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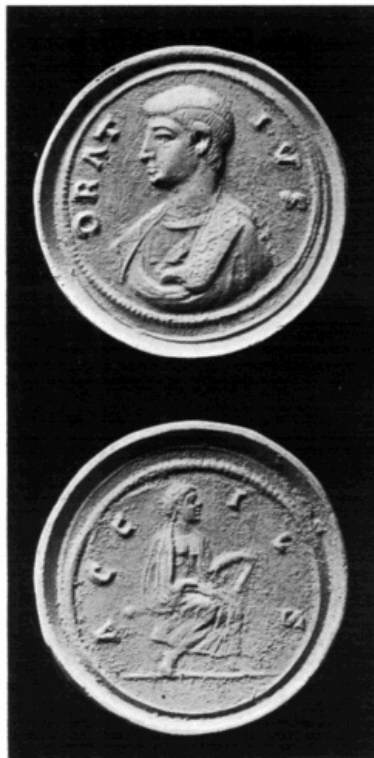
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## HORACE

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[*Bib. Nat., Paris.*]

HORACE.  
From a bronze medallion of the period of Constantine.

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# HORACE

BY REV. W. TUCKWELL, M.A.  
AUTHOR OF "CHAUCER," ETC.



LONDON  
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## THE LIFE OF HORACE

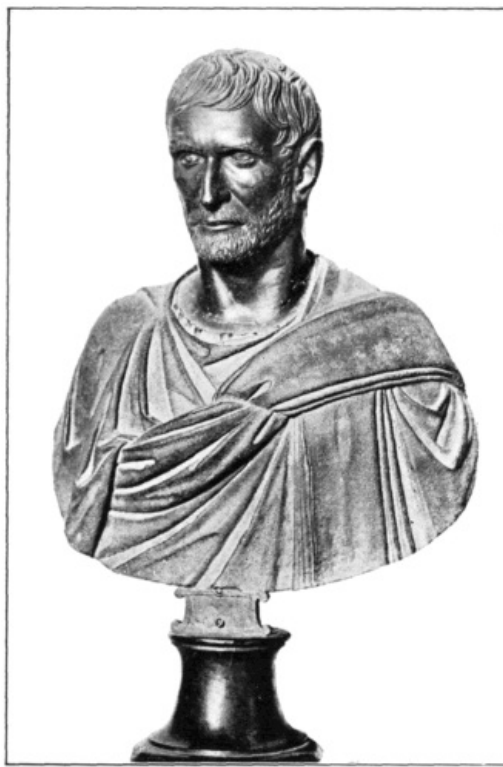
# STRUGGLE

Quintus Horatius Flaccus, the "old popular Horace" of Tennyson, petted and loved, by Frenchmen and Englishmen especially, above all the poets of antiquity, was born on 8th December, B.C. 65. He calls himself in his poems by the three names indifferently, but to us he is known only by the affectionate diminutive of his second or gentile name, borne by his father, according to the fashion of the time, as slave to some member of the noble Horatian family. A slave the father unquestionably had been: meanness of origin was a taunt often levelled against his son, and encountered by him with magnanimous indifference; but long before Horace's birth the older Horatius had obtained his freedom, had gained sufficient money to retire from business, and to become owner of the small estate at Venusia on the borders of Apulia, where the poet was born and spent his childhood. He repeatedly alludes to this loved early home, speaks affectionately of its surrounding scenery, of the dashing river Aufidus, now Ofanto, of the neighbouring towns, Acherontia, Bantia, Forentum, discoverable in modern maps as Acerenza, Vanzi, Forenza, of the crystal Bandusian spring, at whose identity we can only guess. Here he tells us how, wandering in the forest when a child and falling asleep under the trees, he woke to find himself covered up by woodpigeons with leaves, and alludes to a prevailing rural belief that he was specially favoured by the gods. Long afterwards, too, when travelling across Italy with Maecenas, he records with delight his passing glimpse of the familiar wind-swept Apulian hills.

Of his father he speaks ever with deep respect. "Ashamed of him?" he says, "because he was a freedman? whatever moral virtue, whatever charm of character, is mine, that I owe to him. Poor man though he was, he would not send me to the village school frequented by peasant children, but carried me to Rome, that I might be educated with sons of knights and senators. He pinched himself to dress me well, himself attended me to all my lecture-rooms, preserved me pure and modest, fenced me from evil knowledge and from dangerous contact. Of such a sire how should I be ashamed? how say, as I have heard some say, that the fault of a man's low birth is Nature's, not his own? Why, were I to begin my life again, with permission from the gods to select my parents from the greatest of mankind, I would be content, and more than content, with those I had." The whole self-respect and nobleness of the man shines out in these generous lines. (Sat. I, vi, 89.)

Twice in his old age Horace alludes rather disparagingly to his schooldays in Rome: he was taught, he says, out of a translation from Homer by an inferior Latin writer (Ep. II, i, 62, 69), and his master, a retired soldier, one Orbilius, was "fond of the rod" (Ep. II, i, 71). I observe that the sympathies of Horatian editors and commentators, themselves mostly schoolmasters, are with Orbilius as a much enduring paedagogue rather than with his exasperated pupil. We know from other sources that the teacher was a good scholar and a noted teacher, and that, dying in his hundredth year, he was honoured by a marble statue in his native town of Beneventum; but like our English Orbilius, Dr. Busby, he is known to most men only through Horace's resentful epithet;—"a great man," said Sir Roger de Coverley, "a great man; he whipped my grandfather, a very great man!"

The young Englishman on leaving school goes to Oxford or to Cambridge: the young Roman went to Athens. There we find Horace at about nineteen years of age, learning Greek, and attending the schools of the philosophers; those same Stoics and Epicureans whom a few years later the first great Christian Sophist was to harangue on Mars' Hill. These taught from their several points of view the basis of happiness and the aim of life. Each in turn impressed him: for a time he agreed with Stoic Zeno that active duty is the highest good; then lapsed into the easy doctrine of Epicurean Aristippus that subjective pleasure is the only happiness. His philosophy was never very strenuous, always more practical than speculative; he played with his teachers' systems, mocked at their fallacies, assimilated their serious lessons.



*Alinari photo.*

*[Palace of the Conservators, Rome.]*

BRUTUS.

Then into his life at this time came an influence which helped to shape his character, but had nearly wrecked his fortunes. Brutus, fresh from Caesar's murder, was at Athens, residing, as we should say, in his old University, and drawing to himself the passionate admiration of its most brilliant undergraduates; among the rest, of the younger Cicero and of Horace. Few characters in history are more pathetically interesting than his. High born, yet disdainful of ambitious aims, irreproachable in an age of almost universal profligacy, the one pure member of a grossly licentious family, modest and unobtrusive although steeped in all the learning of old Greece, strong of will yet tolerant and gentle, his austerity so tempered by humanism that he won not only respect but love; he had been adored by the gay young patricians, who paid homage to the virtue which they did not rouse themselves to imitate, honoured as an equal by men far older than himself, by Cicero, by Atticus, by Caesar. As we stand before the bust in the Palace of the Conservators which preserves his mobile features, in that face at once sweet and sad, at once young and old, as are the faces not unfrequently of men whose temperaments were never young—already, at thirty-one years old, stamped with the lineaments of a grand but fatal destiny—we seem to penetrate the character of the man whom Dante placed in hell, whom Shakespeare, with sounder and more catholic insight, proclaimed to be the noblest Roman of them all:

[13]

His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up,  
And say to all the world, *This was a man.*

Quitting Athens after a time to take command of the army which had been raised against Antony, Brutus carried Horace in his company with the rank of military tribune. He followed his patron into Asia; one of his early poems humorously describes a scene which he witnessed in the law courts at Clazomenae. (Sat. I, vii, 5.) He was several times in action; served finally at Philippi, sharing the headlong rout which followed on Brutus' death; returned to Rome "humbled and with clipped wings." (Od. II, vii, 10; Ep. II, ii, 50.) His father was dead, his property confiscated in the proscription following on the defeat, he had to begin the world again at twenty-four years old. He obtained some sort of clerkship in a public office, and to eke out its slender emoluments he began to write. What were his earliest efforts we cannot certainly say, or whether any of them survive among the poems recognized as his. He tells us that his first literary model was Archilochus (Ep. I, xix, 24), a Greek poet of 700 B.C., believed to have been the inventor of personal satire, whose stinging pen is said to have sometimes driven its victims to suicide. For a time also he imitated a much more recent satirist, Lucilius, whom he rejected later, as disliking both the harshness of his style and the scurrilous character of his verses. (Sat. I, x.) It has been conjectured therefore that his earliest compositions were severe personal lampoons, written for money and to order, which his maturer taste destroyed. In any case his writings found admirers. About three years after his return to Rome his friends Varius and Virgil praised him to Maecenas; the great man read the young poet's verses, and desired to see him. (Sat. I, vi, 54.)

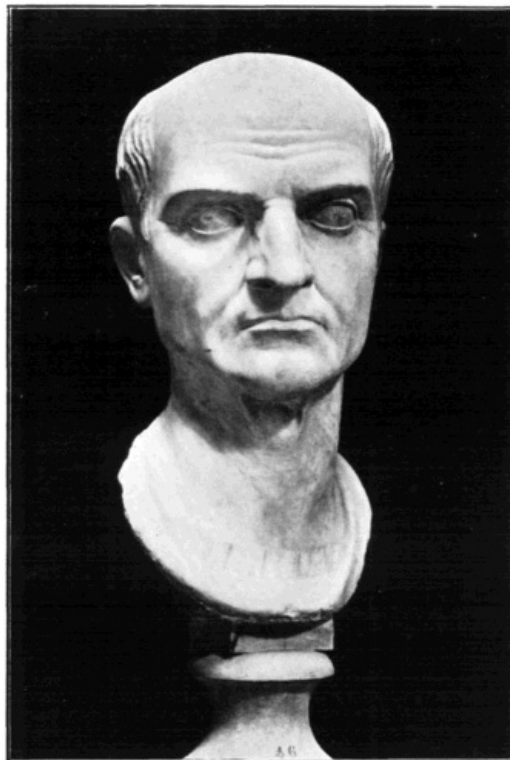
[14]

It is as an enlightened and munificent patron of letters that Maecenas holds his place in popular estimation, but he was much more than this. He had been since Caesar's death the trusty agent and the intimate adviser of Augustus; a hidden hand, directing the most delicate manoeuvres of his master. In adroit resource and suppleness no diplomatist could match him. His acute prevision of events and his penetrating insight into character enabled him to create the

circumstances and to mould the men whose combination was necessary to his aims. By the tact and moderation of his address, the honied words which averted anger, the dexterous reticence which disarmed suspicion, he reconciled opposing factions, veiled arbitrary measures, impressed alike on nobles and on populace the beneficence of imperial despotism, while he kept its harshness out of sight. Far from parading his extensive powers, he masked them by ostentatious humility, refusing official promotion, contented with the inferior rank of "Knight," sitting in theatre and circus below men whom his own hand had raised to station higher than his own. Absorbed in unsleeping political toil, he wore the outward garb of a careless, trifling voluptuary. It was difficult to believe that this apparently effeminate loungeur, foppish in dress, with curled and scented hair, luxuriating in the novel refinement of the warm bath, an epicure in food and drink, patronizing actors, lolling in his litter amid a train of parasites, could be the man on whom, as Horace tells us, civic anxieties and foreign dangers pressed a ceaseless load. He had built himself a palace and laid out noble gardens, the remains of which still exist, at the foot of the Esquiline hill. It had been the foulest and most disreputable slum in Rome, given up to the burial of paupers, the execution of criminals, the obscene rites of witches, a haunt of dogs and vultures. He made it healthy and beautiful; Horace celebrates its salubrity, and Augustus, when an invalid, came thither to breathe its air. (Sat. I, viii, 8, 14.) There Maecenas set out his books and his gems and his Etruscan ware, entertained his literary and high born friends, poured forth his priceless Caecuban and Chian wines. There were drops of bitter in these cups. His beautiful wife Terentia tormented him by her temper and her infidelities; he put her away repeatedly, as often received her back. It was said of him that he had been married a hundred times, though only to a single wife: "What is the latest conjugal news?" men asked as his sumptuous litter passed by, "is it a marriage or a divorce?" And he was haunted by terror of death. "Prolong my life," was his prayer, in words which Seneca has ridiculed and La Fontaine translated finely, yet missing the terseness of the original, "life amid tortures, life even on a cross, only life!"

Qu'on me rend impotent,  
Cul-de-jatte, goutteux, manchot, pourvu qu'en somme  
Je vive, c'est assez; je suis plus que content.

