

vices; but I am very sure a Spaniard does not. How little Mahmoud, surrounded, as he had been, entirely by his Turkish tutors, had learned that there was such a thing as a Parliament, it were useless to conjecture, unless we suppose that his instructors did not confine his studies to the Koran.

In all the mosques there are schools established, which are very regularly attended; and the poor are taught without the church of Turkey being put into peril. I believe the system is not yet printed (though there is such a thing as a Turkish press, and books printed on the late military institution of the Nizam Gedidd); nor have I heard whether the Mufti and the Mollas have subscribed, or the Calmaçam and the Tetterdar taken the alarm, for fear the ingenious youth of the turban should be taught not to "pray to God their way." The Greeks also—a kind of Eastern Irish papists—have a college of their own at Maynooth,—no, at Haivali; where the heterodox receive much the same kind of countenance from the Ottoman as the Catholic college from the English legislature. Who shall then affirm that the Turks are ignorant bigots, when they thus evince the exact proportion of Christian charity which is tolerated in the most prosperous and orthodox of all possible kingdoms? But though they allow all this, they will not suffer the Greeks to participate in their privileges: no, let them fight their battles, and pay their haratch (taxes), be drubbed in this world, and damned in the next. And shall we then emancipate our Irish Helots? Mahomet forbid! We should then be bad Mussulmans, and worse Christians: at present we unite the best of both—jesuitical faith, and something not much inferior to Turkish toleration.

## CANTO THE THIRD.

Note [F]. See p. 38.

"Not vainly did the early Persian make  
His altar the high places and the peak  
Of earth-organizing mountains," &c.—Stanza xci.

It is to be recollected, that the most beautiful and impressive doctrines of the divine Founder of Christianity were delivered, not in the Temple, but on the Mount. To waive the question of devotion, and turn to human eloquence,—the most effectual and splendid specimens were not pronounced within walls. Demosthenes addressed the public and popular assemblies. Cicero spoke in the forum. That this added to their effect on the mind of both orator and hearers, may be conceived from the difference between what we read of the emotions then and there produced, and those we ourselves experience in the perusal in the closet. It is one thing to read the Iliad at Sigæum and on the tumuli, or by the springs with Mount Ida above, and the plain and rivers and Archipelago around you; and another to trim your taper over it in a snug library—this I know. Were the early and rapid progress of what is called Methodism to be attributed to any cause beyond the enthusiasm excited by its vehement faith and doctrines (the truth or error of which I presume neither to canvass nor to question), I should venture to ascribe it to the practice of preaching in the fields, and the unstudied and extemporaneous effusions of its teachers.—The Mussulmans, whose erroneous devotion (at least in the lower orders) is most sincere, and therefore impressive, are accustomed to repeat their prescribed orisons and prayers, wherever they may be, at the stated hours—of course, frequently in the open air, kneeling upon a light mat (which they carry for the purpose of a bed or cushion as required); the ceremony lasts some minutes, during which they are totally absorbed, and only living in their supplication: nothing can disturb them. On me the simple and entire sincerity of these men, and the spirit which appeared to be within and upon them, made a far greater impression than any general rite which was ever performed in places of worship, of which I have seen those of almost every per-

suaion under the sun; including most of our own sectaries, and the Greek, the Catholic, the Armenian, the Lutheran, the Jewish, and the Mahometan. Many of the negroes, of whom there are numbers in the Turkish empire, are idolaters, and have free exercise of their belief and its rites: some of these I had a distant view of at Patras; and, from what I could make out of them, they appeared to be of a truly Pagan description, and not very agreeable to a spectator.

Note [G]. See p. 39.

"Clarens! by heavenly feet thy paths are trod,—  
Undying Love's, who here ascends a throne  
To which the steps are mountains; where the god  
Is a pervading life and light," &c.—Stanza c.

Rousseau's Héloïse, Lettre 17. part. 4. note. "Ces montagnes sont si hautes qu'une demi-heure après le soleil couche, leurs sommets sont éclairés de ses rayons; dont le rouge forme sur ces cimes blanches une belle couleur de rose, qu'on aperçoit de fort loin."—This applies more particularly to the heights over Meillerie.—"J'allai à Vevay loger à la Clef, et pendant deux jours que j'y restai sans voir personne, je pris pour cette ville un amour qui m'a suivi dans tous mes voyages, et qui m'y a fait établir enfin les héros de mon roman. Je dirais volontiers à ceux qui ont du goût et qui sont sensibles: Allez à Vevay—visitez le pays, examinez les sites, promenez-vous sur le lac, et dites si la Nature n'a pas fait ce beau pays pour une Julie, pour une Claire, et pour un St. Preux; mais ne les y cherchez pas."—*Les Confessions*, livre iv. p. 306. Lyon, ed. 1796.—In July, 1816, I made a voyage round the Lake of Geneva; and, as far as my own observations have led me in a not uninterested nor inattentive survey of all the scenes most celebrated by Rousseau in his "Héloïse," I can safely say, that in this there is no exaggeration. It would be difficult to see Clarens (with the scenes around it, Vevay, Chillon, Boveret, St. Gingo, Meillerie, Eivan, and the entrances of the Rhone) without being forcibly struck with its peculiar adaptation to the persons and events with which it has been peopled. But this is not all: the feeling with which all around Clarens, and the opposite rocks of Meillerie, is invested, is of a still higher and more comprehensive order than the mere sympathy with individual passion; it is a sense of the existence of love in its most extended and sublime capacity, and of our own participation of its good and of its glory: it is the great principle of the universe, which is there more condensed, but not less manifested; and of which, though knowing ourselves a part, we lose our individuality, and mingle in the beauty of the whole.—If Rousseau had never written, nor lived, the same associations would not less have belonged to such scenes. He has added to the interest of his works by their adoption; he has shown his sense of their beauty by the selection; but they have done that for him which no human being could do for them.—I had the fortune (good or evil as it might be) to sail from Meillerie (where we landed for some time) to St. Gingo during a lake storm, which added to the magnificence of all around, although occasionally accompanied by danger to the boat, which was small and overloaded. It was over this very part of the lake that Rousseau has driven the boat of St. Preux and Madame Wolmar to Meillerie for shelter during a tempest. On gaining the shore at St. Gingo, I found that the wind had been sufficiently strong to blow down some fine old chestnut trees on the lower part of the mountains. On the opposite height of Clarens is a château. The hills are covered with vineyards, and interspersed with some small but beautiful woods; one of these was named the "Bosquet de Julie;" and it is remarkable that, though long ago cut down by the brutal selfishness of the monks of St. Bernard (to whom the land appertained), that the ground might be enclosed into a vineyard for the miserable drones of an execrable superstition, the inhabitants of Clarens still point out the spot where its trees stood, calling it by the name which consecrated and survived them. Rousseau has not

been particularly fortunate in the preservation of the "local habitations" he has given to "airy nothings." The Prior of Great St. Bernard has cut down some of his woods for the sake of a few casks of wine, and Buonaparte has levelled part of the rocks of Meillerie in improving the road to the Simplon. The road is an excellent one; but I cannot quite agree with the remark which I heard made, that "La route vaut mieux que les souvenirs."

