The most learned Italians of the fifteenth century have confessed and applauded the restoration of Greek literature, after a long oblivion of many hundred years. [85] Yet in that country, and beyond the Alps, some names are quoted; some profound scholars, who in the darker ages were honorably distinguished by their knowledge of the Greek tongue; and national vanity has been loud in the praise of such rare examples of erudition. Without scrutinizing the merit of individuals, truth must observe, that their science is without a cause, and without an effect; that it was easy for them to satisfy themselves and their more ignorant contemporaries; and that the idiom, which they had so marvellously acquired was transcribed in few manuscripts, and was not taught in any university of the West. In a corner of Italy, it faintly existed as the popular, or at least as the ecclesiastical dialect. [86] The first impression of the Doric and Ionic colonies has never been completely erased: the Calabrian churches were long attached to the throne of Constantinople: and the monks of St. Basil pursued their studies in Mount Athos and the schools of the East. Calabria was the native country of Barlaam, who has already appeared as a sectary and an ambassador; and Barlaam was the first who revived, beyond the Alps, the memory, or at least the writings, of Homer. [87] He is described, by Petrarch and Boccace, [88] as a man of diminutive stature, though truly great in the measure of learning and genius; of a piercing discernment, though of a slow and painful elocution. For many ages (as they affirm) Greece had not produced his equal in the knowledge of history, grammar, and

philosophy; and his merit was celebrated in the attestations of the princes and doctors of Constantinople. One of these attestations is still extant; and the emperor Cantacuzene, the protector of his adversaries, is forced to allow, that Euclid, Aristotle, and Plato, were familiar to that profound and subtle logician. [89] In the court of Avignon, he formed an intimate connection with Petrarch, [90] the first of the Latin scholars; and the desire of mutual instruction was the principle of their literary commerce. The Tuscan applied himself with eager curiosity and assiduous diligence to the study of the Greek language; and in a laborious struggle with the dryness and difficulty of the first rudiments, he began to reach the sense, and to feel the spirit, of poets and philosophers, whose minds were congenial to his own. But he was soon deprived of the society and lessons of this useful assistant: Barlaam relinquished his fruitless embassy; and, on his return to Greece, he rashly provoked the swarms of fanatic monks, by attempting to substitute the light of reason to that of their navel. After a separation of three years, the two friends again met in the court of Naples: but the generous pupil renounced the fairest occasion of improvement; and by his recommendation Barlaam was finally settled in a small bishopric of his native Calabria. [91] The manifold avocations of Petrarch, love and friendship, his various correspondence and frequent journeys, the Roman laurel, and his elaborate compositions in prose and verse, in Latin and Italian, diverted him from a foreign idiom; and as he advanced in life, the attainment of the Greek language was the object of his wishes rather than of his hopes. When he was about fifty years of age, a Byzantine ambassador, his friend, and a master of both tongues,

presented him with a copy of Homer; and the answer of Petrarch is at one expressive of his eloquence, gratitude, and regret. After celebrating the generosity of the donor, and the value of a gift more precious in his estimation than gold or rubies, he thus proceeds: "Your present of the genuine and original text of the divine poet, the fountain of all inventions, is worthy of yourself and of me: you have fulfilled your promise, and satisfied my desires. Yet your liberality is still imperfect: with Homer you should have given me yourself; a guide, who could lead me into the fields of light, and disclose to my wondering eyes the spacious miracles of the Iliad and Odyssey. But, alas! Homer is dumb, or I am deaf; nor is it in my power to enjoy the beauty which I possess. I have seated him by the side of Plato, the prince of poets near the prince of philosophers; and I glory in the sight of my illustrious guests. Of their immortal writings, whatever had been translated into the Latin idiom, I had already acquired; but, if there be no profit, there is some pleasure, in beholding these venerable Greeks in their proper and national habit. I am delighted with the aspect of Homer; and as often as I embrace the silent volume, I exclaim with a sigh, Illustrious bard! with what pleasure should I listen to thy song, if my sense of hearing were not obstructed and lost by the death of one friend, and in the much-lamented absence of another. Nor do I yet despair; and the example of Cato suggests some comfort and hope, since it was in the last period of age that he attained the knowledge of the Greek letters." [92]

[Footnote 85: Of those writers who professedly treat of the restoration

of the Greek learning in Italy, the two principal are Hodius, Dr. Humphrey Hody, (de Græcis Illustribus, Linguæ Græcæ Literarumque humaniorum Instauratoribus; Londini, 1742, in large octavo,) and Tiraboschi, (Istoria della Letteratura Italiana, tom. v. p. 364--377, tom. vii. p. 112--143.) The Oxford professor is a laborious scholar, but the librarian of Modena enjoys the superiority of a modern and national historian.]

