

upon the peripatetic school, but improved, as Buhle tells us, by his own acuteness and knowledge. Thus in his books logic is taught with a constant reference to rhetoric; and the physical science of antiquity is enlarged by all that had been added in astronomy and physiology. It need hardly be said that the authority of Scripture was always resorted to as controlling a philosophy which had been considered unfavourable to natural religion.^f

9. I will not contend, after a very cursory inspection of this latter work of Melanchthon, against the elaborate panegyric of Buhle; but I cannot think the *Initia Doctrinæ Physicæ* much calculated to advance the physical sciences. He insists very fully on the influence of the stars in producing events which we call fortuitous, and even in moulding the human character—a prejudice under which this eminent man is well known to have laboured. Melanchthon argues sometimes from the dogmas of Aristotle, sometimes from a literal interpretation of Scripture, so as to arrive at strange conclusions. Another treatise, entitled *De animâ*, which I have not seen, is extolled by Buhle as comprehending not only the psychology but the physiology also of man, and as having rendered great service in the age for which it was written. This universality of talents, and we have not yet adverted to the ethics and dialectics of Melanchthon, enhanced his high reputation; nor is it surprising that the influence of so great a name should have secured the preponderance of the Aristotelian philosophy in the Protestant schools of Germany for more than a century.

10. The treatise of the most celebrated Aristotelian of his age, Pomponatius, on the immortality of the soul, has been already mentioned. In 1525 he published two books, one on incantations, the other on fate and freewill. They are extremely scarce, but, according to the analysis of Brucker, indicate a scheme of philosophy by no means friendly to religion.^g I do not find any other of the Aristotelian school who falls within the present thirty years of sufficient celebrity to deserve mention in this place. But the Italian Aristote-

His own philosophical treatises.

Aristotelians of Italy.

^f Buhle, II. 427.

^g Brucker, iv. 166.

telians were divided into two classes—one, to which Pompenatius belonged, following the interpretation of the ancient Greek scholiasts, especially Alexander of Aphrodisæa; the other, that of the famous Spanish philosopher of the twelfth century, Averroes, who may rather be considered an heresiarch in the peripatetic church than a genuine disciple of its founder. The leading tenet of Averroism was the numerical unity of the soul of mankind, notwithstanding its partition among millions of living individuals.^b This proposition, which it may seem difficult to comprehend, and which Buhle deems a misapprehension of a passage in Aristotle, natural enough to one who read him in a bad Arabic version, is so far worthy of notice, that it contains the germ of an atheistical philosophy, which spread far, as we shall hereafter see, in the latter part of this century, and in the seventeenth.

11. Meantime the most formidable opposition to the authority of Aristotle sprang up in the very University of Paris. centre of his dominions—a conspiracy against the sovereign in his court itself. For as no university had been equal in renown for scholastic acuteness to that of Paris, there was none so tenacious of its ancient discipline. The very study of Greek and Hebrew was a dangerous innovation in the eyes of its rulers, which they sought to restrain by the intervention of the civil magistrate. Yet here, in their own schools, the ancient routine of dialectics was suddenly disturbed by an audacious hand.

12. Peter Ramus (Ramée), a man of great natural acuteness, an intrepid, though too arrogant a New logic of Ramus. spirit, and a sincere lover of truth, having acquired a considerable knowledge of languages as well as philosophy in the university, where he originally filled, it is said, a menial office in one of the colleges, began publicly to attack the Aristotelian method of logic, by endeavouring to substitute a new system of his own. He had been led to ask himself, he tells us, after three years passed in the study of logic, whether it had rendered him more conversant with facts, more fluent in speech, more quick in poetry, wiser, in short, any way

^b See Bayle, Averroes, note E, to which I omitted to refer on a former mention of the subject, p. 201.

than it had found him; and being compelled to answer all this in the negative, he was put on considering whether the fault were in himself or in his course of study. Before he could be quite satisfied as to this question, he fell accidentally upon reading some dialogues of Plato, in which, to his infinite satisfaction, he found a species of logic very unlike the Aristotelian, and far more apt, as it appeared, to the confirmation of truth. From the writings of Plato, and from his own ingenious mind, Ramus framed a scheme of dialectics, which immediately shook the citadel of the Stagirite; and, though in itself it did not replace the old philosophy, contributed very powerfully to its ultimate decline. The *Institutiones Dialecticæ* of Ramus were published in 1543.

