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HARVARD STUDIES IN ROMANCE
LANGUAGES

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH AND OTHER
ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

VOLUME III

FOUR ESSAYS

BY

MURRAY ANTHONY POTTER, Ph.D.

LATE ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES
IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

CAMBRIDGE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

LONDON: HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1917

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TO THE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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THE late Murray Anthony Potter, at the time of his sudden death, was amassing notes for three books which he had long contemplated: a treatise on the horse as a character in epic poetry; a study of Petrarch; a group of essays on the Renaissance. For these, and for his various University courses, he left an abundance of matter in the form of references, memoranda, detached paragraphs, and outlines of lectures, but very little in the way of finished composition. The best that could be done with most of his papers was, therefore, to deposit them in the Harvard Library, for the use of investigators in the same fields. Some pages, however, seemed to lend themselves, without too great departure from the writer's intention, to an arrangement which would make them accessible to the reading public. Hence this little volume, prepared by a few colleagues of the author and offered by his Department, in token of friendship and gratitude.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

July 1, 1917.

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possess great intrinsic beauty. There is, first of all, the famous one to Italy, *Italia mia*, in which the author laments the discords of his country and the presence of the barbarian troops, an ode for which Luigi Marsili wrote a commentary. Then we have the *Spirto Gentil*, which has often been regarded as an address to Cola di Rienzi (a little altered after that hero's downfall, as Cian would have us believe), and which Carducci and Ferrari, contrary to the less enthusiastic de Sanctis, regard as one of the greatest lyrics produced by the Latin races. There is also one on Fame, which is of more than personal interest, a poem meant for the great captain, Pandolfo Malatesta, *L'aspettata virtù*: "That virtue which flowered in you when Love began to wage war upon you has now produced fruit worthy of that flower . . . ; wherefore my heart bids me write upon paper words which shall bring lustre upon your name, for in no other material can that be done. Do you believe that Cæsar or Marcellus or Paulus Æmilius or Scipio would have been what they are, by the help of bronze or marble? Pandolfo mine, those works are too pale to count upon for long duration. It is our work which renders men immortal, bestowing fame." This is certainly Renaissance in spirit; and so is still another poem well worth reading, on Glory, *Una donna più bella assai che'l sole*, which alludes to his coronation. Again, like the Provençal poets, he writes a *compianto* or lament, a poem on the death of Cino of Pistoia, "Weep, ladies, and let Love weep with you."

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It is, however, the love lyrics which form Petrarch's most important contribution to poetry. Scarano, who is one of Petrarch's severest critics, maintains [that in his attitude towards Laura the poet has taken a step backwards, that instead of placing himself by the side of the artists of the *dolce stil nuovo*, or marching in advance, he stands half way between them, with their mystical, philosophical love, and the older school of Provençal poets, with their feudal devotion. It is absurd to blame him for this; rather is it a cause for rejoicing. Were Laura not as human as she is, his verse would lack one of its great charms. Not that she stands out very clearly defined, in spite of his characterization of her hair yellower than gold, now bound together by strings of pearls and other jewels, now floating in the air (it is hard not to think of the quattrocento pictures); of her ebony eyebrows; of the dark eyes in which love nests and which are his guiding stars; of her teeth and lips, pearls and vermeil roses; and of her hands, pure ivory and fresh roses. Nor are we much aided by his statement that she was wise ("sotto biondi capei canuta mente"), eloquent, and that her singing touched one's very soul. Indeed, all this is not necessary. Petrarch is a Pygmalion who in his mind has fashioned a beautiful statue and, being a true creator, has endowed his Galatea with a life so intense that she lives for us as for him, so real that we, no more than he, need the real Laura.] Whether we are able to follow him with sustained interest in every step of his detailed account of

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his passion, is quite another matter. His sonnets and canzoni taken in too large doses leave an impression of linked sweetness long drawn out, and the subtle psychology grows wearisome. With him, it is more difficult than in the case of Dante to take seriously the agony he suffers, except possibly as a symptom of melancholia.]
“Et io son un di quei che ’l pianger giova,” is his cry; and the poems are full of idle tears. There is no use in trying to disguise the fact that these perpetual tears are tiresome and hurt the man in our esteem, the more so since he too often shows serious lack of taste when speaking of them. On one occasion, for example, he makes Laura say: “The sad waves of tears with which you are never satiated, together with the breeze of sighs, pass through the great space between earth and heaven and disturb my peace.” Elsewhere he tells us that Laura caused to flow from his eyes such a river that not only were bridges, fords, oars, and sails unable to cross it, but even wings and plumes, a river deep and broad, with so distant a shore that he could hardly reach it with his thoughts. Again, asking Laura, now in Heaven by God’s side, to bring it about that he may soon join her, he exclaims: “Regard my pure love and pure faith, wherefore I have shed *so many tears and so much ink.*” These examples are very far from exhausting the instances of bad taste and far-fetched conceit in his poems. In addition to anguished sighs, sometimes violent enough to cause forests to rock, there is the frequent — even morbid — playing upon the word Laura. It is not

Of all the
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mere perversity that leads one to lay stress upon these spots on a very bright sun. One does so because no other Italian poet has exercised such an influence upon Italian verse, not to speak of the poetry of other countries; and that influence has been generally baleful, because the inferior but popular copyists have imitated Petrarch's worst qualities, being quite unfit to reproduce the real beauties of one who stands, after all, among the grand poets of the world.

In the case of Petrarch more than in that of Dante or of other leaders of men, we feel the need of striking a balance of all his works. There was in him so much that was petty, that it is dangerously easy to forget how really great he was. A number of the minor things he did would be sufficient to give him a conspicuous place in the history of the Renaissance: the first humanist comedy, the first Renaissance epic on classic lines, the first important body of bucolic verse, the prose letters; the interest he showed in nature, in geography, in travelling (the *Itinerarium*); his love for collecting books and his desire to found a public library; his comparative independence as a scholar, his discrimination in the use of authorities, and his judicial attitude toward scholasticism—a trait very significant of new times. To these are to be added greater things: his passion for eloquence, his use of it as a touchstone in literary criticism, and his own remarkable mastery of it, not so much in Latin prose (though here he was a teacher and an example to men who justified their study of eloquence

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by turning it to account in public life) as in poetry. Said Dante to one of his odes: "Ode! I believe they shall be but rare who shall rightly understand thy meaning, so intricate and knotty is thy utterance of it. Wherefore, if it perchance come about that thou take thy way into the presence of folk who seem not rightly to perceive it, then I pray thee to take heart again, and say to them, O my beloved lastling, 'Give heed at least how beautiful I am.' " Now, the first and last appeal of Petrarch's verse must be its unsurpassed loveliness of form. The subject matter is too often trivial; but if we observe closely as we read the poem, we find it an exquisite mosaic, the beauty of whose every bit is enhanced by the skillful juxtaposition of its neighbor — or else it is pure music. And, as I have said, Petrarch's distinction mainly rests, in my opinion, on his being the greatest lyricist of the Renaissance, and one of the few supreme lyric poets the world has ever seen. At the same time, I fully appreciate his other claims to our study and admiration. The two best exemplars of self-study — study of the ego and, through the ego, of Man — in the Renaissance are the Frenchman, Montaigne, and the Italian, Petrarch, who preceded him by two centuries. In Petrarch's case, even more interesting than the publication of his self-analysis is his insistence upon the right of individualism to recognition and reward. When Petrarch tried to legitimize glory by asserting that a very essential part of it was due to a man's virtue and good deeds, he was not quite consistent. So far as these were

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concerned, leaving aside the veneration of a man's contemporaries, there were two ample rewards, after death beatitude above, and on earth the canonization which the Church can bestow. So far as deeds of valor were concerned, great fighters of whatever rank were amply able with their own hands to win fame which should at least accompany them in their lifetime. But now comes one who takes up the cause of pure letters, which for centuries had been regarded as vain or worldly. The poet, the man of letters, a vastly more important personage than the singer of the guild or the troubadour, wins his meed of glory and something more. The secular world is ennobled, and within it no power, not even the emperor's, can bestow a gift comparable to that which the poet has at his disposal. The emperor can accord wealth and crowns, the poet immortality. Brave men lived before Agamemnon, Horace declares. "They had no poet, and they died." The poet can even canonize whom he chooses, and indeed may secure his own halo, as did Petrarch. And this coronation must be a function of pomp and circumstance, no longer a mere local affair, as it was with Mussato and as it might have been with Dante; it must possess a more universal character and be celebrated in the city which had been for centuries the home of a glorious universal literature, where other crowns had been conferred. In his search for self-glorification Petrarch was like Saul, who went out to look for the asses of his father Kish, and obtained the kingdom of Israel. He won from the world and for

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the world full recognition of the individual humanist, the individual man of letters.

II

To the great majority of readers of Petrarch's verse his Latin works are unknown, but some of these writings deserve a better fate and should be rescued from oblivion. This is particularly true of the *Secretum* and certain Latin epistles and sundry passages in the Eclogues, of which no lover of the *Canzoniere* can afford to be ignorant. And then there are the letters, which should appeal to an even larger circle. If men of to-day in no way conspicuous for their talents find willing listeners when they narrate their recollections and impressions, simply because they have seen much of the world and possess a certain power of observation and a facile pen, the correspondence of Petrarch should indeed be a land of promise. In this case the writer is not merely one of the most famous men of letters that have ever lived; he is also one who was deeply interested in everything that took place about him, and whose good fortune it was to live in a supremely absorbing period of Italy's history, the age which witnessed the Babylonian captivity of the popes, the rise of the Italian despots, and the change from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Though he affected retirement, we know what an insatiable traveller he was, and what an indefatigable cultivator of friendships. One cannot glance casually over the list of his correspondents without

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feeling that a conjuror's wand has restored to life the whole fourteenth century. A grand procession of men of all ranks marches before one's eyes. In the company of humbler but equally dear friends, one meets with popes; cardinals, and bishops; with the secular aristocracy, including seemingly all the noblest names of Italy, the Colonnas, the Viscontis, the Carraras, the Malatestas, the Correggios; with really great figures like Boccaccio and Rienzi.

One's curiosity is immensely whetted, but in no wise, I fear, has it ever been completely gratified. It is not difficult to account for the disappointment. As soon as the history of the formation of the collection is known, a reason suggests itself. Just as Petrarch decided, late in life, to edit his verse, so, when about fifty-five years old (that is, in 1359), he began to think about sifting and arranging his correspondence for publication. The work was difficult and progressed slowly, but, thanks to the skill of the youth from Ravenna, the *Familiarum Rerum Libri xxiv* was achieved — the *Letters of Friendly Intercourse*, as the title is translated by Robinson and Rolfe. The three hundred and forty-seven letters cover the years 1332-62. To this first collection should be added the *Epistolæ Variæ* — miscellaneous letters — which he had thought best not to include with the others. In the last one of the *Familiar Letters* he says to the friend whom he calls Socrates: "The letters which I shall write from now on — if it is your sincere wish that nothing of mine should be lost — I shall place

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in the third volume, and shall bestow upon them the name of my elderly years." So there is a third collection, the *Epistolarum de Rebus Senilibus Libri xvi*, or *Letters of Old Age*, of which there is no good modern Latin edition, and only one Italian translation, now out of print. Finally, a collection which certainly deserves a place by itself, since it is Petrarch's contribution (of course not the only one) to the literature of invective, a special humanistic genre and one vigorously cultivated. The collection bears the name of *Epistolæ sine Titulo*. These contain fierce attacks upon the abuses (not the dogmas) of the Catholic church. To form such collections of letters, it was necessary that the author should have kept copies, and the existence of these proves that he regarded the letters as compositions of some literary value, however slightly he might speak of them, and also, almost certainly, that he intended to put them to some use. There was nothing strange or unusual in such procedure, and these volumes justify Vossler's words that "the prose letter is perhaps the most important creation of the Renaissance."

Now, the literary preoccupation is unmistakable if one only looks at the bulk of the letters composing the last, or twenty-fourth, book of the *Familiæres*. They are letters addressed to dead authors, a species of the genus of the essay, cultivated with much success in our own times by Andrew Lang. But these are not the only essays: many of the letters are little diatribes, treatises, exercises in description. Of course this is one very

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important reason why the humanist's correspondence is interesting historically if not intrinsically. The letter is the essay more or less embryonic, more or less developed. But when we turn to Petrarch's correspondence, we do so with a hunger for the letter pure and simple, and we are not asking too much. "I remember," he says, "Seneca's laughing at Cicero for including in his letters unimportant matters, and nevertheless I am far more inclined to follow Cicero than Seneca. Seneca indeed stored in his letters nearly all the moral reflections which he had published in his various books, while Cicero treated philosophical subjects in his books and filled his letters with the varied news and gossip of the day. Whatever Seneca may think about it, I must say that I find Cicero's correspondence very entertaining." And again in a letter to Socrates, which serves as a preface to the collection (just as one addressed to the same person brings it to a close), he speaks of Cicero again: "To return to the letters, you will find many written in a familiar style to friends, including yourself, sometimes referring to matters of public or private interest, sometimes relating to bereavements (which form, alas! an ever recurring theme), or to other matters which circumstances brought into prominence. I have discussed almost nothing else, except as I have spoken of my state of mind or have imparted some bit of news to my friends. I approve, you see, what Cicero says in his first letter to his brother, that it is the proper aim of a letter to inform the one to whom it is directed of

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something of which he was ignorant I have chosen as a title of my volume, *Letters of Familiar Inter-course* — that is, letters in which there is little anxious regard to style, but where homely matters are treated in a homely manner." Well and good, but he goes on to say: "Sometimes, when it is not inappropriate, there may be a bit of simple narration, or a few moral maxims such as Cicero was accustomed to introduce into his letters"; and this jarring note is repeated in his letter to Lælius, III, 20: "Why, brother, do you complain of *having nothing to write*? Really, though I can never believe that a man so well informed, intelligent, and eloquent as you can lack material for a letter, I prefer to accept any true or fictitious excuse rather than attribute your silence to the veil of forgetfulness. Now this is what I ask of you — something which many have asked of their friends, and, among those I have read, first of all Cicero — *write that you had nothing to write.*"

Now, it is a great pity that Petrarch, whose admiration for Cicero was so intense, and who divined his peculiar charm, should not have tried to obtain that grace, rather than imitate Cicero's use of maxims and moralizing, and in general follow if anything a little more closely Seneca; but then it was not until 1345 that he came into possession of a large number of Cicero's letters — that is, about halfway between the opening and closing members of his own first collection. Pliny the younger, if we are to believe Nollac, he never read; but he almost certainly knew the correspondence of

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St. Jerome, and there can be no doubt as to his acquaintance with that of Seneca and of Abelard. Now, partly owing to his fondness for Seneca, and partly to certain vicious ideas as to the proper function of correspondence, Petrarch often disappoints us. The Latin letter was a work of art, carefully composed, dealing with matters of general interest and addressed to a large audience, not merely to the person to whom it was sent. Not only do statements in Petrarch's letters indicate this, but we know also from various sources that, like any precious merchandise, missives in Latin attracted the cupidity of the thief and often failed to reach their destination.

Letters which stand halfway between the personal and the general, are those of condolence. Many of Petrarch's associates were grievously troubled and afflicted, and it was the part of a good friend to try to alleviate their sorrows. Petrarch was not the one to shirk his obligations; whether he fulfilled them successfully is a different matter. A fair example of his efforts is the third letter of the second book of the *Familiars*, addressed to a Severus Appennincola who had suffered exile. A modern reader may think it administers cold comfort. It begins forbiddingly with a definition of the word *exile*, in which Servius is quoted; it is full of antiquity; and one is not surprised that the author has to redouble his efforts in a second letter, wherein he remarks: "It pains me that what I said in my preceding letter did not profit you, and I do not

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know whose is the fault, the sick man's or the physician's." Other vicissitudes of fortune or afflictions may be his theme; a defense of poetry; an attack upon medicine; the question so interesting to humanists, whether it is better to remain single or to marry; praises of old age; the all-importance of equanimity and eloquence; the use of the second person singular, instead of the plural, in letters; the difference between loquacity and eloquence; the degeneracy of the age in which he lived. Sometimes the subject is treated with brevity; not infrequently it becomes a treatise, as he confesses frankly. In a very long letter to Bruni he speaks of the preceding one in the collection, addressed to the Pope, as being rather a "short little bit of writing" than a regular letter.

Yet the man who, seeking "the homely matters," should turn away in disgust from these pamphlets or essays, would be acting very unwisely, for this very "bit of writing," full of the most glowing enthusiasm for Italy, is an important document in the literature of patriotism, an interesting class at this period. A fine, vigorous expression of Petrarch's patriotism one will find in it then. Indeed, one has only to plunge courageously into any volume, skip judiciously, and one's reward will be ample. Hardly a letter is there which does not add to one's knowledge of the man, or confirm one's appreciation.

Take, for instance, the last eight books of the *Letters of Old Age*, where we find the same great variety of

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correspondents and themes. At the beginning of what is ostensibly a letter, but which in some editions is printed separately and entitled *Treatise on the Art of Good Government*, he writes to Pandolfo Malatesta: "Often have I thought it would not be seemly if, among the names of so many men of great and mediocre station, yours were lacking"; and incidentally he indulges in flattery which is pretty gross. In another epistle he declares: "I have always answered people who have written to me, and sometimes I have been the first to write." From the fourth letter of the thirteenth book we learn that Giovanni d'Arezzo is making a collection of his works, and Petrarch makes the following important remarks: "You say you have many of my letters; I wish you had them all and correctly written. . . . You hope, too, that you have all my vernacular works. . . . *Here it is especially necessary that the readings should be correct.*" More than once he speaks of what is fit subject matter for letters; for example in one to Francesco Bruni: "I leave aside domestic matters, about which you wrote me at some length, inasmuch as they are not worthy of being treated in a noble style." How artificial his style can be, one may judge by looking at another letter to the same person, in which, for the sake of animation, the writer introduces an imaginary dialogue.

Then there are numerous illustrations of his vanity and his desire for fame. "Finally, (that you may know all that has happened to me) I have received again and

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again most cordial invitations from the Pope, the emperor, the French king, and other kings, which I cannot attribute to anything but the hidden workings of fate." Above all should be read the letter to Donato, the teacher of Piacenza, in which he enumerates his illustrious visitors; and the one to Bruni in which he describes his courageous behavior on the trip from Pavia to Padua. Here, if nowhere else, one could collect evidence of his desire for fame. He has no mind to cheapen himself; and, writing to Urban V, he makes this interesting remark: "I should do better not to appear before you, lest that befall me which a fellow-countryman of mine thus expressed, 'His presence hurts his reputation.' " Fame above all else: he makes every effort to acquire and retain it. Boccaccio vainly pleads with him to desist from striving: "Because of your example, many within and perhaps without Italy are cultivating studies neglected for centuries; so you, being old, should rest and give them an opportunity." He cannot be persuaded. And yet his honors have cost him dear. Ever since he was crowned, he has had to be on his guard dodging the blows rained down upon him by former friends made enemies, now attacking him with pen and tongue. "Oh! how many things of that kind I could tell you," he exclaims, "which would make you shudder!" And then the envious! But, as Petrarch says, "the troubles of the mind are perilous, to be sure, yet easier to cure than those of the body." Moreover, he has found a remedy: "Unceasing labor

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and application are the food of my mind. When I begin to relax and seek repose, be assured that I shall cease to live." This is admirable; and we can forgive him much when he has the manliness (referring to his many battles) to cry out *mea culpa*: "I have sinned much; my letters full of repining and lamentation prove that. I blush, and wish I had never written them."