His patronage of intellectual men was due to policy as well as inclination. Himself a cultured literary critic, foreseeing the full-winged soar of writers still half-fledged—the "Aeneid" in Virgil's "Eclogues," the "Odes" of Horace in his "Epodes"—he would not only gather round his board the men whom we know to have been his equals, whose wit and wisdom Horace has embalmed in an epithet, a line, an ode; Varius, and Sulpicius, and Plotius, and Fonteius Capito, and Viscus; but he saw also and utilized for himself and for his master the social influence which a rising poet might wield, the effect with which a bold epigram might catch the public ear, a well-conceived eulogy minister to imperial popularity, an eloquent sermon, as in the noble opening odes of Horace's third book, put vice out of countenance and raise the tone of a decadent community.



*Alinari photo.*

*[Palace of the Conservators, Rome.]*

MAECENAS.

To Horace, then, now twenty-seven years old, these imposing doors were opened. The first interview was unsatisfactory; the young poet was tongue-tied and stammering, the great man reserved and haughty: they parted mutually dissatisfied. Nine months later Maecenas sent for him again, received him warmly, enrolled him formally amongst his friends. (Sat. I, vi, 61.) Horace himself tells the story: he explains neither the first coldness, the long pause, nor the later

cordiality. But he rose rapidly in his patron's favour; a year afterwards we find him invited to join Maecenas on a journey to Brundisium, of which he has left us an amusing journal (Sat. I, v); and about three years later still was presented by him with a country house and farm amongst the Sabine hills, a few miles to the east of Tibur, or, as it is now called, Tivoli.

[18] With this a new chapter in his life begins. During six years he had lived in Rome, first as an impecunious clerk, then as a client of Maecenas. To all Roman homes of quality and consequence clients were a necessary adjunct: men for the most part humble and needy, who attended to welcome the patron when issuing from his chamber in the morning, preceded and surrounded his litter in the streets, clearing a way for it through the crowd; formed, in short, his court, rewarded by a daily basket of victuals or a small sum of money. If a client was involved in litigation, his patron would plead his cause in person or by deputy; he was sometimes asked to dinner, where his solecisms in good breeding and his unfashionable dress, the rustic cut of his beard, thick shoes, gown clumsily draped, made him the butt of the higher guests. Juvenal, in a biting satire, describes the humiliation of a poor client at a rich man's table. "The host," he says, "drinks old beeswined Setian wine, served to him in a gold goblet by a beautiful boy; to you a coarse black slave brings in a cracked cup wine too foul even to foment a bruise. His bread is pure and white, yours brown and mouldy; before him is a huge lobster, before you a lean shore-crab; his fish is a barbel or a lamprey, yours an eel:—and, if you choose to put up with it, you are rightly served." The relation, though not held to be disgraceful, involved sometimes bitter mortifications, and seems to us inconsistent with self-respect. We remember how it was resented in modern times, though in a much milder form, by Edmund Spenser, Dr. Johnson, and the poet Crabbe. Even between a Horace and a Maecenas it must have caused occasional embarrassment: we find the former, for instance, dedicating poems to men whose character he could not respect, but to whom, as his patron's associates, he was bound to render homage; while his supposed intimacy with the all-powerful minister exposed him to tedious solicitants, who waylaid him in his daily walks. He had become sick of "the smoke and the grandeur and the roar of Rome" (Od. III, 29, 12); his Sabine retreat would be an asylum and a haven; would "give him back to himself"; would endow him with competence, leisure, freedom; he hailed it as the mouse in his delightful apologue craved refuge in the country from the splendour and the perils of the town:

Give me again my hollow tree,  
A crust of bread—and liberty.  
(Sat. II, 6, fin.)

[19]

[20] **SUCCESS**

Horace's Sabine farm ranks high among the holy places of the classic world; and through the labours of successive travellers, guided by the scattered indications in his poems, its site is tolerably certain. It was about thirty-two miles from Rome, reached in a couple of hours by pilgrims of the present time; to Horace, who never allowed himself to be hurried, the journey of a full day, or of a leisurely day and a half. Let us follow him as he rides thither on his bob-tailed mule (Sat. I, vi, 104), the heavy saddlebags across its loins stored with scrolls of Plato, of the philosopher Menander, Eupolis the comedian, Archilochus the lyric poet. His road lies along the Valerian Way, portions of whose ancient pavement still remain, beside the swift waters of the Anio, amid steep hills crowned with small villages whose inmates, like the Kenites of Balaam's rhapsody, put their nests in rocks. A ride of twenty-seven miles would bring him to Tivoli, or Tibur, where he stopped to rest, sometimes to pass the night, possessing very probably a cottage in the little town. No place outside his home appealed to him like this. Nine times he mentions it, nearly always with a caressing epithet. It is green Tibur, dew-fed Tibur, Tibur never arid, leisurely Tibur, breezy Tibur, Tibur sloping to the sun. He bids his friend Varus plant vines in the moist soil of his own Tiburtine patrimony there; prays that when the sands of his life run low, he may there end his days; enumerates, in a noble ode (Od. I, 7), the loveliest spots on earth, preferring before them all the headlong Anio, Tibur's groves, its orchards saturated with shifting streams.

The dark pine waves on Tibur's classic steep,  
From rock to rock the headlong waters leap,  
Tossing their foam on high, till leaf and flower  
Glitter like emeralds in the sparkling shower.  
Lovely—but lovelier from the charms that glow  
Where Latium spreads her purple vales below;  
The olive, smiling on the sunny hill,  
The golden orchard, and the ductile rill,  
The spring clear-bubbling in its rocky fount,  
The mossgrown cave, the Naiad's fabled haunt,  
And, far as eye can strain, yon shadowy dome,  
The glory of the earth, Eternal Rome.

No picture of the spot can be more graphic than are these noble lines. They open a Newdigate Prize Poem of just eighty years ago, written, says tradition, by its brilliant author in a single

night. (R. C. Sewell, Magdalen College, 1825.) Tivoli he had never visited; but those who stand to-day beside the Temple of the Sibyl on the edge of its ravine, who enjoy the fair beauty of the headlong Anio and the lesser Cascatelle, of the ruined Temple of Tiburtus, the Grottos of the Sirens and of Neptune, understand how a poet's genius can, as Shakespeare tells us, shadow forth things unseen, and give them local habitation.

[21]

From Tibur, still beside the Anio, we drive for about seven miles, until we reach the ancient Varia, now Vico Varo, mentioned by Horace as the small market town to which his five tenant-farmers were wont to repair for agricultural or municipal business. (Ep. I, xiv, 3.) Here, then, we are in the poet's country, and must be guided by the landmarks in his verse. Just beyond Vico Varo the Anio is joined by the Licenza. This is Horace's Digentia, the stream he calls it whose icy waters freshen him, the stream of which Mandela drinks. (Ep. I, xviii, 104-105.) And there, on its opposite bank, is the modern village Bardela, identified with Mandela by a sepulchral inscription recently dug up. We turn northward, following the stream; the road becomes distressingly steep, recalling a line in which the poet speaks of returning homeward "to his mountain stronghold." (Sat. II, vi, 16.) Soon we reach a village, Roccogiovine, whose central square is named Piazza Vacuna. Vacuna was the ancient name for the goddess Victory; and against the wall is fixed an exhumed tablet telling how the Emperor Vespasian here restored an ancient Temple of Victory. One more echo this name wakes in Horatian ears—he dates a letter to his friend Aristius Fuscus as written "behind the crumbling shrine of Vacuna." (Ep. I, x, 49.) Clearly we are near him now; he would not carry his writing tablets far away from his door. Yet another verification we require. He speaks of a spring just beside his home, cool and fine, medicinal to head and stomach. (Ep. I, xvi, 12.) Here it is, hard by, called to-day Fonte d'Oratini, a survival, we should like to believe, of the name Horatius. Somewhere close at hand must have been the villa, on one side or the other of a small hill now called Monte Rotondo. We may take our Horace from our pocket, and feel, as with our Wordsworth at Dove Cottage, with our Scott at Ashestiel, that we are gazing on the hills, the streams, and valleys, which received the primal outpourings of their muse, and are for ever vocal with its memories.

[22]



THE SITE OF HORACE'S VILLA.

From M. Rotondo, eastward to the Licenza, and southward to the high ground of Roccogiovine, stretched apparently the poet's not inconsiderable demesne. Part of it he let off to five peasants on the *métayage* system; the rest he cultivated himself, employing eight slaves superintended by a bailiff. The house, he tells us, was simple, with no marble pillars or gilded cornices (Od. II, xviii), but spacious enough to receive and entertain a guest from town, and to welcome occasionally his neighbours to a cheerful evening meal—"nights and suppers as of gods" (Sat. II, vi, 65), he calls them; where the talk was unfashionably clean and sensible, the fare beans and bacon, garden stuff and chicory and mallows. Around the villa was a garden, not filled with flowers, of which in one of his odes he expresses dislike as unremunerative (Od. II, xv, 6), but laid out in small parallelograms of grass, edged with box and planted with clipped hornbeam. The house was shaded from above by a grove of ilexes and oaks; lower down were orchards of olives, wild plums, cornels, apples. In the richer soil of the valley he grew corn, whose harvests never failed him, and, like Eve in Eden, led the vine to wed her elm. Against this last experiment his bailiff grumbled, saying that the soil would grow spice and pepper as soon as ripen grapes (Ep. I, xiv, 23); but his master persisted, and succeeded. Inviting Maecenas to supper, he offers Sabine wine from his own estate (Od. I, xx, 1); and visitors to-day, drinking the juice of the native grape at the little Roccogiovine inn, will be of opinion with M. de Florac, that "this little wine of the country has a most agreeable smack." Here he sauntered day by day, watched his labourers, working sometimes, like Ruskin at Hincksey, awkwardly to their amusement with his own hands; strayed now and then into the lichened rocks and forest wilds beyond his farm, surprised there one day by a huge wolf, who luckily fled from his presence (Od. I, xxii, 9); or—most enjoyable of all—lay beside spring or river with a book or friend of either sex.

[23]

A book of verses underneath the bough,  
A loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and thou  
Beside me singing in the wilderness,  
Oh, wilderness were Paradise enow!

So roll to each other across the ages and the continents echoes of the Persian and the Roman bards.

[24]

Of the *beauty* of his home he speaks always modestly; it may not compare with Praeneste, Tarentum, Baiae; its *charm* he is never weary of extolling. Nowhere, he says, is the air sweeter and more balmy, in summer temperate, warm in winter; but beyond all this it yielded calm, tranquillity, repose, making, as Wordsworth says, the very thought of country life a thought of refuge; and that was what, so long in populous city pent, he longed to find, and found. It was his *home*, where he could possess his soul, could be self-centred and serene. "This," says Ruskin, "is the true nature of Home; it is the Place of Peace."

He loved the country, yet he was no hermit. When sickened of town life he could apostrophize the country in the beautiful lines which many a jaded Londoner has echoed (Sat. II, vi, 60); but after some months of its placid joys the active social side of him would re-assert itself: the welcoming friends of the great city, its brilliant talk, its rush of busy life, recovered their attractiveness, and for short intervals, in the healthy season of the year, he would return to Rome. There it is less easy to image him than in his rustic home. Nature, if spared by man, remains unaltered; the heights and recesses of the Digentian valley meet our eye to-day scarce changed in twenty centuries, but the busy, crowded Rome of Horace is now only a desolate excavation. We stand upon the "Rock of Triumph," the Capitoline Hill, looking down upon the Forum: it lies like a stonemason's yard: stumps of pillars, fragments of brick or marble, overthrown entablatures, pillars, altars, tangles of staircases and enclosures, interspersed with poppies, wild oats, trefoils, confuse and crowd it:

[25]

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grow  
Matted and massed together, hillocks heaped  
On what were chambers; arch crushed, columns strown  
In fragments; choked up vaults, where the owl peeped,  
Deeming it midnight.

But patient, daily survey, educated by the restorations of a Lanciani, enables us to piece together these encumbering ruins, until with tolerable clearness we can follow Horace in his walk along the Via Sacra towards Caesar's gardens, and can fairly reconstruct the objects which must have met his view. Everywhere is haunted ground: there is the bronze wolf of the Capitol, "thunder-stricken nurse of Rome," and the Tarpeian rock, from which "the Traitor's leap cured all ambition." There is the mythical gulf of Curtius, and the Mamertine prison where the Catiline conspirators were strangled, with its vault into which Jugurtha, after gracing the triumph of Marius, was hurled to die. Maiden-hair fern grows profusely in the crevices of Juturna's well, hard by the spring where the great twin brethren gave their horses drink after the battle of the Lake Regillus. Half covered with a mass of green acanthus is the base of Vesta's Temple, adjoining the atrium of the Virgins' house surrounded with their portrait statues: their names are engraved on each pedestal, but one is carefully erased, its original having, it is supposed, violated her vestal vow. We pause upon the spot where Caesar's body was burned, and beside the rostra whence Cicero thundered, and Antony spoke his "Friends, Romans, countrymen"; return finally to the Capitoline Museum, nucleus and centre of the ancient mistress of the world, to gaze upon gods, senators, emperors, shining still in undiminished majesty; on the Antinous, the Amazon, the Juno, the Dying Gladiator, and the Grecian masterpiece of Praxiteles.