13. In the first instance, however, he met with the strenuous opposition which awaits such innovators. The university laid their complaint before the parliament of Paris; the king took it out of the hands of the parliament, and a singular trial was awarded as to the merits of the rival systems of logic, two judges being nominated by Goveanus, the prominent accuser of Ramus, two by himself, and a fifth by the king. Francis, it seems, though favourable to the classical scholars, whose wishes might generally go against the established dialectics, yet, perhaps from connecting this innovation with those in religion, took the side of the university; and after a regular hearing, though, as is alleged, a very partial one, the majority of the judges pronouncing an unfavourable decision, Ramus was prohibited from teaching, and his book was suppressed. This prohibition, however, was taken off a few years afterwards, and his popularity as a lecturer in rhetoric gave umbrage to the university. It was not till some time afterwards that his system spread over part of the Continent.¹

14. Ramus has been once mentioned by Lord Bacon, certainly no bigot to Aristotle, with much contempt, and

¹ Launoy de variâ Aristot. fortuna in Acad. Paris. The sixth stage of Aristotle's fortune Launoy reckons to be the Ramean controversy, and the victory of the Greek philosopher. He quotes a passage from Omer Talon, which shows

that the trial was conducted with much unfairness and violence, p. 112. See also Brucker, v. 548-583, for a copious account of Ramus; and Buhle, B. 579-602; also Bayle.

It meets with unfair treatment.

another time with limited praise.^k It is, however, generally admitted by critical historians of philosophy, that he conferred material obligations on science by decrying the barbarous logic of the schoolmen. What are the merits of his own method is a different question. It seems evidently to have been more popular and convenient than that in use. He treated logic as merely the art of arguing to others, *ars disserendi*; and, not unnaturally from this definition, comprehended in it much that the ancients had placed in the province of rhetoric, the invention and disposition of proofs in discourse.

15. "If we compare," says Buhle, "the logic of Ramus with that which was previously in use, it is impossible not to recognise its superiority. If we judge of it by comparison with the extent of the science itself and the degree of perfection it has attained in the hands of modern writers, we shall find but an imperfect and faulty attempt." Ramus neglected, he proceeds to say, the relation of the reason to other faculties of the mind, the sources of error, and the best means of obviating them, the precautions necessary in forming and examining our judgments. His rules display the pedantry of system as much as those of the Aristotelians.^m

16. As the logic of Ramus appears to be of no more direct utility than that of Aristotle in assisting us to determine the absolute truth of propositions, and consequently could not satisfy Lord Bacon, so perhaps it does not interfere with the proper use of syllogisms, which indeed, on a less extended scale than in Aristotle, form part of the Ramean dialectics. Like all those who assailed the authority of Aristotle, he kept no bounds in depreciating his works, aware, no doubt, that the public,

^k Hooker also says with severe irony: "In the poverty of that other new-devised aid, two things there are notwithstanding singular. Of marvellous quick despatch it is, and doth show them that have it as much almost in three days as if it had dwelt threescore years with them," &c. Again: "Because the curiosity of man's wit doth many times with peril wade farther in the search of things than were convenient, the same is

thereby restrained into such generalities as, everywhere offering themselves, are apparent unto men of the weakest conceit that need be; so as, following the rules and precepts thereof, we may find it to be an art, which teacheth the way of speedy discourse, and restraineth the mind of man, that it may not wax over-wise." Eccles. Pol. i. § 6.

^m Buhle, ii. 593, 595.

and especially younger students, will pass more readily from admiration to contempt, than to a qualified estimation, of any famous man.

17. While Ramus was assaulting the stronghold of Aristotelian despotism, the syllogistic method of argumentation, another province of that extensive empire, its physical theory, was invaded by a still more audacious, and we must add, a much more unworthy innovator, Theophrastus Paracelsus. Though few of this extraordinary person's writings were published before the middle of the century, yet as he died in 1541, and his disciples began very early to promulgate his theories, we may introduce his name more appropriately in this than in any later period. The system, if so it may be called, of Paracelsus had a primary regard to medicine, which he practised with the boldness of a wandering empiric. It was not unusual in Germany to carry on this profession; and Paracelsus employed his youth in casting nativities, practising chiromancy, and exhibiting chemical tricks. He knew very little Latin, and his writings are as unintelligible from their style as their substance. Yet he was not without acuteness in his own profession; and his knowledge of pharmaceutic chemistry was far beyond that of his age. Upon this real advantage he founded those extravagant theories which attracted many ardent minds in the sixteenth century, and were afterwards woven into new schemes of fanciful philosophy. His own models were the oriental reveries of the Cabbala, and the theosophy of the mystics. He seized hold of a notion which easily seduces the imagination of those who do not ask for rational proof, that there is a constant analogy between the macrocosm, as they called it, of external nature, and the microcosm of man. This harmony and parallelism of all things, he maintains, can only be made known to us by divine revelation; and hence all heathen philosophy has been erroneous. The key to the knowledge of nature is in the Scriptures only, studied by means of the Spirit of God communicating an interior light to the contemplative soul. So great an obscurity reigns over the writings of Paracelsus, which, in Latin at least, are not originally his own, for he had but a scanty acquaintance with that language, that it is difficult to pronounce upon his

opinions, especially as he affects to use words in senses imposed by himself: the development of his physical system consisted in an accumulation of chemical theorems, none of which are conformable to sound philosophy."