In his complaints, however, he was by no means always in the wrong: his letters against the medical practice of his day are very instructive. Entertaining are his accounts of travel — travel, which, he says "is really my custom, having become almost habitual." Most interesting of all, perhaps, are a few bits of description — "homely matters," he might have called them — which somehow bring back the past and place it before our eyes. When standing up in defence of Italy, and emphasizing the intolerable heat of southern France, he says: "During the pontificate of John XXII, I remember the skies to have been so blazing and the penury of rain to have been so great, that the common people, stripped to the waist, in a frenzy rushed about through that Paradise of the cardinals, beating their breasts and crying out for a drop of water to fall from heaven and end their torment. I recall, too, that nearly every summer the burned skin fell off the faces, necks, and hands of both men and women just as scales fall from a serpent. If any one remained intact in that furnace, he was said to have been made of iron." There is a pathetic description of Robert of

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Naples sitting and watching by his sick son's bedside, not merely as a father but as a doctor, for he was an excellent physician. "When the son died, he alone in the midst of universal grief was steadfast, shed no tear, and went about his work." Petrarch speaks about earthquakes which shook all Italy and part of Germany, so that many thought the world was coming to an end. "I happened to be in Verona, seated alone in my library, and, taken by surprise, feeling the earth tremble under my feet and seeing the books about me fall down one upon the other, I hurried out of the room stunned, and saw first my servants, and then many people, fleeing, pale as death." Last of all, here is something about vegetable influences with which medical science is concerning itself to-day. "I knew once a cardinal of the Roman church, respected for his years and wisdom, who had such a horror of peaches that he turned pale at the mere sight of them and was bathed in cold sweat. Wherefore his attendants took care that he should not see them. There was another, living in the palace of Pope Clement VI, who, when one of his youthful colleagues showed him a rose, took to flight, and, the other following him, ran from room to room through the vast apartments; and if anyone had tried to stop him, he would have jumped out of the windows at the peril of his life, to avoid the odor of the detested flower."

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III

IN addition to Latin prose works, Petrarch wrote much verse in that language, and upon one of his Latin poems he based his hopes of future fame. This is the *Africa*. "While I was wandering in the mountains upon a Friday in Holy Week," he says in his *Letter to Posterity*, "the strong desire seized me to write an epic in a heroic strain, taking as my theme Scipio Africanus the Great who had, strange to say, been dear to me from my childhood. This poem was christened *Africa* from the name of its hero; and, either from its own fortunes or from mine, it did not fail to arouse the interest of many before they had seen it." This was the poem he took with him to Naples to show King Robert, when he wished to prove that he merited the laurel at Rome. It was not complete; indeed, he never succeeded in putting it into final shape. As we have it, there are nine books, the considerable gaps showing that it must have been longer in the author's plan. Though Petrarch began it with such enthusiasm and expected so much from it, the work was a source of continual unhappiness; and the poet would have suffered more, had he known what was to be its fate after his death. The only part which he made public (apart from showing it to King Robert) was the last thirty-four lines of the episode of Mago, in which that hero laments the vicissitudes of fortune. This he sent to his friend Barbato, who promised not to show it to

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any one else; but he did, and unfortunately the fragment was severely criticised, especially in Florence. Petrarch was greatly angered, and at the same time discouraged. Vergerius, a late fourteenth (and early fifteenth) century admirer and biographer of Petrarch, says that, according to report, in the poet's last years, whenever the *Africa* was mentioned, he was greatly disturbed, and the expression of his face betrayed his mental trouble.

When he died, there was great anxiety to see the work. Boccaccio wrote to Petrarch's son-in-law, begging him to send a copy, which was sent, but arrived only after Boccaccio's death. Coluccio Salutati, one of Petrarch's most enthusiastic followers, read it in three nights and was greatly disappointed. On the whole, the *Africa* failed to justify expectations. I find it rather hard to account for the lack of enthusiasm — that is, when we bear in mind the other Latin epics of the time and the later Renaissance. It is not the liveliest work in the world, by any means, but it is readable. Its faults, of course, are patent: the Romans are all good, the Carthaginians all bad; the hero is as pious as Æneas. Like the early writers of Christian epic, who dared not depart from the Bible, Petrarch closely follows history; but this means the omission of much mythological machinery, which makes so many Renaissance epics almost unreadable. Again, though it lacks intrinsic interest, it is historically important. It is the first Renaissance epic built upon classic lines. Then, too,

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like the *De Viris Illustribus*, it is a glorification of Roman history, of the valor and monuments of antiquity. The most successful part of the poem is the episode of Sophonisba and Masinissa, a story which became popular to an extraordinary degree with the Renaissance dramatists.

Of considerable importance is another group of poems, the Eclogues, for not even in antiquity was the Pastoral so popular as it became in the Renaissance. It went into an eclipse during the Middle Ages, though examples are not altogether wanting. Dante resuscitated it; and then came Petrarch with twelve eclogues written during the years 1346-57. He was inspired to write them by love of nature, by his affection for Vaucluse. This is what he says in his defence of Poetry, contained in a letter to his brother Gherardo: "The very nature of the region, the forest recesses to which the coming of dawn made me wish to flee and there forget my cares, and from which only the return of night could bring me home, suggested that I sing in a woodland strain. Accordingly I began to compose a pastoral poem in twelve eclogues, a thing that I had long had in mind." As both he and Gherardo figure in the first one, he writes thus to his brother: "This poetry is of a kind that cannot be understood unless a key to it is furnished by the person who constructed it. So, as I would not have you weary yourself to no purpose, I must give you a brief outline, first of what I say, then of what I mean by it." I have quoted these two re-

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marks because in no single case anywhere is the contradiction between the pretended purpose of the pastoral and the achievement more glaring. No pastoral poems are more artificial than these, written though they be by a sincere lover of nature who called himself a "citizen of the woods." But in spite of their artificiality they are still worth reading, and not merely for the history of the pastoral, but because they have something to say about Laura, and because, here and there, the poet's love of nature appears thinly veiled, if veiled at all.

Fortunately these poems are easily accessible, not merely in Avena's edition with a commentary, but also in the old one of Rossetti with an Italian translation. In that same collection of *Poesie Minori del Petrarca* are found also the most attractive of his Latin verses, his poetical epistles. One of these is addressed to Virgil, another to Horace, others to his friends. One of these it is that contains the strange and significant passage in which Petrarch speaks of Laura as an obsession.

IV

WITH all Petrarch's learning, one great field of classical scholarship and literature, the Greek, remained virtually unknown to him — not, of course, through his own fault. Just how he would have appreciated it, had he known it as well as the Latin, we of course cannot say. Being ignorant of it, he considered it inferior to the

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Roman, and did not realize how heavy was the indebtedness of the latter to the Greek writers. At the same time, he really longed to become acquainted with the famous writers of Greece, and was apparently the first man of modern times to make serious efforts to obtain their works. Hesiod, Euripides, and Sophocles he never secured; but one cannot help feeling that, if he had to be satisfied with only two, as was the case, he could not have done better than acquire Plato and Homer. In addition he had some translations: the *Timæus*, *Phædo*, and *Meno* of Plato; the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* (and some other less important works) of Aristotle; and then there was the translation of Homer, connected with which there is quite a story.

As Petrarch is the first seeker for manuscripts, he is also the first Italian humanist to take lessons in Greek. His teacher was a Basilian monk, Barlaam of Seminara, who on two occasions went on a religious mission to Avignon. On his second visit, in 1342, Petrarch began to take daily lessons of this able and learned man, hoping to fit himself to read Plato. The result of his studies was far more modest: he learned to read and write the uncial hand. Sixteen years later, he made the acquaintance of a different type of man at Padua, a Calabrian, Leontius Pilatus by name, who spoke Greek and who claimed to be a pupil of Barlaam — a curious and apparently rather repulsive person, whom Boccaccio was able to put up with better than could the more

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fastidious Petrarch. The latter, having worked with Barlaam on Plato, hoped through Pilatus to become acquainted with Homer; and this desire was gratified. The Calabrian, who was at work on a translation of the Greek poet, made a preliminary version of a part of the *Iliad* for which Petrarch paid, and which was the delight of his old age.

Now, though Petrarch lacked anything like an adequate knowledge of Greek literature, and its real relation to Latin, he was a well-equipped scholar, and we have a right to ask the question: did he use his tools intelligently? Is he, like Dante, really in advance of men like Cassiodorus, St. Isidore, or Honorius of Autun? In one respect he disappoints and vexes us: he has the pedant's detestable habit of reeling off quotation after quotation from pagan authors. St. Augustine (who himself in the *Secretum* is not guiltless) says to Petrarch: "When I recommend you to think of your white hairs, you mention a crowd of illustrious men whose hair has turned gray. What does that prove? If you had told me that they were immortal, you need not, following their example, have feared white hair. Had I urged baldness, you would appropriately have cited Julius Cæsar." Petrarch, nothing daunted, like Sancho Panza with his proverbs, spins off some more of these examples. "This wealth of instances," St. Augustine replies, "does not displease me, providing that it does not prove negligence, but simply dissipates fear and sadness." This is not a bad excuse for him;

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and those of us who enjoy Montaigne can perhaps understand, if not share, the pleasure of Petrarch's contemporaries in such displays. But the trouble is that in the case of too many erudite writers they are mere displays, establish nothing, and are apt to betray little discrimination on the part of the quoter. It is to Petrarch's credit that as a scholar he really does show discrimination. He is not a Valla; but he too has a desire to get at the truth, the fact, and not to be led astray by great men. One of his grievances against the scholastics is their fondness for mere verbal quibbling, for attempting to erect huge structures without much foundation, for their continual citation of Aristotle as proof positive of a statement. These ignorant men, he claims, are utterly unworthy disciples of a very great but at the same time not infallible teacher. Aristotle, he says, was a man of exalted genius, who not only lectured, but wrote on themes of the greatest importance. How otherwise can we explain so vast an array of works, involving such prolonged labor, and prepared with such supreme care amid so much serious preoccupation? "Yet in spite of his greatness and his vast knowledge, I judge him to have been a man, and therefore subject to ignorance of some things, nay, even of many."

There is, however, one philosopher whose praises he sings without, or almost without, mental reservation: it is hardly necessary to say that this is Plato. Petrarch's advocacy of this sage is a matter of great im-

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portance and significance in the history of the Renaissance. It was not perversity that made him set up Plato as a rival to the philosopher of the scholastics. Plato's eloquence partly accounts for Petrarch's discipleship; and, besides, Plato was greatly admired by writers, pagan and Christian, whom Petrarch himself loved — by St. Augustine above all. Petrarch lacked the philosopher's mind, but he studied with earnestness and intelligence those of Plato's works which were accessible to him.

Now, leaving philosophy, there are other subjects in which our author shows some independence. I think "some" is the word to apply, especially in connection with a pseudo-science which flourished vigorously in Petrarch's day, and which, if it is aging now, is enjoying a very green old age. This is astrology. The best place to get an expression of Petrarch's views is in a letter (*Senilia*, III, 1) written to Boccaccio. "Shut your eyes to illusions," he says, "your ears to nonsense; avoid physicians, flee astrologers; the ones do injury to the body, the others to the soul. If the air is infected by a change of nature, and by hidden causes, or if, as they say, an unknown constellation pursues us, that evil will cease when the corruption has been burned away and absorbed by the sun's rays, or when the plague shall have been turned aside. But supposing that one or both of these things is destined to arrive, it is not the investigator of the planets who knows it in advance, it is the Creator of Heaven, or possibly some pious,

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learned man to whom the Lord shall have revealed it, and not Saturn or Mars." As has been shown by Soldati, who published in 1906 a work on *La Poesia Astrologica nel Quattrocento*, a careful reading of this letter shows that Petrarch did not set out to confute the principles of astrology, but only wished to confound the necromancers of his day. Even with them he was sometimes lenient; and once, when one of them admitted that he thought exactly as Petrarch did, but had to live, the poet said nothing more. Perhaps it is unwise, then, to give Petrarch very much credit for his attitude towards astrology.

It will be noticed that Petrarch couples physicians with necromancers. Here again it may be well to be a little chary with one's praise, though Voigt says that our poet deserves a high place in the history of medicine for being "the first to attack the old system with the arms of skepticism." In other realms it is possible to be more unreserved in one's approval. From lack of observation, love of the mysterious, the marvellous, and the extraordinary, a great amount of pseudo-scientific material had been accumulated during the Middle Ages, which nowadays we regard as very depressing or very amusing, according to our mood or point of view. Petrarch was no profound student of natural sciences (although, loving his gardens as he did, he knew something about plants), but his native good sense revolted against the statements of the bestiaries as to the nature and habits of beasts, and against the

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lapidaries with their wonderful tales of the mystic properties of stones.

It is, however, as historian or biographer that he on the whole appears at his best among scholars. In this field Nollhac, one of the sanest of Petrarch scholars, gives him very high praise. "In his *De Viris Illustribus* he produced the first Renaissance work dedicated to Roman history. At the same time, he restored the ancient art of biography, showing remarkable care in the acquisition of exact information, and, whenever possible, checking up other historians by comparing the different testimony." So much for the evidence of a proper conception of the duties of a historian. Nollhac makes, in connection with his historical studies, another remark which is most suggestive: "Les races, les nations, le développement des empires l'intéressent peu, l'individu seul le passionne."

Books were not the only memorials of antiquity that Petrarch loved. Like nearly all humanists, he was fond of collecting coins or gems, and naturally his imagination was kindled by the sight of ruins; but besides his concern with the past, he was interested (and this is a fine thing about the Renaissance men in general) in the world about him. In a letter to his friend Francesco Bruni (*Senilia*, IX, 2), he says he has spent nearly all his life travelling; why, he cannot say, but it is a fact. One cause was his restlessness, which kept him moving; and then, too, it really delighted him to see new things. "Certainly," he declares, "I have seen more things

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than I should have seen had I remained at home within the walls of my city, and I have learned something. On the other hand, this time was stolen from letters; and if this thought had not kept in check my youthful ardor, I assure you that, fearless and eager as I was to see new things, I should have travelled as far as China, India, and Ceylon. Neither fatigue nor fear of the sea or any other peril could have kept me back: what held me was the dread of losing time and of distracting my mind from studies, thinking that I should have returned with my head full of cities, rivers, mountains, woods that I had seen, but empty of the doctrine of letters. Therefore I learned to visit those distant regions, not on ship or on horseback, not trudging along interminable roads just to see them once, but on a small map, travelling with the aid of imagination and books in such a way that at my pleasure I could go and return in the short space of an hour, safe and sound, unwearied, without bother, expense, or such nuisances as thorns, mud, and dust." In his restlessness and his desire to keep moving (which of course is only one side of his nature), Petrarch is a forerunner of the wandering humanist of a later day, Italian or German. In his love of travel and his eagerness to see remote countries, he is the predecessor of the great discoverers. Even as a fireside traveller he is important, for his *Itinerarium Syriacum* marks a date in geographical studies. In his remarks on art, history, and natural beauties, in connection with places he has occasion

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to mention, he anticipates Flavio Biondo and Æneas Silvius.

Petrarch was a prolific writer, and it is out of the question to try to treat here his works in detail. He is one of the bilingual authors of the Renaissance. I have already discussed his letters and his Latin verse, and shall now say a word of his other Latin prose works. Three of these I shall little more than mention: the *De Otio Religiosorum*, the *De Remediis utriusque Fortunae*, and one which has a very suggestive and alluring title, the *De Vita Solitaria*. This promises much, but to the modern layman it is disappointing, for, like the first two, it is purely religious in tone; and yet in it, and in all of them, one can find the Renaissance man. It is not wholly the medieval ascetic who is talking to you. Finally, the three form a necessary complement to works like the poems of the *Canzoniere* for any one who wishes to study Petrarch's character. Of the *De Viris Illustribus* (a history of Rome with formal biographies of her illustrious men) I have already spoken. To us, his desire to glorify Rome is of course of great significance. The principal weakness of the book is the author's tendency to moralize. The *Libri Rerum Memorandarum*, I should say, would appeal to a much larger circle of readers, and has for me a very special interest. This work consists of a series of anecdotes illustrating certain human qualities and virtues, and here we have Petrarch the novelist. Good examples are certain frequently quoted stories of Dante.

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There is one work which has disappeared, much to the regret of every student of the Renaissance. That is the comedy, *Philologia*, which he wrote when a very young man. It would appear to have been the first humanistic Renaissance comedy, just as the *Eccerinis* is the first tragedy. According to Creizenach, Petrarch seems to have been especially fond of Plautus and Terence, more so than were any of the scholars immediately before his day. What is more, he appears to have heartily enjoyed the fun in Plautus, and, because of it, for some time to have preferred him to Terence. Nevertheless, Boccaccio says his play shows more strongly the influence of Terence. It has a forbidding title, which can hardly have meant the study, philology; rather it was the name of a girl. Even then the choice cannot be said to have been felicitous. Boccaccio calls it the *Philostratus*, and another name given it was the *Tranquillus*. Creizenach gathers from these names that the piece was more than a mere close imitation of Terence, and the evidence of other humanistic comedies, written later, makes this hypothesis seem probable. As to its merits, Boccaccio says that it was most beautiful and that, if it were better known, it would probably be preferred to its models. This is the generous, indiscriminating praise one might expect from Boccaccio.

There is, fortunately, one work of Petrarch's existing, which, because of a certain dramatic power and not a little humor (a quality we miss too often in Petrarch),

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rather inclines us to think that the comedy may have been really entertaining. This work is once more the *Secretum*. It is in dialogue form, consisting of a colloquy between the author and St. Augustine; but nothing less resembles comedy than the opening words.

A. — What are you doing, pitiable creature? Of what are you dreaming? What do you expect? Do you not remember that you are mortal?

P. — I do remember, and the thought never comes to me without making me shudder.

What is comic in its way is the severity and ill-concealed contempt with which St. Augustine treats Petrarch. It reminds one of the way in which Virgil addresses Fulgentius. Try as hard as he may to escape the probing of Augustine, the latter ruthlessly pins him down:

A. — We should ever remember that we are mortal.

P. — Unless I am mistaken, no one thinks of this more than I do.

A. — There is another bit of dodging.

P. — What? Am I lying again?

A. — I should prefer to speak more politely.

P. — But you mean that, don't you?

A. — Yes, nothing else.

Sometimes Petrarch grows tired of wriggling, and, being harassed, turns on his tormentor. For instance, he says in one place: "What do you want me to do? Despair?" Augustine replies: "Try everything else first. Here in two words is the best advice I can give

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you." And then he begins a fine sonorous tirade, only to be interrupted by Petrarch asking urbanely: " While the physician is haranguing, would you permit the sick man, who knows that he is sick, to put in a word ? "

On the whole, the sparring between the two men is very well done. The style, alert and vivacious, affords good reason for believing that the *Philologia*, if, compared with other humanistic comedies, no masterpiece of dramatic composition, was at least their equal and perhaps their superior in cleverness.

