelling for improvement. I cannot blame him for this choice, though I am very sorry for his departure.' Petrarch gave him also a letter for Bruni the apostolic secretary, as he was to pass through Rome, who took him to his house; on which Petrarch felicitates him; ' You are now,' says he, ' after many tempests, got into a fine port; if you cannot live with this amiable man, I know not with whom you can live. Learn to fix, and remember the proverb, "The rolling stone gathers no moss." Learn to live with men; you will find some every where. You must live with them or with beasts. You can neither suffer solitude nor the world; this is a great disorder of the soul, which virtue alone can cure.'

These anecdotes concerning Malphigi have been dwelt on, as he was one of the most learned men of this century, and contributed very much to the establishment of letters. He went to teach at Padua after the death of Petrarch; he had there for his disciple Sicco Polontin, who gives him the greatest praise. ' He was,' says he, ' the wisest, most eloquent, and the best master in Italy, both for science and mo-

vals.' Collucio Salutati speaks of him in the same manner. The republic of Florence invited him to be a professor in that city in 1397; he passed the rest of his life there, and had for his disciples the most learned men of the fifteenth century, the Arctins, Pogges, &c. What he did for the Latin tongue, Emanuel Chrysoloras did for the Greek in that city: and this is the true period of the revival of letters, to which it must be owned Petrarch greatly contributed, if we only consider his forming the genius of Malphigi.

In 1367 Urban removed to Rome: most of the cardinals were chagrined to leave the fine palaces they had built at Avignon. Five of them would not follow him, but remained at Avignon. The pope went in a Venetian galley, and was escorted by a fleet which the queen of Naples, the Venetians, the Genoese, and Pisans, had sent to carry over the Roman court. When they had weighed anchor, the cardinals who remained at Avignon raised horrid cries, and overwhelmed the pope with injuries. 'Vile pope,' said they, 'impious father, whither are you leading your children?' 'One would have supposed,' says Petrarch, 'he was leading them to Memphis among the Saracens.' The pope despised these impotent as-

faults, and had a rapid course. He stopped some days at Genoa, and arrived in June at Viterbo, where he received the homage of all the Italian princes; and the ambassadors of Rome brought him the keys of the city and of the castle of St. Angelo. There was a commotion among the people at Viterbo, caused by a quarrel of the inhabitants with the servants of some of the cardinals: but the sedition was soon appeased, and the authors of it hung up.

Petrarch was delighted with this event, and wrote a long letter to the pope, which chiefly tends to prove the superiority of Italy to France: in it is the following remark on the French. 'As to what regards the social character, I own that the French have a gay and cheerful temper, and are easy in their manners and conversation; they play generously, they sing agreeably, they entertain freely, they are, in short, amiable hosts; but we must not seek among them for solid manners or true morality.'

Another of his remarks on the preceding popes is singular. 'I rise always at midnight to sing the praises of God; the silence of the night is best suited to this employment. It is the part of my life when I am most myself, and most delightfully employed. It is a custom I have observed, which has never been in-



terraptured but by sickness, and which I shall ever adhere to. In the office for Lent there is a prayer for the pope, which is to be repeated three times: I declare to you, that formerly, when I came to that part, I could scarcely forbear smiling, though I had more reason to weep and groan. What, said I, shall I pray more frequently for a man who keeps the church in exile, and who leaves the chair of St. Peter empty, than for my relations and benefactors? However, I continued to pray, but it was not heartily. What a difference do I feel at present, since the friend of God has rejoiced the triumphing church by his return! When I pronounce his name, I bow three times profoundly. I say those three prayers with a louder and more distinct voice; and I seem even to wish for them before they come.'

Galeas Visconti sent for Petrarch in 1368, to desire him to negotiate a peace with the pope, who was in great displeasure at the conduct of Barnabas, and, in alliance with many of the great lords, he determined to exterminate the Viscontis. He also sent for him to be present at the marriage of his daughter Violante, which was soon to be celebrated at Milan. This lord chose Lionel, duke of Clarence, second son to Edward king of England, for her

husband. Her dowry was two hundred thousand florins, and several places in Piedmont.

This young prince crossed France, followed by all the English nobility, who were eager to attend a marriage where the charms of Italy, and the magnificence of the Viscomtis, led them to expect so many pleasures. The duke was well received at Paris; the dukes of Berry and Burgundy walked before him, and he was lodged in the Louvre. His stay in that city was one continued scene of joy and feasting. The king loaded him with presents; he passed from thence to Chamberri, where the count Amedie, uncle to Violante, treated him kindly, and conducted him to Milan. He made his entry there in May, at the Pavian gate. Galeas went out to meet him with a superb train: Blanche of Savoy his wife, Isabella of France, wife to the count of Vertus his son, appeared at the head of fourscore chosen ladies, all dressed with the greatest magnificence in the same kind of habit. After them came John Galeas, count of Vertus, followed by thirty cavaliers, and thirty equerries in a uniform, mounted upon fine palfreys for the tournaments. The marriage was celebrated in the portico of the temple of St. Mary Majcur, in the sight of a vast multitude. Galeas gave a splendid feast in

the court of his palace. Petrarch was seated at the first table, where, except himself, there was none but princes and lords of the first rank : this was a mark of distinction which at once served to shew the friendship of Galeas, and that he knew what was due to genius, knowledge, and so great a character as Petrarch supported through the world.

John Froissard, known by his history and poems, came to Milan in the train of the duke of Clarence. He had been in England, and had paid his court there to Philippa of Hainault, wife of king Edward III. He was at this time about thirty, and seized this favourable opportunity of visiting Italy. It does not appear that he was known to Petrarch : he was not then arrived at that fame he afterwards procured ; so that, having no rank in the republic of letters, and being hid as it were in the bustle of this agitated court, it is not wonderful that Petrarch should have no knowledge of him ; but it seems surprising he should not seek a union with Petrarch, who passed for the greatest genius of his age, so desirous as he was of seeing and knowing all great characters : but he tells us himself he was at that time absorbed in pleasure and in love.