[Footnote 86: In Calabria quæ olim magna Græcia dicebatur, coloniis Græcis repleta, remansit quædam linguæ veteris, cognitio, (Hodius, p. 2.) If it were eradicated by the Romans, it was revived and perpetuated by the monks of St. Basil, who possessed seven convents at Rossano alone, (Giannone, Istoria di Napoli, tom. i. p. 520.)]

[Footnote 87: Ii Barbari (says Petrarch, the French and Germans) vix, non dicam libros sed nomen Homeri audiverunt. Perhaps, in that respect, the xiiith century was less happy than the age of Charlemagne.]

[Footnote 88: See the character of Barlaam, in Boccace de Genealog. Deorum, l. xv. c. 6.]

[Footnote 89: Cantacuzen. l. ii. c. 36.]

[Footnote 90: For the connection of Petrarch and Barlaam, and the two interviews at Avignon in 1339, and at Naples in 1342, see the excellent Mémoires sur la Vie de Pétrarque, tom. i. p. 406--410, tom. ii. p.

74--77.]

[Footnote 91: The bishopric to which Barlaam retired, was the old Locri, in the middle ages. Scta. Cyriaca, and by corruption Hieracium, Gerace, (Dissert. Chorographica Italiæ Medii Ævi, p. 312.) The dives opum of the Norman times soon lapsed into poverty, since even the church was poor: yet the town still contains 3000 inhabitants, (Swinburne, p. 340.)]

[Footnote 92: I will transcribe a passage from this epistle of Petrarch, (Famil. ix. 2;) Donasti Homerum non in alienum sermonem violento alveâ?? derivatum, sed ex ipsis Græci eloquii scatebris, et qualis divino illi profluxit ingenio.... Sine tuâ voce Homerus tuus apud me mutus, immo vero ego apud illum surdus sum. Gaudeo tamen vel adspectû solo, ac sæpe illum amplexus atque suspirans dico, O magne vir, &c.]

The prize which eluded the efforts of Petrarch, was obtained by the fortune and industry of his friend Boccace, [93] the father of the Tuscan prose. That popular writer, who derives his reputation from the Decameron, a hundred novels of pleasantry and love, may aspire to the more serious praise of restoring in Italy the study of the Greek language. In the year one thousand three hundred and sixty, a disciple of Barlaam, whose name was Leo, or Leontius Pilatus, was detained in his way to Avignon by the advice and hospitality of Boccace, who lodged the stranger in his house, prevailed on the republic of Florence to allow him an annual stipend, and devoted his leisure to the first Greek professor, who taught that language in the Western countries of Europe.

The appearance of Leo might disgust the most eager disciple, he was clothed in the mantle of a philosopher, or a mendicant; his countenance was hideous; his face was overshadowed with black hair; his beard long an uncombed; his deportment rustic; his temper gloomy and inconstant; nor could he grace his discourse with the ornaments, or even the perspicuity, of Latin elocution. But his mind was stored with a treasure of Greek learning: history and fable, philosophy and grammar, were alike at his command; and he read the poems of Homer in the schools of Florence. It was from his explanation that Boccace composed [* and transcribed a literal prose version of the Iliad and Odyssey, which satisfied the thirst of his friend Petrarch, and which, perhaps, in the succeeding century, was clandestinely used by Laurentius Valla, the Latin interpreter. It was from his narratives that the same Boccace collected the materials for his treatise on the genealogy of the heathen gods, a work, in that age, of stupendous erudition, and which he ostentatiously sprinkled with Greek characters and passages, to excite the wonder and applause of his more ignorant readers. [94] The first steps of learning are slow and laborious; no more than ten votaries of Homer could be enumerated in all Italy; and neither Rome, nor Venice, nor Naples, could add a single name to this studious catalogue. But their numbers would have multiplied, their progress would have been accelerated, if the inconstant Leo, at the end of three years, had not relinquished an honorable and beneficial station. In his passage, Petrarch entertained him at Padua a short time: he enjoyed the scholar, but was justly offended with the gloomy and unsocial temper of the man. Discontented with the world and with himself, Leo depreciated his