## CANTO THE FOURTH.

HISTORICAL NOTES.

## NO. I.—STATE DUNGEONS OF VENICE.

"I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;  
A palace and a prison on each hand."—Stanza i.

THE communication between the ducal palace and the prisons of Venice is by a gloomy bridge, or covered gallery, high above the water, and divided by a stone wall into a passage and a cell. The state dungeons, called *pozzi*, or wells, were sunk in the thick walls of the palace; and the prisoner when taken out to die was conducted across the gallery to the other side, and being then led back into the other compartment, or cell, upon the bridge, was there strangled. The low portal through which the criminal was taken into this cell is now walled up; but the passage is still open, and is still known by the name of the Bridge of Sighs. The *pozzi* are under the flooring of the chamber at the foot of the bridge. They were formerly twelve; but on the first arrival of the French, the Venetians hastily blocked or broke up the deeper of these dungeons. You may still, however, descend by a trap-door, and crawl down through holes, half-choked by rubbish, to the depth of two stories below the first range. If you are in want of consolation for the extinction of patrician power, perhaps you may find it there; scarcely a ray of light glimmers into the narrow gallery which leads to the cells, and the places of confinement themselves are totally dark. A small hole in the wall admitted the damp air of the passages, and served for the introduction of the prisoner's food. A wooden pallet, raised a foot from the ground, was the only furniture. The conductors tell you that a light was not allowed. The cells are about five paces in length, two and a half in width, and seven feet in height. They are directly beneath one another, and respiration is somewhat difficult in the lower holes. Only one prisoner was found when there publicans descended into these hideous recesses, and he is said to have been confined sixteen years. But the inmates of the dungeons beneath had left traces of their repentance, or of their despair, which are still visible, and may, perhaps, owe something to recent ingenuity. Some of the detained appear to have offended against, and others to have belonged to, the sacred body, not only from their signatures, but from the churches and belfries which they have scratched upon the walls. The reader may not object to see a specimen of the records prompted by so terrific a solitude. As nearly as they could be copied by more than one pencil, three of them are as follows:—

- NON TI FIDAR AD ALCUNO PENZA E TACI  
SE FUGIR VUOI DE SPIONI INSIDIE E LACCI  
IL PENTIRTI PENTIRTI NULLA GIOVA  
MA BEN DI VALOR TUO LA VERA PROVA  
1607. ADI 2. GENARO. FUI RE-  
TENTO P' LA BESTEMMA P' AVER DATO  
DA MANZAR A UN MORTO  
IACOMO . GRITTI . SCRISSE.
- UN PARLAR POCCHÓ ET  
NEGARE PRONTO ET  
UN PENSAR AL FINE PUO DARE LA VITA  
A NOI ALTRI MESCHINI  
1605.  
EGO JOHN BAPTISTA AD  
ECCLESIAM CORTELLARIUS.
- DE CHI MI FIDO GUARDAMI DIO  
DE CHI NON MI FIDO MI GUARDARO IO  
A TA H A NA  
V. LA S . C . K . R .

The copyist has followed, not corrected, the solecisms; some of which are, however, not quite so decided, since the letters were evidently scratched in the dark. It only need be observed, that *bestemmia* and *mangiar* may be read in the first inscription, which was probably written by a prisoner confined for some act of impiety committed at a funeral; that *Cortellarius* is the name of a parish on terra firma, near the sea; and that the last initials evidently are put for *Viva la santa Chiesa Kattolica Romana*.

## NO. II.—SONGS OF THE GONDOLIERS.

"In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more."—Stanza iii.

The well known song of the gondoliers, of alternate stanzas from Tasso's Jerusalem, has died with the independence of Venice. Editions of the poem, with the original in one column, and the Venetian variations on the other, as sung by the boatmen, were once common, and are still to be found. The following extract will serve to show the difference between the Tuscan epic and the "Canta alla Barcarola."

ORIGINAL.

Canto l'arme pietose, e 'l capitano  
Che 'l gran Sepolcro liberò di Cristo.  
Molto egli oprò col senno, e con la mano  
Molto soffrì nel glorioso acquisto;  
E in van l' Inferno a lui s'oppose, e in vano  
S'armò d'Asia, e di Libia il popol misto,  
Che il Ciel gli diè favore, e sotto a i Santi  
Segni ridusse i suoi compagni erranti.

VENETIAN.

L' arme pietose de cantar gho voglia,  
E de Goffredo la immortal braura  
Che al fin l' ha libera co strassia, e dogia  
Del nostro buon Gesù la Sepoltura  
De mezzo mondo unito, e de quel Bogia  
Mister Pluton non l' ha bu mai paura:  
Dio l' ha agutá, e i compagni sparpagnai  
Tutti 'l gh' i ha messi insieme i di del Dai.

Some of the elder gondoliers will, however, take up and continue a stanza of their once familiar bard.

On the 7th of last January, the author of Childe Harold, and another Englishman, the writer of this notice, rowed to the Lido with two singers, one of whom was a carpenter, and the other a gondolier. The former placed himself at the prow, the latter at the stern of the boat. A little after leaving the quay of the Piazzetta, they began to sing, and continued their exercise until we arrived at the island. They gave us, amongst other essays, the death of Clorinda, and the palace of Armida; and did not sing the Venetian, but the Tuscan verses. The carpenter, however, who was the cleverer of the two, and was frequently obliged to prompt his companion, told us that he could translate the original. He added, that he could sing almost three hundred stanzas, but had not spirits (*morbin* was the word he used) to learn any more, or to sing what he already knew: a man must have idle time on his hands to acquire, or to repeat, and, said the poor fellow, "look at my clothes and at me; I am starving." This speech was more affecting than his performance, which habit alone can make attractive. The recitative was shrill, screaming, and monotonous; and the gondolier behind assisted his voice by holding his hand to one side of his mouth. The carpenter used a quiet action, which he evidently endeavoured to restrain; but was too much interested in his subject altogether to repress. From these men we learnt that singing is not confined to the gondoliers, and that, although the chant is seldom, if ever, voluntary, there are still several amongst the lower classes who are acquainted with a few stanzas.

It does not appear that it is usual for the performers to row and sing at the same time. Although the verses of the Jerusalem are no longer casually heard, there is yet much music upon the Venetian canals; and upon holidays, those strangers who are not near or informed enough to distinguish

the words, may fancy that many of the gondolas still resound with the strains of Tasso. The writer of some remarks which appeared in the "Curiosities of Literature" must excuse his being twice quoted; for, with the exception of some phrases a little too ambitious and extravagant, he has furnished a very exact, as well as agreeable, description:—

"In Venice the gondoliers know by heart long passages from Ariosto and Tasso, and often chant them with a peculiar melody. But this talent seems at present on the decline:—at least, after taking some pains, I could find no more than two persons who delivered to me in this way a passage from Tasso. I must add, that the late Mr. Berry once chaunted to me a passage in Tasso in the manner, as he assured me, of the gondoliers.

"There are always two concerned, who alternately sing the strophes. We know the melody eventually by Rousseau, to whose songs it is printed; it has properly no melodious movement, and is a sort of medium between the canto fermo and the canto figurato; it approaches to the former by recitativo declamation, and to the latter by passages and course, by which one syllable is detained and embellished.