In the midst of these rejoicings Petrarch was

informed of an event which grieved him extremely, the death of his little grandson. 'This child,' says he, 'resembled me in so striking a manner, that he might have been taken for my own: this rendered him dearer to his parents, and to Galeas de Visconti my lord, who bore the death of his own child with calmness, but shed many tears for the loss of mine. For my own part I could have wept abundantly, but I suppressed a grief that did not become my age. I had erected to his memory at Pavia a little mausoleum of marble, on which I had engraved in golden characters twelve elegiac verses; in these were mentioned his age, two years and four months, and the tender sorrow of his parents.'

At this time Petrarch had the following letter from Boccace:

'My dear master! I set out from Certaldo to come to you at Venice; but continual rains, and the badness of the roads, prevented my pursuing my journey while you were there: but as soon as the weather cleared up I was desirous of seeing two persons dear to you, your Tullia and her husband, the only friends of yours I was not acquainted with. I met by accident upon the road Francis de Brossano, your son-in-law; he has doubtless told you how

it rejoiced me. After the general compliments, and some questions concerning you, my attention was fixed upon his fine figure, his tranquil countenance, and the sweetness of his manners and conversation. I admired your choice. But how should I not admire every thing you do?

‘ When I came to Venice, I did not accept the offer of your house. I will tell you the truth; I would not lodge with Tullia in the absence of her husband. I doubt not you will do justice to my manner of thinking in this as in other respects: but others do not know me as well as you do. My age, my grey hairs, my fat, which render me of no consequence, ought to silence even suspicion. But I know the world: they often see evil where there is none, and find traces of its footsteps where it has never been: on the minutest trifle you know a false rumour is often raised, which has as much effect as truth itself.

‘ After I had recovered my fatigue I went to see your Tullia: when she heard me named, she came with eagerness toward me, and with a modest blush, and her eyes cast upon the ground, paid me the politest reverence; after which she embraced me with filial tenderness: I felt immediately that she was

only fulfilling your wishes, and felicitated myself in being so dear to you. After the conversation that is produced on a first acquaintance, we went and seated ourselves in your garden with some friends who were with us. She then offered me your house, your books, and all that belonged to you, which she pressed me to accept of with as much eagerness as the delicacy of her character would permit. While she was making these offers, your beloved little girl walked into the garden with a step of dignity far beyond her age : she looked at me with a sweet smiling face, though she knew me not. I took her into my arms, quite overwhelmed with joy : I thought I saw my own grand-daughter whom I have lost, only she was something older and taller, and had chestnut instead of flaxen hair. Alas ! how many involuntary tears, which I hid as much as possible, did the words, gestures, little questions, and gay appearance, of your dear child cost me on the reflection !

‘ I should never end was I to tell you how many instances of friendship your son-in-law shewed me on his return ; the visits he made me when he could not prevail upon me to reside with him ; the repasts he gave with a politeness and liberality like yourself. I will only

mention one instance of his kindness. He knew that I was poor; I have never disguised it: when he found me just ready to leave Venice, which was late in the evening, he drew me aside, and, finding he could not make me accept the marks of liberality he offered, he stretched out his gigantic arm to slip money into my hand, and, bidding me adieu, ran away, leaving me confused at his generosity, and distressed by the obliging violence with which he enforced it. Heaven grant I may be able to make him some return !

Boccace concludes this letter, written in the easy and familiar manner of his Decameron, with a thousand expressions of friendship and veneration for his master.

The war in Italy was at this time carried on with warmth on all sides. Petrarch could not therefore return to Venice by land, but he engaged the master of a vessel for a great sum to embark with him on the Po. All the great lords were his friends, so that he had nothing to apprehend from their soldiers. The banditti who infested the highways were his only terror. His friends, however, dreaded his embarkation, and his servants and the rowers trembled at every vessel they beheld approach them. Petrarch alone felt no uneasiness, and

in reality he received the greatest civilities from all he met with. Every one said, none but Petrarch could have passed without accident in such a conjuncture; every other vessel would have been pillaged, but they loaded him with game, fruits, and all kinds of provisions, and stopped him on his route only to shew him every mark of respect. His modesty made him attribute the success of his navigation to the insignificance of his condition, and to his known love of peace, 'which is,' says he, 'stamped upon my face.' When he came to Padua, Francis de Carrare went out to meet him; but the rain, and the approach of evening, obliging him to return, he left some of his people with orders to accompany Petrarch to his house, where he sent him provisions for his supper, and after supper went to him, and spent the greatest part of the night in conversation with him.

When Petrarch returned home, he was informed by some letters from Rome, particularly one from Francis Bruni, that the pope desired very much to see him there. Petrarch replied, he hoped soon to have that satisfaction; but the season, and a disorder in his leg, which he had hurt, prevented it at present. Bruni in his letter informed him, he had adopted and



joined Collucio Salutati in his office of apostolic secretary with himself, and that Collucio earnestly desired to be acquainted with Petrarch. He had devoted himself to eloquence, letters, and poetry, and studied sacred and profane history under the most learned men of his age; he loved men of letters, and attached himself in a singular manner to Petrarch during the remainder of his life, and expressed every sentiment of zeal and affection for his memory after his death; and, though they never met, Petrarch cherished his affection with paternal love and attention. His answer to the first letter of Salutati is as follows:

‘ Old age, which renders others talkative, imposes silence upon me. In my youth I wrote many, and very long letters: at present I write very short ones, and these only to particular friends. With respect to you, whom I have never seen; whom I know a little, but love very much; I shall write only a line, in answer to your amiable letter.

‘ Your style pleases me, and I am flattered by your kind opinion. I know I am unworthy of your praises, and the homage you pay me: but it turns to your glory; for how highly must you love virtue, who run after its very shadow! If deceived by fame, you treat me

with such generosity, who can boast only an empty name; what would you not do for the man in whom you should behold a real and solid virtue!