[26]



*Alinari photo.*]

#### THE ROMAN FORUM.

Of his life in Rome Horace has given us a minute account (Sat. I, vi, 110, etc.). "Waking usually about six, I lie in bed or on my sofa, reading and writing, till nearly ten o'clock; anoint myself, go to the Campus for a game at ball, return home to a light luncheon. Then perhaps I amuse myself at home, perhaps saunter about the town; look in at the Circus and gossip with the fortune-tellers who swarm there when the games are over; walk through the market, inquiring the price of garden stuff and grain. Towards evening I come home to my supper of leeks and pulse and fritters, served by my three slave-boys on a white marble slab, which holds besides two drinking



[27]

cups and ladle, a saltcellar shaped like a sea-urchin, an oil flask, and a saucer of cheap Campanian ware; and so at last I go to bed, not harassed by the thought that I need rise at day-break." Sometimes, to his great annoyance, he would be roused early to become sponsor in the law courts for a friend; shivering in the morning cold, pelted by falling hailstones, abused by the crowd through which he had to force his way. Or he would accompany Maecenas on a drive, their talk of matters trivial—the time of day, the early frosts, the merits of popular gladiators. We remember how delightfully Pope has adapted the passage to his own relation with Harley. (Imitation of Sat. II, vi.) Often he dined with Maecenas or his friends, and one such dinner he has described, at the house of a rich, vulgar epicure (Sat. II, viii). The guests were nine in number, including Maecenas, Varius, and Viscus: they lay on couches at maplewood tables arranged in three sides of a square. The first course was a Lucanian wild boar garnished with salads; when that was removed, servants wiped the board with purple napkins. Then a procession of slaves brought in Caecuban and Chian wines, accompanied with cheesecakes, fish, and apples. The second course was a vast lamprey, prawns swimming in its sauce; the third an olio of crane, hare, goose's liver, blackbirds, and wood-pigeons. A sumptuous meal, but spoiled by the host's tedious disquisitions on each dish as it appeared. Of social gatherings in their higher aspect, of the feasts of reason which he must have often shared at his patron's board, we long to know, but Horace is discreet; for him the rose of Harpocrates was suspended over every caenobium, and he would not profane its sacrament. He sat there as an equal, we know; his attitude towards those above him had in it no tinge of servility. That he was, and meant to be, independent they were fairly warned; when Maecenas wished to heap on him further benefits, he refused: "What I have is enough and more than enough," he said, "nay, should fortune shake her wings and leave me, I know how to resign her gifts" (Od. III, xxix, 53). And if not to Maecenas, so neither to Maecenas' master, would he sacrifice his freedom. The emperor sought his friendship, writes caressingly to Maecenas of "this most lovable little bit of a man," wished to make him his secretary, showed no offence at his refusal. His letters use the freedom of an intimate. "Septimius will tell you how highly I regard you. I happened to speak of you in his presence; if you disdain my friendship, I shall not disdain in return."—"I wish your little book were bigger; you seem to fear lest your books should be bigger than yourself."—"I am vexed with you, that you have never addressed one of your Epistles to myself; are you afraid that to have appeared as my friend will hurt you with posterity?" Such royal solicitations are a command, and Horace responded by the longest and one amongst the most admired of his Epistles (Ep. II, i). This was his final effort, unless the fragmentary essay on criticism, known as the "Art of Poetry," belongs to these last years; if that be so, his closing written words were a humorous disparagement of the "homely slighted shepherd's trade" (A. P. 470-476).

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His life was drawing to a close; his friends were falling round him like leaves in wintry weather. Tibullus was dead, and so was Virgil, dearest and whitest-souled of men (Sat. I, v, 41); Maecenas was in failing health and out of favour. Old age had come to himself before its time; love, and wine, and festal crown of flowers had lost their zest:

[29]

Soon palls the taste for noise and fray,  
When hair is white and leaves are sere.

But he rallies his life-long philosophy to meet the change; patience lightens the inevitable; while each single day is his he will spend and enjoy it in such fashion that he may say at its conclusion, "I have lived" (Od. III, xxix, 41). His health had never been good, undermined, he believed, by the hardships of his campaign with Brutus; all the care of Augustus' skilful physician, Antonius Musa, failed to prolong his days. He passed away on the 17th of November, B.C. 8, in his fifty-seventh year; was buried on the Esquiline Hill, in a grave near to the sepulchre of Maecenas, who had died only a few days before; fulfilling the promise of an early ode, shaped almost in the words of Moabitish Ruth, that he would not survive his friend.

The self-same day  
Shall crush us twain; no idle oath  
Has Horace sworn; where'er you go,  
We both will travel, travel both  
The last dark journey down below.  
Od. II, xvii.

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## THE SATIRES AND EPISTLES

Horace's poems are of two kinds; of one kind the Satires and Epistles, of another the Odes and Epodes. Their order and dates of publication are shown in the following table:

- B.C.
- 35. First Book of Satires.
  - 30. Second Book of Satires, and Epodes.
  - 23. First three Books of Odes.
  - 20. First Book of Epistles.

- 19. Epistle to Florus.
- 17. The Century Hymn.
- about 13. Fourth Book of the Odes.
- 13. Epistle to Augustus.
- (?) 10. The Art of Poetry.

[31] Let us examine first the Satires and Epistles. The word "Satire" meant originally a *farrago*, a medley of various topics in various styles and metres. But all early writings of this kind have perished; and the first extant Latin satirist, Lucilius, who lived in the second century B.C., devoted his pen to castigating the vices of contemporary society and of living individuals. This style of writing, together with his six-foot measure, called hexameter, was adopted by the ethical writers who followed him, Horace, Persius, Juvenal; and so gave to the word satire a meaning which it retains to-day. In more than one passage Horace recognizes Lucilius as his master, and imitates him in what is probably the earliest, certainly the coarsest and least artistic of his poems; but maturer judgement, revolting later against the censorious spirit and bad taste of the older writer, led him to abandon his model. For good taste is the characteristic of these poems; they form a comedy of manners, shooting as it flies the folly rather than the wickedness of vice: not wounding with a red-hot iron, but "just flicking with uplifted lash," Horace stands to Juvenal as Chaucer stands to Langland, as Dante to Boccaccio. His theme is life and conduct, the true path to happiness and goodness. I write sermons in sport, he says; but sermons by a fellow-sinner, not by a dogmatic pulpiter, not by a censor or a cynic. "Conversations" we may rather call them; the polished talk of a well-bred, cultured, practised worldling, lightening while they point the moral which he ever keeps in view, by transitions, personalities, ironies, anecdotes; by perfect literary grace, by the underlying sympathy whereby wit is sublimed and softened into humour.

[32] So he tells stories; often trivial, but redeemed by the lightness of his touch, the avoidance of redundancy, the inevitable epithets, the culminating point and finish. He illustrates the extravagance of the day by the spendthrift Clodius, who dissolved in vinegar a pearl taken from the ear of beautiful Metella (Sat. II, iii, 239), that he might enjoy drinking at one draught a million sesterces, near a thousand pounds. More than once he returns to castigation of the gluttony, which, though not yet risen to the monstrosity described by Juvenal, was invading the houses of the wealthy. He tells of two brothers—"a precious pair"—who used to breakfast daily upon nightingales: of one Maenius, who ruined himself in fieldfares (Ep. I, xv, 41). In a paper on the "Art of Dining" he accumulates ironical gastronomic maxims (Sat. II, iv): as that oblong eggs are to be preferred to round; that cabbages should be reared in dry soil; that the forelegs of a doe-hare are choice titbits; that to make a fowl tender you must plunge it alive into boiling wine and water; that oysters are best at the new moon; that prawns and snails give zest to wine; that olive oil should be mixed with pickled tunny roe, chopped herbs, and saffron. If these prescriptions are observed, he says, travestying a fine Lucretian line, the diner-out may draw near to and drink deep from the well-spring of a happy life. By contrast he paints the character of Ofellus, a farmer, whom he had known when a boy on the Apulian hills, and had visited in his old age (Sat. II, ii). Deprived of his estate after Philippi, Ofellus had rented it from its new master, working on as tenant where he had formerly been lord. "How are we worse off now?" says the gallant old fellow to his sons. "When I was rich, we lived on smoked bacon and cabbages, with perhaps a pullet or a kid if a friend dropped in; our dessert of split figs and raisins grown upon the farm. Well, we have just the same to-day. What matter that they called me 'owner' then, that a stranger is called owner now? There is no such thing as 'owner.' This man turned us out, someone else may turn him out to-morrow; his heir will do so at any rate when he dies. The farm was called mine once, it is called his to-day; it can never 'belong' to anyone except the man who works and uses it. So, my boys, keep stout hearts, and be ready to meet adversity bravely when it comes."

[34] He lashes the legacy-hunters, who, in a time when disinclination to marriage had multiplied the number of childless old men, were becoming a curse to society; gives rules with affected seriousness for angling in a senior's hoards (Sat. II, v). Be sure you send him game, tell him often how you love him, address him by his first, what we should call his Christian, name—that tickles sensitive ears. If he offers you his will, refuse to read it, but glance sidelong at the line where the names of legatees are written. Praise his bad verses, shoulder a way for him in the streets, entreat him to cover up from cold his dear old head, make up to his housekeeper, flatter him till he bids you stop. Then when he is dead and you find yourself his heir, shed tears, spend money on his funeral, bear your honours meekly—and go on to practise upon someone else. And he throws in a sly story of a testatrix who bequeathed her money on condition that the heir should carry to the grave upon his naked shoulders her body oiled all over; he had stuck to her all her life, and she hoped to shake him off for a moment after death. He enforces the virtue of moderation and contentment from Aesop's fables, of the frog, of the daw with borrowed plumage, of the lean weasel who squeezed himself into a granary through a tiny hole, and grew so fat that he could not return; from the story of Philippus, who amused himself by enriching a poor man to the ruin of his victim's peace and happiness (Ep. I, vii, 46); and from the delightful apologue of the City and the Country Mouse (Sat. II, vi). He denounces the folly of miserliness from the example of the ant, provident in amassing store, but restful in fruition of it when amassed; reproves ill-natured judgement of one's neighbours almost in the words of Prior, bidding us be to their faults a little blind and to their virtues very kind, softening their moral blemishes as lovers and mothers euphemize a dear one's physical defects. (Sat. I, iii) "You will not listen to me?" he stops now and then to say; "I shall continue to cry on all the same until I rouse you, as the

audience in the theatre did the other day" (Sat. II, iii, 60). For it seems that one Fufius, a popular actor, assumed in a tragedy the part of Trojan Ilione, whose cue was to fall asleep upon the stage until roused with a whisper of "Mother awake!" by the ghost of her dead son Deiphilus. Poor Fufius was tipsy, fell asleep in earnest, and was insensible to the ghost's appeal, until the audience, entering into the fun, unanimously shouted, "Wake up, Mother!" Some of you, I know, he goes on, will listen, even as Polemon did (Sat. II, iii, 254). Returning from a debauch, the young profligate passed the Academy where Xenocrates was lecturing, and burst riotously in. Presently, instead of scoffing, he began to hearken; was touched and moved and saddened, tore off conscience-stricken his effeminate ornaments, long sleeves, purple leggings, cravat, the garland from his head, the necklace from his throat; came away an altered and converted man. One thinks of a poem by Rossetti, and of something further back than that; for did we not hear the story from sage Mr. Barlow's lips, in our Sandford and Merton salad days?