present enjoyments, while absent persons and objects were dear to his imagination. In Italy he was a Thessalian, in Greece a native of Calabria: in the company of the Latins he disdained their language, religion, and manners: no sooner was he landed at Constantinople, than he again sighed for the wealth of Venice and the elegance of Florence. His Italian friends were deaf to his importunity: he depended on their curiosity and indulgence, and embarked on a second voyage; but on his entrance into the Adriatic, the ship was assailed by a tempest, and the unfortunate teacher, who like Ulysses had fastened himself to the mast, was struck dead by a flash of lightning. The humane Petrarch dropped a tear on his disaster; but he was most anxious to learn whether some copy of Euripides or Sophocles might not be saved from the hands of the mariners. [95]

[Footnote 93: For the life and writings of Boccace, who was born in 1313, and died in 1375, Fabricius (Bibliot. Latin. Medii Ævi, tom. i. p. 248, &c.) and Tiraboschi (tom. v. p. 83, 439--451) may be consulted. The editions, versions, imitations of his novels, are innumerable. Yet he was ashamed to communicate that trifling, and perhaps scandalous, work to Petrarch, his respectable friend, in whose letters and memoirs he conspicuously appears.]

[Footnote *: This translation of Homer was by Pilatus, not by Boccacio. See Hallam, Hist. of Lit. vol. i. p. 132.--M.]

[Footnote 94: Boccace indulges an honest vanity: Ostentationis causâ

Græca carmina adscripsi.... jure utor meo; meum est hoc decus, mea gloria scilicet inter Etruscos Græcis uti carminibus. Nonne ego fui qui Leontium Pilatum, &c., (de Genealogia Deorum, l. xv. c. 7, a work which, though now forgotten, has run through thirteen or fourteen editions.)]

[Footnote 95: Leontius, or Leo Pilatus, is sufficiently made known by Hody, (p. 2--11,) and the abbé de Sade, (Vie de Pétrarque, tom. iii. p. 625--634, 670--673,) who has very happily caught the lively and dramatic manner of his original.]

But the faint rudiments of Greek learning, which Petrarch had encouraged and Boccace had planted, soon withered and expired. The succeeding generation was content for a while with the improvement of Latin eloquence; nor was it before the end of the fourteenth century that a new and perpetual flame was rekindled in Italy. [96] Previous to his own journey the emperor Manuel despatched his envoys and orators to implore the compassion of the Western princes. Of these envoys, the most conspicuous, or the most learned, was Manuel Chrysoloras, [97] of noble birth, and whose Roman ancestors are supposed to have migrated with the great Constantine. After visiting the courts of France and England, where he obtained some contributions and more promises, the envoy was invited to assume the office of a professor; and Florence had again the honor of this second invitation. By his knowledge, not only of the Greek, but of the Latin tongue, Chrysoloras deserved the stipend, and surpassed the expectation, of the republic. His school was frequented by a crowd of disciples of every rank and age; and one of these, in a

general history, has described his motives and his success. "At that time," says Leonard Aretin, [98] "I was a student of the civil law; but my soul was inflamed with the love of letters; and I bestowed some application on the sciences of logic and rhetoric. On the arrival of Manuel, I hesitated whether I should desert my legal studies, or relinquish this golden opportunity; and thus, in the ardor of youth, I communed with my own mind--Wilt thou be wanting to thyself and thy fortune? Wilt thou refuse to be introduced to a familiar converse with Homer, Plato, and Demosthenes; with those poets, philosophers, and orators, of whom such wonders are related, and who are celebrated by every age as the great masters of human science? Of professors and scholars in civil law, a sufficient supply will always be found in our universities; but a teacher, and such a teacher, of the Greek language, if he once be suffered to escape, may never afterwards be retrieved. Convinced by these reasons, I gave myself to Chrysoloras; and so strong was my passion, that the lessons which I had imbibed in the day were the constant object of my nightly dreams." [99] At the same time and place, the Latin classics were explained by John of Ravenna, the domestic pupil of Petrarch; [100] the Italians, who illustrated their age and country, were formed in this double school; and Florence became the fruitful seminary of Greek and Roman erudition. [101] The presence of the emperor recalled Chrysoloras from the college to the court; but he afterwards taught at Pavia and Rome with equal industry and applause. The remainder of his life, about fifteen years, was divided between Italy and Constantinople, between embassies and lessons. In the noble office of enlightening a foreign nation, the grammarian was not unmindful of a

more sacred duty to his prince and country; and Emanuel Chrysoloras died at Constance on a public mission from the emperor to the council.