In the letter of *Salutati*, not inserted, there is a great eulogy on the pope, and an account of many noble actions done by him since he came to Rome. In October 1368 the emperor came to the castle of St. Angelo, and waited there for the pope; as soon as he saw him he dismounted from his own horse, and, taking the reins of that the pope was upon, led the holy father to the church of St. Peter. *Salutati* speaks of this condescension of the emperor in the following lines to *Boccace*:

‘The Roman prelates who followed the pope were charmed with the honour done him by the emperor. The people ran in crowds, transported to see this union of the two greatest monarchs upon earth. The lovers of peace could hardly satisfy themselves with a sight which excited such pious emotions: but those who interpret every thing wrong, attributed to the pusillanimity of the emperor, and a feigned humility, his submission to the pope. The enemies of the church either turned this affair into ridicule, or openly condemned it. For my own part I was intoxicated with joy

to behold what our fathers had never seen, and which we dared not even to hope; the pontificate in union with the empire, the flesh obedient to the spirit, and the monarchy of the world submissive to the monarchy of heaven!

The emperor performed also the office of deacon at the mass, where Elizabeth his fourth wife was crowned the day of All Saints. He made a shameful peace with the Viscomtis, and in every action expressed the covetous mind for which he was famed; after which he went out of Italy weighed down with gold, leaving in exchange for it a great number of parchments, and the sublime and imperial dignity prostituted. His conduct was such, that Petrarch renewed not his connection with him on this visit to Italy. The pope's entering Rome, followed by two thousand soldiers, was also disapproved by Petrarch; and, though he thought highly of his conduct on the whole, he speaks with his usual freedom of this action.

'It does not,' says he, 'become the Roman pontiff to enter into Rome at the head of an army: his dignity, his sanctity, is a stronger defence than swords and staves. The arms of priests are prayers, tears, fasts, virtue, and so-

briety of manners: the cross of Jesus Christ is the only standard they should set up; it is dreaded by devils, and revered by men: and, instead of drums and trumpets, they should make the air resound with the song of Hallelujah!

The pope at this time conferred the hat on Philip de Cabassole, the friend of Petrarch. 'Urban,' says he, 'is the only one who knew his merit; I rejoiced at first, but afterwards I pitied my friend, and said, what has he done to the pope that he should bind him with a chain of gold, when he has most need of liberty and repose?' The pope was fond of Philip; he had left him governor of Avignon, and ordered him to see the walls of that city completed, and that, if any cardinals opposed, he should order their houses to be pulled down.

In the month of May 1369 the cardinal de Cabassole went to Montefiascone to the pope, who was gone there to pass the summer. In a conversation they had together much was said about Petrarch: Urban expressed a great desire to see him, and begged the cardinal to join his endeavours to bring him to Rome. The cardinal wrote him a very pressing letter, which Petrarch was thus obliged to answer:

I should esteem so great a treasure: I should prefer it to the wealth of Croesus.

‘Riches take peace from the soul; but rarely, if ever, bestow it. I would not set a foot out of my house to gain an empire: I neither desire nor wish for any thing beyond what I have. Love, duty, piety, and gratitude, these are the only springs which can put me in motion. I ask your benediction and favour; and if to that you can add repose, you will fill up the wishes of a poor old man.’

Petrarch passed all the winter in preparing for this voyage; and made his will, in which were the following dispositions:

He forbids any one to weep for his death; ‘because,’ says he, ‘tears benefit not the dead, and they may injure the living.’ He asks their prayers only, and that alms should be given to the poor to pray for him. ‘As to what regards my burial,’ adds he, ‘let them do as they will; it is of little consequence to me where they place my body.’ He makes after this some pious legacies in favour of the religious orders, according to the custom of that age; and he founds an anniversary in the church of Padua, which is celebrated every year to this day on the 9th of July.

He bequeaths to the lord of Padua his pic-

ture of the Virgin, painted by Giotto, 'which ignorant people,' says he, 'discern not the beauty of, but which masters in the art cannot behold without admiration.'

To Donat, the grammar-master at Venice, he gives all the money he had lent him.

He bequeaths the horses he may have at his death to two of the citizens of Padua he was acquainted with, and that they should draw lots for them. To one of them, called Lombard de Serico, he owns the debt of one hundred and thirty-four gold ducats, advanced for the expence of his house, which he charged himself with on a particular occasion, to the neglect of his own affairs. He bequeaths to him a goblet of silver gilt, which he made use of to drink water in, 'more agreeable to me,' says he, 'than wine.' He bequeaths to John Abocheta, warden of his church, his great breviary that he gave a hundred francs for at Venice, on condition that after his death this breviary should remain in the sacristy, for the use of the priests belonging to that church.

To John Boccace five hundred florins of the gold of Florence, to buy him a winter habit for his evening studies. 'I am ashamed,' says he, 'to leave so small a sum to so great a man;' and he begs all his friends to impute to his for-

tune alone the insignificance of his gifts. To Thomas Barbofi, of Ferrara, he makes a present of his good lute, for him to make use of in singing the praises of God. To John Dondi, physician of Padua, he gives fifty gold ducats for a gold ring to wear in remembrance of him.

He appoints Francis de Brossano, citizen of Milan, his heir, and desires him, not only as his heir, but likewise as his very dear son, to divide in two parts the money he should find, one for himself, and the other for the person he had assigned him. It should seem by this he would not mention his daughter by name in a public will, as she was not born in marriage. This daughter died in child-bed sixteen years after this, in the year 1384.

With respect to his little estate at Vacluse, he gives it to the hospital in that diocese.

If Francis de Brossano should happen to die before him, in his place he makes Lombard de Serico his heir, who knows his sentiments; and as he has always found him faithful during his life, he hopes he shall find him so after his death. This appears likewise to be a codicil in favour of his daughter.

His last bequest is to his brother Gerard, a Carthusian of Montrieu: he desires his heir to

write to him immediately after his decease, to give him the option of a hundred florins of gold, payable at once, or by five and ten florins every year.

1370. A few days after he had made his will Petrarch set out on his route. The pleasure with which he undertook this journey to Rome made him believe he was in a condition to support it; but he soon found he had presumed too much upon his strength. When he got to Ferrara he fell down in a fit, in which he continued thirty hours without sense or motion, and it was supposed he was dead; however they tried the most violent remedies, in hopes these might recall his senses, 'but I felt them no more (says he, speaking of this afterwards) than a statue of Polycetes or Phidias.'

