

and chemical treatises of Dioscorides, and the cosmological fancies of Plato. The dialectics of Aristotle were blended by the Arabs with the study of Physics, as in earlier times, in the Christian mediæval age, they were with that of theology. Men borrowed from the ancients what they judged susceptible of special application, but they were far removed from apprehending the spirit of Hellenism in its general character, from penetrating to the depths of the organic structure of the language, from deriving enjoyment from the poetic creations of the Greek imagination, or of seeking to trace the marvelous luxuriance displayed in the fields of oratory and historical composition.

Almost two hundred years before Petrarch and Boccacio, John of Salisbury and the Platonic Abelard had already exercised a favorable influence with reference to an acquaintance with certain works of classical antiquity. Both possessed the power of appreciating the charm of writings in which freedom and order, nature and mind, were constantly associated together; but the influence of the æsthetic feeling awakened by them vanished without leaving a trace, and the actual merit of having prepared in Italy a permanent resting-place for the muses exiled from Greece, and of having contributed most powerfully to re-establish classical literature, belongs of right to two poets, linked together by the closest ties of friendship, Petrarch and Boccacio. A monk of Calabria, Barlaam, who had long resided in Greece under the patronage of the Emperor Andronicus, was the instructor of both.\* They were the first to begin to make a careful collection of Roman and Greek manuscripts; and a taste for a comparison of languages had even been awakened in Petrarch,† whose philological acumen seemed to strive toward the attainment of a more general contemplation of the universe. Emanuel Chrysoloras, who was sent as Greek ambassador to Italy and England (1391), Cardinal Bessarion of Trebisonde, Gemistus Pletho, and the Athenian Demetrius Chalcondylas, to whom we owe the first printed edition of Homer, were all valuable promoters of the study of the Greek writers.‡ All these came from Greece before the eventful taking of Constantinople (29th May, 1453); Constantine Lascaris alone, whose forefathers had once sat on the Byzantine throne, came later to Italy. He brought with

\* Heeren, *Gesch. der Classischen Litteratur*, bd. i., s. 284-290.

† Klaproth, *Mémoires relatives à l'Asie*, t. iii., p. 113.

‡ The Florentine edition of Homer of 1488; but the first printed Greek book was the grammar of Constantine Lascaris, in 1476.