[Footnote 96: Dr. Hody (p. 54) is angry with Leonard Aretin, Guarinus, Paulus Jovius, &c., for affirming, that the Greek letters were restored in Italy post septingentos annos; as if, says he, they had flourished till the end of the viith century. These writers most probably reckoned from the last period of the exarchate; and the presence of the Greek magistrates and troops at Ravenna and Rome must have preserved, in some degree, the use of their native tongue.]

[Footnote 97: See the article of Emanuel, or Manuel Chrysoloras, in Hody (p 12--54) and Tiraboschi, (tom. vii. p. 113--118.) The precise date of his arrival floats between the years 1390 and 1400, and is only confined by the reign of Boniface IX.]

[Footnote 98: The name of Aretinus has been assumed by five or six natives of Arezzo in Tuscany, of whom the most famous and the most worthless lived in the xvith century. Leonardus Brunus Aretinus, the disciple of Chrysoloras, was a linguist, an orator, and an historian, the secretary of four successive popes, and the chancellor of the republic of Florence, where he died A.D. 1444, at the age of seventy-five, (Fabric. Bibliot. Medii Ævi, tom. i. p. 190 &c. Tiraboschi, tom. vii. p. 33--38.)]

[Footnote 99: See the passage in Aretin. Commentario Rerum suo Tempore

in Italia gestarum, apud Hodium, p. 28--30.]

[Footnote 100: In this domestic discipline, Petrarch, who loved the youth, often complains of the eager curiosity, restless temper, and proud feelings, which announce the genius and glory of a riper age, (Mémoires sur Pétrarque, tom. iii. p. 700--709.)]

[Footnote 101: Hinc Græcæ Latinæque scholæ exortæ sunt, Guarino Philelpho, Leonardo Aretino, Caroloque, ac plerisque aliis tanquam ex equo Trojano prodeuntibus, quorum emulatione multa ingenia deinceps ad laudem excitata sunt, (Platina in Bonifacio IX.) Another Italian writer adds the names of Paulus Petrus Vergerius, Omnibonus Vincentius, Poggius, Franciscus Barbarus, &c. But I question whether a rigid chronology would allow Chrysoloras all these eminent scholars, (Hodius, p. 25--27, &c.)]

After his example, the restoration of the Greek letters in Italy was prosecuted by a series of emigrants, who were destitute of fortune, and endowed with learning, or at least with language. From the terror or oppression of the Turkish arms, the natives of Thessalonica and Constantinople escaped to a land of freedom, curiosity, and wealth. The synod introduced into Florence the lights of the Greek church, and the oracles of the Platonic philosophy; and the fugitives who adhered to the union, had the double merit of renouncing their country, not only for the Christian, but for the catholic cause. A patriot, who sacrifices his party and conscience to the allurements of favor, may be possessed,

however, of the private and social virtues: he no longer hears the reproachful epithets of slave and apostate; and the consideration which he acquires among his new associates will restore in his own eyes the dignity of his character. The prudent conformity of Bessarion was rewarded with the Roman purple: he fixed his residence in Italy; and the Greek cardinal, the titular patriarch of Constantinople, was respected as the chief and protector of his nation: [102] his abilities were exercised in the legations of Bologna, Venice, Germany, and France; and his election to the chair of St. Peter floated for a moment on the uncertain breath of a conclave. [103] His ecclesiastical honors diffused a splendor and preeminence over his literary merit and service: his palace was a school; as often as the cardinal visited the Vatican, he was attended by a learned train of both nations; [104] of men applauded by themselves and the public; and whose writings, now overspread with dust, were popular and useful in their own times. I shall not attempt to enumerate the restorers of Grecian literature in the fifteenth century; and it may be sufficient to mention with gratitude the names of Theodore Gaza, of George of Trebizond, of John Argyropulus, and Demetrius Chalcocondyles, who taught their native language in the schools of Florence and Rome. Their labors were not inferior to those of Bessarion, whose purple they revered, and whose fortune was the secret object of their envy. But the lives of these grammarians were humble and obscure: they had declined the lucrative paths of the church; their dress and manners secluded them from the commerce of the world; and since they were confined to the merit, they might be content with the rewards, of learning. From this character, Janus Lascaris [105] will deserve an

