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(1274), Albert the Great (1280), and Duns Scotus (1308). It will be remembered that Conradin, the last of the Hohenstaufen, perished on the block in 1268, and the "Babylonish Captivity," the exile of the Popes at Avignon, began in 1305.

The life of Dante is naturally divided into three periods: 1. To the time of his banishment (1302); 2. To the death of the Emperor Henry VII. (1313); 3. To his own death at Ravenna (1321).

Dante was descended from a family originally obscure. His great-grandfather, Cacciaguida, was a Crusader and was knighted. He married one of the Alighieri, from whom Dante derived his surname, which assumed the form of Alighieri. His Christian name was Durante, which was contracted into Dante.

In tracing the history and character of men it is always difficult to determine how much belongs to nature, to circumstances, to education. Dante was evidently a mixture of the melancholic and choleric temperament and both were probably brought out by the sufferings of his life. Of all this we have abundant evidence in his works.

As regards his appearance, Boccaccio says, "Our poet was of middle stature, and in his advancing years stooped somewhat as he walked, his demeanor was grave and composed; his dress at that time simple and dignified, as became his age; his face was oval, his eyes large rather than small, his under lip somewhat prominent, his complexion was dark, his beard and hair thick, black and curly; his whole aspect was earnest and thoughtful." There are two portraits of almost certain authority, the one a fresco in the Bargello by Giotto, the other a bust from a mask taken after death. Of the former picture Mr. Norton remarks: "It is the same face with that of the mask, but the one is the face of a youth with all triumphal splendor on its brow, the other of a man burdened with the dust and injury of age."

With regard to the natural gifts of Dante, Boccaccio remarks: "This poet was endowed with wondrous capacity, with a most retentive memory, and with a perspicacious intellect. He was also gifted with the loftiest genius and with subtle inventiveness. He likewise took delight in being solitary and away from society, so that his contemplations might not be interrupted."

With regard to his education we have no trustworthy information. Although he visited various universities during the time of his exile, it is doubtful if he ever left Florence in his youth. He had no knowledge of Greek, but was thoroughly familiar with all Latin literature. He knew Virgil's *Æneid* by heart and acquainted with Horace, Ovid and Statius.

There is a tolerably general agreement on the subject of Dante's character. Villani remarks: "This Dante, by reason of his learning, was not presumptuous, haughty, and scornful, and, like most philosophers who are never afflicted, he did not know how to converse with the times, but never unless greatly stirred and with good reason." It is, however to his immortal work that we must refer if we would understand the character of Dante, for here, he has portrayed his character for all posterity. From this work Hettinger has drawn the

following admirable summary:—"He is bold, but restrained by duty; proud but frank, and without dissimulation; passionate and implacable in his hatred of evil, but scorning all mean revenge; in his speech, thoughtful, convincing and truthful. Although he smiles at the follies of mankind, yet he mourns over the sufferings which they entail. He respects all authority, and is full of reverence for the Church. He craves pardon for the boldness of his speech, although its sole aim is the public good. Flattery he abhors, and admires constancy in suffering, even when found among the lost souls. Unwearied in study, he despises riches and whilst ambitious of fame is ever ready to acknowledge his faults. Despising the caprices of fortune, he is calm amid adversity. He delights in enlarging his knowledge of men and things, although he values old friends beyond all others. Everywhere he searches out all that is great and elevated in human nature, and does it homage; he fears nothing so much as the censure of noble minds. He esteems a dignified demeanor in voice, look and manner. To his native city he clings with an unchanging affection which no wrongs can efface; to his friends he is bound by faithful love, to his benefactors by undying gratitude. As a pious Catholic he constantly meditates on death; he is fervent in prayer, and is devout to the ever blessed Virgin, St. Lucy and the saints." There can be no doubt that Hettinger is right, and that Rossetti was wrong when he represented Dante as an unbeliever in the ecclesiastical order of his time. Dante, when attacking one of the popes, makes a clear distinction between the chair and its occupant.

The great event in Dante's life was his meeting with Beatrice Portinari first in his ninth year, when she was eight years old, and again when she was eighteen, at which time she seems to have married Simon de' Bardi. She died at the age of twenty-four. But this very important subject will be considered more fully under the *Vita Nuova*.

