

Clementina Isauri, Countess of Toulouse, are best known. Odes, sonnets, canzoni, were read; a violet wrought of gold was the prize; a poet who gained it three times earned the title Doctor. Similarly, the creation of poets-laureate was revived. Virgil, Horace, Statius, had been crowned with the laurel, when Rome was at its zenith; so the Italians copied their ancestors, and honoured Petrarch in like fashion. Frederick II of Sicily and his son Manfred "illustrious heroes," who "followed after elegance and scorned what was mean"—thus Dante writes of them—were responsible for much of this. Lastly, it is to be expected that *allegory*, arising from Neo-Platonism, had obtained fair foothold in Italy when Dante wrote.

DANTE made a dialect (Sicilian) a literary language (Italian). His Italian works, for he wrote also in Latin, are allegorical. The *Vita Nuova* or New Life, a poem consisting of sonnets and other troubadour forms of versification, expresses in a mystical way his love for Beatrice Portinari. Beatrice, having married another, died young. To assuage his grief, Dante "took to reading the book, not known to many students, of Boethius, wherewith, unhappy and in exile, he had comforted himself"; Dante judges that philosophy "was a thing supreme" and "imagined her in fashion like a gentle lady." The result was that he wrote his *Convito* or Banquet (Italian prose), wherein Beatrice symbolizes philosophy. Then follows the *Divina Commedia*, or Divine Comedy, called a comedy because its ending is happy. It consists of three parts, the Inferno, the Purgatorio, the Paradiso. In the Inferno, Virgil guides Dante, through Hell, whose lowest depth reaches to earth's centre. The choice of Virgil shows the emergence of the classics from the Dark Ages. In the Purgatorio, Dante ascends the mount, of Purgatory, situated in the earth, exactly opposite Hell. In the Paradiso, Dante visits the planets which were made to revolve around the earth, and finally reaches Heaven, where Beatrice dwells. Beatrice, personal or symbolic, runs through all Dante's work from the *Vita Nuova* to the end of the Divine Comedy. The Divine Comedy contains *allegory* of a very deep character, philosophy—Greek, Latin and Arabian. Its aim is as much political as religious; Italy, distracted with factions, and especially Florence, poor Florence, are to take warning from the fate of corrupt Popes, priests, warriors and statesmen. FRANCESCO PETRARCH, born at Arezzo, 1304, expressed in a mysti-