18. A mixture of fanaticism and imposture is very palpable in Paracelsus, as in what he calls <sup>His impos-
tures,</sup> his Gabalistic art, which produces by imagination and natural faith, "per fidem naturalem ingenitam," all magical operations, and counterfeits by these means whatever we see in the external world. Man has a sidereal as well as material body, an astral element, which all do not partake in equal degrees; and therefore the power of magic, which is in fact the power of astral properties, or of producing those effects which the stars naturally produce, is not equally attainable by all. This astral element of the body survives for a time after death, and explains the apparition of dead persons; but in this state it is subject to those who possess the art of magic, which is then called necromancy.

19. Paracelsus maintained the animation of every-
and extra- thing; all minerals both feed and render their
vagas. food. And besides this life of every part of nature, it is peopled with spiritual beings, inhabitants of the four elements, subject to disease and death like man. These are the silvains (sylphs), undines, or nymphs, gnomes, and salamanders. It is thus observable that he first gave these names, which rendered afterwards the Rosicrucian fables so celebrated. These live with man, and sometimes, except the salamanders, bear children to him; they know future events, and reveal them to us; they are also guardians of hidden treasures, which may be obtained by their means.^o I may perhaps have said too much about paradoxes so absurd and mendacious; but literature is a garden of weeds as well as flowers; and Paracelsus forms a link in the history of opinion, which should not be overlooked.

20. The sixteenth century was fertile in men, like Paracelsus, full of arrogant pretensions, and
Cornelius Agrippa. eager to substitute their own dogmatism for

^o Brucker, iv. 646-684, has copiously decanted on the theosophy of Paracelsus; and a still more enlarged account of it will be found in the third volume of Sprengel's *Geschichte der Arzneykunst*, i. which I use in the French translation. Buhle is very brief in this instance, though he has a general partiality to mystical thapsodies. ^o Sprengel, iii. 305.

that they endeavoured to overthrow. They are, compared with Aristotle, like the ephemeral demagogues who start up to a power they abuse as well as usurp on the overthrow of some ancient tyranny. One of these was Cornelius Agrippa, chiefly remembered by the legends of his magical skill. Agrippa had drunk deep at the turbid streams of cabbalistic philosophy, which had already intoxicated two men of far greater merit, and born for greater purposes, Picus of Mirandola and Reuchlin. The treatise of Agrippa on occult philosophy is a rhapsody of wild theory and juggling falsehood. It links, however, the theosophy of Paracelsus and the later sect of Behmenists with an oriental lore, venerable in some measure for its antiquity, and full of those aspirations of the soul to break her limits, and withdraw herself from the dominion of sense, which soothed, in old time, the reflecting hours of many a solitary sage on the Ganges and the Oxus. The Jewish doctors had borrowed much from this eastern source, and especially the leading principle of their Cabbala, the emanation of all finite being from the infinite. But this philosophy was in all its successive stages mingled with arbitrary, if not absurd, notions as to angelic and demoniacal intelligences, till it reached a climax in the sixteenth century.

21. Agrippa, evidently the precursor of Paracelsus, builds his pretended philosophy on the four elements, by whose varying forces the phenomena of the world are chiefly produced; yet not altogether, since there are occult forces of greater efficacy than the elementary, and which are derived from the soul of the world, and from the influence of the stars. The mundane spirit actuates every being, but in different degrees, and gives life and form to each; form being derived from the ideas which the Deity has empowered his intelligent ministers, as it were by the use of his seal, to impress. A scale of being, that fundamental theorem of the emanative philosophy, connects the higher and lower orders of things; and hence arises the power of magic; for all things have, by their concatenation, a sympathy with those above and below them, as sound is propagated along a string. But besides these natural relations, which the occult philosophy

brings to light, it teaches us also how to propitiate and influence the intelligences, mundane, angelic, or demoniacal, which people the universe. This is best done by fumigations with ingredients corresponding to their respective properties. They may even thus be subdued, and rendered subject to man. The demons are clothed with a material body, and attached to the different elements; they always speak Hebrew, as the oldest tongue.^p It would be trifling to give one moment's consideration to this gibberish, were it not evidently connected with superstitious absurdities, that enchained the mind of Europe for some generations. We see the credence in witchcraft and spectral appearances, in astrology and magical charms, in demoniacal possessions, those fruitful springs of infatuation, wretchedness, and crime, sustained by an impudent parade of metaphysical philosophy. The system of Agrippa is the mere creed of magical imposture, on which Paracelsus, and still more Jacob Behmen, grafted a sort of religious mysticism. But in their general influence these theories were still more pernicious than the technical pedantry of the schools. A Venetian monk, Francis Georgius, published a scheme of blended Cabbalistic and Platonic, or Neo-Platonic, philosophy in 1525; but having no collateral pretensions to fame, like some other worshippers of the same phantom, he can only be found in the historians of obsolete paradoxes.^q

22. Agrippa has left, among other forgotten productions, His sceptical treatise. a treatise on the uncertainty of the sciences, which served in some measure to promote a sceptical school of philosophy; no very unnatural result of such theories as he had proposed. It is directed against the imperfections sufficiently obvious in most departments of science, but contains nothing which has not been said more ably since that time. It is remarkable that he contradicts much that he had advanced in favour of the occult philosophy, and of the art of Raymond Lully.^r

23. A man far superior to both Agrippa and Paracelsus was Jerome Cardan: his genius was Cardan. quick, versatile, fertile, and almost profound; yet no man can read the strange book on his own life,

^p Brucker, iv. 410; Sprengel, iii. 226; Buhle, ii. 368.

