

Pasquin and Marforio

ALL the world have heard of these *statues*: they have served as vehicles for the keenest satire in a land of the most uncontrolled despotism. The *statue of Pasquin* (from whence the word *pasquinade*) and that of *Marforio* are placed in Rome in two different quarters. *Marforio's* is an ancient *statue* that lies at its whole length. That of *Pasquin* is a marble *statue*, greatly mutilated, which stands at the corner of the palace of the Ursinos, supposed to be the figure of a gladiator. Whatever they may have been is now of little consequence: to one or other of these *statues*, during the concealment of the night, are affixed those satires or lampoons which the authors wish should be dispersed about Rome without any danger to themselves. When *Marforio* is attacked, *Pasquin* comes to his succour; and when *Pasquin* is the sufferer, he finds in *Marforio* a constant defender. Thus by a thrust and a parry, the most serious matters are disclosed; and the most illustrious personages are attacked by their enemies and defended by their friends.

Misson, in his travels in Italy, gives the following account of the origin of the name of the statue of *Pasquin*:—

A satirical tailor, who lived at Rome, and whose name was *Pasquin*, amused himself with severe raillery, liber-

ally bestowed on those who passed by his shop; which in time became the lounge of the newsmongers. The tailor had precisely the talents to head a regiment of satirical wits, and had he had time to *publish*, he would have been the Peter Pindar of his day; but his genius seems to have been satisfied to rest cross-legged on his shopboard. When any lampoons or amusing bon-mots were current at Rome, they were usually called from his shop, *pasquinades*. After his death this statue of an ancient gladiator was found under the pavement of his shop. It was soon set up, and by universal consent was inscribed with his name; and they still attempt to raise him from the dead, and keep the caustic tailor alive, in the marble gladiator of wit.

There is a very rare work, with this title:—"Pasquillorum, Tomi Duo." The first containing the verse, and the second the prose *pasquinades*, published at Basle, 1544. The rarity of this collection of satirical pieces is entirely owing to the arts of suppression practised by the papal government. Sallengre, in his *Literary Memoirs*, has given an account of this work; his own copy had formerly belonged to Daniel Heinsins, who, in two verses written in his hand, describes its rarity and the price it cost:

Roma meos fratres igni dedit, unica
Vivo, aureisque venio centum Heinsio.

“Rome gave my brothers to the flames, but I survive a solitary Phoenix. Heinsius bought me for a hundred golden ducats.”

This collection contains a great number of pieces, composed at different times, against the popes, cardinals, &c. They are not indeed materials for the historian, and they must be taken with grains of allowance; but Mr. Roscoe might have discovered in these epigrams and puns that of his hero Leo X., and the more than infamous Lucretia of Alexander VI.: even the corrupt Romans of the day were capable of expressing themselves with the utmost freedom. Of these three respectable personages, we find several epitaphs. Of Alexander VI. We have an apology for his conduct:

Vendit Alexander Claves, altaria, Christum,
Emerat ille prius, vendere jure potest.

“Alexander *sells* the keys, the altars, and Christ;
As he *bought* them first, he had a right to *sell them!*”

On Lucretia:—

Hoc tumulo dormit Lucretia nomine, sed re
Thais; Alexandri filia, sponsa, nurus!

“Beneath this stone sleeps Lucretia by name,
but by nature Thais; the daughter, the wife,
and the daughter-in-law of Alexander!”

Leo X. was a frequent butt for the arrows of Pasquin:—

Sacra sub extremâ, si forte requiritis, horâ
Cur Leo non potuit sumere; vendiderat.

“Do you ask why Leo did not take the sacrament on his death-bed?—How could he? He had sold it!”

Many of these satirical touches depend on puns. Urban VII., one of the *Barberini* family, pillaged the Pantheon of brass to make cannon, on which occasion Pasquin was made to say:—

Quod non fecerunt *Barbari* Romæ, fecit *Barberini*.

On Clement VII., whose death was said to be occasioned by the prescriptions of his physician:—

Curtius occidit Clementem, Curtius auro
Donandus, per quem publica parta salus.

“Dr. Curtius has killed the pope by his remedies; he ought to be paid as a man who has cured the state.”

Another calls Dr. Curtius, “The Lamb of God who annuls or takes away all worldly sins.”

The following on Paul III., are singular conceptions:—

Papa Medusæum caput est, coma turba Nepotum:
Perseu cæde caput, Cæsaries perit.

“The pope is the head of Medusa; the horrid tresses are his nephews; Perseus, cut off the head, and then we shall be rid of these serpentlocks.”

Another is sarcastic:—

Ut canerent data multa olim sunt Vatibus æra:
Ut taceam, quantum tu mihi, Paule, dabis?

“Heretofore money was given to poets that they might sing: how much will you give me, Paul, to be silent?”

This collection contains, among other classes, passages from the Scriptures which have been applied to the court of Rome; to different nations and persons; and one of “*Sortes Virgillianæ per Pasquillum collectæ*,”—passages from Virgil frequently happily applied; and those who are curious in the history of those times will find this portion interesting. The work itself is not quite

so rare as Daniel Heinsius imagined; the price might now reach from five to ten guineas.

Marforio is a statue of *Mars*, found in the *Forum*; which the people have corrupted into *Marforio*. These statues are placed at opposite ends of the town, so that there is always sufficient time to make Marforio reply to the jibes and jeers of Pasquin, in walking from one to the other. I am obliged for this information to my friend Mr. Duppa, the elegant biographer of Michael Angelo.