

INTRODUCTION.

LIFE AND WORKS OF OVID.

Publius Ovīdīus Naso was born on the 20th of March (the second day of the 'Quinquatria'), 43 B.C., the year in which the battles fought against Antony under the walls of Modena proved fatal to Hirtius and Pansa, in which the second triumvirate was formed, and in which Cicero perished. The place of his nativity was Sulmo (Sulmone), a town in the cold moist hills of the Peligni, one of the Sabine clans, situated at a short distance to the S.E. of Corfinium, about ninety miles from Rome. His father was of an ancient equestrian family, and Publius was the second son, his elder brother being exactly twelve months his senior. They were both brought up at Rome, their education was superintended by the most distinguished masters, and at the usual period each assumed the manly gown. The elder, a youth of great promise, devoted himself with zeal to the study of eloquence, but his career was short, for he died in his twenty-first year.

Publius repaired to Athens for the purpose of finishing his studies ; at this or some subsequent period he visited, in the train of Macer, the gorgeous cities of Asia, and on his return home passed nearly a year in Sicily. From a very early period he had displayed a decided taste for poetical composition. He soon manifested a rooted aversion to the jarring contentions of the forum, and, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his father, gradually abandoned public life, and devoted himself exclusively to the cultivation of the muses. When a very young man he exercised the functions of triumvir, decemvir, centumvir, and judicial arbiter, but never attempted to rise to any of the higher offices of state, which would have entitled him to the rank and privileges of a senator.

He was married three times. His first wife, whom he wedded while still almost a boy, he describes as unworthy