"I entered a gondola by moonlight; one singer placed himself forwards and the other aft, and thus proceeded to St. Georgio. One began the song: when he had ended his strophe, the other took up the lay, and so continued the song alternately. Throughout the whole of it, the same notes invariably returned; but, according to the subject matter of the strophe, they laid a greater or a smaller stress, sometimes on one, and sometimes on another note, and indeed changed the enunciation of the whole strophe as the object of the poem altered.

"On the whole, however, the sounds were hoarse and screaming: they seemed, in the manner of all rude uncivilised men, to make the excellency of their singing in the force of their voice: one seemed desirous of conquering the other by the strength of his lungs; and so far from receiving delight from this scene (shut up as I was in the box of the gondola), I found myself in a very unpleasant situation.

"My companion, to whom I communicated this circumstance, being very desirous to keep up the credit of his countrymen, assured me that this singing was very delightful when heard at a distance. Accordingly we got out upon the shore, leaving one of the singers in the gondola, while the other went to the distance of some hundred paces. They now began to sing against one another, and I kept walking up and down between them both, so as always to leave him who was to begin his part. I frequently stood still and hearkened to the one and to the other.

"Here the scene was properly introduced. The strong declamatory, and, as it were, shrieking sound, met the ear from far, and called forth the attention; the quickly succeeding transitions, which necessarily required to be sung in a lower tone, seemed like plaintive strains succeeding the vociferations of emotion or of pain. The other, who listened attentively, immediately began where the former left off, answering him in milder or more vehement notes, according as the purport of the strophe required. The sleepy canals, the lofty buildings, the splendour of the moon, the deep shadows of the few gondolas that moved like spirits hither and thither, increased the striking peculiarity of the scene; and, amidst all these circumstances, it was easy to confess the character of this wonderful harmony.

"It suits perfectly well with an idle solitary mariner, lying at length in his vessel at rest on one of these canals, waiting for his company, or for a fare, the tiresomeness of which situation is somewhat alleviated by the songs and poetical stories he has in memory. He often raises his voice as loud as he can, which extends itself to a vast distance over the tranquil mirror; and as all is still around, he is, at it were, in a solitude in the midst of a large and populous town. Here is no rattling of carriages, no noise of foot passengers; a silent gondola glides now and then by him, of which the splashing of the oars are scarcely to be heard.

<sup>1</sup> The writer meant *Lido*, which is not a long row of islands, but a long island: *Ilhas*, the shore.

"At a distance he hears another, perhaps utterly unknown to him. Melody and verse immediately attach the two strangers; he becomes the responsive echo to the former, and exerts himself to be heard as he had heard the other. By a tacit convention they alternate verse for verse; though the song should last the whole night through, they entertain themselves without fatigue; the hearers, who are passing between the two, take part in the amusement.

"This vocal performance sounds best at a great distance, and is then inexpressibly charming, as it only fulfils its design in the sentiment of remoteness. It is plaintive, but not dismal in its sound, and at times it is scarcely possible to refrain from tears. My companion, who otherwise was not a very delicately organised person, said quite unexpectedly:—*E singolare come quel canto intenerisce, e molto più quando lo cantano meglio.*

"I was told that the women of Libo, the long row of islands that divides the Adriatic from the Lagoons<sup>1</sup>, particularly the women of the extreme districts of Malamocco and Palestrina, sing in like manner the works of Tasso to these and similar tunes.

"They have the custom, when their husbands are fishing out at sea, to sit along the shore in the evenings and vociferate these songs, and continue to do so with great violence, till each of them can distinguish the responses of her own husband at a distance."<sup>2</sup>

The love of music and of poetry distinguishes all classes of Venetians, even amongst the tuneful sons of Italy. The city itself can occasionally furnish respectable audiences for two and even three opera-houses at a time; and there are few events in private life that do not call forth a printed and circulated sonnet. Does a physician or a lawyer take his degree, or a clergyman preach his maiden sermon, has a surgeon performed an operation, would a harlequin announce his departure or his benefit, are you to be congratulated on a marriage, or a birth, or a lawsuit, the Muses are invoked to furnish the same number of syllables, and the individual triumphs blaze abroad in virgin white or party-coloured placards on half the corners of the capital. The last curtsey of a favourite "prima donna" brings down a shower of these poetical tributes from those upper regions, from which, in our theatres, nothing but cupids and snow-storms are accustomed to descend. There is a poetry in the very life of a Venetian, which, in its common course, is varied with those surprises and changes so recommendable in fiction, but so different from the sober monotony of northern existence; amusements are raised into duties, duties are softened into amusements, and every object being considered as equally making a part of the business of life, is announced and performed with the same earnest indifference and gay assiduity. The Venetian gazette constantly closes its columns with the following triple advertisement:—

#### Charade.

Exposition of the most Holy Sacrament in the church of St. —

#### Theatres.

St. Moses, opera.  
St. Benedict, a comedy of characters.  
St. Luke, repose.

When it is recollected what the Catholics believe their consecrated wafer to be, we may perhaps think it worthy of a more respectable niche than between poetry and the play-house.

#### No. III. — THE LION AND HORSES OF ST. MARK'S.

"*St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood  
Stand.*" — Stanza xi.

The Lion has lost nothing by his journey to the Invalides but the gospel which supported the paw; that is now on a

<sup>2</sup> *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. ii. p. 156. edit. 1837; and Appendix xxix. to Black's *Life of Tasso*.

level with the other foot. The Horses also are returned to the ill-chosen spot whence they set out, and are, as before, half hidden, under the porch window of St. Mark's church. Their history, after a desperate struggle, has been satisfactorily explored. The decisions and doubts of Erizzo and Zanetti, and lastly, of the Count Leopold Cicognara, would have given them a Roman extraction, and a pedigree not more ancient than the reign of Nero. But M. de Schlegel stepped in to teach the Venetians the value of their own treasures, and a Greek vindicated, at last and for ever, the pretension of his countrymen to this noble production.<sup>1</sup> M. Mustoxidi has not been left without a reply; but, as yet, he has received no answer. It should seem that the horses are irrevocably Chian, and were transferred to Constantinople by Theodosius. Lapidary writing is a favourite play of the Italians, and has conferred reputation on more than one of their literary characters. One of the best specimens of Bodoni's typography is a respectable volume of inscriptions, all written by his friend Pacciardi. Several were prepared for the recovered horses. It is to be hoped the best was not selected, when the following words were ranged in gold letters above the cathedral porch:—

QUATOR EQUORUM SIGNA A VENETIS BYZANTIO CAPTA AD TEMP D MAR A R S MCCIV POSITA Q UE HOSTILIS CUPIDITAS A MDCCLIC ABSTULERAT FRANC I IMP PACIS ORBI DATE TROPHEUM A MDCCLXV VICTOR REDUXIT.

Nothing shall be said of the Latin; but it may be permitted to observe, that the injustice of the Venetians in transporting the horses from Constantinople was at least equal to that of the French in carrying them to Paris, and that it would have been more prudent to have avoided all allusions to either robbery. An apostolic prince should, perhaps, have objected to affixing over the principal entrance of a metropolitan church an inscription having a reference to any other triumphs than those of religion. Nothing less than the pacification of the world can excuse such a solecism.