exception. His eloquence, politeness, and Imperial descent, recommended him to the French monarch; and in the same cities he was alternately employed to teach and to negotiate. Duty and interest prompted them to cultivate the study of the Latin language; and the most successful attained the faculty of writing and speaking with fluency and elegance in a foreign idiom. But they ever retained the inveterate vanity of their country: their praise, or at least their esteem, was reserved for the national writers, to whom they owed their fame and subsistence; and they sometimes betrayed their contempt in licentious criticism or satire on Virgil's poetry, and the oratory of Tully. [106] The superiority of these masters arose from the familiar use of a living language; and their first disciples were incapable of discerning how far they had degenerated from the knowledge, and even the practice of their ancestors. A vicious pronunciation, [107] which they introduced, was banished from the schools by the reason of the succeeding age. Of the power of the Greek accents they were ignorant; and those musical notes, which, from an Attic tongue, and to an Attic ear, must have been the secret soul of harmony, were to their eyes, as to our own, no more than minute and unmeaning marks, in prose superfluous and troublesome in verse. The art of grammar they truly possessed; the valuable fragments of Apollonius and Herodian were transfused into their lessons; and their treatises of syntax and etymology, though devoid of philosophic spirit, are still useful to the Greek student. In the shipwreck of the Byzantine libraries, each fugitive seized a fragment of treasure, a copy of some author, who without his industry might have perished: the transcripts were multiplied by an assiduous, and sometimes an elegant pen; and the

text was corrected and explained by their own comments, or those of the elder scholiasts. The sense, though not the spirit, of the Greek classics, was interpreted to the Latin world: the beauties of style evaporate in a version; but the judgment of Theodore Gaza selected the more solid works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, and their natural histories of animals and plants opened a rich fund of genuine and experimental science.

[Footnote 102: See in Hody the article of Bessarion, (p. 136--177.) Theodore Gaza, George of Trebizond, and the rest of the Greeks whom I have named or omitted, are inserted in their proper chapters of his learned work. See likewise Tiraboschi, in the 1st and 2d parts of the vith tome.]

[Footnote 103: The cardinals knocked at his door, but his conclavist refused to interrupt the studies of Bessarion: "Nicholas," said he, "thy respect has cost thee a hat, and me the tiara." *

Note: * Roscoe (Life of Lorenzo de Medici, vol. i. p. 75) considers that Hody has refuted this "idle tale."--M.]

[Footnote 104: Such as George of Trebizond, Theodore Gaza, Argyropulus, Andronicus of Thessalonica, Philelphus, Poggius, Blondus, Nicholas Perrot, Valla, Campanus, Platina, &c. Viri (says Hody, with the pious zeal of a scholar) (nullo ævo perituri, p. 156.)]

[Footnote 105: He was born before the taking of Constantinople, but his honorable life was stretched far into the xvith century, (A.D. 1535.) Leo X. and Francis I. were his noblest patrons, under whose auspices he founded the Greek colleges of Rome and Paris, (Hody, p. 247--275.) He left posterity in France; but the counts de Vintimille, and their numerous branches, derive the name of Lascaris from a doubtful marriage in the xiiith century with the daughter of a Greek emperor (Ducange, Fam. Byzant. p. 224--230.)]

[Footnote 106: Two of his epigrams against Virgil, and three against Tully, are preserved and refuted by Franciscus Floridus, who can find no better names than Græculus ineptus et impudens, (Hody, p. 274.) In our own times, an English critic has accused the Æneid of containing multa languida, nugatoria, spiritû et majestate carminis heroici defecta; many such verses as he, the said Jeremiah Markland, would have been ashamed of owning, (præfat. ad Statii Sylvas, p. 21, 22.)]