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I

LIKE Dante, Petrarch was of Florentine blood; Florence is, then, the mother of the last great man of the Middle Ages, and of the one who is so often called the first man of the Renaissance. However, this Petrarch who called himself the child of two eras, spoke perhaps even truer than he realized. He spent the major part of his earlier life in France, the home of medieval culture. For many years he studied law at the great schools of Montpellier and Bologna, and, while, if we are to believe him, he disliked the subject, he showed considerable aptitude for it. When his father and mother died, thrown upon the world, he entered the Church. His relations with the Church might at the first inspection seem purely external and superficial; but, as a matter of fact, this apparent worldling, who so loved classic literature and the society of ladies, was truly religious, religious in the medieval sense. Though he was one of the long line of patriotic Italians who looked forward to the restoration of Rome to its former glory, and though he himself played some part — a part more showy than important — in political life, nevertheless, compared with Latini, Mussato, and Dante, he shows himself less versatile than they. He is essentially a man of private life. As a student, his knowledge is not so vast as that

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of Roger Bacon, but he is a real scholar, with wide interests; and he furnishes the first example, since antiquity, of a man surrendering himself entirely to the cultivation of letters. It is not altogether easy to know how to begin further treatment of him: as the restorer of intelligent appreciation of the classics; as the apostle of a new conception of man's place in the universe, and of the individual's relations to God and to his fellows; as a literary craftsman, whether in Latin or in the vernacular; as a scholar; or as a poet. In his own belief, it was as a humanist that he was destined to obtain fame. Nowadays, however, according to general opinion, his fame rests upon his Italian verse, which he affected to depise. Another view, very stoutly upheld, a recent one, is that, however remarkable his poetry may be, and whatever its influence in France and England, he is still more significant as a herald of new ideals which he exemplifies as well as preaches, that he is, as he has often been dubbed, the first modern man. One is sometimes tempted to apply that title to Frederick II; but probably it is more justly bestowed on Petrarch, for there is certainly some truth in a statement by Geiger, to the effect that Petrarch deserves that name because, to a greater extent than any other immediate predecessors of the modern era, he studied himself, and published to the world at large the results of his observations.

Let us, then, begin with Petrarch the individual, and afterwards we may study from different angles his

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ideas and his work. So far as abundance of sources is concerned, there should be no difficulty in arriving at a correct appreciation of his character. The amount of material that we can draw upon is really enormous, and this material is of all kinds, directly or indirectly autobiographical. He wrote a short autobiographical sketch. In his letters written during mature life, he constantly refers back, in some detail, to events in his youth. His *Secretum* is a fourteenth century contribution to the genre of the literary confession. His love poetry, of course, is confessional as well. When one becomes acquainted with him, there is a constant temptation to feel that he never wrote a line that was not intended to be a presentation of self before the eyes of a contemporary public. This is one of the things which distinguish his display of individuality from that of Dante. Like Horace, he is deliberately raising a monument to himself, more durable than brass. He had a perfect right to do this; but unfortunately an unpleasant impression is almost inevitably left upon the reader by his intense self-consciousness. You too often feel, while he is making his confidences, that he is regarding you out of the corner of his eye to see how you take them.

Again, the nature which he lays bare before you does not at first seem to be essentially a very noble one. Dante is far from perfect; at times he is harsh and vindictive; yet he always compels respect. But in Petrarch's case (and the same is true of Cicero, St.

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Jerome, and Rousseau) we are often repelled by his pettiness. This we see in his disputes with his contemporaries. Even when his cause is good, he is guilty, like so many later humanists, of treating his opponents not merely as mistaken men, but as personal enemies, who desire to tarnish his fame; and his shrill, passionate self-defence, while not so bad as the furious invective of Poggio and Valla, does him no credit. One thing is worse, and that is his mock humility; compared with an affected meekness that sounds frequently like whining, the invectives of the humanists just mentioned are like exhilarating peals of artillery.

II

BUT, leaving this subject, let us consider Petrarch's attitude towards solitude and nature, towards Dante, towards friends, towards Gloria and Laura; and let us begin with the first. It was, as has been said, something new for a man to devote himself to pure letters as his life's work; it was also something new for a man to seek retirement in the country for the reasons which prompted Petrarch. Many men before him had left the city and gone into some retreat to avoid temptation, to have an opportunity to give themselves up to religious meditation; but for them a desert would have answered as well as Vacluse, or even better. Petrarch's fondness for this place finds its parallel in the love of Horace, Cicero, and other Romans for their country villas, and a suspicious person might ask: did Petrarch

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really hate the city and courts; did he really love the country; was he not, after all, doing little more than imitate the men of antiquity, or doing something which, because of its strangeness, would attract admiring attention? We can understand perhaps his disliking Avignon, though it may not have been nearly so bad as he describes; but if his hatred for town life was genuine, why did he spend so much time at Parma, at Padua, at Venice, and, above all, not a few years at the court of the Visconti? Why should the man who, if he did not implant seeds of ambition in the heart of his friend Rienzi to resuscitate the republic of Rome, certainly was keenly in sympathy with the attempt, and regretted its failure, why should the descendant of a Florentine, and the object almost of worship on the part of the Florentines of his day, take up his abode with a despotic family, Florence's most dangerous enemy? Certainly Boccaccio and other Florentine friends were grieved, if not furious. One man, Gano da Colle, composed a sonnet on the poet's apostasy, had it memorized by a jongleur, and then sent the performer to declaim it in Petrarch's presence. Apparently Petrarch was not much affected. In a letter to his friend, Francesco degli Apostoli, he declares that he was absolutely forced to go there by the condition of his private affairs, by the wishes (which were really commands) of the Archbishop of Milan, who said that all he desired of him was his presence, which would honor him and his states. In 1904, at the celebration of the six-hundredth

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anniversary of Petrarch's birth at Arezzo, Novati undertook to defend Petrarch for living with the Visconti, and, referring to the inconsistency of this lover of a rural life living at a court, maintained that Petrarch continued unchanged his train of life, and that, after all, from 1334 on there was no real court in Milan. Suppose there was not, suppose that Petrarch's feeling against the Visconti could hardly be as strong as that of the Florentines, who had just cause to fear; suppose the Visconti, whose reputation indeed is particularly odious, were no worse than other tyrants, nevertheless they *were* tyrants; and Milan was a great city. Although we must not imagine Petrarch dwelling in a narrow, malodorous, noisy city street, nevertheless his life with the Visconti must have been very different from his existence earlier at Vacluse, or later at Arquà.

But it is quite easy to make altogether too much of Petrarch's inconsistency. We know perfectly well how possible and natural it is to love both city and country, and how greatly our pleasure is heightened by going from one to the other. Of course Petrarch is largely to blame for the severe criticism that has been meted out to him. He invited it by the intemperance of his statements. We will not take him at his word, then, when he indulges in an invective against life in a city. Must we also be a little on our guard when he praises the country? There is, for instance, a letter (*Fam.*, ix, 14) written to a certain priest of Piacenza named Luca, in which Petrarch makes this significant remark:

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“ We will withdraw from the world and live concealed, but not without glory. Unless I am deceived in my hopes, our fame will resound all the more glorious, coming from a solitary retreat rather than from a populous city. It will issue forth from every place to the torment of the envious.” There is another letter (*Fam.*, XII, 12), a most remarkable one, in which he complains of the conduct of Bishop Acciaiuoli. He writes: “ No one keeps his word any longer in the world. Who would have believed that the bishop of Florence, who is considered the sincerest person on earth, could have wished to deceive me ? But this is always my fate, to be deceived by every one. He had promised to come to Vacluse to admire this place, famous throughout the world, and to see what was the tenor of my life in this solitude. Perhaps he scorned dining with a poet, and disdained to honor with his presence this spot, where one day the glory of our age, Robert, king of Sicily, and after him many cardinals, lords, and princes came sometimes to see the spring, sometimes (I do not hesitate to boast a little before you) to see me. Possibly this spring, which is unparalleled in the opinion of the world, and my person — not the vilest on earth — were not of sufficient worth in the Bishop’s eyes to induce him to go three miles out of his way to see them. True it is that I was not worthy of such a guest, but surely he was worthy of being taken at his word . . . I had written as far as this and was going to continue in this vein, when a loud noise at the

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door told me that the Bishop had arrived. So a day does not pass which does not prove to me and teach me how vain are mortal cares, and how idle are our lamentations."

"*Povero Messer Francesco!*" says Fracassetti in his note to this letter, which, with its horrid twang and display of temper, shows Petrarch at his very worst, and would lead one to believe that he was totally bereft of humor. Both letters might easily make one doubt whether he really loved solitude and the country for their own sake. Did he not seek them rather because, as he writes to Luca, doing something unusual and standing apart from the crowd, which he bitterly hated, he would be more conspicuous? It was flattering to any poet to be kindly received by nobles and kings; but what was that compared to the glory of having them come out of their way to see him? This is all true, but not the whole truth.

Petrarch had more than one reason for living in the country; but I am certain that he loved nature to an extraordinary degree. Of this love, his climbing of Mount Ventoux is usually cited as a proof, and with some reason, for not many men before the nineteenth century cared for mountain ascents. As additional evidence may be quoted some passages from his works, prose and verse. In the *Secretum*, St. Augustine says to Petrarch: "Do you remember with what pleasure you used to wander about the country? Now, lying upon the grass in the meadows, you listened to the

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murmur of the stream as it broke over the pebbles; now, sitting on the bare hills, you measured freely with your glance the plain extended at your feet. Now, sleeping sweetly under the trees in a valley, you enjoyed your beloved silence." But you may think this is mere rhetoric. I do not. In his poetical epistle to Giacomo of Colonna (*Ep.*, I, 7) he says: "Often I spend whole days in retired spots; in my right hand is my pen, in my left the paper, and my mind teems with many thoughts. How irksome it is for me then, if any one appears in a shady path, and salutes me in a low voice, when I am absorbed in other things and meditating lofty ideas! How delightful it is to imbibe the silence of the deep forest! All murmurs jar upon me, except the rippling of the stream, or when the breeze, striking my paper, causes it to rustle, making it seem as though the poem itself were singing softly. Frequently my lengthening shadow on the ground tells me the lateness of the hour, that it is time to return home, and night forces me to hasten my steps. Phœbus now sunk to rest, Hesperus or the rising moon shows me my path and saves me from the briars." "Alas," from another letter, "how many times during the summer I have got up at midnight, and, to avoid waking my sleeping servants, have gone off alone in the moonlight, now to the fields, now to the mountains! How many times at that hour I have entered with a shuddering delight that terrible cavern where the Sorgue rises, a place which makes one tremble even if one visit it accompanied, in

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broad daylight! If you wish to know the cause of so much boldness, learn that I am not afraid of ghosts or phantoms. No wolf has been seen in the valley, and nothing is to be feared from man. Herdsmen pass the night in the meadows, and fishers along the rivers, the former singing, the latter silent. Both treat me at any hour of the day with the greatest respect." Compare with this passage the lovely sestina, *Non ha tanti animali il mar fra l'onde*.

This appreciation of the beauty of the country at night is not over-common nowadays, at least it is seldom carried so far as it went with Petrarch. There are plenty of people who like to walk in the moonlight or starlight, but few who, after once having gone to bed, care to get up again and wander forth. Never since reading this passage have I doubted the sincerity of Petrarch's love for nature. When we speak of Dante's attitude towards it, we lay stress upon his amazing skill as a landscape painter. He uses his brush with the certain mastery of a Japanese artist, or a Sargent. Each stroke is swift and unerring; there is not one which is unnecessary. In addition to this, there is occasionally in Dante the sentimental note, a feeling for a harmony existing between man's emotions and nature in her different manifestations. You may remember that incomparable passage where he says: "It was now the hour that turns back desire in those who sail the sea and softens their hearts, on the day when they have said to their sweet friends 'Farewell,'

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and that pierces the new pilgrim with love, if he hears from afar a bell that seems to mourn the dying day." And then comes the singing of the hymn, *Te lucis ante terminum*. In Petrarch's works, beautiful pictures are, on the whole, comparatively rare; I think too much has been made of them. What one does find, as might be imagined, is the modern, sentimental note to a striking degree. While the literary recluse loved his hermitage, among other reasons, because it brought him more strikingly before the eyes of the public of men, another motive took the place of this in moments when he would have willingly forgotten his human audience. For him, as for a primitive race of men, or for such a people as the modern Greeks, all nature was animate, shared his joys and pleasures, was his confidant.

This aspect of Petrarch's love for nature we find best expressed in the *Canzoniere*. There are many examples of it. Here are one or two. In *Mai non fui in parte ove sì chiar vedessi*, written after the death of Laura, he says of Vacluse: "Never was I in a place where so clearly I saw her whom I might rightly long to see, now that I could see her no more; nor where I had such liberty to fill the heavens with my cries of grief. Never did I see a vale with so many secret nooks where I could sigh in solitude. Nor do I believe that Love in Cyprus or on any other strand had so sweet an abode. The waters speak of love, and the breeze, and the boughs, the little birds, the fishes, the flowers, the grass, all

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together praying that I continue to love. But you, calling to me from the sky, by the memory of your bitter death entreat me to scorn the world and all its sweet snares." Observe here the curious rôle which the fickle Petrarch makes nature play. Two other passages, which I will now quote, do more credit to his honesty. They belong to a class the best-known examples of which are perhaps Lamartine's *Lac* and Musset's *Souvenir*, the literature of impassioned recollection. The first is the sonnet, *Valle, che de' lamenti miei se' piena*: "Valley, full of my lamentations, river often swollen with my tears, denizens of the woods, animals of the forest, beautiful birds, fish imprisoned by either bank, air serene and warmed by my sighs, sweet path turned so bitter, hills which once did please me and now give pain, whither again love leads me from old habit, well do I recognize in you the old self, but not, alas! in me, who, after so happy a life, am become the abode of endless grief." The second is *Sento l'aura mia antica*: "I feel the breezes of old, I see appear the sweet hills where my light was born, which, so long as Heaven willed, made eager and glad my eyes, now sad and wet. O fallen hopes, O idle thoughts! Widowed is the grass, turbid are the streams, and empty and cold the nest in which she lay, and in which I live, desiring death." I have quoted enough to prove, I think, that Petrarch's love for nature, and, with it, solitude, was far from being a sham; and I have tried to point out that a new note has appeared in literature.

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III

WHAT is to be said now of Petrarch's attitude towards Dante and his relations to his friends? In 1359 Boccaccio, who felt that Petrarch did not approve of Dante, sent him a copy of the *Divine Comedy*, with a Latin poem in which he begged him to read the work of his great fellow-citizen. It seems strange that Petrarch should have waited all these years, until he was fifty-five years old, to read the greatest poem that Italy had produced. Had he himself written only Latin, been interested only in that language, like the later humanists, such indifference might have been credible. Quite naturally, the cause of his neglect is said to have been jealousy. He himself, when speaking of the vanity of fame, refers to the distress of the older famous man, when he sees himself crowded out by younger men who are becoming noted. Would he not necessarily have been vexed by the tremendous enduring fame of Dante? The fact that such a sincere, good soul as Boccaccio was troubled by his friend's attitude is perhaps the most important testimony against Petrarch. But it should not be accepted without close scrutiny. At any rate, some account should be made of the letter which Petrarch wrote in reply to Boccaccio's poem. He says: "My enemies assert that I hate and despise Dante, and in this way stir up the common herd against me, for with them he is very popular. How could I bear any ill-will towards a man whom I never saw but once, and

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that in my earliest childhood? My father, forced by other cares and regard for his family, succumbed to the natural influences of exile, while his friend resisted, applied himself with even greater ardor, and neglected everything else, desirous alone of future fame. In this I can scarce admire and praise him enough, for many are easily diverted from their course by the least disturbance, especially writers of verse, who need silence and quiet. You see, therefore, that my supposed hate for this poet is a trumped-up and ridiculous invention. The second reproach cast upon me is that, exceedingly anxious to obtain other books, which I had little hope of finding, I showed a strange indifference, quite foreign to me, towards this one, although it was readily procurable. The fact I admit, but I deny the motives." His reason is that when he was a young man, and especially wished to distinguish himself in the vernacular, he was afraid, because of the impressionableness of youth and its tendency to admire everything, that he might become an imitator. "If you have ever believed me, believe me now. Accept this as the real explanation of my conduct. Without hesitation I yield him the palm for skill in the use of the vulgar tongue. They lie, then, who assert that I carp at his renown, I who probably understand better than the majority of those foolish and immoderate admirers of his what it is that merely tickles their ears without their knowing why, but cannot penetrate their thick heads. What likelihood that I should be jealous of a writer who devoted

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his whole life to those things which in my eyes were but the flower and first fruits of my youth ? It is true that I have sometimes said, to those who wished to know precisely what I thought, that his style was unequal, for he rises to a higher plane of excellence in the vernacular than in Latin poetry or prose. But you will not deny this; nor will it, if rightly understood, carry with it any disparagement of his fame and glory."

In this letter, which for many reasons is important, Petrarch gives as his reason that he wished to avoid unconscious (and not merely conscious) imitation. That was his reason for not reading Dante before; and it is remarkable, because what we call plagiarism was then common enough, and went unrebuked. But suppose a close examination of his vernacular poetry should show that he had been a close student of Dante, assimilating forms and ideas and what not, and turning them to account ? Would that not convict him of outrageous bad faith ? Many an article has been written on both sides of this question, and I do not know that there is as yet any real agreement. Carducci, one of the most gifted Italian scholars and poets of our day, thought that only after receiving Boccaccio's gift of the *Divine Comedy* did Petrarch imitate Dante, and then especially in the *Trionfi*. Carducci has been followed by Hortis, Bartoli, Nohac; and one scholar, Melodia, denies any influence whatever, either in the *Canzoniere* or in the *Trionfi*. On the other side Cesareo, Moschetti, and Lamma find imitation and reminiscences. It is

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interesting that in the same year in which Melodia was trying to vindicate Petrarch, Scarano published, in the twenty-ninth volume of the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura italiana*, the severest criticism made up to that time, under the title, *L'Invidia del Petrarca*. In his opinion, he has no difficulty in proving that before 1359 Petrarch had read the *Commedia* and made good use of it, and that then hypocritically he disowned his model. On the whole, Scarano's work is more carefully done than Melodia's. But undoubtedly it displays too much animus; for after he has stripped Petrarch of his alleged borrowings from Dante, and also of those from Provence, he leaves practically nothing; he pictures our author as a sort of jackdaw strutting around in plumes borrowed from the Provençal songs and from the poets of the *dolce stil nuovo*, a forlorn, belated creature.

Taking everything into consideration, I am inclined to accept Petrarch's word, even though it is hard to understand how he could have avoided reading, or at least looking at a copy of Dante's poetry. As to the reminiscences which Scarano finds, not all are of equal weight; one must remember that many of the ideas were in the air, and that even if Petrarch had never perused a line of Alighieri, he could hardly have shut his ears when the latter's verses were repeated aloud, a thing which often occurred, as he himself admits. For instance, speaking of Dante's silly admirers who so mispronounced and lacerated his verses that they did him the greatest injury a poet can suffer, he says: "I

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can only give voice to my irritation when I hear the common herd befouling with their stupid mouths the noble beauty of his lines." Since these words were written in a letter acknowledging the receipt of the *Divine Comedy*, they prove that he was not unfamiliar with a certain amount of Dante — which would go far to explain the Dantesque reminiscences and might acquit him of the accusation of having deliberately lied.

