

once mentioned, and through which he tells us it was his habit to stroll—and probably on the sunny side of it. They now say at Rome, that only the English residents and the dogs there, take that side of the street; but it seems to have best suited the Poet; for he speaks of himself as being “solibus aptum,” one who was fond of basking in the sun: like a true Epicurean as he was, he ever indulged too in the sunny side of life. There he is in his favourite walk, if you have imagination enough to see him—though there is nothing perhaps very remarkable either in his dress or his person. A short and rather stout figure, of middle age, but already grey-headed: with weak eyes and of not over robust health. I give his picture as he himself has drawn it. We may see him sauntering along the Via Sacra with a careless gait, noting those who pass to and from the Forum; dotting down in his mind each peculiarity of character he may chance to meet; to be shown up in his own happy light raillery and satire; and woe to the unlucky wight that happened to offend him, as he himself says:

“ At ille
Qui me commorit (melius non tangere clamo)
Flebit, et insignis totâ cantabitur urbe.”

Or as our own Pope has imitated the passage,

“ Whoe'er offends at some unlucky time,
Slides into verse and hitches in a rhyme;
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the sad burthen of some merry song.”

One such he has here picked up and hatched in verse, impaling him there for ever, as a naturalist might a curious specimen of butterfly. It was one of the insufferable bores of society, who followed him up and down this same street, torturing the Poet with his impertinent familiarity. But see, as he has at last shaken him off, who is that coming up to accost him? He is taller and of a larger frame and some few years older; but the difference is hardly perceptible. What a strikingly handsome face—soft almost as a woman's. He, too, has rather weak eyes—but his countenance is full of intelligence and expression. He is evidently a man of mark—for observe how all eyes are turned toward him. It is Virgil, the prince of Latin poets. There is a cordiality in the greeting of those firm friends, for such they were; but Virgil seems not to like the gaze of the crowd; and the two go off together to the Esquiline Mount, where Virgil's house was, near to the lately erected villa of Mæcenas, the warm friend of both. This villa seems to have been no less lofty than spacious. Horace, in reference to this, speaks of it as

“ Molem propinquam nubibus arduis.”

It was known also as the Tower of Mæcenas; or rather perhaps one part of it, higher than the rest, had obtained that distinction. Tiberius occupied it afterwards. It was from this eminence that Nero is said to have surveyed with savage delight the burning city. In these grounds of his noble patron, and near the tomb of Mæcenas himself, within a few short months after his death, Horace too found a grave: almost realizing the affectionate expression which a former illness of Mæcenas had called forth.

“ Ah! te mens si partem animæ rapit
Maturior vis, quid moror altera.”

“ My soul's best part once snatched away,
How could her other wish to stay.”

But neither the fame of this charming lyric poet, nor that of this great and munificent patron of letters, could preserve the inviolability of their tombs. Nero required the garden and grounds of Mæcenas for his own use; nor was it likely