[Footnote 107: Emanuel Chrysoloras, and his colleagues, are accused of ignorance, envy, or avarice, (Sylloge, &c., tom. ii. p. 235.) The modern Greeks pronounce the b as a V consonant, and confound three vowels, (h i u,) and several diphthongs. Such was the vulgar pronunciation which the stern Gardiner maintained by penal statutes in the university of Cambridge: but the monosyllable bh represented to an Attic ear the bleating of sheep, and a bellwether is better evidence than a bishop or a chancellor. The treatises of those scholars, particularly Erasmus, who asserted a more classical pronunciation, are collected in the Sylloge

of Havercamp, (2 vols. in octavo, Lugd. Bat. 1736, 1740:) but it is difficult to paint sounds by words: and in their reference to modern use, they can be understood only by their respective countrymen. We may observe, that our peculiar pronunciation of the O, th, is approved by Erasmus, (tom. ii. p. 130.)]

Yet the fleeting shadows of metaphysics were pursued with more curiosity and ardor. After a long oblivion, Plato was revived in Italy by a venerable Greek, [108] who taught in the house of Cosmo of Medicis. While the synod of Florence was involved in theological debate, some beneficial consequences might flow from the study of his elegant philosophy: his style is the purest standard of the Attic dialect, and his sublime thoughts are sometimes adapted to familiar conversation, and sometimes adorned with the richest colors of poetry and eloquence. The dialogues of Plato are a dramatic picture of the life and death of a sage; and, as often as he descends from the clouds, his moral system inculcates the love of truth, of our country, and of mankind. The precept and example of Socrates recommended a modest doubt and liberal inquiry; and if the Platonists, with blind devotion, adored the visions and errors of their divine master, their enthusiasm might correct the dry, dogmatic method of the Peripatetic school. So equal, yet so opposite, are the merits of Plato and Aristotle, that they may be balanced in endless controversy; but some spark of freedom may be produced by the collision of adverse servitude. The modern Greeks were divided between the two sects: with more fury than skill they fought under the banner of their leaders; and the field of battle was removed

in their flight from Constantinople to Rome. But this philosophical debate soon degenerated into an angry and personal quarrel of grammarians; and Bessarion, though an advocate for Plato, protected the national honor, by interposing the advice and authority of a mediator. In the gardens of the Medici, the academical doctrine was enjoyed by the polite and learned: but their philosophic society was quickly dissolved; and if the writings of the Attic sage were perused in the closet, the more powerful Stagyrite continued to reign, the oracle of the church and school. [109]

[Footnote 108: George Gemistus Pletho, a various and voluminous writer, the master of Bessarion, and all the Platonists of the times. He visited Italy in his old age, and soon returned to end his days in Peloponnesus. See the curious Diatribe of Leo Allatius de Georgiis, in Fabricius. (Bibliot. Græc. tom. x. p. 739--756.)]

[Footnote 109: The state of the Platonic philosophy in Italy is illustrated by Boivin, (Mém. de l'Acad. des Inscriptions, tom. ii. p. 715--729,) and Tiraboschi, (tom. vi. P. i. p. 259--288.)]

I have fairly represented the literary merits of the Greeks; yet it must be confessed, that they were seconded and surpassed by the ardor of the Latins. Italy was divided into many independent states; and at that time it was the ambition of princes and republics to vie with each other in the encouragement and reward of literature. The fame of Nicholas the Fifth [110] has not been adequate to his merits. From a plebeian origin

he raised himself by his virtue and learning: the character of the man prevailed over the interest of the pope; and he sharpened those weapons which were soon pointed against the Roman church. [111] He had been the friend of the most eminent scholars of the age: he became their patron; and such was the humility of his manners, that the change was scarcely discernible either to them or to himself. If he pressed the acceptance of a liberal gift, it was not as the measure of desert, but as the proof of benevolence; and when modest merit declined his bounty, "Accept it," would he say, with a consciousness of his own worth: "ye will not always have a Nicholas among you." The influence of the holy see pervaded Christendom; and he exerted that influence in the search, not of benefices, but of books. From the ruins of the Byzantine libraries, from the darkest monasteries of Germany and Britain, he collected the dusty manuscripts of the writers of antiquity; and wherever the original could not be removed, a faithful copy was transcribed and transmitted for his use. The Vatican, the old repository for bulls and legends, for superstition and forgery, was daily replenished with more precious furniture; and such was the industry of Nicholas, that in a reign of eight years he formed a library of five thousand volumes. To his munificence the Latin world was indebted for the versions of Xenophon, Diodorus, Polybius, Thucydides, Herodotus, and Appian; of Strabo's Geography, of the Iliad, of the most valuable works of Plato and Aristotle, of Ptolemy and Theophrastus, and of the fathers of the Greek church. The example of the Roman pontiff was preceded or imitated by a Florentine merchant, who governed the republic without arms and without a title. Cosmo of Medicis [112] was the father of a line of princes,