But, after all, was he not really envious and jealous, in spite of his protestations? It is curious how seldom he mentions Dante by name in the rest of his works. In the *Res Memorandæ*, to be sure, he does tell two stories about Dante's stay at the court of Can Grande, as examples of the great poet's sharp retort. "Dante Alighieri, one of my fellow-citizens, most illustrious because of his vernacular works, but in manners a little too brusque and in speech too uncompromising to please the sensitive eyes and ears of the princes of our age, was received during his exile by Can Grande, the generous host and consoler of the afflicted at that time. At first he was held in honor, but, as time went, he lost favor. One day, at a meal, among the buffoons and mimes present there was one who because of his free language and gestures called forth great applause. Can Grande, suspecting that Dante was ill-pleased, after calling the buffoon before him and bestowing great praise upon him, turned towards Dante and said: 'I wonder how it is, a crazy fellow like this can delight us all, when you, a learned man, fail to do so.' Dante

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replied: ' You would not marvel in the least, if you but knew that similarity in manners and character breeds friendship.' ” “ On another occasion when he was at a banquet, the host, hilarious because of the wine he had drunk, and stuffed with food, was sweating profusely and talking a great deal of nonsense. Dante listened indignant, without saying a word. All were astonished at his silence. Then the speaker, whose eloquence the others applauded, seized Dante with his moist hands and said: ' Don't you agree that he who speaks truly works hard ? ' And Dante answered: ' I was wondering why *you* perspired so.' ” In his letter to Boccaccio, Petrarch says further: “ I venture to add that, if Dante had been permitted to live until this time, he would have found few friends more devoted to him than myself, provided, of course, that I had found his character as attractive as his genius.” To this restriction we should not give too much weight. It is quite conceivable that one might have admired Dante's works and character, and yet have found him very hard to get along with. And as to Dante's behavior (assuming that the anecdotes are true) at Can Grande's court, while Petrarch could hardly have behaved thus, being more supple, more of a courtier, I am rather inclined to believe that he sympathized with Dante, enjoyed the sharp rebuke to Can Grande and the snub to the damp and garrulous bore.

Finally, as regards the matter of jealousy, I believe that he *was* rather jealous. But is there anything, after

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all, very strange in this ? Was it not quite human ? In what he says, from his point of view, there is not a little truth, and his position was a difficult one. Dante's Latinity was not of the best, and Petrarch saw that. His rival had won distinction in the vernacular, which in Petrarch's eyes seemed less important than Latin. This fact would of itself almost acquit Petrarch of the charge of jealousy; nevertheless, Petrarch had written also in Italian, had tried to write well, and his state of mind was therefore not over-easy to define. In Latin, Petrarch was more at home than Dante. He could not help being aware of this, and could not help drawing the inference (though he did not proclaim it loudly) that he was Dante's superior. If anyone is disposed to blame him for this private opinion, he should remember that Dante himself was not a modest man. With such well-grounded reservations in his mind, it was hard for Petrarch to speak of his fellow-poet without seeming lukewarm to the great crowd of Dante's admirers, who would have been satisfied by nothing short of a shrill tribute of praise exaggerated even beyond the powers of the urbane Petrarch.

Petrarch has also been accused of jealousy of his own great contemporary, Boccaccio; but never was accusation more unjust than that. The only proper answer is that his critical sense was not sufficiently developed for him to appreciate Boccaccio's works at their true value. He has been accused also of insincerity in other friendships, and his large correspondence has been

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brought forward as damning evidence. It is said that he purposely sought the society of men of meaner intellect than his own, those from whom he could get nothing but adulation, to whom he could preach down without having his authority questioned. These accusations again seem to me ridiculous. While the tone of his correspondence is not all that one could desire, other reasons than insincerity account for our dissatisfaction; and so far as the category of Petrarch's friends is concerned, no man was more liberal, more catholic in his tastes. Naturally he preferred those who could share his interests; but as for intellectual capacity, it is idle to say that he neglected or shunned his peers or his superiors. There was in his day only one man of letters with whom he could be compared; namely, Boccaccio; and Boccaccio was his dearest friend.

IV

The charge of selfishness has also been brought against Petrarch in regard to his love for Laura. It has been said that if he sang of her so long and so often, it was in order that she might aid him to win fame. It was then the fashion for young poets to be enamored of some woman and celebrate her, the glory which the songster bestowed upon the lady being reflected upon him. To this particular affair an added shade of romantic interest is given by the fact that it offers us the spectacle of a churchman in love.

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Of this great love story we know the hero, but who was the heroine? Are we sure that Laura ever lived? Petrarch's own friend, Giacomo Colonna, writing to him in 1336, expressed doubt concerning the reality of such a person; but Petrarch in answer assured him that he would not be so incredulous, were he to see the author's pitiful physical condition. One wonders how far this argument persuaded Giacomo; for Petrarch, in spite of all the mental anguish he undoubtedly suffered in his lifetime, like many nervous invalids was (in appearance, at least) robust. But Giacomo Colonna was not the only one to express misgivings. Even Boccaccio believed that Laura should be taken allegorically. On the other hand, testimony to the actual existence of such a lady was offered in the fourteenth century by a Florentine, Luigi Peruzzi, who identified her with a certain Lauretta of the house of Salso. In the eighteenth century, the French Abbé de Sade tried to prove that she was really Laura de Noves, wife of Hugues de Sade, and mother of eleven children; that she died in April, 1348, and was buried in the church of the Minorite friars, which, according to Petrarch, was the burial-place of Laura. On the whole, the idea that there was a real Laura is generally accepted; but as to who she was and what part she played in the *Canzoniere*, opinions differ widely. Gröber, in his *Von Petrarca's Laura (Miscellanea di studi critici in onore di Arturo Graf)*, shows that Laura was a very common name in France at that time, and

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asserts that Petrarch's Laura was not Laura de Sade, but an idealized type of womanhood — a muse who inspired him, rather than a lady he loved. Franz X. Kraus, in his essays, also adopts the theory of an ideal woman. Canello sees in the name a pseudonym, like those used by the Provençal poets. Bartoli (vol. VII of his *Storia della Letteratura italiana*) accepts the pseudonym hypothesis because (he says) no poet in those days ever spoke of his lady by her right name; and he mentions Fiammetta and Selvaggia as examples to prove his point. Hauvette believes that Petrarch saw and fell in love with a woman, but that she was not Laura de Noves. Enrico Croce in his *La vera Laura e Francesco Petrarca* is inclined to conjecture that she was a maiden (not married and a mother) belonging perhaps to the Colonna family, though born in Provence. Again (Minich, *Sulla persona della celebre Laura*, 1878), Laura is made out to be the daughter of Henri de Chabaud, or the daughter of Paul de Sade, in either case a maiden. The Prince de Valori (*Nouvelle Revue*, Nov. 15, Dec. 1, 1896) thinks she was a maiden, and of the family of Saint-Laurent. The Swedish scholar, Wulff, believes that there were two Lauras, one a lady of noble stock, the other of humble birth, one woman of that name being the mother of Petrarch's son Giovanni.

The latest views are contained in an article published in Supplement 12 of the *Giornale Storico della Letteratura italiana* (1910), entitled *Tra Valchiusa ed Avignone* —

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La Scena degli Amori del Petrarca, by Flamini, who has no doubt as to the existence of a real Laura, a real passion on Petrarch's part, and also, of course, a real setting. First of all, we need not be troubled by Petrarch's apparently contradictory statements about his first meeting with Laura: one date, Friday, April 10, 1327, is given in *Era il giorno ch'al sol si scoloraro*; another, Monday, April 6, occurs in three places — in the *Trionfi* (*L'ora prima era 'l dì sesto d'Aprile*), at the close of the sonnet beginning *Voglia mi sprona*, and in the entry in the Ambrosian Virgil. We need not assume, with Wulff, the existence of two Lauras; it is quite possible that he should have seen the lady in church on Monday of Holy Week in Avignon, and, attracted by her beauty, have sought her (under the pretext of hunting, of which he was always fond), in the country, where he was fortunate enough to meet her again on Good Friday. If this second meeting took place outside Avignon, her real home can hardly have been in that city; and that real home, her birthplace, and the various places where Petrarch saw her, form, with her identity, the subjects of Flamini's study. Petrarch says Laura was born in a "picciol borgo." There are a number of small towns, not far from Avignon, any one of which might have been the place — Grâveson, Cabrières, Thor, and Lagnes. None of these Flamini is willing to accept, nor Bondelon, very close to Vacluse; nor does he agree with Wulff, who thought she might have visited from time to time the

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heights of Galas, where she was born. Flamini requires a place which shall be far enough from Vacluse to make the latter spot seem a refuge to Petrarch, and yet which can be seen from the hill above Vacluse, and, seen from there, can appear to be situated in the plain, though really on a low hill. That spot, in agreement with a late fifteenth century Neapolitan poet, Francesco Galeoto, who visited France in 1483, he identifies with Caumont, or rather with a small hill called Picabré. The scenes of Petrarch's love-making are the regions near by. The "amorosa reggia," background of the canzone *Chiare fresche dolci acque*, is forty minutes' walk from the *collicello*, near a place called Gadagne; the "dolci colli" are those which extend from Caumont to Vedenès. Petrarch had, then, plenty of opportunities to see Laura, not merely in the balcony of her own home, sitting and singing, but also in the "amorosa reggia," bathing her face or some object, plucking flowers and weaving garlands for her hair — this last occupation being one of the pretty customs of the day, and no figment of the poet's imagination. Flamini's Laura, therefore, is not Laura de Noves, inasmuch as she came not from Noves but from Caumont. Neither can she have been so old as the lady of Noves, nor have had so many children: "crebris partibus" does not mean that. She was probably about nine years younger than Petrarch, and still capable of inspiring passion at her death. The fact that a Laura de Noves died of the plague in April, 1348, and was buried in the church of

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the Minorite Friars, is not conclusive proof, either. Other Lauras might have died at the same time and been buried in the same place. We must look for some important family in the district mentioned, and there Flamini finds the Sabrans, some of whose members were so brutal that we can understand Petrarch's speaking of Laura as a "candida rosa nata in dure spine," and his telling her to turn her glances away from the place where she was born. Her husband was a noble, and probably Italianized. That is why Petrarch, who knew Provençal perfectly, wrote verse in Italian to win the favor of the woman he loved.

Another problem intimately bound up with that of the identity of Laura has perplexed students of the *Canzoniere*. It is this: assuming there was such a person as Laura, is she the only woman mentioned in the collection of poems? Is she the only woman to whom the poems were addressed? Mestica, Volpi, and Cesareo believe that she was not. Cesareo (in his article in the *Nuova Antologia* of June 15, 1895) guesses that Petrarch, forming a collection of his poems in his old age, included with those celebrating Laura others, treating of other women, which he altered sufficiently to make them accord with his purpose. The principal opponent of this theory is Enrico Sicardi (*Gli Amori estravaganti e molteplici di Francesco Petrarca*, 1900), who maintains that in none of Petrarch's poems are found traces of any love for any woman except Laura, and that the poet was singularly chaste. It is hard to

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see how a critic can be so blind: leaving aside the poet's two illegitimate children, there are references enough in Petrarch's works to show that he was a man sorely tempted by sensual passions, and we have reason to suppose that he frequently succumbed. See, for instance, the *Secretum*, II, 87. Whether or not, in arranging the *Canzoniere* for publication, Petrarch (as Cesareo supposes) meant to compose a sort of psychological romance, — the theme of which should be the attainment of liberty by the soul, the subject of the first part being the tumult of passions, of the second a gradual return to thoughts of virtue and religion when confronted by the spectacle of death, of the third the attainment of the light of God, — it is almost certain that, as we have them, the poems which make up the *Canzoniere* are a very treacherous foundation upon which to base theories about the personality of Laura or Petrarch's relations to her. The matter is further complicated by data such as the following, which conflict with one another: Petrarch's famous note on Laura's death in the Ambrosian manuscript of Virgil which belonged to him (the date of which, however, is uncertain) speaks of the event with profound feeling, and the poet writes the beautiful sonnet, *Oimè il bel viso*; yet in his letters he says that his love for her was a little spark which had been languishing for some time and was extinguished by her death; again, he declares that, even if her eyes were open, they would not exercise their usual influence upon him.

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I am personally inclined to think that Petrarch probably did see some beautiful woman; that, influenced by Provençal ideas (and by Italian, too), he resolved to celebrate her; that, being a man of strong passions, he conceived for her an admiration — even though he may never have been actually in her company — not entirely platonic. In his thoughts he may have liked to represent her as near him, and she may have become very real to him. We do know that Petrarch was fond, when lying awake, of imagining his friends to be present, and of holding conversations with them. I have an idea that he carried it rather far, that he lived pretty freely in two worlds, one of fact, the other of fancy; that a passage from one to the other was easy, and that, furthermore, he could hardly tell afterwards in which he had lived at a given time. Certain ideas became almost concrete, and produced a greater effect upon him than any external and material object. It is possible, by change of occupations and change of scenes, to avoid seeing and hearing things which trouble us. But the fixed idea is ever with us, and this seems to me to have been the case with Petrarch. Any real love that he may have felt for the real woman may have vanished, but in its place was substituted a passion for an ideal creature, which caused infinitely greater distress. Expressions of this suffering we find in the *Secretum*, and in a Latin poem. In one place in the former work, St. Augustine, who has been pitilessly probing the poet's heart, telling him that he ought to

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avoid the scenes of his love, exclaims: "How many times in Avignon, — which has been, I will not say the cause, but the laboratory of your love, when you thought you were cured, as you would have been to a considerable extent, had you only fled, — how many times, I say, wandering about those parts of the city you know so well, at the mere sight of the places, without seeing any one, recalling your vanities of old, and overcome by the recollection, you have stopped, sighing heavily! Then with great difficulty restraining your tears, and feeling half wounded, you have said to yourself, 'I feel that my old enemy, Love, is hiding here.' "

Where should Petrarch go to escape love? In his poems he says, to Vacluse; but black care follows him there. He has fled from the scenes which reminded him of his passion, but it is impossible to get rid of himself. He is still tortured by his love. The description which he gives in his poetical epistle to Lelio (*Ep.* I, 8) may well be rhetorical; but I do not think the same can be said of a remarkable poetical epistle to Giacomo Colonna (*Ep.*, I, 7). He begins it with the words: "You wish to hear what I am doing, my manner of life, the state of my affairs. I will not conceal the truth from you, nor tell you what is false. It will be as though I were speaking to myself. Since you feel a fatherly interest in me, I will speak, and perhaps you will be able to help me with advice. There is a certain lady, illustrious because of her virtue and her family, celebrated and made famous in my songs. I had hoped

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to forget her, but she returns and fills me with terror. Ten years my weary neck had borne her chains, and love had pierced the marrow of my bones. Then I was seized with a desire for liberty and tried to shake off my yoke. But it is difficult to banish one who has been in your heart ten years, and with shattered strength to fight against a powerful enemy. I sought safety in flight, wandered about the earth, ventured upon the stormy Tuscan and Adriatic seas, sought refuge in the Pyrenees. Then, guided by fate, I returned to the city. Hardly had I touched the threshold when my malady returned. Then I sought an asylum in those hills, which I hoped would conceal me. But there, too, she has followed me, and clings to her rights. Now she appears before my waking eyes; now her threatening countenance with vain terrors makes mock of my uncertain slumbers. Often, strange to say, though the door be treble-barred, she enters my room in the deep night, firmly demanding her slave. I am transfixed with cold, the blood deserts my limbs to seek refuge in my heart. I awake, the tears stream from my eyes. I leave my bed and the house of fear, and seek the hills and woods, and unconsciously I look about me to see whether she who has disturbed my slumbers may not stop me in my path. Who will believe me? Often in the trackless mazes of the forest, when I am most confident that I am alone, I see her terrifying face in the bushes, on the trunks of the solitary oaks, and rising from the liquid streams; it flashes in the clouds or in

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the clear sky, or issues living from the heart of rock. My feet are rooted to the ground with fear."

Now, it seems to me hard to overestimate the importance of this poetical epistle (which has its pendant in the Italian poem, *Di pensier in pensier, di monte in monte*) as a document throwing light upon Petrarch's character, and especially upon his relations to Laura. Writers of love poetry before him, from antiquity down to Rustico di Filippo, from the latter down to the school of the *dolce stil nuovo*, have shed tears in plenty, have lamented bitterly the cruelty of their lady, whom they have represented as an enemy; but there is something more than this in Petrarch's poem. Although it is fairly long and frequently rhetorical enough, although Petrarch in writing it is treating the matter objectively, I am almost certain that he actually suffered as he describes, and that, if he did so, he was the victim of a nervous malady the true nature of which may have been unknown to him. Those nocturnal terrors, and the form they take, are well enough known nowadays to be almost commonplaces. Petrarch, because of his highly strung temperament and the clash between his religious and his worldly aspirations, and because of overwork, was just the person to suffer from nervous troubles of this character.

One phase of the ailment he recognized and understood. St. Augustine says to him in the *Secretum*: "You are suffering from a terrible scourge of the soul, melancholy, which modern men call accidie, the

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ancients *ægritudo*." Petrarch: "The mere mention of this malady causes me to shudder." "Doubtless because you have suffered from it a long time." "Yes, and while in all the other troubles which torment me there is a certain sweetness (though it be false by nature), in this sadness all is bitter and lugubrious. The road is always open to despair, and everything urges on the unhappy souls to suicide. Add that while the other passions make frequent assaults upon me, their duration is short; this scourge, however, takes absolute possession of me and tortures me for entire days and nights. During this time I take no pleasure in the light. I do not live. I am, as it were, plunged in the night of Tartarus, and I suffer the cruelest of deaths. The worst of my misery is that I actually feed upon my suffering and my tears with a bitter pleasure, from which I have no will to be torn away."

Petrarch calls his trouble *accidie*. The definition given in Webster is "sloth, torpor," and that was Aristotle's idea; Dante, too, means sloth when he uses the word in the *Purgatorio*. In the *Inferno* he means something more. In Canto vii, Virgil utters the following words: "I would have thee believe for certain that there are people under the water who sob and make it bubble at the surface, as thy eye may tell thee, whichever way it turn. Fixed in the slime, they say, 'Sullen were we in the sweet air that is gladdened by the sun, carrying sluggish smoke within our hearts; now lie we sullen here in the black mire.' This hymn they

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gurgles in their throats, for they cannot speak in full words." According to Boccaccio in his Commentary, this sullenness is a result of unhappy conditions. The sufferer feels a distaste to undertake anything, or to finish it if undertaken. He lets everything slip from his grasp, becomes discontented, a recluse, hates himself and all that is good. In the Middle Ages, accidie was regarded as one of the especial curses of monastic life. The monk, when not celebrating offices, when alone in his cell, suffered from torpor and the immoderate bitterness of mind by which spiritual joyfulness is destroyed. Occasionally he was driven even to suicide. One may find not a little of interest said about the matter in the chronicle of Fra Salimbeni, who was himself such a robust, healthy character. The ailment has been associated with "the noonday devil"; and many of us are all too familiar with the feeling of depression, indifference, and slothfulness, which comes upon us in the hateful hours from noonday till three or four in the afternoon. Voigt affirms that Petrarch, not understanding what the word accidie meant, applied it to a mental trouble which he found described in Seneca's work on *Peace of Mind*, a disturbance based upon duality of character; but, after all, accidie is closely allied to such a malady, if not a form of the same thing. Surely this duality existed in Petrarch. He had a deep love for a quiet, retired life, which was in accordance with philosophical and religious ideas; and, at the same time, a keen desire to play an important

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rôle in the active life about him, and an insatiable passion for fame. The world about him was a continual battlefield; even so was his soul, and he could never escape the strife.