#### No. IV. — SUBMISSION OF BARBAROSSA TO POPE ALEXANDER III.

"*The Suabian sued, and now the Austrian reigns—  
An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt.*"  
Stanza xii.

After many vain efforts on the part of the Italians entirely to throw off the yoke of Frederic Barbarossa, and as fruitless attempts of the Emperor to make himself absolute master throughout the whole of his Cisalpine dominions, the bloody struggles of four and twenty years were happily brought to a close in the city of Venice. The articles of a treaty had been previously agreed upon between Pope Alexander III, and Barbarossa; and the former having received a safe-conduct, had already arrived at Venice from Ferrara, in company with the ambassadors of the King of Sicily and the consuls of the Lombard league. There still remained, however, many points to adjust, and for several days the peace was believed to be impracticable. At this juncture it was suddenly reported that the Emperor had arrived at Chioza, a town fifteen miles from the capital. The Venetians rose tumultuously, and insisted upon immediately conducting him to the city. The Lombards took the alarm, and departed towards Treviso. The Pope himself was apprehensive of some disaster if Frederic should suddenly advance upon him, but was reassured by the prudence and address of Sebastian Ziani, the Doge. Several embassies passed between Chioza and the capital, until, at last, the Emperor, relaxing somewhat of his pretensions, "laid aside his leonine ferocity, and put on the mildness of the lamb."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Sui quattro cavalli della Basilica di S. Marco in Venezia. Lettera di Andrea Mustoxidi Corcinese. Padova, 1816.*

<sup>2</sup> "Quibus auditis, imperator, operante eo, qui corda principum sicut vult et quando vult humiliter inclinavit, leonina feritate deposita, ovinam mansuetudinem induit." — Romualdi Salernitani Chronicon, apud Script. Ital. tom. vii. p. 229.

On Saturday the 23d of July, in the year 1177, six Venetian galleys transferred Frederic, in great pomp, from Chioza to the island of Lido, a mile from Venice. Early the next morning the Pope, accompanied by the Sicilian ambassadors and by the envoys of Lombardy, whom he had recalled from the main land, together with a great concourse of people, repaired from the patriarchal palace to St. Mark's church, and solemnly absolved the Emperor and his partisans from the excommunication pronounced against him. The Chancellor of the Empire, on the part of his master, renounced the anti-popes and their schismatic adherents. Immediately the Doge, with a great suite both of the clergy and laity, got on board the galleys, and waiting on Frederic, rowed him in mighty state from the Lido to the capital. The Emperor descended from the galley at the quay of the Piazzetta. The Doge, the patriarch, his bishops and clergy, and the people of Venice with their crosses and their standards, marched in solemn procession before him to the church of St. Mark. Alexander was seated before the vestibule of the basilica, attended by his bishops and cardinals, by the patriarch of Aquileja, by the archbishops and bishops of Lombardy, all of them in state, and clothed in their church robes. Frederic approached—"moved by the Holy Spirit, venerating the Almighty in the person of Alexander, laying aside his imperial dignity, and throwing off his mantle, he prostrated himself at full length at the feet of the Pope. Alexander, with tears in his eyes, raised him benignantly from the ground, kissed him, blessed him; and immediately the Germans of the train sang, with a loud voice, 'We praise thee, O Lord.' The Emperor then, taking the Pope by the right hand, led him to the church, and having received his benediction, returned to the ducal palace."<sup>3</sup> The ceremony of humiliation was repeated the next day. The Pope himself, at the request of Frederic, said mass at St. Mark's. The Emperor again laid aside his imperial mantle, and, taking a wand in his hand, officiated as *verger*, driving the laity from the choir, and preceding the pontiff to the altar. Alexander, after reciting the gospel, preached to the people. The Emperor put himself close to the pulpit in the attitude of listening; and the pontiff, touched by this mark of his attention (for he knew that Frederic did not understand a word he said), commanded the patriarch of Aquileja to translate the Latin discourse into the German tongue. The creed was then chanted. Frederic made his oblation, and kissed the Pope's feet, and, mass being over, led him by the hand to his white horse. He held the stirrup, and would have led the horse's rein to the water side, had not the Pope accepted of the inclination for the performance, and affectionately dismissed him with his benediction. Such is the substance of the account left by the archbishop of Salerno, who was present at the ceremony, and whose story is confirmed by every subsequent narration. It would be not worth so minute a record, were it not the triumph of liberty as well as of superstition. The states of Lombardy owed to it the confirmation of their privileges; and Alexander had reason to thank the Almighty, who had enabled an infirm, unarmed old man to subdue a terrible and potent sovereign.<sup>4</sup>

#### No. V. — HENRY DANDOLO.

"*Oh, for one hour of blind old Dandolo!  
Th' octogenarian chief, Byzantium's conquering foe.*"  
Stanza xii.

The reader will recollect the exclamation of the Highlander, *Oh for one hour of Deuce!* Henry Dandolo when elected Doge, in 1192, was eighty-five years of age. When he commanded the Venetians at the taking of Constantinople he was consequently ninety-seven years old. At this age he

<sup>3</sup> *Ital. tom. vii. p. 231.*

<sup>4</sup> See the above-cited Romuald of Salerno. In a second sermon which Alexander preached, on the first day of August, before the Emperor, he compared Frederic to the prodigal son, and himself to the forgiving father.

annexed the fourth and a half of the whole empire of Romania<sup>1</sup>, for so the Roman empire was then called, to the title and to the territories of the Venetian Doge. The three eighths of this empire were preserved in the diplomas until the dukedom of Giovanni Dolfino, who made use of the above designation in the year 1357.<sup>2</sup>

Dandolo led the attack on Constantinople in person; two ships, the Paradise and the Pilgrim, were tied together, and a drawbridge or ladder let down from their higher yards to the walls. The Doge was one of the first to rush into the city. Then was completed, said the Venetians, the prophecy of the Erythrean sibyl:—"A gathering together of the powerful shall be made amidst the waves of the Adriatic, under a blind leader; they shall beset the goat—they shall profane Byzantium—they shall blacken her buildings—her spoils shall be dispersed; a new goat shall bleat until they have measured out and run over fifty-four feet, nine inches, and a half."<sup>3</sup> Dandolo died on the first day of June, 1205, having reigned thirteen years, six months, and five days, and was buried in the church of St. Sophia, at Constantinople. Strangely enough it must sound, that the name of the rebel apothecary who received the Doge's sword, and annihilated the ancient government, in 1796-7, was Dandolo.

#### NO. VI.—THE WAR OF CHIOZA.

"But is not Doria's menace come to pass;  
Are they not bridled?"—Stanza xliii.

