

The Italian Renaissance and Popes of Aviz

the day and made it possible for him, in the seclusion of Vacluse, to pursue his studies of the great masters of Greek poetry and philosophy.

Petrarch also prevailed upon his friend Boccaccio to publish in Latin the Iliad and Odyssey. It was Leontius Pilatus who took charge of this work a little time after and thus began the great work of translating Greek authors which Pope Nicholas V. was later to bring to so successful an end.

But the works of the nature-loving Greeks would never have inspired in the heart and mind of Petrarch a love of the beauty of life around him—Hellenism was but a factor—were it not that his own beloved Provence revealed its charms to his eyes and filled his soul with poetic dreams. In his garden at Vacluse, among his trees and vines, he found the inspiration which Nature never refuses to the open and responsive heart, whether the votary at her altar be a Wordsworth, amid the lakes and cliffs and scenes of Cumberland; a Burns, treading the hillsides of his native Ayr, or a Whittier, dreaming amid his Berkshire hills.

Many historians do an injustice to the character of Petrarch on the moral side. Petrarch, in the moral gospel of his life and living, was far from being either a Poggio or a Machia-