It is not unnatural that he should have experienced some difficulty in making clear to St. Augustine the cause of his trouble. St. Augustine asks: "What is it that drives you to this despair — the course of temporal things, physical pain, or the vicissitudes of fortune?" And Petrarch replies: "Not one of these things by itself. If I had been attacked in single combat, I should have held firm, but I am now overwhelmed by an entire army. Each time that I am struck by the first blow of Fortune, I stand firm and intrepid, realize that I have often been grievously struck before, and that I have come out a victor. At the second blow I stagger a little; if she return to the charge a third or fourth time, I take refuge, not precipitately but deliberately, in the citadel of reason. There, if Fortune besiege me with all her army, if to subjugate me she assemble all the miseries that can befall man, — memory of my past suffering, fear of future ills, — hemmed in on all sides, seized with terror at the sight of accumulated woes, I lament and feel welling up within me this cruel sorrow. . . . Imagine some one surrounded by innumerable enemies, without hope of escape or of obtaining mercy, without consolation, to whom all is hostile" St. Augustine answers: "Although your exposition is confused, I see that your troubles rest upon your poor

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opinion of yourself." To this Petrarch assents. And again St. Augustine says: "You resemble those who, on the slightest offence, recall past enmities." Petrarch responds: "There is in me no wound old enough to be healed by time."

While it is easy to understand a part of Petrarch's troubles as due to his sensitiveness, it sounds strange to hear him say that self-depreciation had anything to do with them; but I really believe it did. Not a little of what seems excessive vanity in a man is due to a wondering, exultant pleasure and surprise at having accomplished so much. One of the sources of his despondency was the desire for fame, which calls for a word or two of discussion. Expressions of it do occur, to be sure, in Dante, but to no such extent as we find it in the works of Petrarch, who avers that this passion, which has been with him since his earliest years, is so strong in him that no remedy can counteract it. In his *Canzoniere* he is constantly playing upon the words *Laura* and *Laurea*. That is one reason why his friends, Giacomo Colonna and Boccaccio, doubted whether the woman Laura had ever existed. In these same poems he asserts that even this vernacular verse will render him famous. In his Latin writings also he prophesies his fame. Especially is this notable in the *Africa*, the work which he hoped and believed would contribute above all else to his glory, because it was so rare and beautiful and excellent. Just as Brunetto Latini prophesies the future fame of Dante in the *Inferno*, so

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Scipio's father and the poet Ennius tell of the young Tuscan who in the distant future shall call back the muses and restore the sisters to Helicon. We must remember what importance Petrarch attached to his coronation, and to its taking place in Rome, for there the ceremony would be a more universal recognition of his greatness than if it had occurred in Paris, or in some other city in Italy.

Of this desire for fame there is an aspect (indeed, a double aspect) which is of considerable importance: with all his excessive vanity, Petrarch, when insisting upon fame, was really a great champion both of the rights of the individual man and of the value of man's activity upon earth. And this in spite of his talking against fame, as did Oderisi of Gubbio, and in spite of his apprehension lest it interfere with his salvation. The rights of the individual, the lawfulness of fame would no doubt have been recognized if Petrarch had never lived; but he, though some may think him only dimly aware of the larger aspect of the real issue, was an eager and a potent leader. It is rather amusing to see him attempting to legitimize glory by making it mean more than posthumous fame on earth. "I believe," he says in the *Secretum*, "that the glory for which one is allowed to hope on earth should be sought during this life on earth, to the end that a more splendid glory may be enjoyed in Heaven, having attained which, one will no longer wish to think of this earth." The shrewd St. Augustine points out the senselessness

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of the poet, who, trying to win earthly fame in Heaven, is likely to fall between two stools; and he quotes the *Africa*, wherein Petrarch describes the successive deaths of man's fame, due to the rivalry of new aspirants for glory, to the decay of tombstones and of books. He advocates the acquisition of a certain kind of fame which naturally accompanies virtue. Let Petrarch be virtuous, then, and win the real fame; let him abandon his literary works. This is too much for our author, who decides that he will first complete his books, and then give himself up entirely to virtue. St. Augustine takes leave of him with the hope that he may be successful, and Petrarch shares that hope. It is to Augustine's credit, — and of course to Petrarch's as well, — that he perceives the fallacy of this effort to legitimize fame, which reminds one of similar efforts on the part of the old Romans, when they asserted that the art of rhetoric was an *ars bene vivendi* as well as an *ars bene dicendi*, that the great orator must of necessity be a good man. In both cases, of course, the desire was for earthly glory; and the time had come when religion was unable to stifle any longer this yearning. Well and good it is for fame to help men in the life after death, if such there be; but the real thing is to enjoy fame on this earth during one's lifetime, and to hand it down to posterity.

From what has gone before it is quite clear that Petrarch was not perfect. His ideals were noble, but his strength was inadequate for their fulfillment. His

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eye was always turned inwards, he was always dissecting himself and always publishing the results. Few people, however, can indulge to such an extent in self-exposure and retain the respect of their listeners. Not merely because it appears to show vanity on the part of the exhibitors, nor because, as Dante says, intimacy cheapens a man, but because almost inevitably such self-analysis is the result of morbid conditions. It is quite unnecessary to assume that Petrarch was epileptic, as did Lombroso, or an opium-eater, as has been later suggested, or that he had suffered from diseases which affected his brain; but to a certain extent he really was a nervous invalid. Now, if a man is the victim of an unhealthy, over-sensitive imagination, the best thing he can do is to keep his thoughts to himself, or else to use great tact and judgment in selecting which ones he shall make known to the world. Some men can be almost equally self-revealing and yet stand the test successfully — Dante and Montaigne, for instance. Other men, who suffer equally, are more reticent; Samuel Johnson and Robert Louis Stevenson are examples. Petrarch displayed all his weaknesses; but it is evident that, in spite of defects which we can see so clearly, the man must have possessed great personal charm. He made many friends, and he kept them; and it meant much for humanism that its apostle should be able to play so brilliant a part in society. A man who could make himself personally agreeable to persons like Robert of Anjou, the Colonna family, and the

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Visconti, who was religious enough not to scandalize the Church, and who was the hero of a romantic love affair, — all this besides being a really remarkable scholar, — was far better fitted to popularize the new and great movement than an uncomely, ungracious pedant, or even a man as powerful and as superior as Dante, or as lovable but at the same time as modest as Boccaccio.

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I

OTHER men before Petrarch had loved beautiful speech, and had tried to acquire a beautiful style: Eginhard, for instance, Servatus Lupus, the poets of Provence and those of the *dolce stil nuovo*, the author of the *Novellino*. Dante's remarks upon the matter show how deeply interested he was in it, and how carefully he considered it. The story which Petrarch tells of his youth, of his father throwing his Latin books into the fire because he thought that they were stumbling-blocks in the way of the lad's career as a successful lawyer, is significant. The boy was early attracted to Cicero, not merely because of the ancient Roman's philosophy, but also by the "dulcedo" and "sonoritas" of his style. He is always seeking those qualities, to gratify his craving for them; and he finds them, of course, principally in the works of men who are conscious and ambitious literary artists. "What attracted him in the literature of antiquity," says Pierre de Nolhac, "was its being a work of art. For the first time in centuries (there can be no doubt of this), perfection of form determined an intellectual preference. This seeking of the beautiful for itself alone, and this

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using it as a criterion to establish the relative value of different works which reveal it in varying degrees, constituted one of the most fruitful movements initiated by Petrarch. At the same time, this search and this use restored literary criticism at the very end of the Middle Ages, which had lacked it."

Curious it is to see how Petrarch applies this test of eloquence, not merely to purely literary works, but to matters which lie rather outside. One of his reasons for espousing the cause of Plato rather than that of Aristotle was that the latter was not eloquent. In his polemics against the lawyers, he declares that the study of law has degenerated since the days when it was associated with eloquence. In his controversy with the Averroists, he reproaches them, not for their contempt of Christianity nor their scorn of Plato, but for their disdain of the masters of beautiful speech. "What shall we say," he asks (*Sen.*, v, 2), "of men who scorn Marcus Tullius Cicero, the bright sun of eloquence; of those who scoff at Varro and Seneca, and are scandalized at what they are pleased to call the crude, unfinished style of Livy and Sallust? Once I happened to be present when Virgil's style was the subject of their scornful criticism. Amazed at the crazy outbreak, I turned to a person of some cultivation and asked what he had detected in this famous man to arouse such a storm of reproach. Listen to the reply he made me, with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders: 'He is too fond of conjunctions.'" Such

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judgments as this last criticism might come from men who were in their own peculiar way students of eloquence, but, according to Petrarch, eloquence was in their eyes an art unworthy of a scholar.

At the same time, it cannot be said that his fight for eloquence was a very arduous one. Indeed, in the opinion of jealous rivals, Petrarch's championship threatened to jeopardize the cause, inasmuch as, according to them, he surrendered himself so completely to the art that he was unable to distinguish truth from fiction — just the kind of accusation that the champions of Greek rhetoric had had to endure in Rome. We need not take such an allegation at its face value; still, we can be quite certain that if Petrarch had not been such a creative master himself, his critical influence would have been far less notable. And it is quite important to remember that, in the judgment of his contemporaries, he was eloquent in two languages. In his age, there was as yet no really great humanist who confined himself entirely to Latin. Considering how much has been written on Dante's views as to the respective merits of the vernacular and Latin, it seems expedient to hear what Petrarch has to say on the subject, since his opinion is of almost equal importance. Inasmuch as he began his literary career as a writer of Italian verse, it will be appropriate to start with his outgivings about the vulgar tongue.

Especially illuminating are two letters written to Boccaccio: one, which we have discussed, in answer

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to the charge of indifference towards Dante; the other in reference to a statement made by their mutual friend, Donato, that Boccaccio not merely regretted having written works in the vernacular, but even wished to destroy them. Petrarch writes, dissuading him from doing so. "I," he says (*Sen.*, v, 2), "have sometimes harbored quite the opposite design, and thought of devoting my whole attention to the vernacular. To be sure, the Latin, in both prose and poetry, is undoubtedly the nobler language, but for that very reason it has been so thoroughly developed by earlier writers that neither we nor anyone else may expect to add much to it. The vernacular, on the other hand, has but recently been discovered, and, though it has been ravaged by many, it still remains uncultivated, in spite of a few earnest laborers, and still shows itself capable of much improvement and enrichment. Stimulated by this thought, and by the enterprise of youth, I began an extensive work in that language. I laid the foundations of the structure, I got together my lime, and stones, and wood." The two reasons he gives for abandoning the work are substantially these: his dislike of the audience which would be attracted by such writings, and the lack of a proper grace of delivery on the part of those who should recite them. This requires a little explanation.

One of the things that characterize the Renaissance, that distinguish it from the Middle Ages, is the fact that it affords a vastly larger number of persons who

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can appreciate what is properly called literature. They come from all professions, trades, and grades of society. This is a change which, strangely enough, does not always appeal to the author, in spite of his desire for universality. Dante proposes to write his Commentary in Italian, to make it accessible to his own countrymen, and not to the pallid Latinate student of any and every nationality — Italian, German, French, English. But he writes for the Italian of noble heart, for the moral and intellectual aristocracy of the *dolce stil nuovo*. Well, Petrarch carries this feeling to a greater extreme. He hates *hoi polloi* as much as Horace does, and expresses his feelings even more frequently and more bitterly. In a poem he describes the crowd as "hateful and hostile to me"; in a Latin letter (*Sen.*, VIII, 7) he declares that no beast is more tiresome to him than the crowd. Referring to Dante, he says (*Fam.*, XXI, 15): "Who, indeed, could fill me with envy, me who do not envy Virgil, unless perchance I should be envious of the hoarse applause which our poet enjoys from the tavern-keepers, fullers, butchers, and others of that class who dishonor those they would praise? But, far from deserving such popular recognition, I congratulate myself, on the contrary, that along with Virgil and Homer I am free from it, inasmuch as I fully realize how little the plaudits of the unschooled multitude weigh with scholars."

It seems extraordinary that such coarse people should have been familiar with Dante; but in that age,

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when printing was unknown and manuscripts were expensive, the transmission of literature was more or less oral. The jongleur was still extant, and came to Petrarch, just as his predecessors used to go, two centuries before, to the Provençal poets; and he entertained not merely the mob in the square, but kings (see *Sen.*, v, 2). Petrarch writes to Boccaccio: "You are familiar, no doubt, with that widely distributed and vulgar set of men who live by words (and those not their own), and who have increased to such an irritating extent among us. They are persons of no great ability, but of retentive memories. They haunt the antechambers of kings and potentates, naked, were it not for the poetic vesture they have filched from others. Any especially good bit which this or that author has turned off they seize upon, particularly if it is in the mother tongue. In this way they strive to gain the favor of the nobility, and procure money, clothes, or other gifts. Their stock in trade is partly picked up here and there, partly obtained directly from the writers themselves, either by begging or, when cupidity or poverty is encountered, for money. You can easily imagine how often those fellows have pestered me. It is true that I suffer less than formerly, owing to my altered studies." He then proceeds to tell how the minstrels have been made rich by his poems. Such an audience, Petrarch declares, he does not desire.

One is not altogether sure of this: he is too avid of praise not to welcome a tribute, whatever be the source.

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But we may be certain that in one kind of lamentation he is sincere. We can imagine that, in an age like his, when people must have written for the ear as well as for the eye, the ear was probably much more sensitive than it is now; and we can picture what Petrarch suffered, a torture described by him in the same oft-quoted letter to Boccaccio. "This is not the least of the considerations that have led me to give up a style of composition to which I devoted myself in my early years. I feared for my writings the same fate that I had seen overtake those of others, especially of Dante. I could not in my own case look for more musical tongues or more flexible minds among the common people than I noted in the rendering of those authors whom long favor and habit have made popular in the public squares. That my apprehensions were not idle is clear from the fact that I am continually tortured by the tongues of the people as they sing the few productions which I allowed to escape me in my youth. I indignantly reject and hate what I once loved, and day by day walk the streets with vexation, and execrate my own talents. Everywhere I behold a crowd of ignorant fellows, everywhere I find my Damocetas at the street corner ready to murder with his screeching reed my poor sonnet. Hearing again and again the performances of those who mangle, rather than recite, the works of others, and turning the matter over in my mind, I concluded that I was building upon unstable earth and shifting sand, and should, if I went on, simply

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waste my labors and see the work of my hands levelled by the common herd. Like one who finds a great serpent across his path, I stopped and changed my route for a higher and more direct one, I hope."

Once again the question arises as to whether Petrarch is giving us his real opinion when he says that Latin is preferable to the vernacular. Was he not far more in doubt than he would have us imagine, and, as he grew older, did he not arrive at very much the same position as that taken by Dante? Here are some of the facts which would seem to justify such an opinion. He not only began his career as a writer of Italian verse, but he continued composing it until the very end of his life, in spite of his statement that he stopped short in his path and changed his route. About 1350, — when he was no longer a young man and had already written his *Secretum* and a part of his *Africa*, the work most intimately connected with his desire for fame, — he wished to finish the "trifles," of which, years before, he had started making a collection, abandoned because of new plans. In other words, he desired to complete his edition of the lyrics, in order to have a free hand for the *Triumphs*, at which he was working; but he did not succeed until 1359. This is the collection known as the Chigi MS., No. 176. From 1360 to 1365 or 1366 there is another interval, during which he thinks more of the *Triumphs* and the works in Latin. In 1367 begins the famous edition, a large part of which we have in his own handwriting. This collection was destined for Pandolfo

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Malatesta. Of some of the poems which make up the *Canzoniere* he speaks in two letters addressed to the same person, calling them "Nugellas meas vulgares." "Greatly against my will I confess it to you, now that I am an old man: I published these trifles written in my youth, which I now wish had never become known. But how can I prevent it? For a long time they have been in the hands of many, and are read more willingly than works composed when I was more mature in mind." For the crudity of the style he apologises on the ground that most of these poems were done when he was young, saying (*Var.*, 9; cf. *Sen.*, XIII, 10): "if you find many errors, I beg you to pardon me, because of the infinite things which take up my time and which have forced me to hand over the revision to others." But he goes on to admit: "I have still many more of these vernacular poems written on sheets so torn and blurred that it is difficult to read them. And when, from time to time, I have a day's leisure, I amuse myself by mending them." This much, at least, is evident from the letters and from the facts enumerated, that at the close of his life, as well as at the beginning, Petrarch was occupied to some extent with the vernacular. He acknowledges, just before his death, the great popularity of his Italian poems. Not merely does he prepare an authoritative edition of his love songs, but it is clear that he desires to appeal to the erudite as well as the ordinary reader. This desire is evident in the title which he gives to his allegorical poems in terza

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rima, the *Trionfi*, and also in the name he bestows on the *Canzoniere*, *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*.

These are arguments which might well be adduced to prove a literary change of view on Petrarch's part. Another is the extreme care that he took in polishing his verses. He speaks of crudeness of style, but this means nothing. A sixteenth century Italian, Ludovico Beccadelli (1502-72), speaking of some Petrarchan manuscripts, says that, apart from the handwriting, which resembles that of the poet's other works, they were corrected and altered in so many ways that no other than the author could have done it. In the said rhymes "one sees evidences of Petrarch's great care in improving them, changing his phrases four and five times; and it is a noticeable thing that, aside from the corrections, everything is written in Latin, which sometimes gives the reasons for the alteration and always notes down the date of writing." In the poems themselves Petrarch has not a little to say about style. In one, *S'io avesse pensato che sì care*, he says that if he had known his love poetry would give such pleasure, he would have written much more, and in a more polished manner; his one desire at first having been to relieve his heart and not to acquire fame. But now that Laura is dead, and the time has come when he would like to please the fastidious, he no longer possesses so soft a file as to make the dull rhymes sweet and clear. In another, *Mentre che'l cor da gli amorosi vermi*, he says almost the contrary: when he was young and loved

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Laura, both that soft file and the rhymes were lacking; if Laura had lived, now that he is a skilled poet with a mature style, he would have shattered rocks and made them weep with his sweetness. In spite of this inconsistency, it would appear from both passages that Petrarch, in the latter part of his life, was really very much interested in the vernacular.