^q Brucker, iv. 374-386; Buhle, ii. 367.

^r Brucker, Buhle.

wherein he describes, or pretends to describe, his extraordinary character, without suspecting a portion of insanity; a suspicion which the hypothesis of wilful falsehood would, considering what the book contains, rather augment than diminish. Cardan's writings are extremely voluminous; the chief that relate to general philosophy are those entitled *De subtilitate et varietate rerum*. Brucker praises these for their vast erudition, supported by innumerable experiments and observations on nature, which furnish no trifling collection of facts to readers of judgment; while his incoherence of ideas, his extravagance of fancy, and confused method, have rendered him of little service to philosophy. Cardan professed himself a stanch enemy of Aristotle.*

SECT. II. 1520-1550.

On Moral and Political Philosophy.

24. By moral philosophy, we are to understand not only systems of ethics, and exhortations to virtue, but that survey of the nature or customs of mankind which men of reflecting minds are apt to take, and by which they become qualified to guide and advise their fellows. The influence of such men, through the popularity of their writings, is not the same in all periods of society; it has sensibly abated in modern times, and is chiefly exercised through fiction, or at least a more amusing style than was found sufficient for our forefathers; and from this change of fashion, as well as from the advance of real knowledge, and the greater precision of language, many books once famous have scarcely retained a place in our libraries, and never lie on our tables.

Influence
of moral
writers.

* Brucker, v. 85. Cardan had much of the same kind of superstition as Paracelsus and Agrippa. He admits, as the basis of his physical philosophy, a sympathy between the heavenly bodies and our own; not only general, but distributive; the sun being in harmony with the heart, the moon with the animal juices.

All organised bodies he held to be animated, so that there is no principle which may not be called nature. All is ruled by the properties of numbers. Heat and moisture are the only real qualities in nature; the first being the formal, the second the material cause of all things. Sprengel, iii. 278.

25. In this class of literature, good writing, such at least as at the time appears to be good, has always been the condition of public esteem. They form a large portion of the classical prose in every language. And it is chiefly in this point of view that several of the most distinguished can deserve any mention at present. None was more renowned in Italy than the Cortegiano of Castiglione, the first edition of which is in 1528. We here find both the gracefulness of the language in this, perhaps its best age, and the rules of polished life in an Italian court. These, indeed, are rather favourably represented, if we compare them with all we know of the state of manners from other sources; but it can be no reproach to the author that he raised the standard of honourable character above the level of practice. The precepts, however, are somewhat trivial, and the expression diffuse; faults not a little characteristic of his contemporaries. A book of this kind that is serious without depth of thought or warmth of feeling cannot be read through with pleasure.

26. At some distance below Castiglione in merit, and equally in reputation, we may place the dialogues of Sperone Speroni, a writer whose long life embraced two ages of Italian literature. These dialogues belong to the first, and were published in 1544. Such of them as relate to moral subjects, which he treats more theoretically than Castiglione, are solemn and dry; they contain good sense in good language; but the one has no originality, and the other no spirit.

27. A Spanish prelate in the court of Charles obtained an extraordinary reputation in Europe by a treatise so utterly forgotten at present, that Bousterwek has even omitted his name. This was Guevara, author of Marco Aurelio, or the Golden Book. It contains several feigned letters of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, which probably in a credulous age passed for genuine, and gave vogue to the book. It was continually reprinted in different languages for more than a century; scarce any book except the Bible, says Casaubon, has been so much translated or so frequently printed.¹ It must be owned that Guevara is dull; but

¹ [This was afterwards greatly enlarged by the author, and the title, *Relox de principes, the watch or dial of princes, added to the former.* The coun-

he wrote in the infancy of Spanish literature." It is fair to observe, that Guevara seems uniformly a friend to

terfeited letters are in this second work interspersed amidst a farrago of trite moral and religious reflections.—1842.]

Bayle speaks of Guevara's Marco Aurelio with great contempt; its reputation had doubtless much declined before that time.

