of Juvenal deserves, however, as little to be accepted literally as his misleading allusions to Quintilian in the same satire. Of events in the life of Statius we know little. He married early a young widow, for whom he expresses tender affection in some of the few obviously sincere verses he ever wrote. From his boyhood he was victorious in poetic contests,—many times at his native city Naples, thrice at Alba, where he received the golden crown from the hand of the emperor. But at the great Capitoline competition (probably on its third celebration in 94 a.d.) Statius failed to win the coveted chaplet of oak leaves. No doubt the extraordinary popularity of his *Thebais* had led him to regard himself as the supreme poet of the age, and when he could not sustain this reputation in the face of rivals from all parts of the empire he accepted the judges’ verdict as a sign that his day was past, and retired to Naples, the home of his ancestors and of his own young days. We still possess the poem he addressed to his wife on this occasion *(Silv.,* iii. 5). It was a hard task to overcome her objections to turning her back upon the great capital. Chief among them was that which arose from a fear lest it should prove difficult to find in Naples a husband for her daughter (by her first marriage ; she had no children by Statius). There are hints in this poem which naturally lead to the surmise that Statius was suffering from a loss of the emperor’s favour ; he may have felt that a word from Domitian would have won for him the envied garland, and that the word ought to have been given. In the preface to book iv. of the *Silvae* there is mention of detractors who hated our poet’s style, and these may have succeeded in inducing a new fashion in poetry at court. Such an eclipse, if it happened, must have cut Statius to the heart. He appears to have relished thoroughly the rôle of court-poet. The statement sometimes made that the elder Statius had been the emperor’s teacher, and had bestowed many favours on him, so that the son inherited a debt of gratitude, seems to have no solid foundation. Statius lauds the emperor, not to discharge a debt, but rather to create an obligation. His flattery is as far removed from the gentle propitiatory tone of Quintilian as it is from the coarse and crawling humiliation of Martial. It is in the large extravagant style of a nature in itself healthy and generous, which has accepted the theme and left scruples behind. In one of his prefatory epistles Statius declares that he never allowed any work of his to go forth without invoking the godhead of the divine emperor. The poem on the equestrian statue of Domi­tian set up on the Capitol *(Silv.,* i. 1) is such colossal rodomontade that if the emperor had had a grain of humour in his composition he must have died of merri­ment on receiving it. Statius had taken the full measure of Domitian’s gross taste, and carefully puts conscience and sincerity out of view, lest some uneasy twinge should mar his master’s enjoyment. But in one poem, that in which the poet pays his due for an invitation to the im­perial table, we have sincerity enough. Statius clearly feels all the raptures he expresses. He longs for the power of him who told the tale of Dido’s banquet, and for the voice of him who sang the feast of Alcinous, that he may give forth utterance worthy of the lofty theme. The poet seemed, he says, to dine with great Jove himself and to receive nectar from Ganymede the cup-bearer (an odious reference to the imperial favourite Earinus). All his life hitherto has been barren and profitless. Now only has he begun to live in truth. “ O ruler over all the lands, and mighty father of the world which thou hast conquered, do I, *recumbent,* see thee, thou hope of all mankind, and nursling of all the gods ? Is it mine to gaze from near at hand on thy features, with the wine-cup and the feast

beside me, *while I am forbidden to rise*?" The palace struck on the poet’s fancy like the very hall of heaven ; nay, Jove himself marvels at its beauty, but is glad that the emperor should possess such an earthly habitation; he will thus feel less desire to seek his destined abode among the immortals in the skies. Yet even so gorgeous a palace is all too mean for his greatness and too small for his vast presence. “ But it is himself, himself, that my eager eye has alone time to scan. He is like a resting Mars or Bacchus or Alcides.” Martial too swore that, were Jove and Domitian both to invite him to dinner for the same day, he would prefer to dine with the greater potentate on the earth. Pliny, however, has sketched for us the state dinners of Domitian, where the coarse contempt of the tyrant overclouded the guests, and where a man who still respected himself had torments to endure. Martial and Statius were no doubt supreme among the imperial flatterers. Each was the other’s only serious rival. It is therefore not surprising that neither should breathe the other’s name. Even if we could by any stretch excuse the bearing of Statius towards Domitian, he could never be forgiven the poem entitled “ The Hair of Flavius Earinus,” Domitian’s Ganymede (*Silv.,* iii. 4), a poem than which it would be hard to find a more repulsive example of real poetical talent defiled for personal ends. Well for Statius that he did not, like Martial, live on into the days of Nerva to write sorry palinodes ! Everything points to the con­clusion that he did not survive his emperor—that he died, in fact, a short time after leaving Rome to settle in Naples. Apart from the emperor and his minions, the friendships of Statius with men of high station seem to have been maintained on fairly equal terms. He was clearly the poet of society in his day as well as the poet of the court.

As poet, Statius unquestionably shines in many respects when compared with the other post-Augustans. He was horn with exceptional talent, and his poetic expression is, with all its faults, richer on the whole and less forced, more buoyant and more felic­itous, than is to be found elsewhere in the Silver Age of Latin poetry. Statius is at his best in his occasional verses, the *“ Silvae,* ” which have a character of their own, and in their best parts a charm of their own. The title was proper to verses of rapid workmanship, on everyday themes. Statius prided himself on his powers of improvisation, and he seems to have been quite equal to the Horatian feat of dictating two hundred lines in an hour, while standing on one leg. The improvisatore was in high honour among the later Greeks, as Cicero’s speech for the poet Archias indicates ; and the poetic contests common in the early empire did much to stimulate ability of the kind. Statius speaks of his "*Silvae”* (preface to book i.) as having “streamed from him under the influence of sudden inspiration, and with a certain pleasure due to their rapidity. ” No one poem occupied more than two days ; some came to birth at the dinner table ; many while the poet’s friend Pollius sat by his side, and shuddered at the audacity of his pen (preface to book iii.). It is to this velocity that the poems owe their comparative freshness and freedom, along with their loose texture and their inequality. There are thirty-two poems, divided into five books, each with a dedicatory epistle. Of nearly four thousand lines which the books contain, more than five-sixths are hexameters. Four of the pieces (containing about 450 lines) are written in the hendecasyllabic metre, the “ tiny metre of Catullus,” and there is one Alcaic and one Sapphic ode. But the poems in these metres are merely the experiments of a poet who knows well that his strength lies in the hexameter, which in his hands shows greater freedom, variety, and music than it exhibits when handled by other poets of the Silver Latin Age. The subjects of the *“ Silvae”* are very various. Five poems are devoted to flattery of the emperor and his favourites ; but of these enough has already been said. Six are lamentations for deaths, or consolations to survivors. Statius seems to have felt a special pride in this class of his productions ; and certainly, notwithstanding the excessive and conventional employment of pretty mythological pictures, with other affectations, he sounds notes of pathos such as only come from the true poet. There are oftentimes traits of an almost modern domesticity in these verses, and Statius, the childless, has here and there touched on the charm of childhood in lines for a parallel to which, among the ancients, we must go, strange to say, to his rival Martial. One of the *epicedia,* that on Priscilla the wife of Abascantus, Domitian’s freedman (*Silv*., y. 1), is full of interest for the picture it presents of the official activity of a high