But, however this may be, did he really come gradually to accept Dante's point of view? I do not think so. If, as he said, his largest audience was made up of lovers of his Italian verse, he loved praise too much not to write for this public; and, writing, how could this lover of style do anything but polish his works to the very best of his ability? Had he been as clairvoyant, as prophetic, as is Dante in the *Divine Comedy*, he would have seen that he spoke more truly than he in fact realized, when he said: "From me came words which I hope will make me immortal." His work as polisher of the language does indeed make him the first truly modern Italian writer; for Dante, from the standpoint of present usage, is somewhat archaic. That was one great feat which Petrarch accomplished, perhaps unwittingly. Now, Petrarch tells us that he had thought of writing in the vernacular principally because it was a new medium, not as yet perfected, while Latin — the nobler language — had been so polished that no one could hope to rival the writers of antiquity. At the same time, a reason not unlike this must have led him to write in Latin, even though, more than he perhaps

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knew, his desire was impossible of accomplishment. In Italian style, the rivalry of men like Cino and Dante was formidable. But no one since the end of the Roman Empire, in his opinion, had written really beautiful Latin. If he was to be the first of the modern men, what a feat it would be if he succeeded in meeting the authors of antiquity upon their own ground, and, working at a disadvantage, produced books which would place him on an equal footing with them! He made the attempt, and his success was great and legitimate. This does not mean that he wrote perfect Latin. It is easy enough for any Latin scholar of to-day to expose his shortcomings. They were remarked and commented upon almost immediately after his death. It was well for him that he could not look forward a century after his death, and see how severely posterity would judge his darling achievements! Possibly his pain might have been alleviated by the spectacle of the fate which awaited other Latinists, his detractors; for the chief ambition of almost every humanist was to write good Latin. As time went on, the standards were raised — we may almost say, perverted; and inevitable was the punishment of those who in writing had had recourse to a medium not their own. If they escaped the furious invectives of jealous contemporaries, they encountered the indifference or the contempt of their successors. Scholars of to-day, in their judgments of the style of the humanists of the Renaissance, are more lenient than were many of the humanists themselves,

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And therefore, while attention would still naturally be called, by a latter-day Latinist, to Petrarch's deviations from classical usage, most modern critics would acknowledge that the fourteenth century scholar had succeeded in fashioning for himself a really excellent style. Easy, supple, often graceful, always pleasant to read, it possesses what Dante calls the special excellence of Latin, ability to make known the concepts of the writer.

As important as Petrarch's style itself is his theory concerning style in general. In some of his literary principles he is still medieval; but on this question he can be very modern and sensible. Just as, for centuries, Latin was engaged in a life and death struggle with the vernacular, so, in the narrower field of Latin itself, there was, for generations, a constant duel between the Ciceronians and the anti-Ciceronians. Petrarch saw that the great danger in writing Latin was slavish imitation; and in what he has to say about imitation and individuality he appears at his very best as a literary critic. On one occasion, writing to Boccaccio (*Fam.*, XXIII, 19), he tells of a companion of his, a young man of great promise, who, as a result of his experiments, is to fashion a style of his own. To win success, he must avoid imitation, — or, better, conceal it, — so as to give the impression, not of copying, but rather of bringing to modern Italy, from the writers of old, something new. An imitator must see to it that what he writes, though similar, be not the very same. Literary

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similarity, moreover, should not resemble that of a painting or a statue to the person represented, but rather that of a son to a father; in which case there is often great difference in the features and members, and yet, after all, — hovering about the face, and especially the eyes, — a shadowy something akin to what painters call one's air, out of which there grows a likeness that, immediately upon sight of the child, calls up the father. So, too, in literary imitation the likeness must be elusive, something impossible to seize upon, except as the result of a sort of still hunt, a quality to be felt rather than defined. A letter equally interesting is one addressed also to Giovanni Boccaccio (*Fam.*, XXII, 2), in which Petrarch has much to say about plagiarism. "Any garment is suitable for an actor, but not every style for a writer. Each one should have his own style. In our persons, in our movements, in our voice and speech, every one of us possesses something that is individual, our very own, which we should rather polish and correct than exchange for another's." When Petrarch talks like that, we do not feel inclined for an instant to dispute his lofty position; and it can be fairly said that what he aimed at, he attained. He is the first man of the Italian Renaissance whose Latin style is really polished; and, if it has certain defects when compared with that of Cicero and Sallust, it has this in common — real individuality.

But Petrarch is not always what we should call the true literary critic, the first author (as Vossler says)

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who, together with eloquence, rehabilitated literary criticism. Like Cicero, he insists that morality and wisdom must accompany eloquence; and, while he appears to be always conscious of a real difference between prose and verse style, he is prone to lay down the same rules for eloquence and for poetry. When, therefore, we turn to Petrarch the theorist of poetic composition, we feel as though he had relapsed again into the remote past. Fortunately for him, he was in his practice not entirely faithful to his precepts; otherwise his works would hardly have lived until to-day. Only a man like Dante could work at such a disadvantage and be successful. Petrarch expresses in a number of places his ideas as to the true province of poetry. Perhaps the most important document is the oration he made on receiving the poet's crown; next is a letter to his brother Gherardo. Instead of quoting them, however, I wish to cite some remarks made to Nelli about his friend Rienzi as a poet, which show he was not entirely blind. After acknowledging that Rienzi was eloquent, he says (*Fam.*, XIII, 6): "I believe, too, that he reads all the poets generally known, but for all that he is not a poet, any more than one is a weaver who wears a garment made by another's hands. Even the writing of verses does not suffice by itself to earn one the title of poet. This man has never composed a single genuine poem which has reached my ears, nor has he applied himself to such a task; and without application nothing, however easy, can be well done." Then, speaking of the

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prevalent hope that Rienzi's reputation as a poet might save him from violence, he declares: "If Cola can, in such imminent peril, find shelter beneath the poet's ægis, why should not Virgil escape in the same way? Yet Virgil would certainly have perished at the hands of the same judges, because he is held to be, not a poet, but a magician. Let me tell you one thing which will amuse you more: I myself, than whom no one has been more hostile to divination and magic, have been occasionally pronounced a magician, by quite as acute judges, on account of my fondness for Virgil. How very low have our studies sunk!" In this passage, Petrarch, laughing at a senseless medieval superstition from which he was quite free, seems like one of us moderns; but at the same time it is very doubtful whether, for all his literary taste, he actually appreciated those qualities which to us are the real beauties of Virgil. For instance, he seems to regard as particularly fine those passages which impress us as being the most rhetorical. In this, of course, he is no worse than many of the later Romans, for whom poetry was a rhetorical exercise. With that favorite theme of disputations in the late Empire, — "Was Virgil greater as orator or as poet?" — we might compare a remark of Petrarch's: "Our beloved Cicero is beyond doubt the father of Latin eloquence. Next to him comes Virgil; or, perhaps, since there are some who dislike the order in which I place them, I had better say that Tully and Maro are the two parents of Roman litera-

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ture." It is evident that Petrarch regards eloquence as synonymous with beautiful style.

Again, if he saw how absurd it was to regard Virgil as a magician, he was still medieval enough to look upon the Latin poet as a great teacher, and to believe that what we regard as a straightforward narrative is really a veil of allegory. He actually dazed Robert of Naples by his exposition of Virgil, revealing recondite meanings which that monarch had never suspected. A fine debauch of this kind is found in a letter to Federico Aretino (*Sen.*, iv, 5), in which Petrarch explains the true significance of Virgil. It is hardly better than the earlier medieval incursions into this field — those of Fulgentius, Bernard of Chartres, and John of Salisbury. If he had such archaic ideas about the *Æneid*, he held equally strange ones about the nature of poetry in general. Apparently he had not progressed beyond the stage of Mussato. "The fact is, poetry is very far from being opposed to theology. Does that surprise you? One may almost say that theology actually is poetry, poetry concerning God. To call Christ now a lion, now a lamb, now a worm — what, pray, is that if not poetical? What are the parables of our Lord except allegories? Allegory is the very warp and woof of all poetry. Now we can see how Aristotle came to say that the first poets were the first theologians." As Vossler remarks, it never occurred to Mussato and to Petrarch that Aristotle was really casting discredit upon the theologians by implying that their teaching should

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be regarded as invention, to be received with caution by philosophers. For the early Renaissance writers, theology ennobled poetry.

Nevertheless, despite these utterances of Petrarch, the conception of the true nature of the poet was changing, had already changed. The fourteenth century poet is no longer Dante's poet-theologian. He is the man of eloquence, of Latin eloquence, the orator. The greatest Italian poet of the fourteenth century, after Dante, still preferred Cicero to Virgil, and looked upon verse as only a finer sort of prose. It is disheartening to see this, and it augurs ill for the verse of the hundred years to come. Fortunately the humanists were not absolute masters of the field.

II

IF Petrarch disappoints us in his theorizing about the true nature of poetry, he appears to far greater advantage as a scholar, especially in his love of books. In this there is no room for petty jealousy. If his language at times seems a little too highly colored, that excess is due simply to a conventional manner of expressing one's self, common in his day.

A great part of his life was devoted to the building up of his library by copying and purchasing books, and by obtaining them as gifts. At first, naturally, he was forced to do much of the copying himself. Then, when his income increased sufficiently, he employed others, having them work at his home or even accompany him

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on his travels. Of the difficulties he encounters, he has a great deal to say. "Those fellows," he declares (*Sen.*, v, 1), "are verily the plague of noble minds. A work written in a few months cannot be copied in as many years. Such is the ignorance and laziness, the arrogance of these fellows, that, strange as it may seem, they do not reproduce what you give them, but write out something quite different." So, even when oppressed by worries and difficulties, he finds it necessary (*Fam.*, xviii, 12) to press his weary fingers and his worn and ragged pen into service, and copy a Cicero lent him by his friend Lapo Castiglionchio, consoling himself with the thought that there was one more point of contact between himself and Cicero, the fact that both had had to submit to just such drudgery. In his youth he had made a number of journeys to obtain old books. Already he had laid the foundations of his collection at Avignon — which perhaps was not quite so badly off as he describes. In Paris he visited the library of the Sorbonne — Paris, which his friend, Richard de Bury, called the Paradise of the world, because of the opportunities it offered to men of his tastes. In Belgium he went about visiting convents, where he found books new to him, copying (he had great difficulty in obtaining ink at Liége), and adding to his stores. Naturally Italy is the most delightful hunting-ground, especially Rome. He describes himself travelling about with his baggage of books, cumbersome enough but a delight to his eyes. As, in spite of all his travelling, he could not be ubiqui-

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tous, he had to rely upon the aid of others, and this help was given him most ungrudgingly by high and low. Sygeros, the envoy of the emperor of Constantinople, sent him his copy of Homer. To Boccaccio he was indebted for works of Varro, Cicero, and St. Augustine. For others, to Nelli and Bruni. In his letter to Luca della Penna he writes: "When my friends would ask whether I wanted anything from their country, I would answer that I wanted only books, and above all those of Cicero. How many prayers I have addressed, how many have I sent, not only to Italy, but to France, Germany, and even Spain and England, and (would you believe it ?) to Greece. Although often disappointed, I cannot cease from continually seeking."

Petrarch is the real bibliomaniac; he describes his passion as an insatiable desire: "the hunger for books is keener than that for any other thing, — gold, horses, silver, — which give but a mute pleasure, while that of books penetrates to the marrow of our bones." Books converse with us, counsel us, unite with us. So Petrarch, like all earnest book-lovers, always thinks and frequently speaks of his books as real friends. He writes of the joy with which the inhabitants of his library receive a Latin translation of Homer. He talks of a volume of Cicero which fell and bruised his leg and caused him considerable trouble for a long time; jesting at the unkindness of Cicero to one of his most faithful servants. The closeness of the tie which bound him to his books is shown by bits of personal reflection, memo-

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randa of things important to him, sorrowful or otherwise, with which the margins of his manuscripts are filled. The best known of these is the note which relates to the death of Laura, in his copy of Virgil. Another famous one is that in which he speaks of the death of his son Johannes, born to give him labor and grief — “a source of perpetual and heavy care in his youth, and by his death a cause of deep pain.” The manuscripts are full, too, of remarks of a different kind, principally observations which show conclusively that he well digested what he read. Others are curious, some are droll, some very mysterious.

Petrarch did not buy for show, although he loved beautiful books, good bindings, and neat, clear handwriting. The delight that he himself took in his books he wished others to share with him; and so he had copies made and distributed them. One great desire of this true humanist was to leave his collection in such a state that it might be accessible to all who loved literature. Apparently he is the first man of modern times to conceive of founding a public library. He chose Venice as the safest place. In his offer to the Grand Council he is very explicit as to what he wishes to have done. “Francesco Petrarca desires, if it is the pleasure of Christ and the blessed St. Mark, that the church of the latter inherit a certain number of books which he has now or which he may possess some day, on condition that they be not sold nor dispersed in any way whatsoever, but be preserved forever in a spe-

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cial place to be chosen later, sheltered from fire and rain for the honor of the donor and the consolation and profit of men of letters and nobles of this city. He hopes that from time to time this glorious city may add other books at the expense of the State, and that nobles who love their country, and even foreigners, may leave by will a part of their property to the said church, and that in this way the collection may become a great and famous library, like those of antiquity." The Grand Council gratefully accepted the offer, assigning a palace on the Riva degli Schiavoni. For some reason or other, the scheme most unfortunately fell through. Petrarch found it pleasanter to live at Padua or Arquà, where he could have his garden. There were wars between Padua and Venice, and ultimately, some years after Petrarch's death, without any blame attaching to Petrarch or to Venice, the books were sold and dispersed. Perhaps Francesco of Carrara, the lord of Padua, was the guilty person. He retained the greater part of the library for himself; but when he was defeated by Venice and Gian Galeazzo Visconti, he had to surrender his books, with other property, to the Visconti family.

So far as the make-up of Petrarch's library is concerned, it was most complete in poetry. Only one great poet was missing, and that was Lucretius. Of the works of some of the other poets he knew only a part: Plautus, Tibullus, and Martial. As might be expected, he was fondest of Virgil. But he knew all of Ovid, and

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drew especially upon that poet's erotic verse — which is rather curious, for he objected to Ovid's sensuality, and his pleasure in Catullus was marred by the presence of the same defect. In his later years, faithful to the allegorical tendency of his age and of his own mind, he tried to read into Ovid a hidden moral meaning. After Virgil, he makes most of Horace, and it is due to him that all the works of Horace enjoy equal esteem; for up to his day the odes, the lyric verse, and the epodes were not so well liked as the epistles and the satires. Persius, Juvenal, and the comic poets he admired, principally, perhaps, because they offered such rich storehouses of maxims. It is to his credit that, while possessing little real affection for Lucan, he had the sense to perceive that this author should be regarded as a poet rather than as an historian. For the Christian Latin poets he cared little, in spite of the fact that some of them were devout churchmen. Their style, his critical taste told him, was inferior to that of the models he used, and style, after all, was his principal criterion.

As the absence of Lucretius constituted the great gap in his collection of poets, the lack of Tacitus was the principal lacuna in that of the prose writers. His ideal, of course, was Cicero; and Petrarch was a better critic of Cicero than of Virgil, for he not only appreciated his style but correctly judged his character. In regard to his acquaintance with Cicero's works, the most interesting question always has been: did he or did he not possess one entitled *De Gloria*? He tells us

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in his *Old Age* (*Sen*, xvi, 1) that he lent it to his old teacher Convenevoles, who had become very poor and who needed it for his work; but unfortunately the old man pawned it, and it was never recovered. This story is told with much circumstantial detail; yet it is almost certain that Petrarch never possessed a copy. Voigt thinks that perhaps he had found such a title at the head of some chapters of the *Tusculan Disputations*. Nolz is inclined to believe that Petrarch was the victim of his own imagination: he did lend books to Convenevoles; he had noticed somewhere some fine passages on Glory, and, having learned subsequently that Cicero had composed a work on that subject (dear to him above all others), he wondered in after years whether he had not possessed it, until he finally convinced himself that he had. But if he really had owned it, it is almost certain that he would have said so long before; and he surely would have remembered more about it.

There is another favorite, to whom indeed Petrarch did not surrender himself with quite such self-abandonment, yet with whom he had so much in common that after his death he was called — by one scholar, at least — the modern Seneca. Petrarch particularly enjoyed the moralizing of Seneca, and, as I have said, this fondness to a considerable extent spoiled his letters. He could not get away from Seneca's influence, even when he wished to, or thought he had succeeded. He imagined he derived consolation from reading Seneca's

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moral dissertations, but it is quite likely that they heightened his melancholia. To Seneca's weaknesses he was no more blind than he was to Cicero's; and in various ways, especially as a critic, he showed himself an independent scholar, not a sheep to follow blindly the lead of others. Although it was not until about a century later that the authenticity of the so-called correspondence between St. Paul and Seneca was attacked, Petrarch saw more clearly than his contemporaries that Seneca was not a Christian. He doubted whether Seneca was the author of the *Octavia*, but unfortunately he had suspicions of all the plays.

With Quintilian he became acquainted late and incompletely, but he took to him naturally because of his sensible remarks upon rhetoric. Nolhac says that in no other of Petrarch's manuscripts does one see so markedly his hostility towards the dialecticians and scholastics of his time.

Pliny the elder was for him a source of varied information, just the person to interest him and other Renaissance men, because of his eager inquisitiveness. At the same time, be it said to his credit, Petrarch shows caution in accepting his statements. Perhaps it is worth remembering that it was especially Pliny the geographer and historian of art who appealed to him. Again, it was Pliny who inspired him to make the remark that he stood, as it were, on the confines of two ages, looking at the same time forwards and backwards.

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When he said this, he was thinking of Pliny the historian, whose historical works were lost. Of historians he was particularly fond, feeling, as he did, that he was a belated man of antiquity who had strayed into uncongenial surroundings, and that authors like Livy and the letter-writing Cicero were the only ones who could tell him about this lost Eden, and perhaps lead him back to it, during the precious hours he spent in their company. In a letter to Livy (one of the previously mentioned letters to dead authors) he says: "I wish to offer you everlasting thanks especially for this, that because of you I often forget present ills; that, while reading you, I picture at my side Cornelius, Scipio Africanus, Brutus, Cato, and have the illusion of living in the midst of these great men." Other Roman historians with whom he was acquainted we can do no more than name: Caesar, Suetonius, Sallust, Justin, Valerius Maximus. It should be reckoned in his favor that he was not taken in by Dictys and Dares, nor by the fabulous accounts of Alexander.

As regards the church writers, although he set little store by Christian poets, he had the greatest admiration for the prose authors, for Lactantius, for St. Jerome, and above all for St. Augustine, whose *Confessions* were, one cannot help feeling, his dearest possession. It is not to be expected that he should have been greatly drawn towards the famous schoolmen who were more nearly his contemporaries; but there was one who evidently interested him deeply although he was aware

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of the man's defects, — " his faith, as I hear, being doubtful, and his mind far from meek " (*Vita Solitaria*, II, vii, 1). This was Abelard; not Abelard the philosopher, but Abelard the hero of an unhappy love story, one who, like himself, had sought refuge in solitude. And the manuscript of Abelard's and Heloise's letters is, after that of Virgil, the most interesting of his collection for the notes which Petrarch jotted down on it — interesting not so much for his comments on the style or the sentiments of the writers (which are mostly in the vein of " just like a woman " or " not inelegantly said, Peter ") as for a series of mysterious dates which excite one's curiosity, since refer they must to certain unknown episodes of his troubled inner life.