After the loss of the battle of Pola, and the taking of Chioza on the 16th of August, 1379, by the united armament of the Genoese and Francesco da Carrara, Signor of Padua, the Venetians were reduced to the utmost despair. An embassy was sent to the conquerors with a blank sheet of paper, praying them to prescribe what terms they pleased, and leave to Venice only her independence. The Prince of Padua was inclined to listen to these proposals; but the Genoese, who, after the victory at Pola had shouted, "To Venice, to Venice, and long live St. George!" determined to annihilate their rival; and Peter Doria, their commander-in-chief, returned this answer to the suppliants:—"On God's faith, gentlemen of Venice, ye shall have no peace from the Signor of Padua, nor from our commune of Genoa, until we have first put a rein upon those unbridled horses of yours, that are upon the porch of your evangelist St. Mark. When we have bridled them, we shall keep you quiet. And this is the pleasure of us and of our commune. As for these my brothers of Genoa, that you have brought with you to give up to us, I will not have them: take them back; for, in a few days hence, I shall come and let them out of prison myself, both these and all the others." In fact, the Genoese did advance as far as Malamocco, within five miles of the capital; but their own danger and the pride of their enemies gave courage to the Venetians, who made prodigious efforts, and many individual sacrifices, all of them carefully recorded by their historians. Vettor Pisani was put at the head of thirty-four galleys. The Genoese broke up from Malamocco, and retired to Chioza in October; but they again threatened Venice, which was reduced to extremities. At this time, the 1st of January, 1380, arrived Carlo Zeno, who had been cruising on the Genoese coast with fourteen galleys. The Venetians were now strong enough to besiege the Genoese. Doria was killed on the 22d of January, by a stone bullet 195 pounds weight, discharged from a bombard called the Trevisan. Chioza was then closely invested; 5000 auxiliaries, amongst whom were some English condottieri, commanded by one Captain Ceccho, joined the Venetians. The Genoese, in their turn, prayed for conditions, but none were granted, until, at last, they surrendered at discretion; and, on the 24th

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Gibbon has omitted the important *o*, and has written Romani instead of Romanis. Decline and Fall, chap. lxi. note 9. But the title acquired by Dandolo runs thus in the chronicle of his namesake, the Doge Andrew Dandolo. "Ducali titolo addidit, Quartæ partis et dimidiæ totius imperii Romanie." And. Dand. Chronicon, cap. iii. pars xxxvii. ap. Script. Rer. Ital. tom. xli. page 231. And the Romanis is observed in the subsequent acts of the Doge. Indeed, the continental possessions of the Greek empire in Europe were then generally known by the name of

of June, 1380, the Doge Contarini made his triumphal entry into Chioza. Four thousand prisoners, nineteen galleys, many smaller vessels and barks, with all the ammunition and arms, and outfit of the expedition, fell into the hands of the conquerors, who, had it not been for the inexorable answer of Doria, would have gladly reduced their dominion to the city of Venice. An account of these transactions is found in a work called the War of Chioza, written by Daniel Chinnazzo, who was in Venice at the time.

#### NO. VII.—VENICE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF AUSTRIA.

"Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must  
Too oft remind her who and what entrals."—Stanza xv.

The population of Venice at the end of the seventeenth century amounted to nearly two hundred thousand souls. At the last census, taken two years ago, it was no more than about one hundred and three thousand: and it diminishes daily. The commerce and the official employments, which were to be the unexhausted source of Venetian grandeur, have both expired. Most of the patrician mansions are deserted, and would gradually disappear, had not the government, alarmed by the demolition of seventy-two during the last two years, expressly forbidden this sad resource of poverty. Many remnants of the Venetian nobility are now scattered and confounded with the wealthier Jews upon the banks of the Brenta, whose Palladian palaces have sunk, or are sinking, in the general decay. Of the "gentiluomo Veneto," the name is still known, and that is all. He is but the shadow of his former self, but he is polite and kind. It surely may be pardoned to him if he is querulous. Whatever may have been the vices of the republic, and although the natural term of its existence may be thought by foreigners to have arrived in the due course of mortality, only one sentiment can be expected from the Venetians themselves. At no time were the subjects of the republic so unanimous in their resolution to rally round the standard of St. Mark, as when it was for the last time unfurled; and the cowardice and the treachery of the few patricians who recommended the fatal neutrality were confined to the persons of the traitors themselves. The present race cannot be thought to regret the loss of their aristocratical forms, and too despotic government; they think only on their vanished independence. They pine away at the remembrance, and on this subject suspend for a moment their gay good humour. Venice may be said, in the words of the scripture, "to die daily;" and so general and so apparent is the decline, as to become painful to a stranger, not reconciled to the sight of a whole nation expiring as it were before his eyes. So artificial a creation having lost that principle which called it into life and supported its existence, must fall to pieces at once, and sink more rapidly than it rose. The abhorrence of slavery which drove the Venetians to the sea, has, since their disaster, forced them to the land, where they may be at least overlooked amongst the crowd of dependents, and not present the humiliating spectacle of a whole nation loaded with recent chains. Their liveliness, their affability, and that happy indifference which constitution alone can give (for philosophy aspires to it in vain), have not sunk under circumstances; but many peculiarities of costume and manner have by degrees been lost, and the nobles, with a pride common to all Italians who have been masters, have not been persuaded to parade their insignificance. That splendour which was a proof and a portion of their power, they would not degrade into the trappings of their subjection. They retired from the space which they had occupied in the eyes of their fellow-citizens;

Romania, and that appellation is still seen in the maps of Turkey as applied to Thrace.

<sup>2</sup> See the continuation of Dandolo's Chronicle, *ibid.* p. 498. Mr. Gibbon appears not to include Dolfino, following Samudò, who says, "il qual titolo si usò fin al Doge Giovanni Dolfino." See *Vite de' Duchi di Venezia*, ap. Script. Rer. Ital. tom. xxii. 550. 641.

<sup>3</sup> Chronicon, *ibid.* pars xxxiv.

their continuance in which would have been a symptom of acquiescence, and an insult to those who suffered by the common misfortune. Those who remained in the degraded capital might be said rather to haunt the scenes of their departed power, than to live in them. The reflection, "who and what entrals," will hardly bear a comment from one who is, nationally, the friend and the ally of the conqueror. It may, however, be allowed to say thus much, that to those who wish to recover their independence, any masters must be an object of detestation; and it may be safely foretold that this unprofitable aversion will not have been corrected before Venice shall have sunk into the slime of her choked canals.

#### NO. VIII.—LAURA.

"Watering the tree which bears his lady's name  
With his melodious tears, he gave himself to fame."  
Stanza xxv.

Thanks to the critical acumen of a Scotchman, we now know as little of Laura as ever.<sup>1</sup> The discoveries of the Abbé de Sade, his triumphs, his sneers, can no longer instruct or amuse. We must not, however, think that these memoirs are as much a romance as Belisarius or the Incas, although we are told so by Dr. Beattie, a great name, but a little authority.<sup>2</sup> His "labour" has not been in vain, notwithstanding his "love" has, like most other passions, made him ridiculous.<sup>3</sup> The hypothesis which overpowered the struggling Italians, and carried along less interested critics in its current, is run out. We have another proof that we can be never sure that the paradox, the most singular, and therefore having the most agreeable and authentic air, will not give place to the re-established ancient prejudice.