whose name and age are almost synonymous with the restoration of learning: his credit was ennobled into fame; his riches were dedicated to the service of mankind; he corresponded at once with Cairo and London: and a cargo of Indian spices and Greek books was often imported in the same vessel. The genius and education of his grandson Lorenzo rendered him not only a patron, but a judge and candidate, in the literary race. In his palace, distress was entitled to relief, and merit to reward: his leisure hours were delightfully spent in the Platonic academy; he encouraged the emulation of Demetrius Chalcocondyles and Angelo Politian; and his active missionary Janus Lascaris returned from the East with a treasure of two hundred manuscripts, fourscore of which were as yet unknown in the libraries of Europe. [113] The rest of Italy was animated by a similar spirit, and the progress of the nation repaid the liberality of their princes. The Latins held the exclusive property of their own literature; and these disciples of Greece were soon capable of transmitting and improving the lessons which they had imbibed. After a short succession of foreign teachers, the tide of emigration subsided; but the language of Constantinople was spread beyond the Alps and the natives of France, Germany, and England, [114] imparted to their country the sacred fire which they had kindled in the schools of Florence and Rome. [115] In the productions of the mind, as in those of the soil, the gifts of nature are excelled by industry and skill: the Greek authors, forgotten on the banks of the Ilissus, have been illustrated on those of the Elbe and the Thames: and Bessarion or Gaza might have envied the superior science of the Barbarians; the accuracy of Budæus, the taste of Erasmus, the copiousness of Stephens, the erudition of Scaliger, the

discernment of Reiske, or of Bentley. On the side of the Latins, the discovery of printing was a casual advantage: but this useful art has been applied by Aldus, and his innumerable successors, to perpetuate and multiply the works of antiquity. [116] A single manuscript imported from Greece is revived in ten thousand copies; and each copy is fairer than the original. In this form, Homer and Plato would peruse with more satisfaction their own writings; and their scholiasts must resign the prize to the labors of our Western editors.

[Footnote 110: See the Life of Nicholas V. by two contemporary authors, Janottus Manettus, (tom. iii. P. ii. p. 905--962,) and Vespasian of Florence, (tom. xxv. p. 267--290,) in the collection of Muratori; and consult Tiraboschi, (tom. vi. P. i. p. 46--52, 109,) and Hody in the articles of Theodore Gaza, George of Trebizond, &c.]

[Footnote 111: Lord Bolingbroke observes, with truth and spirit, that the popes in this instance, were worse politicians than the muftis, and that the charm which had bound mankind for so many ages was broken by the magicians themselves, (Letters on the Study of History, l. vi. p. 165, 166, octavo edition, 1779.)]

[Footnote 112: See the literary history of Cosmo and Lorenzo of Medicis, in Tiraboschi, (tom. vi. P. i. l. i. c. 2,) who bestows a due measure of praise on Alphonso of Arragon, king of Naples, the dukes of Milan, Ferrara Urbino, &c. The republic of Venice has deserved the least from the gratitude of scholars.]

[Footnote 113: Tiraboschi, (tom. vi. P. i. p. 104,) from the preface of Janus Lascaris to the Greek Anthology, printed at Florence, 1494. Latebant (says Aldus in his preface to the Greek orators, apud Hodium, p. 249) in Atho Thraciæ monte. Eas Lascaris.... in Italiam reportavit. Miserat enim ipsum Laurentius ille Medices in Græciam ad inquirendos simul, et quantovis emendos pretio bonos libros. It is remarkable enough, that the research was facilitated by Sultan Bajazet II.]

[Footnote 114: The Greek language was introduced into the university of Oxford in the last years of the xvth century, by Grocyn, Linacer, and Latimer, who had all studied at Florence under Demetrius Chalcocondyles. See Dr. Knight's curious Life of Erasmus. Although a stout academical patriot, he is forced to acknowledge that Erasmus learned Greek at Oxford, and taught it at Cambridge.]