In the earlier Satires his personalities are sometimes gross: chatterbox Fabius, scattercash Nomentanus, blear-eyed Crispinus, Hermogenes the fop, Pantolabus the trencherman, Gorgonius the goat-scented, Rufillus the pastille-perfumed, were derisive sobriquets, which, while ministering to the censoriousness of readers by names genuine or well understood, must have bitterly offended the men thus stigmatized or transparently indicated. This he admits regretfully in his later Satires, throwing some blame on a practice of his father, who when cautioning him against vice, always pointed the warning by some example from among their acquaintance. So, leaving personal satire, he turns to other topics; relates divertingly the annoyances of a journey; the mosquitoes, the frogs which croaked all night (Sat. I, v), the bad water and the ill-baked bread. Or he paints the slummy quarter of the city in which the witches held their horrible rites, and describes their cruel orgies as he peeped at them through the trees one night. Or he girds, facetiously and without the bitterness of Persius or Juvenal, at the Jews (Sat. I, v, 100), whose stern exclusiveness of faith was beginning to excite in Rome the horror vigorously expressed by Gallio in M. Anatole France's recent brilliant work. Or he delineates, on a full canvas and with the modernity which is amongst his most endearing characteristics, the "Bore" of the Augustan age. He starts on a summer morning, light-hearted and thinking of nothing at all, for a pleasant stroll along the Sacred Way (Sat. I, ix).<sup>1</sup> A man whom he hardly knew accosts him, ignores a stiff response, clings to him, refuses to be shaken off, sings his own praises as poet, musician, dancer, presses impertinent questions as to the household and habits of Maecenas. Horace's friend Fuscus meets them; the poet nods and winks, imploring him to interpose a rescue. Cruel Fuscus sees it all, mischievously apologizes, will not help, and the shy, amiable poet walks on with his tormentor, "his ears dropped like those of an overladen ass." At last one of the bore's creditors comes up, collars him with threats, hales him to the law courts, while the relieved poet quotes in his joy from the rescue of Hector in the Iliad, "Thus Apollo bore me from the fray." In this Satire, which was admirably imitated by Swift, it always seems to me that we get Horace at his very best, his dry quaintness and his inoffensive fun. The *delicacy* of Roman satire died with him; to reappear in our own Augustan age with Addison and Steele, to find faint echo in the gentle preachments of Cowper, to impress itself in every page on the lambent humour, the self-accusing tolerance, the penetrative yet benignant wit of Thackeray.

Between the latest of the Satires and the earliest of the Epistles, we have to reckon an interval of something like ten years, during which had been published the Epodes and the majority of the Odes. "Epistles" his editors have agreed to entitle them; but not all of them are genuine Letters. Some are rather dedicated than written to the persons whose names they bear; some are thrown for literary purposes into epistolary form; some again are definitely and personally addressed to friends. "Sermons" he calls them himself as he called the Satires, and their motive is mostly the same; like those, they are Conversations, only with absent correspondents instead of with present interlocutors, real or imagined. He follows in them the old theme, the art of living, the happiness of moderation and contentment; preaching easily as from Rabelais' easy chair, with all the Frenchman's wit, without his grossness. And, as we read, we feel how the ten years of experience, of thought, of study, have matured his views of life, how again the labour spent during their progress on lyrical composition, with perhaps the increasing influence over his taste of Virgil's poetry, have trained his ear, mellowed and refined his style. "The Epistles of Horace," says Dean Milman, "are, with the Poem of Lucretius, the Georgics of Virgil, and perhaps the Satires of Juvenal, the most perfect and most original form of Roman verse."

Of the three letters to Maecenas, one, like the Ode we have before quoted on p. 28, is a vigorous assertion of independence. The great man, sorely sick and longing for his friend, had written peevishly (Ep. I, vii), "You said you should be absent five days only, and you stay away the whole of August." "Well—I went away because I was ill, and I remain away because in this 'undertakers' month,' as you call it in Rome, I am afraid of being worse if I go back. When cold weather comes I shall go down to the sea; then, with the first swallow, dear friend, your poet will revisit you. I love you fondly; am grateful to you every hour of my life; but if you want to keep me always by your side, you must restore to me the tender grace of vanished youth; strong lungs, thick black hair, musical voice and ringing laughter; with our common love for pretty Cinara now dead and gone." A positive sturdy refusal, not without hints that if the patron repents his benefactions or demands sacrifice of freedom in exchange for them, he had better take them back: yet a remonstrance so disarming, infused with such a blend of respect and playfulness, such wealth of witty anecdote and classical allusion, that we imagine the fretfulness of the appeased protector evaporating in admiration as he reads, the answer of affectionate apology and acceptance dictated in his pacified response.

In another inimitable letter (Ep. I, 9), as brief as this is long, he recommends his friend Septimius to Tiberius Claudius Nero, stepson of Augustus, a young man of reserved unpleasant manners, and difficult to approach. The suasive grace with which it disclaims presumption, yet pleads his own merits as a petitioner and his friend's as a candidate for favour, with its dignified deference, implied not fulsome, to the young prince's rank, have caused it to be compared with that masterpiece of delicate solicitation, St. Paul's Epistle to Philemon. It is cited by Steele in the "Spectator" as a model of epistolary tact ("Spectator," No. 493); we cannot improve upon his translation:

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"Septimius, who waits on you with this, is clearly well acquainted with the place you are pleased to allow me in your friendship. For when he beseeches me to recommend him to your notice in such a manner as to be received by you, who are delicate in the choice of your friends and domestics, he knows our intimacy and understands my ability to serve him better than I do myself. I have defended myself against his ambition to be yours as long as I possibly could; but fearing the imputation of hiding my influence with you out of mean and selfish considerations, I am at last prevailed upon to give you this trouble. Thus, to avoid the appearance of a greater fault, I have put on this confidence. If you can forgive such transgression of modesty in behalf of a friend, receive this gentleman into your interests and friendship, and take it from me that he is a brave and honest man."

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An epistle written and sent about the same time, possibly by the same bearer, shows Horace in an amiable light as kindly Mentor to the young Telemachi of rank who were serving on Tiberius' staff (Ep. I, iii). "Tell me, Florus, whereabouts you are just now, in snowy Thrace or genial Asia? which of you poets is writing the exploits of Augustus? how does Titius get on with his Latin rendering of Pindar? my dear friend Celsus, what is he at work upon? his own ideas, I hope, not cribs from library books. And you? are you abandoning all other allurements for the charms of divine philosophy? Tell me, too, if you have made up your quarrel with Munatius. To break the tie of brotherhood is a crime: please, please be friends with him again, and bring him with you when next you come to see me. I am fattening a calf to feast you both." Here is a dinner invitation (Ep. I, v.): "If you can put up with deal tables and a mess of greens served in a common dish, with wine five years old and not at all bad, come and sup with me, Torquatus, at sunset. We have swept up the hearth and cleaned the furniture; you may see your face reflected in cup and platter. We will have a long summer evening of talk, and you can sleep afterwards as late as you like, for to-morrow is Augustus' birthday, and there will be no business in the courts. I told you the wine is good, and there is nothing like good drink. It unlocks reticence, unloads hearts, encourages the shy, makes the tongue-tied eloquent and the poor opulent. I have chosen my company well: there will be no blab to repeat our conversation out of doors. Butra and Septimius are coming, and I hope Sabinus. Just send a line to say whom you would like to have besides. Bring friends if you choose, but the weather is hot, and we must not overcrowd the rooms." It all sounds delightful, except perhaps the mess of greens; but a good Italian cook can make vegetables tempting down to the present day. I think we should all have loved to be there, as at the neat repast of Attic taste with wine, which tempted virtuous Laurence to sup with Milton. So should we like to know what called forth this pretty piece of moralizing, addressed to the poet Tibullus (Ep. I, iv). He was handsome, prosperous, popular, yet melancholy. Horace affectionately reproves him. "Dear Albius," he says, using the intimate fore-name, "Dear Albius, tell me what you are about in your pretty villa: writing delicate verses, strolling in your forest glades, with thoughts and fancies I am sure all that a good man's should be? What can you want besides the beauty, wealth, full purse, and seemly household which the gods have given you? Dear friend, I tell you what you want, contentment with the present hour. Try and imagine that each day which dawns upon you is your last; then each succeeding day will come unexpected and delightful. I practise what I preach: come and take a look at me; you will find me contented, sleek, and plump, 'the fattest little pig in Epicurus' sty.'" And he impresses the same lesson on another friend, Bullatius, who was for some reason restless at home and sought relief in travel. "What ails you to scamper over Asia or voyage among the Isles of Greece? Sick men travel for health, but you are well. Sad men travel for change, but change diverts not sadness, yachts and chaises bring no happiness; their skies they change, but not their souls who cross the sea. Enjoy the to-day, dear friend, which God has given you, the place where God has placed you: a Little Pedlington is cheerful if the mind be free from care" (Ep. I, xi).

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His great friend Fuscus twits him, as Will Honeycomb twitted Mr. Spectator, with his passion for a country life (Ep. I, x). "You are a Stoic," Horace says, "your creed is to live according to Nature. Do you expect to find her in the town or in the country? whether of the two yields more peaceful nights and sweeter sleep? is a marble floor more refreshing to the eyes than a green meadow? water poured through leaden pipes purer than the crystal spring? Even amid your Corinthian columns you plant trees and shrubs; though you drive out Nature she will silently return and supplant your fond caprices. Do interpose a little ease and recreation amid the money-grubbing which confines you to the town. Money should be the servant, not the queen, the captive, not the conqueror. If you want to see a happy man, come to me in the country. I have only one thing wanting to perfect happiness, my desire for your society." Two longer letters are written to his young friend Lollius (Ep. I, ii, xviii). The first is a study of Homer, which he has been reading in the country. In the "Iliad" he is disgusted by the reckless selfishness of the leaders; in the hero of the "Odyssey" he sees a model of patient, wise endurance, and impresses the example on his friend. It is curious that the great poet of one age, reading the greater poet of another, should fasten his attention, not on the poetry, but on the ethics of his predecessor. The remaining letter is called out by Lollius' appointment as confidential secretary to some man of great consequence; an office such as Horace himself declined when offered by Augustus. The post, he says, is full of difficulty, and endangering to self-respect: the servility it exacts will be

intolerable to a man so truthful, frank, and independent as his friend. Let him decline it; or, if committed, get out of it as soon as possible.

[44] Epistles there are without a moral purpose, called forth by some special occasion. He sends his "Odes" by one Asella for presentation to Augustus, punning on the name, as representing an Ass laden with manuscripts (Ep. I, xiii). The fancy was carried out by Pope in his frontispiece to the "Dunciad." Then his doctor tells him to forsake Baiae as a winter health resort, and he writes to one Vala, who lives in southern Italy, inquiring as to the watering places lower down the coast (Ep. I, xv). He must have a place where the bread is good and the water pure; the wine generous and mellow; in the market wild boars and hares, sea-urchins and fine fish. He can live simply at home, but is sick now and wants cherishing, that he may come back fat as one of the Phaeacians—luxurious subjects, we remember, of King Alcinous in the "Odyssey,"

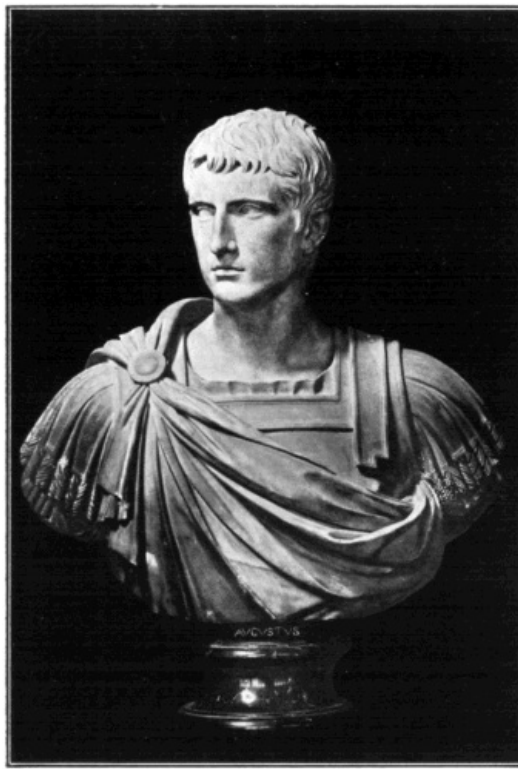
Good food we love, and music, and the dance,  
Garments oft changed, warm baths, and restful beds.  
Odyssey, viii, 248.