" [The account of Guevara in the former edition, though conformable to the bibliographers, stood in need of some correction, which the learned Dr. W. West of Dublin has enabled me to give. " There are some circumstances connected with the *Relox* not generally known, which satisfactorily account for various erroneous statements that have been made on the subject by writers of high authority. The fact is that Guevara, about the year 1518, commenced a life and letters of M. Aurelius, which purported to be a translation of a Greek work he found at Florence. Having some time afterwards lent this in MS. to the emperor, it was surreptitiously copied, and printed, as he informs us himself, first in Seville, and afterwards in Portugal. This was the famous *Libro aureo*, or Golden Book, which for more than a century afterwards was so very popular, and which was so often translated. Guevara himself subsequently published it (1529), with considerable additions, under the title mentioned by you, but still, as I have already stated, forming but one treatise. An Italian translation of this was published in Venice in 1606, and there is also a Latin translation; but it was never so popular, nor so often reprinted, as the Golden Book, its original form. I have a copy of this letter in the original Spanish, printed at Antwerp in 1529, and have seen another, printed at Toledo in 1554, so that even after the author published it in an enlarged and altered form, it was apparently preferred. The English translation of the 'Golden Book of Marcus Aurelius, Emperor and eloquent Orator,' was made from the French in 1532, by Lord Berners, the translator of Froissart. According to Lowndes it was first printed by Berthelet in 1534, in octavo. My edition, by the same printer, is in quarto, 1539. I cannot discover from

what French translation the English was made, the earliest mentioned by Brunet being 1535. It must, however, have been very accurate, as the English, though taken from the Spanish only at second hand, through the French, follows it so closely as to have the appearance of a literal translation made directly from it. I have likewise the Aldine edition of the Italian version with additions (Venice, 1546). Antonio, Watts, and Lowndes, all seem to have been unaware of the literary history of the two works."

In a subsequent letter Dr. West observes, that the evidence of his statement is easily given from the language of Guevara himself, towards the conclusion of the prologue to the *Relox de principios*.

The following passage at the beginning of an edition of this work in the British Museum, without a title-page, but referred by a pencil note in the fly-leaf to the date of Seville, 1540, will confirm Dr. West's assertion:—

Comienca el primero libro del famosísimo emperador Marco Aurelio con el *Relox de principios* nuevamente añadido, compuesto por el muy reverendo y magnífico señor Don Antonio de Guevara, obispo de Guadix, predicador y coronista del emperador y rey Don Carlos quinto deste nombre; á cuya imperial celsitud se dirige la presente obra. En la qual son añadidas ciertas cartas del emperador Marco Aurelio, que si quitaron en otras impresiones que se hizieron antes desta, y tractase en este primero libro quanta excelencia es en el principe ser buen christiano, y quantos males se sigue de ser tyrano.

The second book is announced as follows:—Comienca el segundo libro llamado *Relox de principios*, en el qual va incorporado otro muy famoso libro llamado Marco Aurelio; trata el autor en el presente libro della manera que los principes y grandes señores se han de aver con sus mujeres, y de como han de criar á sus hijos.

I have not searched for the numerous editions of the Golden Book, but one in Spanish (Antwerp, 1529), which I have seen, contains only the original fiction of Marcus Aurelius, without the Dial of

good and just government, and that he probably employs Roman stories as a screen to his satire on the abuses of his time. Antonio and Bayle censure this as a literary forgery more severely than is quite reasonable. Andrès extols the style very highly.*

28. Guevara wrote better, or more pleasingly, in some other moral essays. One of them, *Menosprecio di corte y alabanza d'aldea*, indifferently translated into English by Thomas Tymme in 1575, contains some eloquent passages; and being dictated apparently by his own feelings instead of the spirit of book-making, is far superior to the more renowned Marco Aurelio. Antonio blames Guevara for affectation of antithesis, and too studious a desire to say everything well. But this sententious and antithetical style of the Spanish writers is worthy of our attention; for it was imitated by their English admirers, and formed a style much in vogue in the reigns of Elizabeth and James. Thus, to take a very short specimen from Tymme's translation: "In the court," says Guevara, "it profits little to be wise, forasmuch as good service is soon forgotten, friends soon fail, and enemies augment, the nobility doth forget itself, science is forgotten, humility despised, truth cloaked and hid, and good counsel refused." This elaborately condensed antithetical manner cannot have been borrowed from the Italians, of whom it is by no means a distinguishing feature.

29. Bouterwek has taken notice of a moral writer contemporary with Guevara, though not so successful in his own age, Perez d'Oliva. Of him Andrès says, that the slight specimen he has left in his dialogue on the dignity of man displays the elegance, politeness, and vigour of his style. "It is written," says

Princes. Dr. West is probably right in supposing that the former was the celebrated work which was so often printed throughout Europe; but there are several editions of the second in different languages. One in Italian, Venice, 1584, contains a fourth book, purporting to be the genuine work of Guevara, and translated from the Spanish in 1562. But whether this appears in any Spanish edition I do not know.

*The account given of Guevara in the *Biographie Universelle* is plainly written

in ignorance of the facts for which I am indebted to my learned correspondent.—1842.]