Nicholas II. of Est, son of Obizzon, was then lord of Ferrara, and the friend and admirer of Petrarch; he was extremely touched with his situation, had him brought to his house, and took the greatest care of him. The physicians as well as others thought he was dead, and the whole city was in grief. The news spread to Padua, Venice, Milan, and Pavia: crowds came from all parts of Italy to his burial. Hugues de Est, the brother of Nicho-



las, a young man of great merit, who had a singular taste for the conversation of Petrarch, shewed him the most tender attention and care during his whole illness; he went to see him several times in the day, sent every moment to inquire after him, and had every thing carried to him he thought might contribute to the re-establishment of his health. Petrarch acknowledged he owed his surprising recovery, from death itself, as it were, to the bounty and affection of these two lords; and expressed the most lively gratitude for their friendship. Hugues de Est was fond of tournaments to distraction.

These tournaments were tiltings, or combats with lances; equestrian games, which presented an image of war, and helped to form warriors, and keep up among them military ardour. There were some traces of them in France in the ninth and tenth centuries, mentioned in the chronicle of Taus, and strangers called them the combats of the French.

These warlike exercises passed from France to Germany and England; and the authors of the Byzantian history agree that the people of the east learned these games from the French. Whatever precautions were however used in these games, and though edged and pointed

weapons were forbidden, they were always dangerous, and sometimes they proved mortal; which induced several popes, and some councils, to prohibit them: and this was probably the reason why they were established in Italy later than elsewhere, from the respect paid to the ecclesiastical authority. A Milanese historian says, that Barnabas Visconti was the first who ordered in that city, in the year 1350, tiltings on high saddles, and tournaments according to the custom of France and Germany. After which they soon became the fashion in all the courts of Italy. Hugues de Est was the lord in this country who distinguished himself the most in them, and acquired the highest glory. As his life had been often endangered by this practice, his relations desired Petrarch to try if he could not moderate this passion for glory, which he indulged beyond bounds. Petrarch wrote this young lord the following epistle:

‘ I learn with pleasure that you march rapidly on in the path of glory. It is difficult, and it is short. Far from stopping, I would assist, I would accelerate you, in so noble a career. Go: let nothing detain you: confront, if necessary, perils and death: fight for your honour, for your country, for your safety! It

is for these you ought to display your valour, and sacrifice your life; but it is a madness to expose it in such useless and dangerous games as the equestrian; there is more rashness in this than true courage. Renounce these phantoms of war, I conjure you. My age, rather than my judgment, authorises me to speak to you in this manner: you will pardon my temerity, in consideration of my zeal. You have shewn sufficiently of what you are capable in these exercises; it is time to stop: and it would be folly to pursue a course where the peril you run is greater than the glory you can acquire. Leave these games to those men who can do nothing more, who know nothing better, and whose life or whose death are of no consequence. Your welfare is precious to your brothers and your friends, and dear to the republic. A soul like yours ought to be occupied with more noble objects. We nowhere read that Cæsar or Scipio amused themselves with any games of this kind.'

Hugues de Est died soon after receiving this letter, in August 1370. Tournaments, though so destructive to the nobility in France, were not put a stop to till Henry II. was killed in one of them.

When Petrarch was thus recovered by the

hospitality and affectionate care of the lords of Ferrara, he would have pursued his route, but the physicians assured him he could not get to Rome alive. Their threats would not however have prevented his attempting it, if his strength had seconded his desires; but he was unable to sit his horse. They brought him back to Padua, laid down on a soft seat in a boat: his unhopèd-for return caused as much surprise as joy in that city, where he was received by his lord and the citizens as a man come back again from the other world. To re-establish his health he went into the country, to a place called Arquà, a large village situated on the edge of a hill, which shelters it from the north, famous for its beautiful vines, and the excellent wines they produce. An everlasting spring reigns here, and there are little villas scattered in a most agreeable manner over this delightful place. Petrarch built him a house at the top of the village, and he added to the vines of the country a great number of fruit-trees.

Petrarch had quitted Venice for Padua, disgusted with that licentiousness of conversation which reigned universally there; and the philosophy of Aristotle, so disfigured by former commentators, and not much enlightened by

Averroes, whose disciples at Venice believed the world co-eternal with God, and made a joke of Moses and his book of Genesis: 'Would the architect of the world,' say they, 'remain so long doing nothing? Certainly no. Its youthful appearance is owing to its revolutions, and the changes it has undergone by its deluges and conflagrations.' They had a great contempt for Christ and his apostles, whom they treated as idiots; the greatest fathers of the church, as enthusiasts; as well as all those who did not bow the knee to Aristotle and Averroes. They called the doctrines of Christianity fables, and hell and heaven the tales of an ass; and finally, they believed that Providence took no care of any thing under the region of the moon. Four young Venetians of this sect had attached themselves to Petrarch, who loved them, but opposed their opinions: this liberty astonished them; and in consequence of it Petrarch was examined in a sort of juridical manner, and pronounced by these judges to be a good man without letters: upon which occasion Petrarch wrote a treatise, entitled, *His Own Ignorance*, and that of many Others; in which he says, 'I care little for what they deny me, if I really possess the good part they allow me to claim.'

Averroes was a Spaniard by birth, who lived in the twelfth century; he was a judge, a physician, a philosopher, and theologist: he knew neither Greek nor Latin history, nor ancient philosophy; he took the sentiments of Aristotle from an Arabian translation; and men of learning agree that the Arabian language is very ill calculated to express the turns of the Greek, and the philosophical ideas in this work.

Petrarch had himself formed the design of confuting the doctrines of this book; but he engaged father Lewis Marsili, an Augustine monk of Florence, to undertake it; he was a man of great natural genius, to which was joined indefatigable study. ‘When your leisure will permit, I conjure you,’ says he, ‘to write against Averroes, that enraged animal, who barks with so much fury against Jesus Christ and his apostles. I have neither time nor knowledge equal to such a work; you have both: employ all your powers in it; Christ himself will assist the champion of his cause; it is impious for those to be silent who are so able to face this enemy of true religion.’

There was great reason for this pious zeal of Petrarch: these unfriendly doctrines to the peace and salvation of men spread fast, inso-

much that Leo X. two centuries after this, published a bull, in which he forbade any, under grievous penalties, to write or teach that the soul was mortal.