[Footnote 115: The jealous Italians were desirous of keeping a monopoly of Greek learning. When Aldus was about to publish the Greek scholiasts on Sophocles and Euripides, Cave, (said they,) cave hoc facias, ne Barbari istis adjuti domi maneant, et pauciores in Italiam ventitent, (Dr. Knight, in his Life of Erasmus, p. 365, from Beatus Rhemanus.)]

[Footnote 116: The press of Aldus Manutius, a Roman, was established at Venice about the year 1494: he printed above sixty considerable works of Greek literature, almost all for the first time; several containing different treatises and authors, and of several authors, two, three, or

four editions, (Fabric. Bibliot. Græc. tom. xiii. p. 605, &c.) Yet his glory must not tempt us to forget, that the first Greek book, the Grammar of Constantine Lascaris, was printed at Milan in 1476; and that the Florence Homer of 1488 displays all the luxury of the typographical art. See the Annales Typographical of Mattaire, and the Bibliographie Instructive of De Bure, a knowing bookseller of Paris.]

Before the revival of classic literature, the Barbarians in Europe were immersed in ignorance; and their vulgar tongues were marked with the rudeness and poverty of their manners. The students of the more perfect idioms of Rome and Greece were introduced to a new world of light and science; to the society of the free and polished nations of antiquity; and to a familiar converse with those immortal men who spoke the sublime language of eloquence and reason. Such an intercourse must tend to refine the taste, and to elevate the genius, of the moderns; and yet, from the first experiments, it might appear that the study of the ancients had given fetters, rather than wings, to the human mind. However laudable, the spirit of imitation is of a servile cast; and the first disciples of the Greeks and Romans were a colony of strangers in the midst of their age and country. The minute and laborious diligence which explored the antiquities of remote times might have improved or adorned the present state of society, the critic and metaphysician were the slaves of Aristotle; the poets, historians, and orators, were proud to repeat the thoughts and words of the Augustan age: the works of nature were observed with the eyes of Pliny and Theophrastus; and some Pagan votaries professed a secret devotion to the gods of Homer and

Plato. [117] The Italians were oppressed by the strength and number of their ancient auxiliaries: the century after the deaths of Petrarch and Boccace was filled with a crowd of Latin imitators, who decently repose on our shelves; but in that æra of learning it will not be easy to discern a real discovery of science, a work of invention or eloquence, in the popular language of the country. [118] But as soon as it had been deeply saturated with the celestial dew, the soil was quickened into vegetation and life; the modern idioms were refined; the classics of Athens and Rome inspired a pure taste and a generous emulation; and in Italy, as afterwards in France and England, the pleasing reign of poetry and fiction was succeeded by the light of speculative and experimental philosophy. Genius may anticipate the season of maturity; but in the education of a people, as in that of an individual, memory must be exercised, before the powers of reason and fancy can be expanded: nor may the artist hope to equal or surpass, till he has learned to imitate, the works of his predecessors.

[Footnote 117: I will select three singular examples of this classic enthusiasm. I. At the synod of Florence, Gemistus Pletho said, in familiar conversation to George of Trebizond, that in a short time mankind would unanimously renounce the Gospel and the Koran, for a religion similar to that of the Gentiles, (Leo Allatius, apud Fabricium, tom. x. p. 751.) 2. Paul II. persecuted the Roman academy, which had been founded by Pomponius Lætus; and the principal members were accused of heresy, impiety, and paganism, (Tiraboschi, tom. vi. P. i. p. 81, 82.) 3. In the next century, some scholars and poets in France

celebrated the success of Jodelle's tragedy of Cleopatra, by a festival of Bacchus, and, as it is said, by the sacrifice of a goat, (Bayle, Dictionnaire, Jodelle. Fontenelle, tom. iii. p. 56--61.) Yet the spirit of bigotry might often discern a serious impiety in the sportive play of fancy and learning.]

[Footnote 118: The survivor Boccace died in the year 1375; and we cannot place before 1480 the composition of the Morgante Maggiore of Pulci and the Orlando Innamorato of Boyardo, (Tiraboschi, tom. vi. P. ii. p. 174--177.)]