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WHEN we compare epic heroes, such as Roland, with romance heroes, like those of the Arthurian poems, we usually consider that the former live in a world more or less prosaic like our own, while the latter inhabit one of mystery, where the phenomena of nature are subject to the caprices of supernatural beings or mortals possessed of magic power, where also the boundaries between men, animals, and plants are wavering and uncertain. This distinction is not an imaginary one. Nevertheless, if, instead of limiting our vision to the scenes of the exploits of, say, French and Spanish heroes, we extend it over that immense region which stretches from Ireland in the West to India and Siberia in the East, we must modify our conception to a considerable degree. Superficially there seems then to be little difference between this epic world and that of romance. Certainly the former is infinitely vaster than the one we know, for it comprehends not only the surface of the globe but the subterranean regions peopled by the dead, by the powers of evil, by gnomes, water sprites, and other supernatural beings. It includes also the heavens, and the intermediate space between them and the earth, inhabited by gods, valkyrias, swan maidens, and other creatures of the air and sky.

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Now, while playing his part on this great stage, the epic hero, who surpasses us in courage, strength, and endurance, is helped in many ways denied us. In the first place, not merely is he aided by the counsels and armed assistance of his king, his comrades, and his people, but all nature follows his career with eager interest. She heralds his birth with terrific demonstrations, flashes lightning, hurls thunderbolts, causes the earth to rock from side to side, and on the whole behaves in such a startling fashion that the people, and above all the troubled parents, regard the child with very mingled feelings, and are uncertain whether to cherish or to expose him. In a quieter but far more effectual manner she accompanies and assists him during his arduous lifetime. Seldom can the epic hero be said to be alone, for, though leagues of plains and mountains may separate him from his comrades, he has the fellowship of the trees of the forest, the mountain peaks, the winds, the clouds, stars, moon, and sun — all of which in articulate human words cheer him and give him timely warning and advice. The Bulgarian and Servian heroes, who do a tremendous amount of letter writing, have at their disposal a remarkably efficient postal service conducted by the little birds, who answer calls promptly, deliver the letters with the greatest dispatch, and faithfully bring back the answer if one is required. Should nature for any reason be at all tardy in lending her assistance, the hero often is able to force her to do his will. At his bidding utter darkness

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falls upon the earth, mists rise and hide the footsteps of his men from the pursuing enemy, twigs buried beneath a path rob his foes of half their strength. His weapons themselves not only are strong because of their sharp points or edges, the vigorous arm which wields them, the sure eye which directs them, but they are potent with the spells uttered by the wizard hero.

Again, divine help is vouchsafed the hero in battle. The gods and goddesses of Greece took sides in the siege of Troy, the gods of India were no idle spectators in the great battle of Kurukshetra, apostles and saints have fought in the ranks with Christian soldiers against the Saracens.

Finally, the universal sympathy which greets the hero at his birth and accompanies him through life, does not desert him at his death. In answer to Charlemagne's prayer God bids the sun stand still in heaven, that vengeance may be wreaked upon the slayers of Roland. Tears stream from the trees, the winds sob, the mountains lament the death of the Greek Klepht.

Now, of all the friends of the epic hero, there is one whom I have not mentioned, yet none is more faithful, more affectionate, more helpful. I mean the hero's horse. We are all familiar with Pegasus, Bellerophon's winged steed, we have heard of Bucephalus, and we know that Xanthus foretold the death of Achilles. But these are only three of a multitude of heroic horses coming from different countries which cover a large part of two continents. Where the imagination of the

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people is on the whole sober and pedestrian, they are little more than very intelligent, sensitive, high-spirited animals; where there are no fixed, well-defined boundaries between the natural and supernatural worlds, they are marvellous, protean creatures like their semi-divine masters.

That the horse plays an important part in mythology and folklore has been clearly shown by Jähns, De Gubernatis, von Negelein, Freytag, and others: it is my purpose to call attention to the fact that his rôle in the popular epic is equally conspicuous. Bangert, in his monograph on animals in the *chansons de geste*, has devoted considerable space to the different horses appearing in those poems. But the possible field is much wider. It includes practically all the epic literature of Europe and Asia.

Now, in this immense body of narrative matter there is no reason why the horse should not be a prominent actor. Inanimate things, like weapons, for instance, often have names, a certain individuality and history. Why not, then, an animate being as intelligent as the horse? Remember that he is the hero's closest companion. In the thick of the fray, on long solitary expeditions, he is always with him, when friends, kinsmen, and king are distant. Again, while it may be true that there is not so much of the supernatural in the epic as in the romance, still the supernatural is there. However faithful to fact the nucleus of any given epic may have been, the poem as we have it usually owes no

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small part of its bulk to folklore and mythology. Then, too, our particular epic may be in a transition stage between epic and romance.

Still, in spite of all this, it would not be surprising if we had nothing but a collection of descriptive phrases as splendid as the famous one in Job, or pretty stories illustrating the intelligence of the horse — the kind of an anthology one might glean from newspapers, or farming and sporting journals. One finds something of this sort in the Arabian epic romance of Antares. The Arab horse is famous throughout the world, and all know well enough the brilliant audacity of oriental imagination; yet Antares's steed, almost as celebrated as Antares himself, is, apart from his beauty, a very commonplace animal. Now, the epic horses of which I wish to treat belong to quite a different category. I hope to prove that many of them have as just a claim as their masters to be called heroic.

In showing what the epic horse is, I shall trace his career from the moment he appears on the scene to the moment he disappears. I advisedly refrain from using the words "birth" and "death," because, as is the case with some of his masters, his beginning and end are not infrequently shrouded in mystery. First of all, he comes into his master's possession in a number of ways. He may be a gift, a part of booty in war, or he may have been handed down from father to son. The horse of the Russian Dobrynya Nikitich served several generations. Occasionally he is bought from a dealer. This is suffi-

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ciently commonplace; yet the famous Bayard and the Persian Rakhsh were obtained in this fashion. In the latter case there is a redeeming note of mystery. Rustem asks the dealer what are the origin and the price of the animal. The dealer, who does not recognize the hero, answers evasively: "Many rumors are current about this horse. So far as we know, he has no master; we call him *Rakhsh the steed of Rustem*." When the dealer does find out to whom he has been talking, he gives the horse to Rustem, and will accept no payment in return. Evidently we have here what we meet with in a number of other places: a certain horse destined for a certain hero. So marked is this relation at times that horse and hero are born at the same moment. But there was something else interesting in the horse dealer's remarks — the "many rumors" he refers to. One of them I think is to be found in a Kurdish tale published by Prym and Socin. It gives an account of the origin of the animal, which Firdusi, the Persian epic poet, may have known and yet hesitated to use. Rustem, requiring a horse, is told by the Creator to go to the seashore, where he must dig a pit, enter it, and cover himself with straw. At daybreak a horse will rise out of the sea. Rustem is to call out to him his own name and that of his father. The horse will then be his. The water horse, therefore, so common in the folklore of the Kelts, of Germany, Bohemia, and other countries, appears in the epic. Ridgeway, who published a work on the horse not long ago, says it is evident that the horses of the Irish hero

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Cuchullin were well bred, that they probably came from northern Spain or Gaul. The author of the epic has a different story. He says that Cuchullin caught them as they came out of the lake, wrestled with them, and subdued them. In the Feast of Bricriu, an episode of the Irish Ulster epic cycle, Emer, wife of Cuchullin, boasts of her husband's great prowess. "Sooth, lady," quoth Conall the Victorious, "let that famous fellow come here, that we may enquire of him." "No," quoth Cuchullin, "I am to-day weary and exhausted. I will not hold a duel till after I have had food and sleep." In truth that was really so, inasmuch as it was the day on which he had fallen in with his steed, the Gray of Macha, by the side of the Gray Linn. On its having come out of the loch, Cuchullin crept up to it and put his two hands around the steed's neck, till they twain got a-wrestling, and on that night Cuchullin came chasing with his steed to Emain. He got the Black Sainglenn in like wise from Lough Dubh Sainglenn. The Russian hero Ilya has a steed, Cloudfall, from whose hoofs dripped little rivers and lakes. From mountain to mountain he sprang. Where his hoofs fell, founts of water gushed forth. We are told, too, that in the village of Karacharovo, Ilya's birthplace, there is a chapel built upon the spot where a fountain burst forth from beneath Cloudfall's hoof. To this spring fierce bears still come to quaff the water and gain heroic strength. In the Greek epic, Arion, the horse of Adrastus, and Pegasus, ridden by the Corinthian hero Bellerophon, are both the off-

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spring of the water god Poseidon. According to another tradition, Arion had as his father Zephyrus; the horses of Achilles and Aeneas had as father Boreas. The heroic horse is, then, the offspring of the winds as well as of the water.

With these epic horses in mind one thinks immediately of the great part that the water horses (male water sprites) play in Gaelic and Cymric folklore. They come on shore as men and beguile women. Often their real nature is betrayed by the presence of seaweed in their hair, just as one recognizes the water sprite in Russian stories from water dripping from a corner of his shirt. They transform themselves into birds — which is interesting, for, if our epic horses have much to do with the water, like Pegasus they are also at home in the air. Often they appear as ordinary handsome horses; and when unwary men have mounted upon their backs, they tear over hill and dale, then soar aloft, and finally, changing into mist, let fall the unlucky rider. Only a very bold horseman or priest can ride them with safety. Outside of Celtic territory, the Scandinavian *nykr* (Eng. *nicker*) is spoken of as a horse. He appears on land as a handsome dapple-gray steed — but his hoofs turn the wrong way. German legends speak of a big black horse rising out of the sea. Grimm says that to the water sprite the whole or half of a horse's figure is attributed, and that is why horses are sacrificed to rivers. This last is true also of Russian folklore. It is worth noting that in the *Shah Nameh* the hero Yez-

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digerd is killed by a white horse which comes out of a fountain.

A number of these supernatural horses are related to one another. In the Norse Saga, Grani is the offspring of Sleipnir, and Sleipnir had as parents the horse Svaðilfari and the god Loki. Just as human heroes in the epic, at first in no wise connected with each other, are later made members of the same family, so we have horse families. This is true of the horses in the German Dietrich Saga; and here is an especially good instance from the Russian songs. When Dyuk Stepanovich weeps bitterly because he has rashly wagered that his shaggy pony is swifter than the hero Churilo's horse, the pony says: "Cheer up, pathetic master mine! Not over Mother Dnieper's flood alone will I leap, but yet three versts upon the other side. If I yield not to my elder brother, much less will I give way before my younger. For my eldest brother is with Ilya of Murom, my second with Dobrynya Nikitich. I am the third, and Churilo's steed is but the fourth."

Another resemblance exists between horse and human heroes. The childhood of the latter frequently gives no promise of their future brilliant careers. Now, the epic has much to say about the appearance of the different horses. Some are splendid creatures. This is the way the daughter of Queen Meve described the steeds of Cuchullin as she, from the sunny parlor over the great door of the fort, watched them approach: "I see two horses of the one size and beauty, the one fierceness

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and speed, with ears pricked, heads high, spirited and powerful, with fine nostrils, wide foreheads, mane and tail curled, leaping together. The one gray, handsome, with broad thighs, eager, thundering, trampling. As he goes, his fierce hoofs throw up sods of earth like a flock of swift birds after him. As he gallops on the way, a flash of hot breath darts from him; from his curbed jaws gleams a blast of flame-red fire. The other, dark, small-headed, thin-sided, broad-backed, sure-footed. They come together with fast, joyful steps, moving o'er the plain like a swift mountain mist, or like the rushing of a loud wind in winter." Part of this description recalls that of Sigurd's steed in an old Danish song. "Fire flamed from his mouth, and his eye was as bright as the morning star." So one might continue to quote indefinitely; but, as I have said, all heroic horses are not so well-favored. The Spanish Babieca was a mangy colt when the youthful Cid, to his godfather's great disgust, chose him from among other horses in the paddock. Nearly all the Russian steeds are spoken of as shaggy little animals. In some of the Ilya songs, Cloudfall, when bought, is desperately ugly. Three months Ilya fed him with finest Turkish wheat and watered him from a pure stream. Then he bound him three nights in the garden and anointed him with three morning dews. This done, he led the foal to the lofty paling, and the good horse began to leap from side to side and was able to sustain Ilya's vast weight, for he had become a heroic steed.

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We see by this that the horse has to undergo a preliminary training. At least, he must pass some ordeal before he is accepted as a heroic horse. The most frequent is the test of his ability to carry the hero, who crushes the ordinary horse to the ground. Sometimes, as in the Persian epic, the hero strikes the animal on the back to see whether it can stand the blow. Occasionally the hero has to conquer the horse in a kind of duel. The strangest test of all is that described in a Bulgarian ballad. The child Golomeshe enters the cool stable, seizes a little horse by the tail and swings it out into the yard. Clearly this one will not do. He continues until he finds one that he is unable to move.

The horse, when once he has proved his proficiency, can do almost anything. I shall pass over extraordinary feats in running, jumping, and swimming. Often he is able not only to leap from hill to hill, but actually to fly. A number of the Greek, Bulgarian, and Russian horses are as much at home in the air as on the ground. Dyuk's horse is spoken of as having pinions. Marko's could soar high into the air and pursue a Vila (a kind of female elf). Marko's mother's brother Momchil possessed a steed which certainly had wings. They were of fine gauze or silk, evidently invisible when not used; for when Momchil's faithless wife enters the stable to cripple the animal, she burns them off, and Momchil is none the wiser when he sets forth on his last ride.

Particularly interesting is the fact that the heroic horse, like his master, is a great fighter. Is this because

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in the periods of epic fermentation men were familiar with wild horses? They were to be found in Germany as late as the sixteenth century. Down to comparatively late times the *hestavíg*, or horse fight, was a favorite sport of the Norsemen; and through them the Irish probably became familiar with it. The tarpan, a wild horse found near the Caspian Sea, is feared now by the Siberian nomads. The Arab stallion, according to Richard Burton, is supposed to fight for his master. It is very possible, however, that, in spite of these facts, we have in the stories little more than a transference of epic qualities from hero to horse. Whatever be the cause, like the Chaldaean horses mentioned by Habakkuk, our epic horses are swifter than leopards and, often, more fierce than the evening wolf. Conall's dog-headed steed takes a bite out of the side of the hero's opponent. Ekkehart's Rösclin puts three hundred men to flight. The horse which Fierabras gave Oliver had already struck down, strangled, and devoured more than a hundred men.

Coming back to the Arab horse, Tweedie says: "The noble mare frequently shows her aversion when those whom she does not know approach her. The stallion picketed beside the tent is as good as a sentinel. The first sound of an intruder brings him to attention. Generally he will stamp with one forefoot, and challenge, not braying like a *kadish* [cart-horse], but sounding one or two sharp notes, to indicate that he will make no terms." Burton tells very much the same story.

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“ The Arab horse stands guard over his sleeping master and warns him of approaching danger.” Many an epic horse does the same — and even more, for at least in some favored countries he is gifted with powers lacking to even the most intelligent horses we are familiar with. The Persian Rakhsh, for instance, can see an ant on a piece of black felt ten parasangs away on the darkest night.

The epic horse also is frequently able to speak. Here is an example from Russia, which shows, in addition, extraordinary resourcefulness. Prince Vladimir, listening one day to the boasts of his heroes, exclaimed himself: “ I too can boast. Besides my three hundred stallions, my iron-gray, and my horse with the long mane, I have a coal-black steed. He can gallop from Kiev to Chernigov between mass and matins; and the distance is three hundred versts and thereto thirty versts and three. Is there in all Kiev town a man whose horse can do the like ? ” All hid and made no answer. Then did Ivan step forth and cry in loud, piercing tones: “ Lord, courteous Vladimir, such a horse have I. And I will wager my turbulent head that he will run against thy horse.” With speed they wrote out strong contracts and set their white hands thereto. Then Ivan drank a bucket and a half of green wine, saluted all, and went forth to the white stall. He fell down before his horse’s left hoof and wept floods. “ Help me, good steed,” quoth he; and he told him of the wager. The shaggy brown answered in good Russian tongue: “ Hey,

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courteous master mine, grieve not. I fear not. Do thou water me for three dawns with mead and give me Saracen wheat." When the day of the race came, Ivan rode into the courtyard upon his steed. Then did the shaggy brown dance about the court, and roar like an aurochs and hiss and shriek like a dragon. The three hundred stallions were affrighted and fled, the iron-gray broke two legs, the long-maned steed his neck; the black fled neighing, with tail uplifted, to the Golden Horde, leaping the Dnieper stream in his flight. Then said sweet Ivan: "Delay not, Prince Vladimir, but count me out the 300,000 roubles." This Vladimir did with sorrow and said: "The devil take thee and thy steed." Thus was the great race run.

Here is another story, this time from a modern Greek ballad, the *Rescue of the Wife of Liakos*. What misfortune has happened to the wife of Liakos? Five Albanians hold her prisoner and they ask her: "O Liskena, won't you marry? Do you not want a Turk for a husband?" But Liakos sees her from a high hill. His black horse is close to him, and he whispers in his ear: "Can you, my horse, can you deliver your mistress?" "Yes, I can, my master, I can deliver my mistress, for then she may increase my rations. I go." And he does go, frees his master's wife, and brings her home. This same lack of disinterestedness appears in another modern Greek ballad of a similar nature. One day, while Akritas is plowing in the field, a bird flies up to him and tells him that his wife Eudoxia and his best

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steed have been abducted. Akritas rushes home, discovers the windows and doors open, enters the stable, where he finds his horses whinnying. "In the name of God, horses," he cries, "which of you can run quickly?" Not one, not one spoke. But an old horse speaks and answers: "If you give me good food, I'll go quickly."

Not all masters beg or bribe; some order, and here is an illustration — not this time from the modern, but from the old Greek epic, from Homer. Achilles is speaking just before he sets out to fight Hector. "Xanthus and Balius, illustrious offspring of Podarge, resolve now in a different manner to bring back your charioteer to the Greeks, after we are satiated with battle, nor leave him dead, like Patroclus." But from beneath the yoke, Xanthus, his swift-footed steed, addressed him, the white-armed goddess Juno giving him the power of speech: "This time, at least, we will bear thee safe, O impetuous Achilles, but the fatal day draws nigh to thee; nor are we to blame, but a mighty deity and violent destiny. Though we can run even with the blast of Zephyrus, which they say is most fleet, yet to thyself it is fated thou shalt be violently slain by a god or a man." Him swift-footed Achilles, greatly indignant, addressed: "O Xanthus, why dost thou predict my death to me? Well do I myself know that it is my fate to perish here, far away from my dear father and mother. Nevertheless I will not cease before the Trojans are abundantly satiated with war." Achilles

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is impatient and harsh in speech. Other heroes are gentler when warned of impending death.

