

kept his mind active with politics or his literary pursuits.

But he was not happy, and his friends, deeming that marriage would be the most effectual cure for disappointed affection, persuaded him to receive a wife at their hands; an undertaking compared by Boccaccio to that of "a physician who should endeavour to cure an acute fever by fire, or an ague by immersion in snow or ice, or to refresh any one sick or feeble by carrying him from the sweet air of Italy to the burning heats of Lybia or the eternal gloom of Mount Rhadape; for certainly," says he, "no one else would ever have conceived the notion of curing amorous tribulations with a wife!"

On this homeopathic principle Dante married Gemma di Monetto di Donati, a woman of high birth and fortune, and one who would improve and strengthen his political connexions; but her jealous and imperious temper kept him constantly unhappy.

His heart was devoted to the memory of Beatrice, and he could not give that love which Gemma herself yielded, and which her heart craved. This early sowed the seeds of discord between them, and they reaped a whirlwind of unhappiness which blighted their lives, destroyed all harmony and domestic comfort, and made Dante an alien from home and country, and so embittered his existence that even the sweet bonds of parent and child lost their power over him, and he became a neglectful and unloving father. But he suffered less from this cause, from the active occupation of his mind in the affairs of the republic. It is reported that he was sent on fourteen embassies, and in all met with distinguished success.

But unfortunately for Dante's political prospects an under current of discord and faction was at work, which soon welled, destroying the delusive peace which had rested for a short time upon Florence. New difficulties broke out between the Neri and Bianchi; the hatchet was unburied, and daily aggressions were committed by each party. Dante, whose superiority of intellect placed him at the head of the Bianchi, was deputed to Pope Boniface to implore his aid in their cause; but the pontiff secretly favored the Neri, and though he received Dante kindly, and promised him his influence, it was only to lull his suspicions, and to transfer the power to his own hands. 'This it was that gave Dante his hatred of the priests, and excited him to the burning satire against them all, the pope and cardinals especially, which is found in his "*Commedia*."

"The sentence of banishment was soon pro-

nounced upon six hundred of the Bianchi, and to that of Dante was added a fine of eight thousand livres, and in default of payment his estates and goods were confiscated, on the trivial excuse of mismanagement of public money; but the high name which he bore for public integrity refutes the charge. This severe sentence was pronounced on the twenty-seventh January, 1302, and on the tenth March in the same year, it was repeated, with the addition that if he was found within the territories of Florence he should be burnt alive. What a disgrace to the republic was this act, which from political motives alone prescribed the noblest ornament of the age, and banished the poet and patriot from his country! Not all the statues, paintings, and inscriptions, which were afterwards offered to his memory, could atone for this injury, which was not so much a disgrace to Dante as to the country, which, blinded by prejudice, could not appreciate him.

From this time Dante, an exile from his beloved Florence, was a wanderer over Italy, and none of his chroniclers have been able to trace the exact course of his various pilgrimages. His first sojourn, however, was at Arezzo, where a party of the Bianchi had fortified themselves. Here they formed the plans which resulted in the sudden attack upon Florence, which took place the very night Petrarch was born. Their hopes of success were very sanguine, but they were totally discomfited, and with this failure Dante lost all the little hope he had nourished of being restored to his home. While at Arezzo he formed an intimacy with a nobleman of great merit, whose friendship cheered and solaced him under his misfortunes. After wandering about for two or three years, now at Padua then at Luvigiani, where he was kindly received by the Marquis Morello Malaspina, he went to Gubbio, and there tradition reports that in the convent of St. Croce, near that place, he composed most of his poems. His chamber is even now shown, and a marble bust, with a suitable inscription, has been placed to commemorate the spot.

Some portion of his "*Commedia*" was composed in Florence, and it is said his wife rescued with difficulty seven cantos from the populace when they pillaged his house, and sent them to him while he was with the Marquis Malaspina. After leaving Gubbio he went to Verona, to which place he was attracted by the kindness of Francesco and Albornoz Scaligori, who jointly exercised the sovereign authority. They were patrons of all literary merit, and felt a peculiar sympathy for Dante's distressed state; but although honored by them, his restless spirit would not be content.