

## HORACE—BOOK IV., ODE 4.

[THIS noble Ode, if composed, as some suppose, at the instance of Augustus, manifests nothing of the feebleness which so often characterizes poems written to order. Cæsar is only mentioned in it as the father of Drusus by adoption. Drusus and Tiberius were sons of Livia and Claudius Nero, and step-sons of Augustus, who educated them, and declared them heirs to the throne. When the Vindelici, a powerful German tribe, were overthrown by Drusus (B.C. 15), he was only twenty-three years of age. Hence, in the two fine similes with which this poem commences, he is compared to the young eagle and the lion cub, *jam lacte depulsum* and the Barbarian troops are described as *catervæ consiliis juvenis revictæ*. In lines full of beauty and philosophic thought, Horace traces back the high qualities of Drusus to those of his ancestors who, nearly two hundred years before, had delivered Italy from the Punic invasion by the defeat and death of Hasdrubal on the Metaurus, as he led a large army to the relief of his brother Hannibal. After describing the restoration of religion and social order subsequent to that victory, he records the despairing speech of Hannibal to his soldiers when about to retreat from Italy for the defence of Carthage. There is a stronger dramatic element in Horace than perhaps in any other lyric poet. He saw the dramatic propriety of making Hannibal extenuate his own defeat by extolling the invincible prowess of the Romans. Horace, poet and courtier, was guided by a true instinct in the composition of the great Carthaginian's speech. He preserved the dramatic unity of the poem, and gratified the Roman people by putting the eulogy of Roman valour into the mouth of the first soldier of the age and the most successful enemy of Rome. Four lines which occur in the fifth and sixth quatrains of the original are omitted from this translation. Franke and other able commentators believe them to be an interpolation. Others—as the late Lord Lytton—think that they were indeed written by Horace, but that they are a light and satirical allusion to some ephemeral absurdity the memory of which has not survived. However this may be, they are inconsistent with the stately grandeur of the Ode, and are unintelligible to the modern reader.]

## QUALEM MINISTRUM.

## I.

LIKE the fierce bird, with thunder-laden wing,  
That bore to Jove his gold-haired Ganymed,  
And from the Monarch dread  
Of gods and men obtained supreme dominion  
O'er all that fly;—lured by the breath of Spring.  
A fledgeling first, he spreads his fluttering pinion;  
Soon, fired by youth, impelled by inborn might,  
Through cloudless skies he wings his daring flight;  
He soars, he swoops, and on the fold descends;  
Or, hungry for the fight,  
With sanguine beak the writhing dragon rends:—

## II.

Or, as the Lion, from his tawny dam  
Late weaned, on some glad mead describes  
The roe-deer, or the unsuspecting lamb  
Contented grazing;—on, with flashing eyes,  
And fangs new-fleshed, he bounds;—the victim dies:

## III.

So Drusus swooping from the Rhetian snows  
Smote the Vindelici; nor helm, nor sword,  
Nor Amazonian battleaxe could ward  
From Roman vengeance Rome's barbaric foes;  
Victors in every field till now  
Suppliant before a Roman youth they bow.  
They know at last what hearts undaunted, fed  
Beneath the roof of an auspicious home,  
What Nero's sons, by Cæsar bred  
With all a father's love, can do for Rome.

## IV.

The strong and good beget the brave and true;  
Deep in the cavern of the infant's breast  
The father's nature lurks, and lives anew:  
The steer, the generous steed, inherit  
Parental beauty, strength, unconquered spirit:  
The stock-dove springs not from the Eagle's nest.

## V.

But inborn virtue still requires  
Culture to shape what Nature's self inspires;  
Leave it unformed, unaided, guilt and shame  
Shall stain the noblest heart, the most illustrious name.

