

**A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE
LIFE AND
WRITINGS OF QUINTUS
HORATIUS FLACCUS**

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A Brief Survey of the Life and Writings of Quintus Horatius Flaccus by Sidney G. Ashmore

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A BRIEF SURVEY
of
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS
of
QUINTUS HORATIUS FLACCUS

BY
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PREFACE.

It has seemed to me that a brief account of the life and writings of Horace, in a separate and independent form, would be of service to my pupils, notwithstanding the fact that the various editions of Horace's works, which are now available, contain more or less extended references to this subject. Accordingly, I have decided to print the following pages, which I prepared some years ago and have since revised. In selecting and arranging my facts I have had recourse not only to the Horatian text itself, but to most of the literature on Horace which has been published recently in Germany, England and America. My thanks are due to The Grafton Press for their courtesy and the pains they have taken to secure typographical accuracy and neatness.

S. G. A.

SCHENECTADY, N. Y.,
September, 1901.

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LIFE OF HORACE

Horace's life and character are fully set forth in his writings. No author of antiquity has told us more about himself. He takes the reader completely into his confidence, and although some facts concerning him have come down to us through extraneous sources, yet little has been said by others with which the Horatian scholar is not always familiar. Indeed, the remarks of his biographers appear to find their source almost exclusively in Horace's own works, so that the information thus vouchsafed is little more than a repetition of that which was already sufficiently understood. A "life" of the poet appeared in the voluminous work of Suetonius, *De Viris Illustribus*, and the substance of this life is contained in the biography appended to certain

manuscripts of Horace's poems. Other external sources of information are the scholia, and certain shorter "lives" contained in some of the other manuscripts. But it is to Horace's own works that we must go for accurate information regarding him, and of these the Satires and Epistles are our best and truest guides. The Epodes come next in order, and then the Odes. The last contain many references and allusions to the poet's feelings and circumstances, but are perhaps to a less degree reliable, since it is more difficult, in their case, to distinguish between that which is related as fact and that which is said for mere poetical effect.

Quintus Horatius Flaccus was born at Venusia, on the 8th of December, 65 B.C., and died (presumably at Rome, or at his Sabine farm near Rome) on the 27th of November, of the year 8 B.C. Venusia was a Roman colony in Apulia, near the borders of Samnium and Lucania. The colony was planted for military purposes in the Samnite wars, and was situated in the moun-

tains of the Appennine range, on a branch of the river Aufidus, whose current was swift and noisy as it descended the steep slopes of the hills, the loftiest of which was Mt. Voltur. Horace's father was a freedman, and the owner of a small farm. From this he derived a competence sufficient to enable him to educate his son in a manner both satisfactory to himself, and, as it would seem, well suited to the boy's talents and literary tastes; for, as Horace tells us (*Sat.* 1. 6. 72-82), his early training was not acquired at the school of Flavius in Venusia, but at Rome. Thither his father determined to take him, "to receive the education that a knight or a senator gives to his sons"; and, as if to secure the best results from such advantages, the father himself accompanied the boy to the capital, instead of intrusting him to the care of slaves or strangers, whose watchfulness might be less persistent and conscientious than his own. It is a touching picture that the poet has left us of the devoted father making the round, as it were, of the son's lessons, and