Julius Florus, poet and orator, presses him to write more lyrics (Ep. II, ii). For many reasons, no, he answers. I no longer want money. I am getting old. Lyrics are out of fashion. No one can write in Rome. I have become fastidious. His sketch of the ideal poet is believed to portray the writings of his friend Virgil. It is nobly paraphrased by Pope:

But how severely with themselves proceed  
The men, who write such verse as we can read!  
Their own strict judges, not a word they spare,  
That wants or force, or light, or weight, or care;  
Pour the full tide of eloquence along,  
Serenely pure, and yet divinely strong;  
Prune the luxuriant, the uncouth refine,  
But show no mercy to an empty line;  
Then polish all with so much life and ease,  
You think 'tis nature, and a knack to please;  
But ease in writing flows from art, not chance,  
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

[45] The "Epistle to Augustus" (Ep. II, i) was written (page 28) at the Emperor's request. After some conventional compliments it passes to a criticism of Latin poetry past and present; comparing, like Swift's "Battle of the Books," the merits of the contemporary and of the older masters. There is a foolish mania just now, he says, for admiring our older poets, not because they are good, but because they are old. The origin and development of Roman poetry made it certain that perfection must come late. He assumes that Augustus champions the moderns, and compliments him on the discernment which preferred a Virgil and a Varius (and so, by implication, a Horace) to the Plautuses and Terences of the past.

[46] The "Art of Poetry" is thought to be an unfinished work. Unmethodical and without proportion, it may have been either compiled clumsily after the poet's death, or put together carelessly by himself amid the indolence which grows sometimes upon old age. It declares the essentials of poetry to be unity of conception and ingenuity of diction, urges that mechanical correctness must be inspired by depth of feeling, gives technical rules of dramatic action, of the chorus, of metre. For matter such as this a Horace was not needed, but the felicity of its handling has made it to many Horatian students the most popular of his conversational works. It abounds in passages of finished beauty; such as his comparison of verbal novelties imported into a literature with the changing forest leaves; his four ages of humanity—the childish, the adolescent, the manly, the senile—borrowed from Aristotle, expanded by Shakespeare, and taken up by Keats; his comparison of Poetry to Painting; his delineation of an honest critic. Brief phrases which have become classical abound. The "purple patch" sewn on to a sober narrative; the wine jar turning to a pitcher as the potter's wheel revolves; the injunction to keep a book ten years before you publish it; the near kinship of terseness to obscurity; the laughable outcome of a mountain's labour; the warning to be chary of bringing gods upon the stage; the occasional nod of Homer;—are commonplace citations so crisp and so exhaustive in their Latin garb, that even the unlettered scientist imports them into his treatises, sometimes with curious effect.



*Alinari photo.*

*[Uffizi Gallery, Florence.]*

#### AUGUSTUS.

If for a full appreciation of these minor beauties a knowledge of the Latin text is necessary, the more abounding charm of both Satires and Epistles is accessible to the Latinless reader. For the bursts of poetry are brief and rare, issuing from amid what Horace often reminds us are essentially plain prose essays in conversational form, their hexametral garb an unpoetical accident. Two versions present themselves to the unclassical student. The first is Conington's scholarly rendering, hampered sometimes rather than adorned by its metrical shape; the other is the more recent construe of Dean Wickham, clear, flowing, readable, stamping with the translator's high authority many a disputed passage. Both set temptingly before English readers the Rome of Horace's day, and promote them to an intimacy with his own mind, character, history. Preferable to both, no doubt, are the "Imitations" of Pope, which do not aim at literal transference, but work, as does his yet more famous Homer, by melting down the original, and pouring the fused mass into an English mould. Their background is Twit'nam and the Mall instead of Tibur and the Forum; their Maecenas St. John, their Trebatius Fortescue, their Numicius Murray. Where Horace appeals to Ennius and Attius, they cite Shakespeare and Cowley; while the forgotten wits, worthies, courtiers, spendthrifts of Horatian Rome reappear as Lord Hervey or Lady Mary, as Shippen, Chartres, Oldfield, Darteneuf; and Horace's delicate flattery of a Roman Emperor is travestied with diabolical cleverness into bitter mockery of an English king. In these easy and polished metamorphoses we have Pope at his very best; like Horace, an epitome of his time, bearing the same relation, as patriot, scholar, worldling, epicurean, poet, satirist, to the London of Queen Anne, which Horace bore to the Augustan capital; and so reproducing in an English garb something at any rate of the exotic flavour of his original. In an age when Pope is undeservedly and disastrously neglected, I shall do well to present some few Horatian samples from the king-poet of his century; by whose wit and finish, unsurpassed if not unequalled in our literature, the taste of my own contemporaries was formed; and to whom a public which decries or ignores him pays homage every day, by quoting from him unconsciously oftener than from anyone except Shakespeare.

Here is a specimen from the Satires, heightening our interest in Horace's picture by its adaptation to familiar English characters. Great Scipio and Laelius, says Horace (Sat. II, i, 72), could unbend their dignity to trifle and even to romp with Lucilius. Says Pope of his own Twickenham home:

Know, all the distant din that world can keep  
Rolls o'er my Grotto, and but soothes my sleep.  
There my retreat the best Companions grace,  
Chiefs out of war, and Statesmen out of place.  
There St. John mingles with my friendly bowl  
The feast of reason and the flow of soul:  
And he, whose lightning pierced the Iberian lines,  
Now forms my Quincunx and now ranks my vines,  
Or tames the genius of the stubborn plain,  
Almost as quickly as he conquered Spain.

That Naevius is no longer read (Ep. II, i, 53) affects us slightly, for of Naevius we know nothing; Pope substitutes a writer known and admired still:

Who now reads Cowley? if he pleases yet,  
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;  
Forget his Epic, nay, Pindaric art,  
But still I love the language of his heart.

[49]

Horace tells how the old rough Saturnian measure gave way to later elegance (Ep. II, i, 157). Pope aptly introduces these fine resonant lines:

Waller's was smooth; but Dryden taught to join  
The varying verse, the full resounding line,  
The long majestic march, and energy divine.

Horace claims for poetry that it lifts the mind from the coarse and sensual to the imaginative and pure (Ep. II, i, 128). Pope illustrates by a delightful compliment to moral Addison, with just one little flick of the lash to show that he remembered their old quarrel:

In our own day (excuse some courtly stains),  
No whiter page than Addison's remains.  
He from the taste obscene reclaims our youth,  
And sets the passions on the side of Truth;  
Forms the soft bosom with the gentlest art,  
And pours each human virtue in the heart.

Horace, speaking of an old comic poet, Livius (Ep. II, i, 69), whom he had been compelled to read at school, is indignant that a single neat line or happy phrase should preserve an otherwise contemptible composition. This is Pope's expansion:

But, for the wits of either Charles' days,  
The mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease,  
Sprat, Carew, Sedley, and a hundred more,  
Like twinkling stars the Miscellanies o'er,  
One simile, that solitary shines  
In the dry desert of a thousand lines,  
Or lengthened thought that gleams through many a page,  
Has sanctified whole poems for an age.

[50]

Horace paints the University don as he had seen him emerging from his studious seclusion to walk the streets of Athens, absent, meditative, moving the passers-by to laughter (Ep. II, ii, 81). Pope carries him to Oxford:

The man, who, stretched in Isis' calm retreat,  
To books and study gives seven years complete;  
See, strowed with learned dust, his nightcap on,  
He walks, an object new beneath the sun.  
The boys flock round him, and the people stare;  
So stiff, so mute! some statue you would swear,  
Stept from its pedestal to take the air.

Finally, Horace extols the poet as distinct from the mere versifier (Ep. II, i, 210). Pope's rendering ought to dispel the plea of an unfeelingness sometimes lightly urged against him:

Let me for once presume to instruct the times  
To know the Poet from the Man of Rhymes:  
'Tis he, who gives my breast a thousand pains,  
Can make me feel each passion that he feigns,  
Enrage, compose, with more than magic art,  
With pity and with terror tear my heart;  
And snatch me o'er the earth or through the air,  
To Thebes, to Athens, when he will, and where.

If only he had handled more! but of the forty-one Conversations Pope imitated only seven. And so to assimilate those remaining we must descend from the heights of poetry to the cool sequestered vale of literal masquerade. To a lady wintering in Rome who consulted me lately as to guide-books, I ventured to recommend Hawthorne's "Transformation," Marion Crawford's "Ave Roma," and Dean Wickham's translation of the Satires and Epistles.

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(1) May the writer ask indulgence while he recalls how, exactly fifty-eight years ago, as senior boy at Winchester, he recited this Satire publicly, receiving in recompense at Warden Barter's hands the Queen's silver medal for elocution.

[51]

I have tried to interpret in some degree the teaching of the Satires and Epistles. Yet had the author's genius found expression in these Conversations only, he would not have become through nineteen centuries the best beloved of Latin poets: beloved in his own time alike by the weary Atlas Augustus and the refined sensualist Maecenas; "playing round the heartstrings" of the stern censor Persius; endowed by Petronius and Quintilian with the prize of incommunicable felicity; the darling of Dante, Montaigne, Voltaire, Chesterfield; the "old popular Horace" of Tennyson; the Horace whose "sad earnestness and vivid exactness" pierced the soul and brain of aged John Henry Newman. "His poems," says a great French critic (St. Beuve, "Horace"), "form a manual of good taste, of poetic feeling, of practical and worldly wisdom. The Christian has his Bible; the scholar his Homer; Port Royal lived on St. Augustine; an earlier philosophy on Montaigne; Horace comes within the range of all: in reading him we break not in any way with modernity, yet retain our hold upon antiquity. I know nothing more delightful as one grows in years, when the mind retains its subtlety, but is conscious of increasing languor, than to test the one and brace the other by companionship with a book familiar and frequently re-read: we walk thereby with a supporting staff, stroll leaning upon a friendly arm. This is what Horace does for us: coming back to him in our old age, we recover our youthful selves, and are relieved to learn while we appreciate afresh his well-remembered lines, that if our minds have become more inert, they are also more feeling, than of yore."

For full justification of these graceful amenities we must turn to the lyrical poems. The Satires and Epistles, as their author frequently reminds us, were in prose: the revealed Horatian secret, the condensed expression of the Horatian charm, demanded musical verse; and this we have in the Odes and Epodes. The word Ode is Greek for a Song; Epode was merely a metrical term to express an ode which alternated in longer and shorter lines, and we may treat them all alike as Odes. The Epodes are amongst his earliest publications, and bear signs of a 'prentice hand. "Iambi," he calls them, a Greek word meaning "lampoons"; and six of them are bitter personal attacks on individuals, foreign to the good breeding and urbanity which distinguish his later writings. More of the same class he is believed to have suppressed, retaining these as specimens of that earlier style, and because, though inchoate, they won the admiration of Virgil, and preferred their author to the patronage of Maecenas. One of the finer Epodes (Epod. ix) has peculiar interest, as written probably on the deck of Maecenas' galley during or immediately after the battle of Actium; and is in that case the sole extant contemporary record of the engagement. It reflects the loathing kindled in Roman breasts by Antony's emasculate subjugation to his paramour; imagines with horror a dissolute Egyptian harlot triumphant and supreme in Rome, with her mosquito-curtained beds and litters, and her train of wrinkled eunuchs. It describes with a spectator's accuracy the desertion of the Gallic contingent during the battle, the leftward flight of Antony's fleet: then, with his favourite device of lapsing from high-wrought passion into comedy, Horace bewails his own sea-sickness when the excitement of the fight is over, and calls for cups of wine to quell it. In another Epode (Epod. ii) he recalls his boyish memories in praise of country life: the vines wedded to poplars in the early spring, after that the sheepshearing, later still the grape-gathering and honey harvest; when winter comes, the hunting of the boar by day, at night the cheery meal with wife and children upon olives, sorrel, mallows, beside the crackling log-piled hearth. Even here he is not weaned from the tricks of mocking irony manifest in his early writings and born perhaps of his early struggles; for he puts this delicious pastoral, which tinkles through the page like Milton's "L'Allegro," into the mouth of a Roman capitalist, who, bitten by transient passion for a country life, calls in all his money that he may buy a farm, pines in country retirement for the Stock Exchange, sells his estate in quick disgust, and returns to city life:

So said old Ten-per-cent, when he  
A jolly farmer fain would be.  
His moneys he called in amain—  
Next week he put them out again.

is the spirited rendering of Mr. Goldwin Smith.

In his remaining Epodes we may trace the germ of his later written Odes. We have the affectionate addresses to Maecenas, the disgust at civil discords, the cheery invitations to the wine cup, the wooing of some coy damsel. By and by Maecenas presses him to bring them out completed in a volume, and he pleads a fugitive amour in excuse for his delay. Published, however, they were, notwithstanding the distractions of Neaera; went, neatly written out in red-lined columns, to the brothers Sosii in the street called Argiletum, to be multiplied by the librarian's scribes on well-bleached Egyptian papyrus, bound in pumiced parchment, stored in metal boxes on the bookseller's shelves within, while the names of the author and his work were inscribed upon a pillar outside the shop, as a guide to intending purchasers. Copies were sold, probably, for a few denarii each; what would we not give for one of them to-day? Let us hope that their author was well paid.