It seems, then, first, that Laura was born, lived, died, and was buried, not in Avignon, but in the country. The fountains of the Sorga, the thickets of Cabrières, may resume their pretensions, and the exploded *de la Bastie* again be heard with complacency. The hypothesis of the Abbé had no stronger props than the parchment sonnet and medal found on the skeleton of the wife of Hugo de Sade, and the manuscript note to the Virgil of Petrarch, now in the Ambrosian library. If these proofs were both incontestable, the poetry was written, the medal composed, cast, and deposited within the space of twelve hours: and these deliberate duties were performed round the carcass of one who died of the plague, and was hurried to the grave on the day of her death. These documents, therefore, are too decisive: they prove not the fact, but the forgery. Either the sonnet or the Virgilian note must be a falsification. The Abbé cites both as incontestably true; the consequent deduction is inevitable—they are both evidently false.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, Laura was never married, and was a haughty virgin rather than that *tender and prudent* wife who honoured Avignon, by making that town the theatre of an honest French passion, and played off for one and twenty years her *little machinery* of alternate favours and refusals<sup>5</sup> upon the first poet of the age. It was, indeed, rather too unfair that a female should be made responsible for eleven children upon the faith of a misinterpreted abbreviation, and the decision

<sup>1</sup> See An Historical and Critical Essay on the Life and Character of Petrarch; and a Dissertation on an Historical Hypothesis of the Abbé de Sade.

<sup>2</sup> Life of Beattie, by Sir W. Forbes, vol. ii. p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Gibbon called his Memoirs "a labour of love" (see Decline and Fall, chap. lxx. note 1.), and followed him with confidence and delight. The compiler of a very voluminous work must take much criticism upon trust. Mr. Gibbon has done so, though not as readily as some other authors.

<sup>4</sup> The sonnet had before awakened the suspicions of Mr. Horace Walpole. See his letter to Warton in 1765.

<sup>5</sup> "Par ce petit ménage, cette alternative de faveurs et de rigueurs bien ménagée, une femme tendre et sage amuse, pendant vingt et un ans, le plus grand poète de son siècle, sans faire la moindre brèche à son honneur." *Mém. pour la Vie de Petrarque*, Préface aux Français.

<sup>6</sup> In a dialogue with St. Augustin, Petrarch has described Laura as having a body exhausted with repeated *stips*. The old editors read and printed *perturbationibus*; but M. Capperonier, librarian to the French king in 1762, who saw the MS. in the Paris library, made an attestation

of a librarian.<sup>6</sup> It is, however, satisfactory to think that the love of Petrarch was not Platonic. The happiness which he prayed to possess but once and for a moment was surely not of the mind<sup>7</sup>, and something so very real as a marriage project, with one who has been idly called a shadowy nymph, may be, perhaps, detected in at least six places of his own sonnets. The love of Petrarch was neither Platonic nor poetical: and if in one passage of his works he calls it "amore veementeissimo ma unico ed onesto," he confesses, in a letter to a friend, that it was guilty and perverse, that it absorbed him quite, and mastered his heart.

In this case, however, he was perhaps alarmed for the culpability of his wishes; for the Abbé de Sade himself, who certainly would not have been scrupulously delicate if he could have proved his descent from Petrarch as well as Laura, is forced into a stout defence of his virtuous grandmother. As far as relates to the poet, we have no security for the innocence, except perhaps in the constancy of his pursuit. He assures us in his epistle to posterity, that, when arrived at his fortieth year, he not only had in horror, but had lost all recollection and image of any "irregularity." But the birth of his natural daughter cannot be assigned earlier than his thirty-ninth year; and either the memory or the morality of the poet must have failed him, when he forgot or was guilty of this *stip*.<sup>8</sup> The weakest argument for the purity of this love has been drawn from the permanence of its effects, which survived the object of his passion. The reflection of M. de la Bastie, that virtue alone is capable of making impressions which death cannot efface, is one of those which every body applauds, and every body finds not to be true, the moment he examines his own breast or the records of human feeling.<sup>9</sup> Such apophthegms can do nothing for Petrarch or for the cause of morality, except with the very weak and the very young. He that has made even a little progress beyond ignorance and pupillage cannot be edified with any thing but truth. What is called vindicating the honour of an individual or a nation, is the most futile, tedious, and unproductive of all writing; although it will always meet with more applause than that sober criticism, which is attributed to the malicious desire of reducing a great man to the common standard of humanity. It is, after all, not unlikely that our historian was right in retaining his favourite hypothetical salvo, which secures the author, although it scarcely saves the honour of the still unknown mistress of Petrarch.<sup>10</sup>

#### NO. IX.—PETRARCH.

"They keep his dust in Arqua, where he died."—Stanza xxxi.

Petrarch retired to Arqua immediately on his return from the unsuccessful attempt to visit Urban V. at Rome, in the year 1370, and, with the exception of his celebrated visit to Venice in company with Francesco Novello da Carrara, he appears to have passed the four last years of his life between that charming solitude and Padua. For four months previous to his death he was in a state of continual languor, and in the morning of July the 19th, in the year 1374, was found dead in his library chair with his head resting upon a book. The chair is still shown amongst the precious relics of Arqua,

that "on lit et qu'on doit lire, partibus exhaustum." De Sade joined the names of Messrs. Boudot and Bejot with M. Capperonier, and, in the whole discussion on this *stip*, showed himself a downright literary rogue. See Rifflesioni, &c. p. 267. Thomas Aquinas is called in to settle whether Petrarch's mistress was a *chaude* maid or a *continent* wife.

<sup>7</sup> "Pigmalion, quanto lodar ti dei  
Dell' imagine tua, se mille volte  
N' avesti quel ch' è sol una vorrei."

Sonetto 58. *quando giunse a Simon l'allo concetto*.  
*Le Rime*, &c. par. i. pag. 189. edit. Ven. 1756.

<sup>8</sup> "A questa confessione così sincera diede forse occasione una nuova caduta ch' è fece." Tiraboschi, Storia, &c. v. 492.

<sup>9</sup> M. de Bimard, Baron de la Bastie, in the Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres for 1740 and 1751. See also Rifflesioni, &c. p. 295.

<sup>10</sup> "And if the virtue or prudence of Laura was inexorable, he enjoyed, and might boast of enjoying, the nymph of poetry." Decline and Fall, chap. lxx. p. 257. vol. xii. 8vo. Venice the *if* is here meant for *although*.

which, from the uninterrupted veneration that has been attached to every thing relative to this great man from the moment of his death to the present hour, have, it may be hoped, a better chance of authenticity than the Shakspearian memorials of Stratford-upon-Avon.

