

He was unfitted by his irritable feelings for a residence at court; and annoyed by some fancied coolness on the part of his noble patrons, he withdrew to the French capital, which was during the thirteenth century more celebrated than any other city in the world for its learning and philosophy.

The constant excitement, however, and the restless feeling of being without a home, had now almost worn him out, and he ardently wished for some place where he might repose in quiet, and pursue undisturbed the studies to which he now devoted himself. He had resigned all hope of rescuing Florence from its state of degradation, and his mind turned with loathing from further political excitement. He was therefore well prepared to accept the invitation he now received from Guido Palenta, Lord of Ravenna, a nobleman of distinguished worth, who had truly sympathized with the sufferings of Dante, and who feared his unsettled life would extinguish the torch which had lighted up so brilliantly the Egyptian darkness of Italian literature. Here at last in the beautiful city of Ravenna, soothed by the kindness of his friend and patron, did Dante find that peace he had so long sought, and his freed mind poured itself forth in psalms and penitential hymns, which still remain as monuments of his piety, and beautiful specimens of his poetical taste.

But Dante could not long enjoy this state of repose. Guido became involved in a war with the Venitians, which he found so injurious to his state, that he determined to negotiate if possible with that haughty republic, and knowing the experience of his guest in these matters, he solicited him to undertake the embassy. Reluctantly did Dante come forth once more on the arena of public life; but he could not refuse Guido's request, and accordingly with a suitable retinue proceeded to Venice; but so determined was the opposition of the Venitians to Ravenna, that they would not even admit the ambassador to an audience, and he was obliged to return home with the object of his mission unaccomplished. No blame attached to him, but the mortification sank deep into his lacerated and susceptible heart, and from this time an unconquerable sadness oppressed him, which so wore upon his frame, debilitated by previous suffering, that in September 1320, he died.

His death was bitterly lamented by Guido and all Ravenna, and they showed their love and respect for him by the honors which were rendered to him. The coarse Franciscan robe which he had worn for some time, was replaced by rich garments, suitable to his birth and genius, and

the trappings of the funeral were as gorgeous as if he himself had been the lord of the land rather than a travelling exile. Guido pronounced an eulogy over him, and he was laid in his long rest in the Franciscan church at Ravenna. Cardinal Bernbo a few years after, erected a splendid monument to his memory, a tribute scarcely needed; for the writings of Duranti Alghieri will remain a fitting monument to his genius long after the costly pile reared by his friend shall have been destroyed by the elements.

It was nearly a century before Italy was aroused to a sense of the greatness of Dante's genius, and the vast debt she owed to him for exhuming the Muse who, covered by the lava of ages, was forgotten and unsought even in the asylum to which she had fled when exiled from her native Greece. But though tardily accomplished, the *amende honorable* was at length made to Dante's memory, and the fifteenth century saw Florence humbly begging for his hallowed remains, that they might rest in his much loved birth soil, and that she might atone to the honored dead for the neglect of the exiled and discarded living. But vain was the petition! Ravenna valued too highly the relics of the poet, and Duranti's body was permitted that repose which his living spirit so vainly sought. The disappointed Florentines were obliged to content themselves with causing his portrait, painted by Giotto, to be hung, with a suitable inscription, in a public place; and they instituted a professorship to explain the divine mysteries of the *Commedia*, the chair of which was filled first by Boccaccio, then successively by the most learned men of Florence. Bologna, Pisa, Venice, and other towns soon followed the example of Florence, and all Italy resounded with the name of Dante, the creator of their poetical language, and the father of their poetry.

## THE STATUARY.

A SONNET.

BY E. W. W. G. HOUSEAL.

This cannot surely be a form of stone,  
The mere production of my feeble art!  
From off the pedestal, she soon will start,  
And softly whisper, "I am still thine own"—  
But no, alas! Herself, herself I've known,  
But Death, he smote her with unsparing dart,  
And I am now condemned to live apart—  
Weeping that on my birth, the sun e'er shone!  
Oh! could I drink oblivion in the wave,  
Soon would I dare the tempest and the storm,  
And leap yon rock, 'gainst which the billows roar!  
But on that rock, her name I would engrave—  
Place on its pinnacle, this angel form,  
Where all might see, and seeing all adore.