* vii. 148. In 1541 Sir Thomas Elyot published 'The image of government compiled of the acts and sentences of Alexander Severus,' as the work of Encolpius, an imaginary secretary to that emperor. Some have thought this genuine, or at least no forgery of Elyot's; but I see little reason to doubt that he imitated Guevara. *Fabric. Bibl. Lat. and Herbert.*

Bouterwek, "in a natural and easy manner; the ideas are for the most part clearly and accurately developed, and the oratorical language, particularly where it is appropriately introduced, is powerful and picturesque."⁷

30. The writings of Erasmus are very much dedicated to the inculcation of Christian ethics. The *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, the *Lingua*, and, above all, the *Colloquies*, which have this primary object in view, may be distinguished from the rest. The *Colloquies* are, from their nature, the most sportive and amusing of his works; the language of Erasmus has no prudery, nor his moral code, though strict, any austerity; it is needless to add, that his piety has no superstition. The dialogue is short and pointed, the characters display themselves naturally, the ridicule falls in general with skill and delicacy; the moral is not forced, yet always in view; the manners of the age, in some of the colloquies, as in the *German Inn*, are humorously and agreeably represented. Erasmus, perhaps, in later times, would have been successful as a comic writer. The works of Vives breathe an equally pure spirit of morality. But it is unnecessary to specify works of this class, which, valuable as they are in their tendency, form too much the staple literature of every generation to be enumerated in its history. The treatise of Melancthon, *Moralis Philosophiæ Epitome*, stands on different grounds. It is a compendious system of ethics, built in great measure on that of Aristotle, but with such variation as the principles of Christianity, or his own judgment, led him to introduce. Hence, though he exhorts young students, as the result of his own long reflection on the subject, to embrace the Peripatetic theory of morals, in preference to those of the Stoic or Epicurean school,⁸ and contends for the utility of moral philosophy, as part of the law of God, and the exposition of that of nature, he admits that the reason is too weak to discern the necessity of perfect obedience, or the sinfulness of natural appetite.⁹ In this epitome, which is

Ethical
writings of
Erasmus
and Me-
lancthon.

⁷ Bouterwek, p. 369; Andrès, vii. 149.

⁸ Ego vero qui has sectarum controversias diu multumque agitavi, *ἀπὸ καὶ ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ σπειρώμενος*, ut Plato facere præcipit, valde adhortor adolescentulos, ut repudiatis Stoicis et Epicureis, amplectantur

Peripatetica. Præfat. ad Mor. Philos. Epist. (1549.)

⁹ Id., p. 4. The following passage, taken nearly at random, may serve as a fair specimen of Melancthon's style:—

Primum cum necesse sit legem Dei,

far from servilely following the Aristotelian dogmas, he declares wholly against usury, less wise in this than Calvin, and asserts the magistrate's right to punish heretics.

61. Sir Thomas Elyot's Governor, published in 1531, though it might also find a place in the history of political philosophy or of classical literature, seems best to fall under this head—education of youth being certainly no insignificant province of moral science. The author was a gentleman of good family, and had been employed by the king in several embassies. The *Biographia Britannica* pronounces him “an excellent grammarian, poet, rhetorician, philosopher, physician, cosmographer, and historian.” For some part of this sweeping eulogy we have no evidence; but it is a high praise to have been one of our earliest English writers of worth, and though much inferior in genius to sir Thomas More, equal perhaps in learning and sagacity to any scholar of the age of Henry VIII. The plan of sir Thomas Elyot in his *Governor*, as laid down in his dedication to the king, is bold enough. It is “to describe in our vulgar tongue the form of a just public weal, which matter I have gathered as well of the sayings of most noble authors Greek and Latin, as by mine own experience, I being continually pained in some daily affairs of the public weal of this most noble realm almost from my childhood.” But it is far from answering to this promise. After a few pages on the superiority of regal over every other government, he passes to the subject of education, not of a prince only, but any gentleman's son, with which he fills up the rest of his first book.

item magistratum leges nosse, ut disciplinam teneamus ad coercendas cupiditates, facile intelligi potest, hanc philosophiam etiam prodesse, quæ est quedam domestica disciplina, quæ cum demonstrat fontes et causas virtutum, accendit animos ad earum amorem; abeunt enim studia in mores, atque hoc magis invitatur animi, quia quo propius aspiciuntur res bonas, eo magis ipsas et admiramur et amamus. Hic autem perfecta notitia virtutis queritur. Neque vero dubium est, quin, ut Plato ait, sapientia, si quod ejus simulacrum manifestum in oculos incurreret, acerrimos amores excitaret. Nulla autem fingi effigies

potest, quæ propius exprimat virtutem et clarius ob oculos ponat spectantibus, quam hæc doctrina. Quare ejus tractatio magnam vim habet ad excitandos animos ad amorem rerum honestarum, præsertim in bonis ac mediocribus ingenii. p. 6.

He tacitly retracts in this treatise all he had said against free-will in the first edition of the *Loci Communes*; in hæc questione moderatio adhibenda est, ne quas amplectamur opiniones immoderatas in utramque partem, quæ aut moribus officiant, aut beneficia Christi obscurant. p. 34.