Between 1291 and 1296 Dante married Gemma Donati, who belonged to a powerful family of the Guelf faction. They had several children, some say five, some seven, and there is documentary evidence of two sons and two daughters. Many stories have been told respecting the relations between Dante and his family. All that is really known is the following:—His wife remained at Florence after Dante's banishment, and it is uncertain if he ever met her again. We do not find that Dante ever refers to her. Two sons were with him at Ravenna. All beyond this seems to be of the nature of guesses or inferences.

Dante's civic life began in 1295. In 1300 he was elected one of the six Priors of the city, who were chosen every two months. He belonged to a Guelf family, and this party was generally dominant in Florence. But the violence of the Guelfs and their opposition to what he regarded as the legitimate power of the Emperor drove the poet into the ranks of the Ghibbelines, which led to his banishment from Florence. He was accused of several fictitious crimes, fined a sum of 500,000 small florins. If this were not paid in three days his goods were to be confiscated. If it were paid, he was to remain for two years outside Tuscany, and to be disqualified for office. Not paying, he was, forty days afterwards, pronounced guilty of contumacy and condemned to be burnt alive, if he came back.

Dante tells us in the *Convito* how bitterly he resented the injustice of his countrymen, whilst he retained all his love for Florence. Once (1304) he sought restoration, in vain, to Florence by arms. But dissensions broke out in the party, and after that he became a party by himself. How hard was the poet's life of exile, poverty and partial dependence, we may judge from hints in the *Commedia*. For example:

"Thou shalt prove
How salt the savor is of others' bread;
How hard the passage, to descend and climb
By others' stairs."

It is most difficult to trace the wanderings of the exile during these weary years. From time to time he visited the Della Scala (or Scaliger) family at Verona. There were three brothers, who ruled in succession, Bartolommeo, Alboni and Cane, known as Can Grande. The first and third were noble and generous. The second made him feel the misery of dependence. It is tolerably certain that he studied at several universities, among them Bologna and Paris, at which, doubtless, he obtained his mastery of theology. In 1306 he was in Padua, in 1307 at Lunigiana. In 1310, while Dante was probably at Paris, occurred the descent of the Emperor into Italy. From this event Dante entertained great hopes of the emancipation of the Italian cities from the demagogues; but the Emperor met with much opposition, and in 1313 he died, not without suspicion of poison. Further discussion of Dante's political views will come up under the treatise *De Monarchia*. The death of the Emperor put an end to Dante's hope for Italy.

On entering upon the third period of Dante's life, something must be said respecting his spiritual history. It is difficult to assign the successive experiences of his life to definite periods of time. We know tolerably well of three phases. First, a period of doubt and difficulty, partly brought on by adversity; secondly, a period of wrath and indignation, which never quite had an end, and thirdly, a period of faith and comparative harmony. Dante is very frank in speaking of his faults and sins, and false inferences have been drawn. He never could have been a licentious man; but he confesses to luxury and even to envy, and to a misuse of his gifts, through forgetfulness of the Giver, whilst the greatest of all his sins he says was pride. In 1314 he was in Pisa and Lucca, and in 1316 he took up his abode permanently at Ravenna with Count Guido Novello da Polenta, although from time to time he seems to have paid visits to Can Grande at Verona. Both of these men were worthy of the poet's friendship and expected nothing unworthy of him. About the same time Dante and other exiles were offered the opportunity of returning to Florence, but on terms so disgraceful that they were indignantly rejected by him. It was at Ravenna that the great work of his life was brought to perfection, in sorrow and suffering. It had been begun, in idea, at least, when he was 35; it was completed just before his death.

In 1321 he was sent on an embassy to Venice. On his return he was seized with a grave malady and died. "Measured by man's standard, he was unfortunate from his youth upwards . . . an exile, poor and homeless, he wandered in foreign lands, but he was never untrue to himself; he never lost faith in his ideal, nor was false to his principles; nor did he ever cease to love and to labor for his country, for knowledge, for freedom and religion."