When Cuchullin is about to enter his last fight, the Gray of Macha will not allow Laegh the charioteer to harness him. Laegh says to Cuchullin: "I swear by the God by whom my people swear that though all the men of Conor's fifth were round the Gray of Macha, they could not bring him to the chariot. Come thou, if thou wilt, and speak with the Gray himself." Cuchullin went to him, and thrice did the horse turn his left side to his master. Then Cuchullin reproached him, saying that he was not wont thus to deal with his master. Thereat the Gray of Macha came and let fall big round tears of blood on Cuchullin's feet. And Cuchullin leaped into the chariot and started southwards along the road. . . . Cuchullin was wounded to death. He went to a pillar stone that was in the plain, and put his girdle round it, that he might not die seated or lying down but standing up. Then came the men around him, but they durst not go to him, for they thought that he was alive. And the Gray of Macha came to protect him as long as his soul was in him; and the hero's light, out of his forehead, shone about him. And fifty fell by his teeth, and thirty by each of his hoofs. . . . At last Cuchullin dies, and the Gray goes to Conall. Together he and the Gray of Macha sought Cuchullin's body. They saw the corpse of the hero at the pillar stone. Then went the Gray of Macha and laid his head on Cuchullin's breast. And Conall said: "A heavy care

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is that corpse to the Gray of Macha." The pathos and brevity of these last words are matched in a short Norse lay: "We have hewn Sigurd asunder with the sword; the gray horse may droop his head forever over the dead king." One more death scene. This time it is a modern Greek ballad of Vevros and his horse. Vevros, alas! was lying on the ground, and his horse said to him: "Arise, master, and let us go our way. Our company is departing." "I cannot move, my good steed. I am going to die. Come, dig up the earth with your feet, with your iron shoes; take me up in your teeth and drop me into the earth; then take my arms and carry them to my kinsmen; take also my handkerchief and carry it to my sweetheart, that she may weep when she sees it."

The life of the epic horse, then, resembles that of the epic hero. He is often of supernatural origin. Sometimes he is glorious when he first appears, often enough he is the ugly duckling of the fairy story. Frequently he has to pass some ordeals before he is recognized as worthy to become an epic actor. He is not only a great fighter, but a far-sighted, devoted friend, with all the virtues and seldom with any of the vices of his master. His vision pierces the future and the veil that hides gods and fairies from men. Usually his career ends with that of the hero he has served. Sometimes the latter, feeling that his own death is inevitable, kills his old friend to prevent his falling into the hands of a stranger.

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Let us now, in conclusion, pass in review the careers of four epic horses, two from the west and two from the east.

Our first horse hero shall be Marchegai, and his story is told in the French epic, *Aiol*. Aiol is the son of a certain Count Elie, who has been banished from Charlemagne's court and has lived for fifteen years with his wife in the dreariest spot of all France, the *landes* near Bordeaux — that is, in Gascony. At the end of that time Aiol, a lad now some thirteen years old, decides that the time has come to go forth into the world, avenge his father, and recoup the family fortunes. All that Elie can give him is his blessing, a liberal store of good advice, his lance (which because of long exposure to wind and rain had become rusty and bent), the old hauberk and helmet, the good sword which he had kept polished, and, best of all, his horse Marchegai. "He is ill groomed now, very lean and sickly," says the father, "his four feet are unshod; but do not sell him nor pawn him, do not stint him of fodder, and he will soon be fairer than any other horse." Thus equipped, Aiol started forth like another young Gascon gentleman, some eight hundred years later, whose acquaintance nearly every one has made in the *Three Musketeers*, poor, shabby, but with a high heart and great ambition. And the mockery that greeted D'Artagnan mounted upon his buttercup-colored Rosinante, welcomed Aiol as he entered the cities of Poitiers and Orléans. According to Dumas, D'Artagnan checked

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to some extent the demonstrations of hilarity by the sight of his clenched fist, the ferocious rather than haughty expression of his eye, forcing the mockers, if they would laugh, to laugh with but one side of their faces, like the antique masks. As for the shaggy steed, he kept his eyes bent on the ground, his head drooping lower than his knees, meekly ignoring the insults of the horse-connoisseurs of Meung. In the epic, it is the horse who is resentful and unwilling to tolerate any criticism of his master's appearance. Aiol entered the city, says the poem, one Thursday at the hour of vespers. His lance was bent and black, his shield old and his sword-strap broken. Marchegai noticed the shabby arms. His nostrils dilated, he opened his mouth, and bore his head high, like a stag hunted with horns and pursued by hounds in the leafy forest. Knights and burghers stared at Aiol. Ladies and maidens mounted into the towers, and one citizen said to his fellow: "Look, friend, who is this robber? The arms he bears he has stolen. But his face is bright and fair, and well he seems to be son of a noble mother." Aiol went his way greatly angered, for all, big and little, followed and mocked him. Then up came a knave out of a cellar; he had drunk much, played at dice, and lost his all. He stopped Aiol. "Master," said he, "are you come at last? Why have you tarried so long? My companions have lost everything. This horse is very lean and broken down; he will be sold for wine." And he seized the animal by the bridle. Marchegai looked

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at him, and knew him not; raising his right foot, he struck the man and laid him dead beside him. The citizens who saw this jeered. "That man left the tavern too soon. This horse seems to belong to the horses of King Arthur: he cannot endure a man but must kill him. Good God! how shall we praise rightly that shield which resembles the arms of Lord Esau who lived a hundred years or more!" Never had such joy come to Poitiers. The citizens were wicked and evil-intentioned. "Tell us, sire, where will you take that horse? The dogs of this town have sworn to eat his flesh." Another knave ran out from a tavern; he tore the bridle from Marchegai's head and started to return to the drinking-shop. When Marchegai felt the bit taken from his mouth, swiftly he ran after the rascal. He lowered his ear, seized the man, and raising him four feet from the ground, shook his head and dropped him. The man fell to the earth and the blood gushed from his nostrils. "Surely," said the burghers, "that is a magic horse." Magic or not, no old retainer, no faithful Ekkehart, could be more jealous of the honor of the family which he serves than this apparently decrepit steed. He is aristocratic, too, and will not tolerate other horses being near him. And he knows more about war than many a knight, the poet declares. When the villain of this particular epic ridicules his appearance, Aiol proposes a horse race; and though Marchegai is heavily handicapped, he wins the race in a far more legitimate fashion than the Russian steed. On one oc-

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casion he saves his master's life. Aiol, sleeping one day in the forest, is unaware of the approach of a body of Saracens. His horse, however, standing guard over him, does hear the clashing of shields, helmets, and lances, and instinctively recognizes the strangers as enemies. In the words of the poem, "such grief he feels, he nearly goes mad. Loudly he neighs and fiercely paws the ground till Aiol is awakened."

At last the time comes for Aiol to return to his father. Greetings have hardly been exchanged between the two men when Elie asks after his weapon and his old steed. You may remember that D'Artagnan had been requested by his father never to part with his horse, and nevertheless, as soon as he had arrived at Paris, he had sold it for three crowns. Aiol, more obedient and kinder-hearted, has kept Marchegai, but he cannot refrain from teasing his father. "Sire," he says, "never did I hear such a question. The white hauberk and helmet could not last; the shield and lance were lost while jousting; and Marchegai is dead and gone to his end. Long ago the dogs have eaten him in the ditch. He could run no longer, he was so old." When Elie heard this he nearly went mad: picking up a club, he rushed at Aiol, for he wished to kill him; and he said — but I forbear to quote his words. Only the sight of Marchegai fresh and fat after a long rest pacifies him.

Even more remarkable is the story of Bayard, the "good Gascon horse," as he is called in the French epic,

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Renaud de Montauban. He seems to have been bought from the Duke of Lorraine and given to Renaud on the day the latter was knighted. He is best known for his ability to carry a number of people; and all French children are familiar with pictures representing him with the four sons of Aymon upon his back. Much is also said about his speed. "Quicker than a blackbird, at the shortest leap he cleared thirty feet, and it seemed to those who were watching him that he must be flying. You could not see him move foot nor leg. So resounding was the blow of his hoof that it could be heard a league away." There is exaggeration in this description, and in the account of a race which he wins there is actual magic. Renaud, though not in favor at court, wishes to enter his horse in a race that is announced. To make this possible, the magician Maugis dyes Bayard whiter than a flower and makes Renaud appear like a fifteen-year-old boy. In addition Bayard's right fore foot is bandaged so that he will limp and appear altogether unpromising. The moment he appears, there are the usual shouts of derision. The race begins. Renaud, leaning over his horse's neck, says : " Bayard, we are going too slow. If the others arrive before us, we shall receive great blame, and you will be reproached as long as you live." Bayard, understanding Renaud, throws up his head. He comprehends his master as easily as a mother does her child. Dilating his nostrils and shaking his head, with outstretched neck he flies over the earth. In three arpents of ground he has

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passed so many that the swiftest steed holds himself to be slow. Naturally he wins the race, and a little later carries Renaud across the Seine as easily as though he were on land. An even better example of Bayard's human understanding and of the affection between him and his rider is a certain occasion when Renaud, in great trouble, comes to Bayard in the stable, puts his two arms about his neck, and laments. "Ah! Bayard, good horse, why can't you speak? You would have comforted me in my grief." Bayard paws the ground and acts as though he wished to be saddled. At other times it was his custom to leap about and play with Renaud, but now he hardly ventures to look at him, for he sees that he is in great sorrow.

Like Marchegai, he acts upon his own initiative. Like Marchegai, he wakes up his master on the approach of danger. "Bayard could not speak. He says neither 'yes' nor 'no.' But he raises his right foot, which is big and round, and he strikes Renaud's shield a great blow; from one end to the other he shatters it." On two different occasions, when Renaud is fighting with Ogier and Roland respectively, Bayard attacks the opponents' steeds. "When Bayard saw Roland lying on the ground, he threw his hind feet up into the air tempestuously. He struck Roland's horse on the left ear, and the animal fled terrified across the stream." Once, in a combat with a Saracen, the latter's steed attempted to run away. Bayard, noticing this, pursued it, seized it by the mane, and brought it back. The

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citizens of Bordeaux, hearing of this, with one accord, big and small, cried out: " Bayard took the horse and Renaud took the master." The greatest service Bayard ever rendered was during a great siege, when Renaud and his brothers suffered terribly from famine. For fourteen days, until relief came, the horse's blood, drawn from him every day, kept them alive.

We come now to the end of Bayard's career. Marchegai, sharing Aiol's prosperity, is honored and happy in his old age. Bayard, partaking of Renaud's hard fortunes, obtains sorrow and ill treatment as his lot. When peace is declared between Charlemagne and the rebellious house of Montauban, Renaud was forced to surrender his faithful companion. Charlemagne, only too well pleased to be able to wreak vengeance upon Bayard, had him thrown from a bridge with a stone collar about his neck to ensure his drowning. There was not a peer there but did weep for Bayard and censure the king. But Bayard did not die. He broke the stone and fled to the forest of Ardennes, where once a year, upon midsummer day, he can still be seen. The poet dismisses him with a few harsh words. " When he sees a man, he does not go up to him. No, he runs away like an evil spirit unwilling to serve God."

The next horse, Sharatz, comes from Bulgaria, and his exploits are described in the ballads about the national hero Marko Kralyevich. Marko is told by his mother that at the death of his father the latter's steed,

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a mare, fled to the seashore. Marko goes thither, finds the mare, and with it a three-year-old colt, upon whose back he leaps. He is carried about madly, even into the water, where he is nearly drowned. Once more on land, the colt bows down before Marko and asks him his name. On being told, he joyfully acknowledges the hero as his master. Marko then wishing to know where he can have him shod, the old mare recommends a certain smith who used to shoe her during her years of service. We have now come to the horse which can actually talk. When, for instance, Sharatz, like other epic horses, has to warn his master, he can tell him who is coming, and how many men are in the party. And when Marko is so depressed by the news that he weeps, Sharatz prophesies victory and assures him that he himself will kill a thousand men with his hoofs. Here is another example of his supernatural intelligence: one day, near the Danube, the horse begins to snort and paw the ground. "Come, come!" cried Marko, "why do you paw the ground like that? because I forgot to water you or gave you your fodder late? Beware! if I once strike you upon your temple, your eyes will certainly fly out of your head." "What ails you, dear master?" answers Sharatz. "I am angry because I look beyond the Danube to the Wallachian land, and I see your sister Magdalena, a prisoner of Ali Aga. She is weeping bitterly and calling for her brother." Marko swung himself into the saddle; before he was fairly seated, he was in the middle of the stream;

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before he was firm in the saddle, he was across the stream. Quickly he seized the beautiful Magdalena and raised her upon his little horse. Ali Aga saw Marko; but before he realized what had taken place, Marko was in the middle of the stream. Hardly had he started in pursuit, when Marko was on the other side of the Danube.

In addition to his ability to speak, Sharatz can fly. It so happens that one of Marko's dearest friends is killed by a Vila maiden. Marko embraces and kisses Sharatz and says to him: "Oh, thou, my right wing, take me to the Vila, and I will shoe you with silver and pure gold. I will cover you with silk to your knees, and the tassels will hang down to your hoofs. I will adorn your mane with seed pearls. You shall eat cakes and drink three-year-old wine." Sharatz answered: "Mount upon me quickly, for I see the Vila maid hastening, hiding behind the sun. Cover your eyes, that your head may not swim."

One of the bribes here is three-year-old wine. This may seem incongruous, but we find the same thing elsewhere. The Russian horses drink mead; the steeds of Hector were given sweet wine by Andromache, as he reminds them when he bids them serve him well. Still, it is a fact that, just as Marko drinks more wine than any other epic hero, so Sharatz surpasses other epic horses in this respect. Certainly, in all Homer you will not find a passage like the following. One day Marko rode forth to visit Philip the Magyar. Over the walls he leaped and entered the castle on horseback; with a

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blow of his little finger he knocked out seventy teeth from the strawberry mouth of Philip's wife. Then he went into the cool wine-room to drink, taking good care to station Sharatz at the door with a generous measure of wine. Philip came home, saw his disfigured, weeping wife, and went in pursuit of Marko; but enter the wine-room he could not. He raised his club and beat Sharatz; all in vain he beat and struck him. Sharatz heeded him not, but drank and drank.

Again: Marko, having heard of the beauty of Ros-sanda the fair, sister of Captain Leko, decided to go a-wooing. He put on his richest garments, went down to the courtyard, and made ready to start; but first he called for two buckets of wine. One he drank, and became red to the eyes. The other Sharatz drank, and became red to his ears. Then the red hero, mounted upon his red horse, rode forth.

Other acts of Sharatz, such as dancing at his master's request, walking lame, leaping castle walls, fighting horses, we may omit, and pass on to his death. Early one Sunday morning Marko was riding up Mount Urvina. As he climbed it, he began to stumble, and shed tears. Marko was greatly troubled. "What does this mean, Sharatz?" he said. "One hundred and fifty years we have been together. Never before have you stumbled, and now you stumble and weep. God knows, nothing good will come of this. Some one will lose his head, either you or I." This time Sharatz is dumb. A Vila maiden, calling to Marko, tells him that

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his last hour has come and that Sharatz weeps at the thought of parting from his old friend. "Part from me!" cries Marko. "Shall I give up my faithful steed that has borne me over many a long road and through many a dark place? Never while my head is upon my shoulders!" "No one will take Sharatz from you," says the Vila, "but the enemy who spares no living being will come for you, Marko. Look at your face in the spring, and you will see the face of a dead man." Marko looked and saw that he must surely die. Then he drew his sword, went towards his horse, and cut off his head, unwilling that he should fall into the hands of his enemies and have to serve them.

Let us now conclude with a heroic horse described in Tatar songs, particularly those which come from the Minussinsk district. In these he is sometimes the chief actor, and we almost have what might be called a horse epic. There is good reason for this, for the horse plays an even more important role in the life of the Siberian nomads than among European peoples. Not only is the Tatars' favorite drink fermented mare's milk, but their favorite meat is the flesh of the horse, and they make use of his hair and hide after his death. This seems quite utilitarian; but the Tatars also have a better opportunity to study him in a natural state than had the medieval Frenchmen. Radloff, who edited the Siberian songs, makes this statement: "The stallion is the ruler and protector of the herd. Should the latter be attacked

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by beasts of prey, he defends it. The mares form a circle, heads to the centre, and in the centre are the colts. The stallion remains outside and attacks the aggressor. He always vanquishes the wolf and sometimes the bear. He knows every member of the herd, and should any one happen to leave it, he drives it back. When the young stallions grow up and begin to crowd him, he tries to expel them from the herd by biting and kicking."

It is quite natural, then, that the Siberian epic horse should be as mighty as any Russian or Irish animal. He is even more superb than Cuchullin's steeds. He is as radiant as the sun and the moon, his mane and tail are golden. Fire flashes from his eyes; smoke, winds, and storms issue from his nostrils; his hot breath melts the bit, his iron hoof stops the arrow in its flight. Of course he can fly and speak with a human voice. Now for the story of one of these remarkable creatures. Nothing could be wilder or more fantastic; but one must bear in mind Schiefner's description of the conditions in which the story is told: the winter night, the wind whistling over the steppes, the men crouching about the fire, the little circle lit up by flickering flames, and all about it blackness as impenetrable as a wall.

Katai Khan, mounted on his forty-horned bull, carries off the two children of Ak Khan, and gives them with other children as a tribute to the old Fish Kiro Balak. Though, fortunately, not devoured, they are drowned, and their bodies are left on the shore. There they are found and buried by a certain Sadei Mirgan,

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who takes possession of their property, and, the more effectually to prevent their ever appearing again, stations guards about their grave. One day shepherds come to the usurper and tell him that a mare has just given birth to an extraordinary white colt. This is our hero, Sib; and the childhood of no human hero is more remarkable than his. Scarcely had the colt been born when it began to eat grass. It leaped back and forth six times over its mother's back, and three times did it swim in the waves. Sadei, foreseeing trouble, determined to kill it, and had it pursued by sixty men. For three days darkness covers the earth. When the obscurity departs, only the hoof prints of the colt can be seen, and it takes the pursuers half a day to traverse the space between those of the hind feet and those of the fore feet. With this start, the colt has no difficulty in returning home long before Sadei and his men. It now changes itself into a little six-year-old girl, takes seven bags of strong wine, goes to the grave, makes the guards drunk, and sings so sweetly that all the beasts of the forest and all the birds of the air come to listen to it. The guards are now drowsy, and go off to their tents to sleep. Then the colt leaps over the grave again, and becomes a seven-year-old boy. Pushing back the grave stone, he digs down sixty fathoms, takes out the bones of the children, puts them into a sack, places them on his back, and once more becomes a colt. Suddenly there is a tremendous uproar. The black earth totters, the mountains crash, the rocks split apart. This disturb-

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ance heralds the approach of Ak Khan's heroic steed. After six years' wanderings through twelve lands, he has discovered the water of life. He brings the children back to life, and then goes in search of his master's body. The colt now hears the trampling of Katai Khan's bull; it seizes the children, places them on its back, and runs off so rapidly that it escapes an arrow shot by the furious Katai. In its flight, it comes to the White Sea, where it finds an old friend of Ak Khan, Jebet Khan, whom it persuades to fight with Katai. Jebet is killed. A similar appeal is made to Alten Kus, with the same result. Over nine mountains the colt races, and finally it comes to one that towers so high into the clouds that even birds are unable to fly above it. The colt bows to the sun, then to the moon, and begs their help. Next it tells the boy to take a birch twig and beat it hard. The boy obeys, and the colt reaches the summit. Here there is a hot spring, out of which the boy drinks and falls into a deep and most untimely sleep, for Katai and the bull are following close behind. To wake the boy, the colt is obliged to give him a kick, which sends him seven fathoms from his sleeping-place. In the terrible fight which ensues, the boy pulls Katai off the bull and succeeds in throwing him to the ground. Seeing this, the bull is on the point of attacking him, when the colt picks up two swords and cuts him in half. Katai is killed; the boy drinks once more of the hot spring, sleeps seven days, and then wakes to find himself a hero and his colt a heroic steed.

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