Petrarch languished all the summer; John de Dondi his physician, or rather his friend (for he would have no physician), wrote to him that he had discovered the true cause of his disease, and that it arose from eating fruit, drinking water, and from his frequent fastings: he besought him to alter his diet if he wished to live, and to abstain from all salted things, and raw fruits or herbs. ‘If you will not believe the physicians,’ says he, ‘believe experience, and reflect how much you have suffered this year for not following their advice.’ Petrarch easily renounced salt provision; ‘but as to fruit,’ says he, ‘which all the physicians look upon as they do hemlock and aconite, nature must have been a very unnatural mother to give us such agreeable food, of such delightful hue and fragrance, only to seduce her children, by presenting them with poison covered over with honey.’

John de Dondi, who has been often mentioned as the friend of Petrarch, ‘had a genius,’ says the latter, ‘that would have raised him to heaven, if physic had not tied him to

the earth.' He was the greatest physician in all Italy, attached to Galeas Visconti, who gave him yearly two thousand florins. He was also a skilful astronomer, and the inventor of the famous clock placed on the tower of the palace at Padua, which was considered as the wonder of the age: besides the hours, it shewed the annual course of the sun according to the twelve signs of the zodiac, the motion of the plants, the phases of the moon, the months, and even the holidays, of the year. Philip de Maiziere says, 'It was a sphere all of brass; and that, notwithstanding the number of wheels, which could not be reckoned without pulling the instrument to pieces, the whole of its motion was governed by one single weight.' John wrote a treatise on the baths of Padua, and the cause of the heat of the waters at Albano; and he mentions in it that his father made salt without sun and without fire, by a sort of evaporation with *Balneum Maris*: he also wrote a treatise on the manner of living in the time of the plague. He loved the conversation and the works of Petrarch, and often went to see him: they had continual disputes about physics, and each remained at the end of them in his own opinion. Petrarch permitted him to visit him as a friend, but not as a physician;



‘When a physician comes in,’ says he, ‘I know what he will say; Eat young chicken, and drink warm water.’

While Petrarch was thus struggling with his disorder and his physician, he learned a piece of news not very likely to forward his cure. The pope took it into his head on a sudden to return to Avignon; that city, in concert with the queen of Naples, and the kings of France and Arragon, had sent him vessels to convey him thither. Urban gave this reason for his conduct; the necessity of making peace between the kings of France and England: but no one doubted that the love of his country, the difficulty of inuring himself to the climate of Rome, the uneasy and rebellious character of the Italians, and the importunate solicitation of the cardinals, were the causes of it. He was received at Avignon with the greatest demonstrations of joy. St. Bridget told him, ‘If you go to Avignon, you will die soon after; the holy virgin has revealed this to me.’ This pretended revelation happened to be accomplished: not long after his arrival there he was seized with a mortal disease, and died in public the 19th of December, 1370, having ordered the doors of his house to be set open, that all the world might be more

impressed by witnessing his death. ' It must have been a very touching and edifying sight,' says a writer of that time, ' to behold a pope extended like a poor man on a sorry bed, with the habit of St. Bennet, which he always wore, his crucifix in his hand, shewing such marks of piety, penance, and perfect resignation.' In the course of his pontificate, he received two singular honours, which might have discomposed the most philosophic head; and yet he was always the most humble and modest of men. The emperor of the west performed the office of his equerry, and the emperor of the east abjured schism, and acknowledged him as primate of the church.

Petrarch was extremely grieved when he was informed of the return of this pope to Avignon, and was preparing to write to him on the subject, when he was informed of his death. He made this short prayer on the occasion: ' Lord, have mercy on this good pope, and pardon his weakness; pass over the faults of his youth, and this fault he has committed in his old age; since, considering the corruption of the times, he may be justly called a good man.' Petrarch speaks afterwards of his wisdom and sanctity, and that he erred through an excess of kindness to those around him;

and he adds, that he was famous for the miracles he performed.

When this news came to Bologna, to cardinal Anglic his brother, who was legate there, it spread over that city a general grief. They resolved to celebrate a solemn service with a magnificence beyond example, for a pope who had bestowed such services on their city: all the princes and neighbouring lords were invited to it, and the ambassadors of the principal cities; they reckoned up eight hundred noble persons, all dressed in black: the shops were shut up for eight days. Among the princes there was Francis de Carrare, who took Petrarch along with him: his health was more established; he found several friends who were delighted to see him so much better, and who shewed him every mark of distinction.

Cardinal Anglic was adored at Bologna, and through all Italy; there was no lord more beloved, or who governed with greater wisdom and prudence; his temper was perfectly amiable. He was recalled to Avignon by his brother successor, and died in 1388. One of his executors was Audibert de Sade, the son of Laura, for whom he had always had a great affection.

1371. The cardinals chose Peter Roger,

nephew of Clement VI. to fill up the place of Urban; he took the name of Gregory XI.: he had great virtues and great modesty. Soon after his exaltation he wrote to Petrarch, whom he had long known and loved, in the most polite and flattering manner: in which he expressed a great desire to see him, and do him some service. In Petrarch's answer to cardinal Bruni, he says, 'I will receive no benefice with the charge of souls, however great the revenue: the charge of my own is sufficient for me. As to the rest, let the holy father do as he pleases; I shall be always his servant, useless indeed, but faithful and submissive. His generosity may inspire me with gratitude, but it will never augment my zeal and my attachment. If he bestow any office on me, it will be a very short deposit, for I feel myself as a shadow vanishing away. If it will enable me to expiate my sins, the sooner the better. I pray God my purgatory may be completed in this world.'

In a letter to the cardinal de Cabassole he says:

'I had projected to visit the pope in the spring; my design was to go by water as far as I could, and the rest of the way in short journies by land; but there has been no spring this year: a burning summer has all at once

succeeded a very cold winter. Notwithstanding this, I had packed up my goods, when I was attacked in May with a violent fever, which has disappointed my projects. I have been very ill, the physicians believed me dead ; they said I should not live the night over, and the next day they found me cured. 'This has happened to me ten times in the last ten years.' When these violent returns of the fever came upon Petrarch, the physicians came to him from all the cities in Italy, either sent by the princes, or attending him from affection. After many altercations, they agreed he could not live over midnight, unless he was prevented sleeping ; and that by taking something for that purpose he might hold out till morning. No regard was paid to what the physicians said, for he had expressly commanded his friends and servants to do nothing they desired, but rather the contrary : this saved his life, and he slept in the most tranquil manner. The next morning, when the physicians reappeared to behold the accomplishment of their predictions, what was their astonishment when they found the man who should have died at midnight, not only alive, but even writing ! They contented themselves with saying, 'Petrarch is not like other men !'

