

who, across nineteen centuries, chats to us easily, consoles, advises, amuses, whose philosophy is never cumbrous, whose learning is never pedantic, whose courtly jokes are always in season. We yield to a fascination which we can scarcely account for, but which remains constant amidst many changes.

One charm about him is that he is eminently a man of the world--a man of the world and a gentleman; and what makes this so strange is that his birth was quite ignoble. His father had been a slave. Horace tells us so himself. He had been a slave who was given his freedom, and who devoted his life to the education of this only child. Horace was still a youth when he took leave of the good father whom he was never again to see, and started for Athens to complete his education at its academy. It is hard to realize these times and to regard the Greek city as a kind of Oxford or Cambridge. Cicero had a son there, who was perhaps a companion of young Flaccus, and we can fancy the excitement that must have been produced amongst the Roman students when the messenger came in with the tidings of the assassination of Julius Caesar.

There were plenty of young Republicans at Athens, and the students joined the crowd who crowned the statues of Brutus and Cassius with garlands. How Horace in his early manhood espoused the Republican cause, and fought at the battle of Philippi, and ran away, leaving his shield ingloriously behind, he has himself told us. The party with whom he sided was utterly beaten, and he was reduced to poverty, which (he says) drove him to write. But he had made good friends; even Virgil, who was five years older than he, came to his aid, and another poet, named Varius, whose works have perished forever. The period of want did not last long. One day he was introduced to Mæcenas. With a delightful brevity and simplicity he has described the interview. "The day I came to see you," he says in one of the Satires addressed to his patron, "I spoke but little, and that nervously; silent shame stopped me from saying more. I told no tale of an illustrious father, but the plain truth about myself. You answered 'but little'; then nine months afterwards you sent for me again, and bid me join the number of your 'friends.' From that time poverty was unknown. He lived an easy, happy, careless life, rich in the possession of many friendships, untouched by political change, hospitable, kindly and not avaricious. With that patron, whose kindness had so opportunely rescued him from want, his relations remained always the same,—"Remember Flaccus," said Mæcenas on his death bed to the Emperor; "remember Flaccus as you would myself." The solemn bequest was not forgotten, but the poet did not long survive his patron. His last illness came so suddenly upon him

that he had not time to make his will. Witnesses were called in, and the poet had just force left to name the Emperor as his heir. He died in his fifty-seventh year, and was buried at the end of the Esquiline Hill, close to the tomb of Mæcenas.

His life was thus not eventful, and most of what we know about it, we know from himself. No small part of the charm of his writings is due to their extremely personal nature. Like Montaigne, he is confidential, even egotistical, without ever being a bore. The Satires and Epistles are literally independent of time. Omitting a very few local allusions, they remain models of what they are intended to be. Take the Fourth Satire of the Second Book, it might have been written yesterday. The poet walking through the street meets a friend who is hurrying on so quickly that he cannot stop a minute. But Horace detains him, and asks him where he has been; Catius replies that he has just heard a lecture on cookery, and that he is trying now to learn them off by heart; he fears lest he may forget them. Horace proposes that he should fix them in his memory by rehearsing them then and there, and Catius accordingly commences:—"Let no ordinary man lightly take to himself the science of dinner-parties unless he has first duly considered the delicate question of taste." We have only to change the scene from Rome to Montreal, and fancy the words spoken outside our Cooking School. "Some 'men's genius,' says Catius, 'is poor, only equal to the invention of new pastry; whereas it is worth while thoroughly to master the qualities of compound sauces.'" So the Satire runs on, till Horace begs that he may be taken to see this lecturer, that he may note the bearing of the great man, and "quaff thoughts of the wisdom of such a blessed life."

Another notable characteristic of the poet is his appreciation of the country. He has the art of a landscape painter in describing a landscape. There always comes some happy, forcible adjective that puts the scene locally and individually before you. He turns away from the overgrown city, and takes his holiday amongst the vines and olive trees of the Sabine farm. Few letters have ever been penned more delightful than that in which the poet, writing to his country steward, complains of town life, and longs to be back amongst the fields and the woods. These Epistles have a wonderful ease and simplicity. They read as if they were mere letters and not literary productions. Pope imitated Horace, but the labor of the file is to be traced on every polished line, and his Satires smell of midnight oil. Horace is always simple and natural. His friend Bullatius is travelling in Iona. Was there ever such a gossiping, pleasant letter written by a stay-at-home to some acquaintance wandering about in his travels? He