Horace was now thirty-five years old: the Epodes had taught him his power over lyric verse. He had imitated at first the older Roman satirists; here by Maecenas' advice he copied from Greek models, from Alcaeus and Sappho, claiming ever afterwards with pride that he was the first amongst Roman poets to wed Aeolian lays to notes of Italy (Od. III, xxx, 13). He spent seven years in composing the first three Books of the Odes, which appeared in a single volume about B.C. 23. More than any of his poems they contain the essence of his indefinable magic art. They deal apparently with dull truisms and stale moralities, avowals of simple joys and simple sorrows. They tell us that life is brief and death is sure, that light loves and ancient wines are good, that



riches are burdensome, and enough is better than a feast, that country life is delightful, that old age comes on us apace, that our friends leave us sorrowing and our sorrow does not bring them back. Trite sayings no doubt; but embellished one and all with an adorable force and novelty at once sadly earnest and vividly exact; not too simple for the profound and not too artful for the shallow; consecrated by the verbal felicity which belongs only to an age of peculiar intellectual refinement, and which flashed diamond-like from the facets of his own highly polished mind. "He is the Breviary of the natural man, his poetry is the Imitation not of Christ but of Epicurus."

His Odes may be roughly classified as Religious, Moral, Philosophical, Personal, Amatory.

[56] 1. RELIGIOUS. Between the classic and the Christian hymn, as Matthew Arnold has reminded us, there is a great gulf fixed. The Latin conception of the gods was civic; they were superior heads of the Republic; the Roman church was the invisible Roman state; religion was merely exalted patriotism. So Horace's addresses to the deities for the most part remind them of their coronation oaths, of the terms on which they were worshipped, their share in the bargain with humanity, a bargain to be kept on their side if they expected tribute of lambs and piglings, of hallowed cakes and vervain wreaths. Very little of what we call devotion seasons them. In two Odes (I, ii, xii), from a mere litany of Olympian names he passes to a much more earnest deification of Augustus. Another (III, xix) is a grace to Bacchus after a wine-bout. Or Faunus is bidden to leave pursuing the nymphs (we think of Elijah's sneer at Baal) and to attend to his duties on the Sabine farm, of blessing the soil and protecting the lambs (III, xviii). The hymn to Mercury recounts mythical exploits of the winged god, his infantile thefts from Apollo, his guiding Priam through the Grecian camp, his gift of speech to men, his shepherding souls to Hades (I, x). Venus is invoked in a dainty prayer to visit the chapel which Glycera is building for her (I, xxx):

O come, and with thee bring thy glowing boy,  
The Graces all, with kirtles flowing free,  
Youth, that without thee knows but little joy,  
The jocund nymphs and blithesome Mercury.

[57] The doctrine of an overruling Providence Horace had expressly rejected in the Satires (Sat. iv, 101), holding that the gods are too happy and too careless in their superior aloof security to plague themselves with the affairs of mortals. But he felt sometimes, as all men feel, the need of a supreme celestial Guide: in the noble Ode which Ruskin loved he seems to find it in Necessity or Fortune (Od. I, xxxv); and once, when scared by thunder resounding in a cloudless sky, recants what he calls his "irrational rationalism," and admits that God may, if He will, put down the mighty and exalt the low (I, xxxiv). So again in his hymn for the dedication of Apollo's Temple on the Palatine (I, xxxi) a serious note is struck. He will not ask the God for rich cornfields and fat meadow land, for wines of Cales proffered in a golden cup. A higher boon than these his prayer demands:

O grant me, Phoebus, calm content,  
Strength unimpaired, a mind entire,  
Old age without dishonour spent,  
Nor unbefriended of the lyre.

[58] On the other hand, his Ode to Melpomene (IV, iii), written in the consciousness of accepted eminence as the national poet, "harpist of the Roman lyre," breathes a sentiment of gratitude to Divinity far above the typical poetic cant of homage to the Muse. And his fine Secular Hymn, composed by Augustus's request for the great Century Games, strikes a note of patriotic aspiration and of moral earnestness, not unworthy to compare with King Solomon's Dedication Prayer; and is such as, with some modernization of the Deities invoked, would hardly misbecome a national religious festival to-day. It was sung by twenty-seven noble boys and as many high-born maidens, now in antiphon, now in chorus, to Apollo and Diana, as representing all the gods. Apollo, bless our city! say the boys. Dian, bless our women and our children, say the girls, and guard the sanctity of our marriage laws. Bring forth Earth's genial fruits, say both; give purity to youth and peace to age. Bring back the lapsed virtues of the Golden Age; Faith, Honour, antique Shame-fastness and Worth, and Plenty with her teeming horn. Hear, God! hear, Goddess! Yes, we feel our prayers are heard—

Now homeward we repair,  
Full of the blessed hope which will not fail,  
That Jove and all the gods have heard our prayer,  
And with approving smiles our homage hail:  
We, skilled in choral harmonies to raise  
The hymn to Phoebus and Diana's praise.

[59] Of course in all this there is no touch of ecstasy; no spark of the inspiration which in a St. Francis, a St. Teresa, or a Charles Wesley, scales the heights of hymnody. And, as the unimaginative Roman temperament lacked the instinct of adoration, so was it deficient in that other constituent of supernatural faith, the belief in immortality. There might be a shadowy world—the poets said so—Odysseus visited its depths and brought back its report—but it was a gloomy place at best. Horace alludes to it always in the tone of the Hebrew Psalmists, or of Hezekiah sick to death, utilizing Minos and Cerberus and Tantalus and Sisyphus for poetic effect, yet ever with an undertone of sadness and alarm. Not Orpheus' self, he says (I, xxiv, 13), in his exquisite lament for dead Quinctilius, can bring back life-blood to the phantom pale who has joined the

spectral band that voyage to Styx: the gods are pitiless—we can only bear bereavements patiently (II, iii). You must leave, my Dellius, your pleasant groves and your cottage upon Tiber's banks, since Orcus, ruthless king, swoops equally on all:

Land, home, and winsome wife must all be left;  
And cypresses abhorred,  
Alone of all the trees  
That now your fancy please,  
Shall shade his dust who was awhile their lord.  
(II, xiv, 21.)

2. MORAL. But if the gods are beyond our ken, and if the world to come is misty, we still have this world with us; a world not always to be daffed aside with love and wine and comradeship, since behind its frolic wantonness lie the ennobling claims of duty and of conscience. As with Fielding, as with Thackeray, the light current tone of sportiveness or irony heightens the rare solemnity of didactic moral earnestness. Of all the Latin poets, says Sir Richard Fanshaw, Horace is the fullest fraught with excellent morality. In the six stately Odes which open the third book, together with a later Ode (xxiv) which closes the series and ought never to have been severed from it, Horatian poetry rises to its greatest height of ethical impressiveness. Ushered in with the solemn words of a hierophant bidding the uninitiated avaunt at the commencement of a religious ceremony (III, i, 1-2), delivered with official assumption in the fine frenzy of a muse-inspired priest, their unity of purpose and of style makes them virtually a continuous poem. It lashes the vices and the short-sighted folly of society; with the Sword of Damocles above his head the rich man sits at a luxurious board (III, i, 17); sails in his bronzed galley, lolls in his lordly chariot, with black Care ever at the helm or on the box (III, i, 40). By hardihood in the field and cheerful poverty at home Rome became great of yore; such should be the virtues of to-day. Let men be *moral*; it was immorality that ruined Troy; *heroic*—read the tale of Regulus; *courageous*, but with courage ordered, disciplined, controlled (III, iii; v; iv, 65). Brute force without mind, he says almost in Milton's words, falls by its own strength, as the giants fell encountering the gods:

For what is strength without a double share  
Of wisdom? vast, unwieldy, burdensome;  
Proudly secure, yet liable to fall  
By weakest subtleties, not made to rule,  
But to subserve where wisdom bears command.  
("Samson Ag.," 53.)

Self-discipline, he reminds his audience, need not be sullen and austere; in regenerated Rome the Muses still may rule. Mild thoughts they plant, and they joy to see mild thoughts take root; refinement of manners and of mind, and the gladsomeness of literary culture (III, iv, 41).

He turns to reprove the ostentation of the rich; their adding field to field, poor families evicted from farmstead and cottage to make way for spreading parks and ponds and gardens;

driven from home  
Both wife and husband forth must roam,  
Bearing their household gods close pressed,  
With squalid babes, upon their breast.  
(II, xviii, 23.)

Not thus was it in the good old times. Then rich men lavished marble on the temples of the gods, roofed their own cottages with chance-cut turf (II, xv, 13). And to what end all this splendour? Behind your palace walls lurks the grim architect of a narrower home; the path of glory leads but to the grave (II, xviii, 17). And as on the men, so on the women of Rome his solemn warnings are let fall. Theirs is the task to maintain the sacred family bond, the purity of marriage life. Let them emulate the matrons of the past, severe mothers of gallant sons (III, vi, 37). Let men and women join to stay the degeneracy which has begun to set in, and which, unchecked, will grow deadlier with each generation as it succeeds.

How Time doth in its flight debase  
Whate'er it finds? our fathers' race,  
More deeply versed in ill  
Than were their sires, hath born us yet  
More wicked, destined to beget  
A race more vicious still.  
(III, vi, 45.)

3. PHILOSOPHICAL. "How charming is divine philosophy?" said the meek younger brother in "Comus" to his instructive senior. Speaking as one of the profane, I find not less charming the humanist philosophy of Horace. Be content! be moderate! seize the present! are his maxims.

*Be content!* A mind without anxiety is the highest good (II, xvi). Great desires imply great wants (III, xvi, 42). 'Tis well when prayer seeks and obtains no more than life requires.

Happy he,  
Self-centred, who each night can say,  
"My life is lived": the morn may see

A clouded or a sunny day:  
That rests with Jove; but what is gone  
He will not, can not, turn to nought,  
Nor cancel as a thing undone  
What once the flying hour has brought.

(III, xxix, 41.)

*Be moderate!* He that denies himself shall gain the more (III, xvi, 21). He that ruleth his spirit is better than the lord of Carthage. Hold fast the golden mean (II, x, 5). The poor man's supper, spare but neat and free from care, with no state upon the board except his heirloom silver saltcellar, is better than a stalled ox and care therewith (II, xvi, 13). And he practised what he preached, refusing still fresh bounties which Maecenas pressed upon him. What more want I than I have? he says:

Truth is mine with genius mixed,  
The rich man comes and knocks at my poor gate.  
Favoured thus I ne'er repine,  
Nor weary Heaven for more, nor to the great  
For larger bounty pray,  
My Sabine farm my one sufficient boon.

(II, xviii, 9.)

[63]

*Seize the Present!* Now bind the brow with late roses and with myrtle crowns; now drown your cares in wine, counting as gain each day that Chance may give (I, vii, 31; I, ix, 14). Pale Death will be here anon; even while I speak time slips away: seize to-day, trust nothing to the morrow.

Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears  
*To-day* of past regrets and future fears:  
*To-morrow?* why to-morrow I may be  
Myself with yesterday's seven thousand years.

What more commonplace than this saying that we all must die? but he brings it home to us ever and again with pathetic tearful fascinating force. Each time we read him, his sweet sad pagan music chants its ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and we hear the earth fall upon the coffin lid amongst the flowers.

Ah, Postumus, they fleet away  
Our years, nor piety one hour  
Can win from wrinkles, and decay,  
And death's indomitable power;

Not though three hundred steers you heap  
Each day, to glut the tearless eyes  
Of Him, who guards in moated keep  
Tityos, and Geryon's triple size:

All, all, alas! that watery bound  
Who eat the fruits that Nature yields,  
Must traverse, be we monarchs crowned,  
Or humblest tillers of the fields.

(II, xiv.)

[64]

The antipathy is not confined to heathenism; we distrust the Christian who professes to ignore it; many of us felt drawn by a brotherhood of humanity to the late scholarly Pope, when we learned that, as death looked him in the face, he clung to Pagan Horace as a truthful and sympathetic oracle. "And we all go to-day to this singer of the ancient world for guidance in the deceptions of life, and for steadfastness in the face of death."



*Alinari photo.*

[*Capitol Museum, Rome.*

VIRGIL.