In 1371 the pope sent the cardinal de Cabassole, as legate to Perugia; when he took leave of the pope, he said to him, 'Holy father! allow me to recommend to you Petrarch, for the love I bear him, which is not to be expressed: in truth, he is a phoenix of a man.' He went out repeating this with the warmth of a true friend.

The cardinal of Bologna, after his departure, turned both him and Petrarch into ridicule, whom he was disgusted with for the freedom with which he declaimed against the vices of the court. This prelate was intoxicated with great prosperity, and no longer supported the character he bore at the time he expressed so great a friendship for Petrarch, who heard of this not by the cardinal de Cabassole, but by accident. 'I am not astonished,' says he, 'at this change. Would you know the reason of it? He is the enemy of truth, and I am the enemy of lies: he dreads the liberty with which I am animated, and I detest the pride with which he is swelled. If our fortunes were equal, and we were together in a place of freedom, I say not that I should be a phoenix, that eulogy would not become me; but he would certainly appear an owl. Such people imagine their wealth, ill acquired and worse employed, permits them to

say every thing : but there are people who are made eloquent by poverty ; and others who are struck dumb by riches.' .

When the cardinal de Cabasole arrived at Perugia, he wrote to Petrarch to congratulate him on the restoration of his health, and the fortitude he had expressed in sickness.

Petrarch was uneasy for him, as he had been ill, that he should undergo the fatigues of a journey, so that his letter gave him double joy. In his answer he expresses a great desire to see him once more before he dies : ' I have loved you,' says he, ' from my youth ; you are almost the only friend left me on earth. I have been twenty-four years deprived of your society ; now that you are in my neighbourhood, if my ill fate does not pursue me through life, I shall kiss that hand from whence I have received such affectionate letters, filled with salutary advice and holy consolations ; and, agreeable to the indulgence you have long granted me, embrace my dear father with tender affection and ardent zeal. I would recall to him our happy village days, when we passed our hours in the woods, so absorbed that we forgot our repasts ; and whole nights in delightful discourse, surrounded by our books, till we were surprised by the appearance of Aurora. You

praise my courage in sickness: it is true, my physicians and my friends were astonished to see me gay and tranquil in the midst of pain, without a sigh or a tear; but this was the gift of Heaven; to Heaven, therefore, be the praise!

1372. In the beginning of the spring Petrarch tried to sit his horse, that he might go to see his dear friend the cardinal; but his strength failed, he found he could not bear the least motion. He wrote again to him to express his regret.

‘You are not,’ says he, ‘like most of your brethren, whose heads are turned by a bit of red cloth, and who forget that they are men; and mortal. On the contrary, these honours only make you the more humble; and I do not believe you would change your manner of thinking was you to be adorned with the imperial diadem.’

This good cardinal, so worthy the description Petrarch gave of him, could not bear the air of Italy; he was sick all the time he was there, and died the 26th of August, 1372. His body was transported to the Carthusians of Bonpas, where his monument still remains.

Petrarch, in a letter to one of his friends, speaks thus of his present condition:



I pass the greatest part of the year in the country, which I have always preferred to cities; I read, I write, I think: thus my life and my pleasures are like those of youth. Having studied so long, it is astonishing that I have learned so little: I hate no one; I envy no one. In that first season of life, which is full of error and presumption, I despised every one but myself: in manhood I despised none but myself: in old age I despise all the world, and myself more than all. I reverence none but those I love; and I desire nothing ardently but to die with piety and honour. I dread a multitude of servants as I should a troop of thieves; I would have none if my age and my weakness did not oblige me: I take pains to hide myself, but I cannot escape visits; it is an honour that displeases and wearies me. In my little house on the hills of Euganean I hope to pass my few remaining days in tranquillity, and to have always before my eyes my dead or my absent friends.

In 1372 war was again lighted up between Venice and Padua. The country round the latter being ravaged by the enemy, Petrarch went with his books, which he considered as his most precious treasure, to shelter himself at Padua. A friend advised him to put his

name upon his door, and to fear nothing, for it would be a sufficient protection. Petrarch replied, 'I would not trust to that; Mars is not a favourer of the Muses: I have not so exalted an idea of myself as to suppose this could shelter me from the fury of war; I even doubt its advantage to me in peace.' He was advised to quit Padua; but the bad state of his health, the rigour of the season, and the danger of travelling, prevented him.

Petrarch was solicited at this time for his Italian works: he sent them, and these lines with them; 'I have sent the trifles you ask for; they were the amusement of my youth; but they require all your indulgence: my age must excuse the faults of the style, the intoxications of love, and the variations of my soul. It is a shame for an old man to send you such frivolous productions: but with what face could I refuse you verses which are in the hands of every one, are even sung about the streets, and which the world prefers to those solid compositions I have made in riper age?'

Francis de Carrare, lord of Padua, perceiving the strength of the Venetians, signed a peace on the terms they prescribed, which were very humbling. One of the articles was, that he should come himself, or send his son, to ask

pardon for the insults he had been guilty of, and to swear an inviolable fidelity. Francis sent his son, and begged Petrarch to accompany him; and, though he wished to decline it, he would not, having so many obligations to this lord. Accompanied with a great train, they arrived at Venice in September 1373, where Petrarch was received with the greatest honour. Whether the majesty of the senate awed him, or his memory was lost, Petrarch could not pronounce the discourse he had prepared; but so great was the desire to hear him, that they dismissed the assembly to the next day: he was then more fortunate; he spoke with grace and energy, and was highly applauded. The son of Francis Corrare asked pardon on one knee; the doge raised him, saying, 'Go and sin no more, neither you nor your father!'