Arquà (for the last syllable is accented in pronunciation, although the analogy of the English language has been observed in the verse) is twelve miles from Padua, and about three miles on the right of the high road to Rovigo, in the bosom of the Euganean hills. After a walk of twenty minutes across a flat well-wooded meadow, you come to a little blue lake, clear but fathomless, and to the foot of a succession of acclivities and hills, clothed with vineyards and orchards, rich with fir and pomegranate trees, and every sunny fruit shrub. From the banks of the lake the road winds into the hills, and the church of Arquà is soon seen between a cleft where two ridges slope towards each other, and nearly enclose the village. The houses are scattered at intervals on the steep sides of these summits; and that of the poet is on the edge of a little knoll overlooking two descents, and commanding a view, not only of the glowing gardens in the dales immediately beneath, but of the wide plains, above whose low woods of mulberry and willow, thickened into a dark mass by festoons of vines, tall, single cypresses, and the spires of towns, are seen in the distance, which stretches to the mouths of the Po and the shores of the Adriatic. The climate of these volcanic hills is warmer, and the vintage begins a week sooner than in the plains of Padua. Petrarch is laid, for he cannot be said to be buried, in a sarcophagus of red marble, raised on four pilasters on an elevated base, and preserved from an association with meaner tombs. It stands conspicuously alone, but will be soon overshadowed by four lately planted laurels. Petrarch's fountain, for here every thing is Petrarch's, springs and expands itself beneath an artificial arch, a little below the church, and abounds plentifully, in the driest season, with that soft water which was the ancient wealth of the Euganean hills. It would be more attractive, were it not, in some seasons, beset with hornets and wasps. No other coincidence could assimilate the tombs of Petrarch and Archilochus. The revolutions of centuries have spared these sequestered valleys, and the only violence which has been offered to the ashes of Petrarch was prompted, not by hate, but veneration. An attempt was made to rob the sarcophagus of its treasure, and one of the arms was stolen by a Florentine through a rent which is still visible. The injury is not forgotten, but has served to identify the poet with the country where he was born, but where he would not live. A peasant boy of Arquà being asked who Petrarch was, replied, "that the people of the parsonage knew all about him, but that he only knew that he was a Florentine."

Mr. Forsyth<sup>1</sup> was not quite correct in saying that Petrarch never returned to Tuscany after he had once quitted it when a boy. It appears he did pass through Florence on his way from Parma to Rome, and on his return in the year 1350, and remained there long enough to form some acquaintance with its most distinguished inhabitants. A Florentine gentleman, ashamed of the aversion of the poet for his native country, was eager to point out this trivial error in our accomplished traveller, whom he knew and respected for an extraordinary capacity, extensive erudition, and refined taste, joined to that engaging simplicity of manners which has been so frequently recognised as the surest, though it is certainly not an indispensable, trait of superior genius.

Every footstep of Laura's lover has been anxiously traced and recorded. The house in which he lodged is shown in

Venice. The inhabitants of Arezzo, in order to decide the ancient controversy between their city and the neighbouring Ancisa, where Petrarch was carried when seven months old, and remained until his seventh year, have designated by a long inscription the spot where their great fellow-citizen was born. A tablet has been raised to him at Parma, in the chapel of St. Agatha, at the cathedral, because he was archdeacon of that society, and was only snatched from his intended sepulture in their church by a *foreign* death. Another tablet, with a bust, has been erected to him at Pavia, on account of his having passed the autumn of 1363 in that city, with his son-in-law Brossano. The political condition which has for ages precluded the Italians from the criticism of the living, has concentrated their attention to the illustration of the dead.

#### No. X. — TASSO.

"*In face of all his foes, the Cruscan quire;  
And Boileau, whose rash envy,*" &c. — Stanza xxxviii.

Perhaps the couplet in which Boileau depreciates Tasso may serve as well as any other specimen to justify the opinion given of the harmony of French verse:—

"*A Malherbe, à Racan, préfère Théophile,  
Et le clinquant du Tasse à tout l'or de Virgile.*" — Sat. ix.

The biographer Serassi<sup>2</sup>, out of tenderness to the reputation either of the Italian or the French poet, is eager to observe that the satirist recanted or explained away this censure, and subsequently allowed the author of the Jerusalem to be a "genius, sublime, vast, and happily born for the higher flights of poetry." To this we will add, that the recantation is far from satisfactory, when we examine the whole anecdote as reported by Olivet.<sup>3</sup> The sentence pronounced against him by Bohours<sup>4</sup> is recorded only to the confusion of the critic, whose *palinodia* the Italian makes no effort to discover, and would not, perhaps, accept. As to the opposition which the Jerusalem encountered from the Cruscan academy, who degraded Tasso from all competition with Ariosto, below Bojardo and Pulci, the disgrace of such opposition must also in some measure be laid to the charge of Alfonso, and the court of Ferrara. For Leonard Salviati, the principal and nearly the sole origin of this attack, was, there can be no doubt<sup>5</sup>, influenced by a hope to acquire the favour of the House of Este: an object which he thought attainable by exalting the reputation of a native poet at the expense of a rival, then a *prisoner of state*. The hopes and efforts of Salviati must serve to show the contemporary opinion as to the nature of the poet's imprisonment; and will fill up the measure of our indignation at the tyrant jailer.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the antagonist of Tasso was not disappointed in the reception given to his criticism; he was called to the court of Ferrara, where, having endeavoured to heighten his claims to favour, by panegyrics on the family of his sovereign<sup>7</sup>, he was in turn abandoned, and expired in neglected poverty. The opposition of the Crusicans was brought to a close in six years after the commencement of the controversy; and if the academy owed its first renown to having almost opened with such a paradox<sup>8</sup>, it is probable that, on the other hand, the care of his reputation alleviated rather than aggravated the imprisonment of the injured poet. The defence of his father and of himself, for both were involved in the censure of Salviati, found employment for

<sup>1</sup> Remarks, &c. on Italy, p. 95. note, 2d edit.

<sup>2</sup> La Vita del Tasso, lib. iii.

<sup>3</sup> Histoire de l'Académie Française depuis 1652 jusqu'à 1700, par l'Abbé d'Olivet. "Mais, ensuite, venant à l'usage qu'il a fait de ses talens, j'aurais montré que le bon sens n'est pas toujours ce qui domine chez lui," p. 182. Boileau said, he had not changed his opinion. "J'en ai si peu changé, dit-il," &c. p. 181.

<sup>4</sup> La Manière de bien Penser. Philanthès is for Tasso, and says in the outset, "De tous les beaux esprits que l'Italie a portés, le Tasse est peut-être celui qui pense le plus noblement." But Bohours seems to speak in Eudoxus, who closes with the absurd comparison: "Faites valoir le Tasse tant qu'il vous plaira, je m'en tiens pour moi à Virgile," &c.

<sup>5</sup> La Vita, &c. lib. iii. p. 90. tom. ii. The English reader may see an account of the opposition of the Crusca to Tasso, in Dr. Black, Life, &c. chap. xvii. vol. ii.

<sup>6</sup> For further, and, it is hoped, decisive proof, that Tasso was neither more nor less than a *prisoner of state*, the reader is referred to "Historical Illustrations of the IVth Canto of Childe Harold," page 5, and following.

<sup>7</sup> Orazioni funebri . . . delle lodi di Don Luigi, Cardinal d'Este . . . delle odi di Donno Alfonso d'Este. See La Vita, lib. iii. p. 117.

<sup>8</sup> It was founded in 1582, and the Cruscan answer to Pellegrino's *Caraffa*, or *epica poesia*, was published in 1584.

many of his solitary hours, and the captive could have been but little embarrassed to reply to accusations, where, amongst other delinquencies, he was charged with invidiously omitting, in his comparison between France and Italy, to make any mention of the cupola of St. Maria del Fiore at Florence.<sup>1</sup> The late biographer of Ariosto seems as if willing to renew the controversy by doubting the interpretation of Tasso's self-estimation<sup>2</sup> related in Serassi's life of the poet. But Tiraboschi had before laid that rivalry at rest<sup>3</sup> by showing, that between Ariosto and Tasso it is not a question of comparison, but of preference.