4. PERSONAL. Something, but not very much, we learn of Horace's intimates from this class of Odes. Closest to him in affection and oftenest addressed is Maecenas. The opening Ode pays homage to him in words closely imitated by Allan Ramsay in addressing the chief of his clan:

Dalhousie of an auld descent,  
My chief, my stoup, my ornament;

and at the end of the volume the poet repeats his dedication (III, xxix). Twice he invites his patron to a feast; to drink wine bottled on the day some years before when entering the theatre after an illness he was received with cheers by the assembled multitude (I, xx); again on March 1st, kept as the festal anniversary of his own escape from a falling tree (III, viii). To a querulous letter from his friend written when sick and dreading death, he sends the tender consolation and remonstrance of which we spoke before (p. 29). In a very different tone he sings the praises of Licymnia (II, xii), supposed to be Terentia, Maecenas' newly-wedded wife, sweet voiced, witty, loving, of whom her husband was at the time passionately enamoured. He recounts finally, with that delicate respectful gratitude which never lapses into servility, his lifelong obligation, lauding gratefully the still removed place which his friend's bounty has bestowed:

A clear fresh stream, a little field, o'ergrown  
With shady trees, a crop that ne'er deceives.  
(III, xvi, 29.)

Not less tenderly affectionate is the exquisite Ode to Virgil on the death of Quintilius.

By many a good man wept Quintilius dies,  
By none than you, my Virgil, trulier wept;  
(I, xxiv.)

or to his devoted young friend Septimius (p. 39) (II, vi), who would travel with him to the ends of the world, to Moorish or Cantabrian wilds. Not so far afield need they go; but when age steals on they will journey to Tarentum, sweetest spot on earth:

That spot, those happy heights, desire  
Our sojourn; there, when life shall end,  
Your tear shall dew my yet warm pyre,  
Your bard and friend.

To the great general Agrippa (I, vi), rival of Maecenas in the good graces of Augustus, he sends a tribute complimentary, yet somewhat stiffly and officially conceived; lines much more cordial to the high-born Aelius Lamia (III, 17), whose statue stands to-day amid the pale immortalities of the Capitoline Museum. We have a note of tonic banter to Tibullus, "jilted by a fickle Glycera," and "droning piteous elegies" (I, xxxiii); a merry riotous impersonation of an imaginary symposium in honour of the newly-made augur Murena (III, 19), with toasts and tipsiness and noisy Bacchanalian songs and rose-wreaths flung about the board; a delicious mockery of reassurance to one Xanthias (II, iv), who has married a maidservant and is ashamed of it. He may yet find out that though fallen into obscurity she is in truth high-born and noble, and will present

him with a patrician mother-in-law.

For aught that you know now, fair Phyllis may be  
The shoot of some highly respectable stem;  
Nay, she counts, I'll be sworn, a few kings in her tree,  
And laments the lost acres once lorded by them.

Never think that a creature so exquisite grew  
In the haunts where but vice and dishonour are known,  
Nor deem that a girl so unselfish, so true,  
Had a mother 'twould shame thee to take for thine own.

[67] Several of his correspondents we can only name; the poet Valgius, the tragedians Pollio and Fuscus; Sallust, grandson of the historian; Pompeius, his old comrade in the Brutus wars; Lollius, defeated in battle and returning home in disgrace. Nor need we labour to identify a host of others; Iccius, Grosphus, Dellius; who figure as mere dedicatory names; nor persons mentioned casually, such as Telephus of the rosy neck and clustering hair (I, xiii; III, xix), whom Bulwer Lytton, with fine memories of his own ambrosial petted youth, calls a "typical beautyman and lady-killer." The Horatian personages, remarks Dean Milman, would contain almost every famous name of the Augustan age.

[68] 5. AMATORY. "Speak'st thou of nothing but ladies?" says Feste the Jester to poor Malvolio. He might have said the same to Horace; for of the Odes in the first three Books one third part is addressed to or concerned with women. How many of the pretty female names which musicalize his love songs, in syllables that breathe of the sweet south and melt like kisses in the utterance, are representative of real girls, we cannot guess; with none of them except perhaps one, who died young, does he seem to have been really in love. He was forty years old when most of his amorous Odes were written; an age at which, as George Eliot has reminded us, the baptism of passion is by aspersion rather than immersion. Something he must have known of love, or he could not write as he has done; but it is the superficial gallantry of a flirt rather than the impassioned self-surrender of a lover; of a gay bachelor, with roving critical eye, heart whole yet fancy free, too practised a judge of beauty to become its slave. Without emotion, without reverence, but with keen relishing appreciation, he versifies Pyrrha's golden curls, and Lycoris' low forehead—feminine beauties both to a Roman eye—and Phyllis' tapering arms and shapely ankles, and Chia's dimpled cheek, and the tangles of Neaera's hair, and the gadabout baggage Lyde, and Glycera's dazzling complexion that blinds the gazer's eye (I, v, xix, xxxiii; II, iv, 21; III, xiv, 21). They are all inconstant good-for-nothings, he knows; but so are men, and so is he; keep up the pleasant give-and-take, the quarrels and the reconciliations. All the youths of Rome are in love with a beautiful Ninon D'Enclos named Barine—Matthew Arnold declared this to be the finest of all the Odes (II, viii)—she perjures herself with every one in turn. But it seems to answer; she shines forth lovelier than ever. Venus and the nymphs only laugh, and her lovers, young and old, continue to hug their chains.

New captives fill the nets you weave;  
New slaves are bred; and those before,  
Though oft they threaten, never leave  
Your perjured door.

Sometimes he plays the monitor. Asterie's husband is laid up in Greece by contrary winds: he is faithful to his wife, though his hostess tempts him: let the wife be on her guard against her handsome neighbour Enipeus (III, vii). His own charmers are sometimes obdurate: Chloe and Lyde run away from him like fawns (I, xxiii): that is because they are young; he can wait till they are older; they will come to him then of themselves: "they always come," says Disraeli in "Henrietta Temple." He has quarrelled with an old flame (I, xvi), whom he had affronted by some libellous verses. He entreats her pardon; was young and angry when he wrote; will burn the offending lines, or fling them into the sea:

Come, let me change my sour for sweet,  
And smile complacent as before;  
Hear me my palinode repeat,  
And give me back your heart once more.

[69] He professes bitter jealousy of a handsome stripling whose beauty Lydia praises (I, xiii). She is wasting her admiration; she will find him unfaithful; Horace knows him well:

Oh, trebly blest, and blest for ever,  
Are they, whom true affection binds,  
In whom no doubts nor janglings sever  
The union of their constant minds;  
But life in blended current flows,  
Serene and sunny to the close.

If anyone now reads "Lalla Rookh," he will recall an exquisite rendering of these lines from the lips of veiled Nourmahal:

There's a bliss beyond all that the minstrel has told,  
When two, that are linked in one heavenly tie,

With heart never changing and brow never cold,  
Love on through all ills, and love on till they die.

One hour of a passion so sacred is worth  
Whole ages of heartless and wandering bliss;  
And oh! if there be an Elysium on earth,  
It is this, it is this!

But, perhaps, if a jury of scholars could be polled as to the most enchanting amongst all Horace's lovesongs, the highest vote would be cast in favour of the famous "Reconciliation" of the roving poet with this or with some other Lydia (III, ix). The pair of former lovers, mutually faithless, exchange defiant experience of their several infidelities; then, the old affection reviving through the contact of their altercation, agree to discard their intervening paramours, and return to their first allegiance.

[70]

*He.*

Whilst I was dear and thou wert kind,  
And I, and I alone, might lie  
Upon thy snowy breast reclined,  
Not Persia's king so blest as I.

*She.*

Whilst I to thee was all in all,  
Nor Chloe might with Lydia vie,  
Renowned in ode or madrigal,  
Not Roman Ilia famed as I.

*He.*

I now am Thracian Chloe's slave,  
With hand and voice that charms the air,  
For whom even death itself I'd brave,  
So fate the darling girl would spare.

*She.*

I dote on Calais; and I  
Am all his passion, all his care,  
For whom a double death I'd die,  
So fate the darling boy would spare.

*He.*

What if our ancient love return,  
And bind us with a closer tie,  
If I the fair-haired Chloe spurn,  
And, as of old, for Lydia sigh?

*She.*

Though lovelier than yon star is he,  
Thou fickle as an April sky,  
More churlish too than Adria's sea,  
With thee I'd live, with thee I'd die.

[71]

The austere Scaliger used to say that he would rather have written this ode than be King of Spain and the Indies: Milton's Eve expresses her devotion to Adam in an apostrophe paraphrased from its closing lines.

Observe, too, how we find in all the Odes as we read them, not only a gallery of historical pictures, nor only an unconscious revelation of the poet's self, of, that is, the least subjective among poets, ever, as says Sir Stephen De Vere, looking outward, never looking in; but they incidentally paint for us in vivid and familiarizing tints the intimate daily life of that far-off ancient queen of cities. We walk with them the streets of Rome. We watch the connoisseurs gazing into the curiosity shops and fingering the bronzes or the silver statuettes; the naughty boys jeering the solemn Stoic as he walks along, staid, superior, absent; the good boys coming home from school with well-thumbed lesson books; the lovers in the cookshops or restaurants shooting apple pips from between finger and thumb, rejoicing in the good omen if they strike the ceiling; the stores of Sulpicius the wine merchant and of Sosius the bookseller; the great white Latian ox, exactly such as you see to-day, driven towards the market, with a bunch of hay upon his horns to warn pedestrians that he is dangerous; the coarse drawings in chalk or colours on the wall advertising some famous gladiator; at dusk the whispering lovers in the Campus, or the romping hide-and-seek of lads and lasses at the corners of the streets or squares, just as you may watch them to-day on spring or winter evenings amongst the lower arches of the Colosseum;—it is a microcosm, a cameo, of that old-world life. Horace knew, and feared not to say, that in his

[72]

poems, in his Odes especially, he bequeathed a deathless legacy to mankind, while setting up a lasting monument to himself. One thing he could not know, that when near two thousand years had passed, a race of which he had barely heard by name as dwelling "quite beyond the confines of the world," would cherish his name and read his writings with a grateful appreciation even surpassing that of his contemporary Romans.

A few Odes remain, too casual to be classified; rejoicings over the vanishing of winter and the return of spring (I, iv); praises of the Tibur streams, of Tarentum (II, vi) which he loved only less than Tibur, of the Lucretilis Groves (I, xvii) which overhung his Sabine valley, of the Bandusian spring beside which he played in boyhood. We have the Pindaric or historic Odes, with tales of Troy, of the Danaid brides, of Regulus, of Europa (III, iii, v, xi, xvii); the dramatic address to Archytas (I, xxviii), which soothed the last moments of Mark Pattison; the fine epilogue which ends the book, composed in the serenity of gained renown;

[73]

And now 'tis done: more durable than brass  
My monument shall be, and raise its head  
O'er royal pyramids: it shall not dread  
Corroding rain or angry Boreas,  
Nor the long lapse of immemorial time.  
I shall not wholly die; large residue  
Shall 'scape the Queen of funerals. Ever new  
My after fame shall grow, while pontiffs climb  
With silent maids the Capitolian height.  
"Born," men will say, "where Aufidus is loved,  
Where Danaus scant of streams beneath him bowed  
The rustic tribes, from dimness he waxed bright,  
First of his race to wed the Aeolian lay  
To notes of Italy." Put glory on,  
My own Melpomene, by genius won,  
And crown me of thy grace with Delphic bay.

[74]

## SWAN SONG

When a well-graced actor has left the stage amid trumpeted farewells from an admiring but regretful audience, we somewhat resent his occasional later reappearance. So, when a poet's last word has been spoken, and spoken emotionally, an Afterword is apt to offend: and we may wish that the fine poem just quoted had been reserved as finish to the volume yet to come, which lacks a closing note, or even that the volume itself had not been published. The fourth Book of the Odes was written nearly ten years after the other three, and Horace wrote it not as Poet but as Laureate. His Secular Hymn appeared in B.C. 17, when he was forty-eight years old; and after it Augustus pressed him to celebrate the victories of his two stepsons, Drusus and Tiberius, over the tribes of the Eastern Alps. If he wrote unwillingly, his hand had not lost its cunning. The sentiment is paler and more artificial, but the old condensation and felicity remain. He begins with rather sad reluctance. He is old; the one woman whom he loved is dead; his lyric raptures and his love campaignings are at an end; he is tired of flattering hopes, of noisy revels, of flower garlands fresh with dew. Or are they war songs, not love songs, that are wanted? There he is more helpless still. It needs a Pindar worthily to extol a Caesar: he is no Pindar; and so we have an ode in honour of the Theban bard. And yet, as chosen lyrist of the Roman race, he cannot altogether refuse the call. Melpomene, who from his cradle marked him for her own, can still shed on him if she will the power to charm, can inspire in him "music of the swan." So, slowly, the wasting lyric fire revives; we get the martial odes to conquering Drusus and to Lollius, the panegyrics on Augustus and Tiberius, all breathing proud consciousness that "the Muse opens the good man's grave and lifts him to the gods"; that immortality can be won only by the poet's pen, and that it is in his own power to confer it.