Francis said one day to Petrarch, 'I am astonished, and I am not astonished, at the good and evil that happens in the world; explain to me this enigma.' Petrarch replied, 'It is not impossible to reconcile the contradiction your genius has proposed. When you meditate on the corruption of man's heart, you are surprised at the good they do; but it is the rarity of this virtue causes your astonishment, and that ceases

when you reflect that it is God who is the author of all good. With respect to evil, it is wonderful to behold the son conspire against the father, the brother against the brother, the wife against her husband, and the ungrateful man against his benefactor; but this wonder ceases when we review the history of the world, and observe what passes every day in it. If I have explained your enigma, I shall be glad; if I have not, I shall learn it most willingly from you.' This lord loved Petrarch in the tenderest manner; his greatest pleasure was to converse with him, and he went often to see him in his little house at Arqua: he said to him one day, 'You have written something for all your friends but me.'

Petrarch had thought some time of composing something for this lord; but he was doubtful on what subject to fix. At last he composed a treatise on government, in which he might indirectly praise his virtues, and warn him of some faults he had remarked in his conduct: the sentiments of this work would not be at all new to this age, though they were very great for that in which he lived; and he gives a high idea of the talents and virtues of Francis Corrare, in which he agrees with the best authors of that time.

1374. After Petrarch's return from Venice he had not an hour's ease; his fever undermined him very sensibly, and he languished through a tedious disorder, expiring by inches. Nevertheless he made no change in his manner of living: he passed the greatest part of the day in reading and writing. He happened at this time to meet with the Decameron of Boccace, which he had never seen before, though they had been united twenty-four years. He had not time to read it attentively, but he speaks of it in the following manner in a letter to Boccace.

'I have only run over your Decameron, and therefore am not capable of forming a true judgment of its merit; but upon the whole it has given me a great deal of pleasure; the freedoms in it are excusable, from having been written in youth, from the subjects it treats of, and the persons for whom it was designed. Among a great number of gay and witty jokes, there are, however, many grave and pious sentiments. I did as most people do, I payed most attention to the beginning and the end. Your description of the people is very true and pathetic, and the touching story of Grisildis has been ever since laid up in my memory, that I may relate it in my conversations with my

friends. A friend of mine at Padua, a man of wit and knowledge, undertook to read it aloud; but he was scarcely got through half of it, when his tears prevented his going on; he attempted it a second time, but his sighs and sobs obliged him to desist: another of my friends determined on the same adventure, and after having read from beginning to the end, without the least alteration of voice or gesture, he said, returning the book, It must be owned this is a touching history; and I should have cried, could I have believed it true, but there never was, nor ever will be, a woman like Grisildis.'

This was Petrarch's last letter: he closes it by saying, 'Adieu my friends, adieu my letters!'

Soon after this he was found dead in his library, July 18, 1374, with one arm leaning on a book. As he had been often seen to pass whole days in this attitude, those who beheld him were not at first alarmed; but on a nearer view finding in him no signs of life, they gave themselves up to the most bitter grief. It was supposed he was taken off at last by an apoplexy, but as no one was with him this could not be known. His death caused a general grief and consternation; they came from all

parts in crowds to pay their last duty to a man who had been the greatest ornament of their country, and had raised its fame on all occasions. Francis de Corrare, with the bishop and clergy, and all the nobility of Padua, came to Arqua to attend his obsequies. The body of Petrarch, dressed in a flame-coloured cassock, which was the habit of the canons of Padua, was carried by sixteen doctors on a bier, covered with a cloth of gold, lined with ermin, to the parish church of Arqua, which was hung in a manner suitable to this solemn ceremony. After the funeral oration, which was pronounced by Bonaventure de Peraga, of the order of the hermits of St. Augustin, the body was interred in a chapel of the Virgin, which Petrarch had built in this church. Some time after Francis de Brossano, having raised a marble tomb on four columns, opposite the same church, had his body removed thither, and engraved three Latin verses to his memory: the rhyme is their only merit.

*Frigida Francisci tegit hic lapis ossa Petraræ*

*Suscipe, Virgo parens, animam : fate Virgine parce,  
Fessaque jam terris cœli requiescat in arce.*

*In 1667 Paul de Valdezucchi, proprietor of*

Petrarch's house at Arqua, had his bust in bronze placed on this mausoleum.

In 1630 some persons broke into this tomb, and took away some of Petrarch's bones to sell them: the senate of Venice, enraged at this sacrilege, punished those who were guilty of it with extreme severity, and in the decree against them expressed the highest respect for the ashes of this great man.

Through all Italy there was a general weeping and lamentation: they all cried out, 'The father of letters is no more, the light of our age is extinguished!' Funeral songs were composed in every city to his memory, and Aretin gives him a distinguished place in the great work he composed; and Francis Socchetti, one of the best Italian poets of that age, composed a canzone, at the beginning of which he represents heaven rejoicing, earth lamenting, purgatory weeping, and hell howling, at his death. It was at Florence, his native country, they felt his death most sensibly, for it was there his zeal, his merit, was most known; and where the most intimate friends he had left resided, Boccace, Collucio Salutati, and father Marfili.

As soon as Petrarch's will was opened Francis Brossano, his heir, sent to all his friends the



small legacies he bequeathed them. When Boccace received his, and the letter wrote with it, he made the following reply :

‘ When I saw your name, I felt immediately the contents of your letter : I had already heard from public report the happy translation of our master from this earthly Babylon to the heavenly Jerusalem. My first intention was to have visited the tomb of my father, and to bid him my last adieu, and to mix my tears with yours : but it is now ten months I have been attacked with a languishing disorder, which has weakened and altered me so much you would not know me. I am no longer fat nor fresh-coloured, as when you saw me at Venice : my sides are shrunk, my eyes become dim, my hands tremble, and my knees knock against one another. After having read your letter, I wept all night for my dear master ; not indeed for him ; his prayers, his fasts, his life, permit me not to doubt his happiness : but I weep for myself, and for his friends, whom he has left in this world, as a vessel without a pilot in a stormy sea. I judge by my grief of yours, and that of Tullia, my dear sister and your amiable wife, whom I beg you will reason with, as well as console for her great loss, which she ought long ago to have expected : women are

weaker than men on these occasions, and therefore require their utmost assistance and consolation.