32. This contains several things worthy of observation. He advises that children be used to speak Latin from their infancy, and either learn Latin and Greek together, or begin with Greek. Elyot deprecates "cruel and *yrous* schoolmasters, by whom the wits of children be dulled, whereof we need no better author to witness than daily experience."^b All testimonies concur to this savage ill-treatment of boys in the schools of this period. The fierceness of the Tudor government, the religious intolerance, the polemical brutality, the rigorous justice, when justice it was, of our laws, seem to have engendered a hardness of character, which displayed itself in severity of discipline, when it did not even reach the point of arbitrary or malignant cruelty. Every one knows the behaviour of Lady Jane Grey's parents towards their accomplished and admirable child—the slave of their temper in her brief life—the victim of their ambition in death. The story told by Erasmus of Colet is also a little too trite for repetition. The general fact is indubitable; and I think we may ascribe much of the hypocrisy and disingenuousness, which were so unfortunately too much displayed in this and the first part of the next century, to the rigid scheme of domestic discipline so frequently adopted; though I will not say but that we owe some part of the firmness and power of self-command, which were equally manifest in the English character, to the same cause.

33. Elyot dwells much and justly on the importance of elegant arts, such as music, drawing, and carving, by which he means sculpture, and of many exercises, in liberal education; and objects with reason to the usual practice of turning mere boys at fifteen to the study of the laws.^c In the second book he seems to come back to his original subject, by proposing to consider what qualities a governor ought to possess. But this soon turns to long commonplace ethics, copiously illustrated out of ancient history, but perhaps, in general, little more applicable to kings than to private men, at least those of superior station. It is plain that Elyot did not venture to handle the political part of his subject as he wished to do. He seems worthy, upon the whole, on account of the solidity of his reflec-

^b Chap. x.^c Chap. xiv.

tions, to hold a higher place than Ascham, to whom, in some respects, he bears a good deal of resemblance.

34. Political philosophy was not yet a common theme with the writers of Europe, unless so far as the moral duties of princes may have been vaguely touched by Guevara or Elyot, or their faults strongly but incidentally adverted to by Erasmus and More. One great luminary, however, appeared at this time, though, as he has been usually deemed, rather a sinister meteor than a benignant star. It is easy to anticipate the name of Nicolas Machiavel. His writings are posthumous, and were first published at Rome early in 1532, with an approbation of the pope. It is certain, however, that the treatise called *The Prince* was written in 1513, and the *Discourses on Livy* about the same time.^d Few are ignorant that Machiavel filled for nearly fifteen years the post of secretary to that government of Florence which was established between the expulsion of the Medici in 1494 and their return in 1512. This was, in fact, the remnant of the ancient oligarchy, which had yielded to the ability and popular influence of Cosmo and Lorenzo de' Medici. Machiavel, having served this party, over which the gonfalonier Pietro Soderini latterly presided with great talents and activity, was naturally involved in their ruin, and having undergone imprisonment and torture on a charge of conspiracy against the new government, was living in retired poverty when he set himself down to the composition of his two political treatises. The strange theories that have been brought forward to account for *The Prince* of Machiavel could never be revived after the publication of Ginguéné's history of Italian literature, and the article on Machiavel in the *Biographie Universelle*, if men had not sometimes a perverse pleasure in seeking refinements after the simple truth has been laid before them.^e His own language may assure us of what certainly is not very improbable, that his object was to be employed in the service of Julian de' Medici, who was at the head of the state in

^d There are mutual references in each of these books to the other, from which Ginguéné has reasonably inferred that they were in progress at the same time. *Hist. Litt. de l'Italie*, viii. 46.

^e Ginguéné has taken great pains with

his account of Machiavel, and I do not know that there is a better. The *Biographie Universelle* has a good anonymous article. Tiraboschi had treated the subject in a most slovenly manner.

Florence, almost in the situation of a prince, though without the title, and that he wrote this treatise to recommend himself in his eyes. He had been faithful to the late powers; but these powers were dissolved; and in a republic, a dissolved government, itself the recent creature of force and accident, being destitute of the prejudice in favour of legitimacy, could have little chance of reviving again. It is probable, from the general tenor of Machiavel's writings, that he would rather have lived under a republic than under a prince; but the choice was not left; and it was better, in his judgment, to serve a master usefully for the state, than to waste his life in poverty and insignificance.

35. We may also in candour give Machiavel credit for sincerity in that animated exhortation to Julian which concludes the last chapter of *The Prince*, where he calls him forth to the noble enterprise of rescuing Italy from the barbarians. His motives in writing *The Prince*. Twenty years that beautiful land had been the victim of foreign armies, before whom in succession every native state had been humiliated or overthrown. His acute mind easily perceived that no republican institutions would possess stability or concert enough to cast off this yoke. He formed, therefore, the idea of a prince; one raised newly to power, for Italy furnished no hereditary line; one sustained by a native army, for he deprecates the employment of mercenaries; one loved, but feared also, by the many; one to whom, in so magnanimous an undertaking as the liberation of Italy, all her cities would render a willing obedience. It might be, in part, a strain of flattery in which he points out to Julian of Medici a prospect so disproportionate, as we know historically, to his opportunities and his character; yet it was one also perhaps of sanguine fancy and unfeigned hope.