[75]



*Becchetti photo.]*

THE FORUM RESTORED AS IN A.D. 80.  
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The remaining poems are in the old spirit, but are somewhat mournful echoes of the past. They remind us of the robin's winter song—"Hark to him weeping," say the country folk, as they listen to the music which retains the sweetness but has lost what Wordsworth calls the gushes of the summer strains. There is still an ode to Venus; its prayer not now "come to bless thy worshipper"; but "leave an old heart made callous by fifty years, and seek some younger votary." There is an ode to Spring. Spring brought down from heaven his earliest Muse; it came to him charged with youthful ardours, expectations, joys; now its only message is that change and death attend all human hopes and cares. Like an army defeated, the snow has retreated; the Graces and the Nymphs can dance unclad in the soft warm air. But summer will thrust out spring, autumn summer, then dull winter will come again; will come to the year, will come to you and me. Not birth nor eloquence nor virtue can save from Minos' judgement seat; like Aeneas, Tullus, Ancus, like all the great ones of the earth, we shall soon be nameless shades and a poor pinch of dust. More of the old buoyant glee comes back in a festal invitation to one Virgilius, not the poet. There is a ring of Tom Moore in Sir Theodore Martin's rendering of it.

[76]

\* \* \* \* \*

On the young grass reclined, near the murmur of fountains,  
The shepherds are piping the song of the plains,  
And the god who loves Arcady's purple-hued mountains,  
The god of the flocks, is entranced by their strains.

\* \* \* \* \*

To the winds with base lucre and pale melancholy!  
In the flames of the pyre these, alas! will be vain;  
Mix your sage ruminations with glimpses of folly,  
'Tis delightful at times to be somewhat insane!

There follows a savage assault on one Lyce, an ancient beauty who had lost her youthful charms, but kept up her youthful airs:

Where now that beauty? where those movements? where  
That colour? what of her, of her is left,  
Who, breathing Love's own air,  
Me of myself bereft!  
Poor Lyce! spared to raven's length of days;  
That youth may see, with laughter and disgust,  
A firebrand, once ablaze,  
Now smouldering in grey dust.

[77]

Poor Lyce indeed! what had she done to be so scourged? One address we miss: there is no ode in this book to Maecenas, who was out of favour with Augustus, and had lost all political influence. But the friend is not sunk in the courtier. The Ides or 13th of April is his old patron's birthday—a nativity, says Horace, dearer to him almost than his own, and he keeps it always as a feast. With a somewhat ghostly resurrection of voluptuousness dead and gone he bids Phyllis come and keep it with him. All things are ready, a cask of Alban nine years old is broached, the servants are in a stir, the altar wreathed for sacrifice, the flames curling up the kitchen chimney, ivy and parsley gathered to make a wreath for Phyllis' hair. Come then, sweet girl, last of my loves; for never again shall this heart take fire at a woman's face—come, and learn of me a tune to sing with that dear voice, and drive away dull care. I am told that every man in making love assures the charmer that no woman shall ever succeed her in his regards; but this is probably a veritable amorous swan-song. He was older than are most men at fifty-two. Years as they pass, he sadly says, bereave us one by one of all our precious things; of mirth, of loves, of banquets; at last the Muse herself spreads wings to follow them. "You have sported long enough," she says, "with



Amaryllis in the shade, you have eaten and drunk your fill, it is time for you to quit the scene." And so the curtain falls.

[78] To our great loss there is no contemporary portrait of Horace. He tells us himself (Ep. II, ii, 214; I, xx, 29) that he was short of stature, his hair black but early tinged with grey; that he loved to bask in sunshine, that his temper was irascible but easily appeased. In advanced life he became fat; Augustus jests with him rather coarsely on his protuberant figure. The portrait prefixed to this volume is from a Contorniate, or bronze medallion of the time of Constantine, representing the poet's likeness as traditionally preserved amongst his countrymen three hundred years after his death.

[79] The oldest extant manuscript of his works is probably that in the public library of Berne, and dates from the ninth century. The earliest printed edition, bearing neither date nor printer's name, is supposed to have been published at Milan in 1470. Editions were also printed at Florence and at Venice in 1482, and a third at Venice in 1492. An illustrated edition on vellum was brought out by Aldus in 1501, and reissued in 1509, 1514, 1519. The Florence Press of the Giunti produced splendid specimens in 1503, 1514, 1519. Between this date and the end of the century seven more came forth from famous presses. Of modern editions we may notice the vellum Bodoni folio of 1791, and the matchless Didot of 1799 with its exquisite copperplate vignettes. Fortunate is the collector who possesses the genuine first edition of Pine's "Horace," 1733. It is known by an error in the text, corrected in the subsequent and less bibliographically valuable impression of the same year. A beautifully pictorial book is Dean Milman's; the student will prefer Orelli, Maclean, Yonge, Munro and King, or Dean Wickham's scholarly volumes.

[80] In composing this modest little book I have had in view principally readers altogether ignorant of Latin, but wishing to know something of a writer lauded enthusiastically by all classical scholars: they will observe that I have not introduced into its pages a single Latin word. I have nourished also the hope that it might be serviceable to those who have forgotten, but would like to recover, the Horace which they learned at school; and to them I would venture to recommend the little copy of the Latin text with Conington's version attached, in "Bell's Pocket Classics." Latinless readers of course must read him in English or not at all. No translation can quite convey the cryptic charm of any original, whether poetry or prose. "Only a bishop," said Lord Chesterfield, "is improved by translation." But prose is far easier to render faithfully than verse; and I have said that either Conington's or Dean Wickham's version of the Satires and Epistles, which are both virtually in prose, will tell them what Horace said, and sometimes very nearly how he said it. On the Odes a host of English writers have experimented. Milton tried his hand on one, with a result reflecting neither Milton nor Horace. Dryden has shown what he could have done but would not do in his tantalising fragment of the Ode to Fortune. Pope transformed the later Ode to Venus into a purely English poem, with a gracefully artificial mechanism quite unlike the natural flow of the original. Marvell's noble "Horatian Ode," with its superb stanzas on the death of Charles I, shows what he might have achieved, but did not attempt. Francis' rendering of 1765 is generally respectable, and in default of a better was universally read and quoted by his contemporaries: once, in the Ode to Pyrrhus (III, xx) he attains singular grace of phrase and metre. Cowper translated two Odes and imitated two more, not without happy touches, but with insertions and omissions that lower poetry into commonplace. Of Calverley's few attempts three are notably good; a resounding line in his "Leuconoe" (I, xi):

Which flings now the flagging sea-wave on the obstinate sandstone reef,

[81] is at once Horatian and Tennysonian; and his "Oh! where is all thy loveliness?" in the later Ode to Lyce has caught marvellously the minor key of tender memory which relieves the brutality of that ruthless flagellation. Mr. Goldwin Smith's more numerous "Bay Leaves" are fashioned all in goodly measure; and his "Blest man who far from care and strife" well transfers to English the breathlessness of Horace's sham pastoral ecstasy. Of more ambitious translators Bulwer Lytton catches now and then the careless rapture of his original; Sir Theodore Martin is always musical and flowing, sometimes miraculously fortunate in his metres, but intentionally unliteral and free. Conington is rigidly faithful, oftentimes tersely forcible; but misses lyrical sweetness. Perhaps, if Marvell, Herrick, Cowley, Prior, the now forgotten William Spencer, Tom Moore, Thackeray, could be alchemized into one, they might combine to yield an English Horace. Until eclectic nature, emulating the Grecian sculptor, shall fashion an archetype from these seven models, the vernacular student, with his Martin and his Conington, sipping from each alternately, like Horace's Matinee bee (IV, ii, 27), the terseness of the professor and the sweetness of the poet, may find in them some echo from the ever-shifting tonality of the Odes, something of their verbal felicity, something of their thrilling wistfulness; may strive not quite unsuccessfully, in the words of Tennyson's "Timbuctoo," to attain by shadowing forth the unattainable.

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## ON THE "WINES" OF HORACE'S POETRY

The wines whose historic names sparkle through the pages of Horace have become classical commonplaces in English literature. "Well, my young friend, we must for once prefer the

Falernian to the *vile Sabinum*?" says Monkbarns to Lovel when the landlord of the Hawes Inn at Queensferry brings them claret instead of port. It may be well that we should know somewhat of them.

[83]

The choicest of the Italian wines was *Caecuban*, from the poplar-trained vines grown amongst the swamps of Amyclae in Campania. It was a heady, generous wine, and required long keeping; so we find Horace speaking of it as ranged in the farthest cellar end, or "stored still in our grandsire's binns"(III, xxviii, 2, 3; I, xxxvii, 6); it was reserved for great banquets, kept carefully under lock and key: "your heir shall drain the Caecuban you hoarded under a hundred padlocks" (II, xiv, 25). It was beyond Horace's means, and only rich men could afford to drink it; we hear of it at Maecenas' table and on board his galley (I, xx, 9); and it appeared at the costly banquet of Nasidienus (page 27). With the Caecuban he couples the *Formian* (I, xx, 11), and *Falernian* (I, xx, 10), grown on the southern slopes of the hills dividing Campania from Latium. "In grassy nook your spirit cheer with old Falernian vintage," he says to his friend Dellius (II, iii, 6). He calls it fierce, rough, fiery; recommends mixing it with Chian wine, or with wine from Surrentum (Sat. II, iv, 55), or sweetening and diluting it with honey from Mount Hymettus (Sat. II, ii, 15). From the same district came the *Massic* wine, also strong and fiery. "It breeds forgetfulness" (II, vii, 21), he says; advises that it should be softened by exposure to the open sky (Sat. II, iv, 51). He had a small supply of it, which he kept for a "happy day" (III, xxi, 6). The *Calenian* wine, from Cales near Falernum, was of similar character. He classes it with Caecuban as being too costly for a poor man's purse (I, xx, 10); writing late in life to a friend, promises to find him some, but says that his visitor must bring in exchange an alabaster box of precious spikenard (IV, xii, 17). Next after these Campanian vintages came the *Alban*. He tells Phyllis that he will broach for her a cask of it nine years old (IV, xi, 1). It was offered, too, at Nasidienus' dinner as an alternative to Caecuban; and Horace praises the raisins made from its berries (Sat. II, iv, 72). Of the *Sabine*, poorest of Italian wines, we have spoken (page 23).

The finest Greek wine was *Chian*, thick and luscious; he couples it in the Epode to Maecenas (IX, 34) with *Lesbian* which he elsewhere (I, xvii, 21) calls "innocent" or mild. *Coan* wine he mentions twice, commending its medicinal value (Sat. II, iv, 29; II, viii, 9).

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In justice to Horace and his friends, it is right to observe that connoisseurship in wine must not be confounded with inebriety. They drank to exhilarate, not to stupefy themselves, to make them what Mr. Bradwardine called *ebrioli* not *ebrii*; and he repeatedly warns against excess. The vine was to him "a sacred tree," its god, Bacchus, a gentle, gracious deity (I, xviii, 1):

'Tis thine the drooping heart to heal,  
 Thy strength uplifts the poor man's horn;  
 Inspired by thee, the soldier's steel,  
 The monarch's crown, he laughs to scorn.  
 III, xxi, 17.

"To total abstainers," he says, "heaven makes all things hard" (I, xviii, 3); so let us drink, but drink with moderate wisdom, leave quarrelsomeness in our cups to barbarous Scythians, to brute Centaurs and Lapithae: let riot never profane our worship of the kindly god. We must again remember that they did not drink wine neat, as we do, but always mixed with water. Come, he says to his slave as they sit down, quench the fire of the wine from the spring which babbles by (II, xi, 19). The common mixture was two of water to one of wine; sometimes nine of water to three of wine, the Muses to the Graces; very rarely nine of wine to three of water.

Who the uneven Muses loves,  
 Will fire his dizzy brain with three times three.  
 Three once told the Grace approves;  
 She with her two bright sisters, gay and free,  
 Hates lawless strife, loves decent glee.  
 III, xix, 11.

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## CHRONOLOGY OF HORACE'S LIFE AND WORKS

### B.C. AGE.

65		Born December 8th.
44	21	Entered as student at Athens.
43	22	In Brutus' army.
41	24	{ Philippi. Return to Rome.
38	27	Introduced to Maecenas.
35	30	Satires, Book I.
30	35	Satires, Book II, and Epodes.
23	42	Odes I-III.

20	45	Epistles, Book I.
19	46	Epistles, Book II, ii.
17	48	The Century Hymn.
13	52	Odes, Book IV.
13	52	Epistle to Augustus.
10?	55?	Art of Poetry.
8	57	Died November 17th.

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