officer of state. Another group of the "*Silvae"* give picturesque descriptions of the villas and gardens of the poet’s friends. In these we have a more vivid representation than elsewhere of the surroundings amid which the grandees of the early empire lived when they took up their abode in the country. It was of these pieces that Niebuhr thought when he said that the poems of Statius are charming to read in Italy. They exhibit, better even than Pliny’s well-known letters, the passion of the rich Roman for so constructing his country house that light, air, sun, and leafage should subserve his luxury to the utmost, while scope was left for displaying all the resources of art which his wealth enabled him to command. As to the rest of the “ *Silνaef* the congratulatory addresses to friends are graceful but commonplace, nor do the jocose pieces call for special mention here. In the “ Kalendae Decembres ” we have a striking description of the gifts and amusements provided by the emperor for the Roman popula­tion on the occasion of the Saturnalia. In his attempt at an epithalamium *CSilv.,* i. 2) Statius is forced and unhappy. But the birthday ode in Lucan’s honour *(Silv.,* ii. 7) has, along with the accustomed exaggeration, many powerful lines, and shows high appreciation of preceding Latin poets. Some phrases, such as “the untaught muse of high-souled Ennius” and “the lofty passion of sage Lucretius,” are familiar words with all scholars. The ode ends with a great picture of Lucan’s spirit rising after death on wings of fame to regions whither only powerful souls can ascend, scornfully surveying earth and smiling at the tomb, or reclining in Elysium and singing a noble strain to the Pompeys and the Catos and all the "Pharsalian host, ” or with proud tread exploring Tartarus and listening to the wailings of the guilty, and gazing at Nero, pale with agony as his mother’s avenging torch glitters before his eyes. It is singular to observe how thoroughly Nero had been struck out of the imperial succession as recognized at court, so that the “ bald Nero ” took no umbrage when his flatterer-in-chief profanely dealt with his predecessor’s name.

The epic poems of Statius are less interesting because cast in a commoner mould, but they deserve study in many respects. They are the product of long elaboration. The “ *Thebais,"* which the poet says took twelve years to compose, is in twelve books, and has for its theme the old “tale of Thebes”—the deadly strife of the Theban brothers. There is also preserved a fragment of an *“Achilleis*,” consisting of one book and part of another. In the weary length of these epics there are many flowers of pathos and many little finished gem-pictures, but the trammels of tradition, the fashionable taste, and the narrow bars of education check con­tinually the poet’s flight. The public idea of what an epic poem should be was firmly fixed, and Statius would not have towered above the thousand poets of his day in the estimation of his countrymen had he not given full embodiment to the idea. Not merely were the materials for his epics prescribed to him by rigid custom, but also to a great extent the method by which they were to be treated. All he could do was to sound the old notes with a distinctive *timbre* of his own. The gods must needs wage their wonted epic strife, and the men, their puppets, must dance at their nod ; there must needs be heavenly messengers, portents, dreams, miracles, single combats, similes, Homeric and Virgilian echoes, and all the other paraphernalia of the conventional epic. But Statius treats his subjects with a boldness and freedom which contrast pleasingly with the timid traditionalism of Silius Italicus and the stiff scholasticism of Valerius Flaccus. The vocabulary of Statius is conspicuously rich, and he shows audacity, often successful, in the use of words and metaphors. At the same time he carried certain literary tricks to an aggravating pitch, in parti­cular the excessive use of alliteration, and the misuse of mytho­logical allusion. The most well-known persons and places are described by epithets or periphrases derived from some very remote connexion with mythology, so that many passages are as dark as Heraclitus. The *Thebais* is badly constructed. The action of the epic is hindered and stopped by enormous episodes, one of which fills one sixth of the poem. Nor had Statius a firm grasp or clear imagina­tion of character. So trying are the late ancient epics to a modem reader that he who has read any one of the three—Statius, Silius, and Valerius (Lucan stands apart)—will with difficulty be persuaded to enter on the other two. Yet, if he honestly reads them all, he can hardly fail to rank Statius the highest of the three by a whole sphere.