‘I envy Arqua the happiness it enjoys in receiving into its bosom the ashes of a man whose heart was the residence of the Muses, the sanctuary of philosophy, of eloquence, and the fine arts. This village, hardly known even at Padua, will become famous through the world: it will be respected as we respect Mount Paufilippo, because it contains the cinders of Virgil; Ternas and the banks of the Euxine for the tomb of Ovid; and Smyrna, because Homer died and was buried there. The sailor who returns from the ocean, and who, charged with riches, sails along the Adriatic sea, shall fall prostrate when he discovers the hills of Euganee! “They inclose,” will he cry out, “that great poet, who was the glory of the world!” Ah! unhappy country! thou didst not merit such an honour! Thou hast neglected to cherish the most illustrious of thy children! Thou wouldst have caressed him if he had been capable of treason, avarice, envy, and ingratitude: so truly is that old proverb verified, “No one is a prophet in his own country.”

‘You propose, you say, to erect him a mau-

soleum: I approve your design; but permit me to hint to you one reflection; it is, that the tombs of great men ought never to be raised at all, or answer in magnificence to the renown of their heroes! This was what Fortune did for Pompey: she thought it not proper to enclose his ashes in an urn, or to cover his body with the finest marble; but she gave him for a sepulchre all that region which is watered by the sea, from Pelusium to Canope, and the heaven for his monument, that the passing traveller might tread lightly, and dread to trample under foot the body of that great man, who had marched over the heads of those kings he had subdued by his arms. If he had died with glory in Rome, I doubt whether the mausoleum of Artemisia had been equal to his desert.

‘My master has given me at his death a new proof of his friendship and generosity, of which I have received so many proofs during his life: I accept it with gratitude; I wish I was not in a situation to receive it. I beg of you to inform me what is become of the precious library of this illustrious man. They say there are persons commissioned to examine his works, and decide their fate: I dread lest this office should be given to lawyers, who think

they know all things, when they have confused their heads with the chicaneries of law. God preserve the works of my master from falling into such hands as these ! Science has no enemies so powerful as ignorant persons : they are always envious, hide the best parts of an author, condemn what they do not understand, and corrupt the whole of his works. Be upon your guard ; for if things were to go thus, how irreparable would the loss be to letters in Italy ! I heard he had written me a long letter, with a translation he made of the last novel of my Decameron, as a compliance with my advice, that he would save himself as much as possible from the fatigue of writing : I have not received these kind marks of his attention. I am concerned for the trouble I give you, and beg of you, my dear brother, to consider me as a friend, and entirely yours.

‘ My weakness is so great that I have been three whole days in writing this letter.’

Boccace did not long survive his master ; he died the twenty-first of December 1375. Coluccio Salutati wrote to acquaint Francis Brossano with this mournful event, and, after giving the greatest praise to Boccace, begs Petrarch’s poem called *Africa*. ‘ I will,’ says he, ‘ defray all the charges of copying it. I know

I do not deserve this honour, but I will venture to say your putting it into my hands shall not tarnish the glory of Petrarch.' Francis sent it him, desiring him to correct and not to publish it: Salutati's design was to have made several well corrected copies of it to send to Bologna, Paris, and England; and to place one in a celebrated house in Florence for the use of the public. He was prevented by this prohibition, and by finding a chasm in the poem, either placed apart accidentally by Petrarch, or omitted by the copiers. It seems extraordinary that Petrarch should never have shewn Boccace a poem he had spent so much time in composing, and that he should have been so long ignorant of the Decameron, undoubtedly the best work of Boccace, and an admirable satire on the monks. The latter was probably owing to the reverence of Boccace for Petrarch, who could not think of presenting him with a work which, being meant to expose vice, might probably in some parts offend the delicacy and sublimity of his sentiments; and Petrarch would not read his poem to Boccace, because he was not satisfied with it himself.

## CONCLUSION.

WE have now finished the account of Petrarch: and when a life (if I may so speak) paints itself, it would be a reproach to the reflection of the writer, and a very ill compliment to the penetration of the reader, to attempt to draw it over again by a summary of insipid assertions. I shall therefore only remark one particular which, with all feeling hearts, will apologize for that unfixed and variable temper so justly ascribed to Petrarch, and this was his tender and ardent passion for Laura, which entirely unsettled him for twenty years, and produced a restlessness in his mind (not formed perhaps by nature in the calmest mould) through every succeeding period of life. Had his profession and happy lot permitted him to have filled up the sacred and delightful relations of a husband and father: could he have brought up with tender and virtuous care the pledges of an honourable affection (as from the principles of humanity and justice he did the

innocent offspring of a dishonourable one) and thus given a public example of parental virtue: could he have rewarded with his esteem, and soothed with his attention, the cares of a tender mother and a faithful wife: how much would it have promoted his happiness and heightened his worth! As it was, he frequently led the life of a wanderer, to whom the sweets of a kind and cheerful home are unknown and un hoped for, to alleviate the toils of life and the distresses of humanity; and with the finest taste for knowledge, the most perfect sympathy with nature, and the most lively and picturesque imagination, he often felt all the languor of discontent. His heart was formed for tenderness; but, alas! it fixed where its affections could not be sacredly confirmed. This uncertain spring of joy at last entirely failed; and his friends, one after another, followed the same beaten track.

From youth to manhood he was a prey to the keenest sensibility: from manhood to old age he was struggling to recover a calm and virtuous state of soul; but, often pierced with regret for the hours he had lost in the early part of his life, and with sorrow for the death of those he tenderly loved, he was continually interrupted in this great and noble pursuit.

What a striking lesson for youth! what an awful lesson for all human beings! to engage them to seize with ardour those fair and unruffled moments that may fix the most pure and sacred principles in their hearts, and lay the foundation of that solid peace through life which, once lost, we have seen is never perfectly regained, not even under the influence and direction of the brightest understanding and the most fervent piety.

Those readers who have been interested in the fortune of Petrarch, will pity his fate, admire his sublime and exalted genius, and revere his humble piety, which their candour, penetration, and sensibility, will draw out to life from this faint and imperfect representation.





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