#### No. XI. — ARIOSTO.

"*The lightning rent from Ariosto's bust,  
The iron crown of laurel's mimic'd leaves.*"  
Stanza xli.

Before the remains of Ariosto were removed from the Benedictine church to the library of Ferrara, his bust, which surmounted the tomb, was struck by lightning, and a crown of iron laurels melted away. The event has been recorded by a writer of the last century.<sup>4</sup> The transfer of these sacred ashes, on the 6th of June, 1801, was one of the most brilliant spectacles of the short-lived Italian republic; and to consecrate the memory of the ceremony, the once famous fallen *Intrepidi* were revived and reformed into the Ariostean academy. The large public place through which the procession paraded was then for the first time called Ariosto Square. The author of the Orlando is jealously claimed as the Homer, not of Italy, but Ferrara.<sup>5</sup> The mother of Ariosto was of Reggio, and the house in which he was born is carefully distinguished by a tablet with these words: "Qui nacque Ludovico Ariosto il giorno 8. di Settembre dell' anno 1474." But the Ferrarese make light of the accident by which their poet was born abroad, and claim him exclusively for their own. They possess his bones, they show his arm-chair, and his inkstand, and his autographs.

" . . . . Hic illius arma,  
Hic currus fuit . . . ."

The house where he lived, the room where he died, are designated by his own replaced memorial<sup>6</sup>, and by a recent inscription. The Ferrarese are more jealous of their claims since the animosity of Denina, arising from a cause which their apologists mysteriously hint is not unknown to them, ventured to degrade their soil and climate to a Bœotian incapacity for all spiritual productions. A quarto volume has been called forth by the detraction, and this supplement to Barotti's Memoirs of the illustrious Ferrarese has been considered a triumphant reply to the "Quadro Storico Statistico dell' Alta Italia."

#### No. XII. — ANCIENT SUPERSTITIONS RESPECTING LIGHTNING.

"*For the true laurel-wreath which Glory weaves  
Is of the tree no bolt of thunder cleaves.*" — Stanza xli.

The eagle, the sea calf, the laurel, and the white vine, were amongst the most approved preservatives against lightning: Jupiter chose the first, Augustus Cæsar the second, and Tiberius never failed to wear a wreath of the third when the

<sup>1</sup> "Contanto potè sempre in lui il veleno della sua pessima volontà contro alla nazione Fiorentina." La Vita, lib. iii. pp. 96. 98. tom. ii.

<sup>2</sup> La Vita di M. L. Ariosto, scritta dall' Abate Girolamo Baruffaldi Giunior, &c. Ferrara, 1807, lib. iii. p. 262. See "Historical Illustrations," &c. p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Storia della Lett. &c. lib. iii. tom. vii. par. iii. p. 1220. sect. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Op. di Bianconi, vol. iii. p. 176. ed. Milano, 1802: lettera al Signor Guido Savini Arcivescovo, sull' indole di un fulmine caduto in Dresda l'anno 1759.

<sup>5</sup> "Appassionata ammiratore ed invito apologeta dell' *Onoma Ferrarese*." The title was first given by Tasso, and is quoted to the confusion of the *Tassisti*, lib. iii. pp. 262. 265. La Vita di M. L. Ariosto, &c.

sky threatened a thunder-storm.<sup>7</sup> These superstitions may be received without a sneer in a country where the magical properties of the hazel twig have not lost all their credit; and perhaps the reader may not be much surprised to find that a commentator on Suetonius has taken upon himself gravely to disprove the imputed virtues of the crown of Tiberius, by mentioning that a few years before he wrote a laurel was actually struck by lightning at Rome.<sup>8</sup>

#### No. XIII.

"*Know that the lightning sanctifies below.*" — Stanza xlii.

The Curtian lake and the Riminal fig-tree in the Forum, having been touched by lightning, were held sacred, and the memory of the accident was preserved by a *putcal*, or altar resembling the mouth of a well, with a little chapel covering the cavity supposed to be made by the thunderbolt. Bodies scathed and persons struck dead were thought to be incorruptible<sup>9</sup>; and a stroke not fatal conferred perpetual dignity upon the man so distinguished by heaven.<sup>10</sup>

Those killed by lightning were wrapped in a white garment, and buried where they fell. The superstition was not confined to the worshippers of Jupiter: the Lombards believed in the omens furnished by lightning; and a Christian priest confesses that, by a diabolical skill in interpreting thunder, a seer foretold to Agilulf, duke of Turin, an event which came to pass, and gave him a queen and a crown.<sup>11</sup> There was, however, something equivocal in this sign, which the ancient inhabitants of Rome did not always consider propitious; and, as the fears are likely to last longer than the consolations of superstition, it is not strange that the Romans of the age of Leo X. should have been so much terrified at some misinterpreted storms as to require the exhortations of a scholar, who arrayed all the learning on thunder and lightning to prove the omen favourable; beginning with the flash which struck the walls of Velitrae, and including that which played upon a gate at Florence, and foretold the pontificate of one of its citizens.<sup>12</sup>

#### No. XIV. — THE VENUS OF MEDICIS.

"*There, too, the Goddess loves in stone.*" — Stanza xliii.

The view of the Venus of Medicis instantly suggests the lines in the *Seasons*, and the comparison of the object with the description proves, not only the correctness of the portrait, but the peculiar turn of thought, and, if the term may be used, the sexual imagination of the descriptive poet. The same conclusion may be deduced from another hint in the same episode of Musidora; for Thomson's notion of the privileges of favoured love must have been either very primitive, or rather deficient in delicacy, when he made his grateful nymph inform her discreet Damon that in some happier moment he might perhaps be the companion of her bath:—

"The time may come you need not fly."

The reader will recollect the anecdote told in the Life of Dr. Johnson. We will not leave the Florentine gallery without a word on the *Whetler*. It seems strange that the character of that disputed statue should not be entirely decided, at least in the mind of any one who has seen a sarcophagus in the vestibule of the Basilica of St. Paul without

<sup>6</sup> "Parva sed apta mihi, sed nulli obnoxia, sed non Sordida, parva meo sed tamen ære domus."

<sup>7</sup> Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. cap. 56. Columella, lib. x. Sueton. in Vit. August. cap. xc. et in Vit. Tiberii, cap. lxxx.

<sup>8</sup> Note 2. p. 403. edit. Lugd. Bat. 1667.

<sup>9</sup> Vid. J. C. Bullenger, de Terræ Motu et Fulminibus. lib. v. cap. xi.

<sup>10</sup> Οὐδὲν κτερονωθὲς ἀτιμὸς ἔσται, ὅθεν καὶ ὁς ἰδοὺ τιμῶνας.

Plut. Sympos. vid. J. C. Bullenger, ut sup.

<sup>11</sup> Pauli Diaconi de Gestis Langobard. lib. iii. cap. xiv.

<sup>12</sup> L. P. Valentini de fulminum significationibus declamatio, ap. Græv. Antiq. Rom. tom. v. p. 595. The declamation is addressed to Julian of Medicis.