The *editio princeps* of the epics is (lated 1470, of the *Silvae* 1472. Notable editions since have been those of Bernartius (Antwerp, 1595), Gronovius (1653), and Barth (1664). The best text is the Teubner (the *Achilleis* and *Thebais* by Kohlmann, the *Silυae* by Baehrens). Among editions of portions of Statius’s works, that of the *Silvae* by Jeremiah Markland, fellow of Peterhouse in Cam­bridge (1728), deserves special attention. The brilliance and erudition of the work mark him out as one of the best Latin scholars who ever lived. A critical edition of the *Thebais* and *Achilleis* was begun by O. Müller (1870) but not completed. The condition of the text of the *Silvae* is one of the most curious facts in the history of ancient literature. Poggio discovered a MS. at St Gall and brought it into Italy. This MS. has disappeared, but from it are derived all our existing MSS., except one of the birthday ode to Lucan, now at Florence, and of the 10th century. Politian collated Poggio’s MS. with the *editio princeps,* and the collation has come down to us, and is the principal basis of the text. The MSS. of the epics are numerous, as was to be expected from their great popularity in the Middle Ages, to which Dante is witness (see *Pιιrg.,* xxi., where an interview with the shade of Statius is described at some length). (J. S. R.)

STATUTE, or Act of Parliament, is a law made by the sovereign power in the state, that is, the king, by and with the advice and consent of the lords spiritual and temporal and commons in parliament assembled. It forms a part of the *lex scripta,* or written law, which by English legal authorities is used solely for statutory law, a sense much narrower than it bore in Roman law. To make a statute the concurrence of the crown and the three estates of the realm is necessary. Thus a so-called statute of 5 Ric. II. c. 5, directed against the Lollards, was afterwards repudiated by the Commons as passed without their assent. The validity of a statute was indeed at times claimed for ordinances such as that just mentioned, not framed in accordance with constitutional rule, and was actually given to royal proclamations by 31 Hen. VIII. c. 8. But this Act was repealed by 1 Edw. VI. c. 12, and since that time nothing but a statute has possessed the force of a statute, unless indeed certain rules or orders depending ultimately for their sanction upon a statute may be said to have such force. Examples of what may be called indirect legislation of this kind are orders in council (see Privy Council), by-laws made under the powers of the Public Health Act, and rules of court such as those made under the powers of the Judicature Acts and Acts of Sederunt of the Court of Session.

The history of statutory legislation and the modern procedure by which bills become statutes are sufficiently treated under Act of Parliament and Parliament. It is proposed in this place to deal with the legal rather than the political aspect of the subject, and to give a short list of some of the more important statutes which have been passed by the legislature.

The list of statutes as at present existing begins with the Statute of Merton, 1235.@@1 Many of the earlier statutes are known by the names of the places at which they were passed, *e.g.,* the Statutes of Merton, Marlbridge, Gloucester, Westminster, or by their initial words, *e.g., Quia Emptores, Circumspecte agatis.* The earliest existing statute roll is 6 Edw. I. (the Statute of Gloucester). After 4 Hen. VII. the statute roll ceased to be made up, and enrolments in Chancery (first made in 1485) take its place. Some of the Acts prior to the Statute of Gloucester are of question­able authority, but have gained recognition by a kind of prescription.

All statutes were originally public, irrespectively of their subject matter. The division into public and private dates from the reign of Richard III. At present statutes are of four kinds—public general Acts, public local and personal Acts, private Acts printed by the queen’s printers, and private Acts not so printed. The division into public general and public local and personal rests upon a reso­lution of both Houses of Parliament in 1798. In 1815 a resolution was passed in accordance with which private Acts are printed, with the exception of name, estate, naturalization, and divorce Acts. The last two are now practically superseded by the provisions of the Divorce Act, 1857, and the Naturalization Act, 1870. Since 1815 it has been usual to refer to public general Acts by Arabic numerals, *e.g.,* 5 and 6 Vict. c. 21, public local and per­sonal Acts by small Roman numerals, *e.g.,* 5 and 6 Vict. c. xxi. Each Act is strictly but a chapter of the legisla­tion of the session, which is regarded as composing a single Act divided into chapters for convenience, the chapters themselves being also called Acts. The citation of previous Acts is provided for by 13 and 14 Vict. c. 21, § 3. It is now usual for each chapter or Act to contain

@@@1 Ruffhead’s edition of the statutes begins with the Magna Carta of 1225. But in the *Revised Statutes* that form of Magna Carta which is now law appears as a statute of the year 1297. It is often known as *Confirmatio Cartarum,* and is a recital and confirmation by Edward I. of the chief provisions of John’s charter.