## VI.

How deep the debt your fathers owed,  
O Rome! to Nero's race, to Nero's blood!  
Witness Metaurus' purple flood;  
Witness that day when through the clouds of night  
Refulgent burst, a living light,  
That glorious Sun which smiled to see  
A grateful Nation's jubilee,—  
For Hasdrubal lies low, and Rome again is free!

## VII.

Through the fair fields of Italy once more  
The people grew: the voice of toil was heard:  
And where the Punic conqueror  
So long o'er smoking plains his war-horse spurred,  
Fierce as the flame that wraps the forest tress,  
Or storms careering o'er Sicilian seas,  
Once more the Nation's heart awakened stirred,  
And in the desecrated fane  
Adoring Rome beheld her banished Gods again.

## VIII.

Then spake perfidious Hannibal,—  
"Unwarlike deer, the wolf's predestined food,  
We seek a foe 'twere triumph to elude,  
That race heroic which of yore  
Their Gods, their babes, their aged fathers bore  
From Ilion's burning wall  
Through Tuscan billows to Ausonia's shore:  
So the broad oak that spreads its dusky shade  
On Algidus, shorn by the woodman's knife,  
Wounded and lopped, bourgeois again to life,  
And draws, refresht, new vigour from the blade.

## IX.

Great Nation, fierce as Hydra when she sprung  
Severed yet scathless, full on Hercules!  
Great Roman people strong  
As Colchian monsters, Theban prodigies!  
Plunge them 'neath ocean's lowest depths,—they rise  
More bright, more glorious: fell them to the Earth,—  
They start to life, the vanquished victor dies;  
And Roman dames for aye blazon their husbands' worth.

## X.

Tidings of victory  
I send no more. I send a wailing cry:—  
Our Punic name, our hope, our fortune, all  
Have died with Hasdrubal."

## XI.

Valiant and wise, 'neath Jove's benignant care,  
What man can do the Claudian race shall dare;  
They, too, with counsel sage shall staunch the wounds of war.

—Stephen E. de Vere, in the Spectator.

## THE TIME IT TAKES TO THINK.

WE can determine the interval between the production of some external change which excites mental processes and a movement made after these processes have taken place. Thus, if people join hands in a circle, and one of them, A, presses the hand of his neighbour, B, and he as soon as possible afterward the hand of C, and so on round and round, the second pressure will be felt by each of the persons at an interval after the first, the time depending on the number of people in the circle. After the hand of one of the persons has been pressed an interval, very nearly constant in length, passes before he can press the hand of his neighbour. This interval, which we may call the reaction time, is made up of a number of factors. A period elapses before the pressure is changed into a nervous message or impulse. This time is very short in the case of touch; but light working on the retina seems to effect chemical changes in it, and these take up some little time, probably about 1-50 second. After a nervous impulse has been generated it moves along the nerve and spinal cord to the brain, not travelling with immense rapidity like light, but at the rate of an express train. In the brain it must move on to a centre having to do with sensation, where changes are brought about through which a further impulse is sent on to a centre having to do with motion, and a motor impulse having been prepared there is sent down to the hand. Another pause, 1-200 to 1-100 second, now occurs, while the muscle is being excited, after which the fingers are contracted and the reaction is complete. The entire time required is usually from 1-10 to 1-5 second. The reaction varies in length with different individuals and for the several senses, but as long as the conditions remain the same the times are very constant, only varying a few thousandths of a second from each other. One may wonder how it is possible to measure such short times and with such great accuracy. It would not be easy if we had not the aid of electricity, but when it is called to mind that a movement made in London is almost instantaneously registered in Edinburgh it will not seem inconceivable that we can record to the thousandth of a second the instant a sense stimulus is produced and the instant a movement is made. The time passing between these two events can be measured by letting a tuning fork write on a revolving drum. The tuning fork can be regulated to vibrate with great exactness, say 500 times a second; it writes a wavy line on the drum, each undulation long enough to be divided into 20 equal parts, and thus time can be measured to the ten-thousandth of a second.—*The Nineteenth Century*.