36. None of the explanations assigned for the motives of Machiavel in *The Prince* is more groundless than one very early suggested, that by putting the house of Medici on schemes of tyranny, he was artfully luring them to their ruin. Some of his rules not immoral. Whether this could be reckoned an excuse, may be left to the reader; but we may confidently affirm that it contradicts the whole tenor of that treatise. And, without palliating the worst passages, it may be said that few books have been

more misrepresented. It is very far from true that he advises a tyrannical administration of government, or one likely to excite general resistance, even to those whom he thought or rather knew from experience to be placed in the most difficult position for retaining power, by having recently been exalted to it. The Prince, he repeatedly says, must avoid all that will render him despicable or odious, especially injury to the property of citizens, or to their honour.^f This will leave him nothing to guard against but the ambition of a few. Conspiracies, which are of little importance while the people are well affected, become unspeakably dangerous as soon as they are hostile.^g Their love, therefore, or at least the absence of their hatred, is the basis of the governor's security, and far better than any fortresses.^h A wise prince will honour the nobility, at the same time that he gives content to the people.ⁱ If the observance of these maxims is likely to subvert a ruler's power, he may be presumed to have designed the ruin of the Medici. The first duke in the new dynasty of that house, Cosmo I., lived forty years in the practice of all that Machiavel would have advised, for evil as well as good; and his reign was not insecure.

37. But much of a darker taint is found in *The Prince*. Good faith, justice, clemency, religion, should be ever in the mouth of the ideal ruler; but he must learn not to fear the discredit of any actions which he finds necessary to preserve his power.^k In a new government it is impossible to avoid the charge of cruelty—for new states are always exposed to dangers. Such cruelties perpetrated at the outset and from necessity, "if we may be permitted to speak well of what is evil," may be useful; though when they become habitual and unnecessary, they are incompatible with the continuance of this species of power.^m It is best to be both loved and feared; but if a choice must be made, it should be of the latter. For men are naturally ungrateful, fickle, dissembling, cowardly, and will promise much to a benefactor, but desert him in his need, and will break the bonds of love much sooner than those of fear. But

^f c. xvii. and xix.

^g c. xix.

^h c. xx.: la miglior fortezza che sia o non essere odiato de' popoli.

ⁱ c. xix.

^k c. xvi. xviii.

^m c. viii.

fear does not imply hatred; nor need a prince apprehend that, while he abstains from the properties and the lives of his subjects. Occasions to take the property of others never cease, while those of shedding blood are rare; and besides, a man will sooner forgive the death of his father than the loss of his inheritance.^a

38. The eighteenth chapter, on the manner in which princes should observe faith, might pass for a satire on their usual violations of it, if the author did not too seriously manifest his approbation of them. The best palliation of this, and of what else has been justly censured in Machiavel, is to be derived from his life and times. These led him to consider every petty government as in a continual state of self-defence against treachery and violence, from its ill-affected citizens, as well as from its ambitious neighbours. It is very difficult to draw the straight line of natural right in such circumstances; and neither perhaps the cool reader of a remote age, nor the secure subject of a well-organised community, is altogether a fair arbiter of what has been done or counselled in days of peril and necessity; relatively, I mean, to the persons, not to the objective character of actions. There is certainly a steadiness of moral principle and Christian endurance which tells us that it is better not to exist at all than to exist at the price of virtue; but few indeed of the countrymen and contemporaries of Machiavel had any claim to the practice, whatever they might have to the profession, of such integrity. His crime in the eyes of the world, and it was truly a crime, was to have cast away the veil of hypocrisy, the profession of a religious adherence to maxims which at the same moment were violated.^b

39. The Discourses of Machiavel upon the first books of Livy, though not more celebrated than The Prince, have been better esteemed. Far from being exempt from the same bias in favour of unscrupulous politics, they abound with similar maxims,

^a c. xvii.

^b Morhof has observed that all the arts of tyranny which we read in Machiavel had been unfolded by Aristotle; and Ginguéné has shown this in some measure from the eleventh chapter of the fifth book of the latter's Politics. He

might also have quoted the Economics; the second book, however, of which, full of the stratagems and frauds of Dionysius, though nearly of the age of Aristotle, is not genuine. Mitford, with his usual partiality to tyrants (chap. xxxi. sect. 8), seems to think them all laudable.

especially in the third book; but they contain more sound and deep thinking on the spirit of small republics than could be found in any preceding writer that has descended to us; more, probably, in a practical sense, than the Politics of Aristotle, though they are not so comprehensive. In reasoning upon the Roman government, he is naturally sometimes misled by confidence in Livy; but his own acquaintance with modern Italy was in some measure the corrective that secured him from the errors of ordinary antiquaries.

40. These discourses are divided into three books, and contain 143 chapters with no great regard to arrangement; written probably as reflections occasionally presented themselves to the author's mind. They are built upon one predominant idea; that the political and military annals of early Rome having had their counterparts in a great variety of parallel instances which the recent history of Italy furnished, it is safe to draw experimental principles from them, and to expect the recurrence of similar consequences in the same circumstances. Though this reasoning may easily mislead us, from an imperfect estimate of the conditions, and does not give a high probability to our anticipations, it is such as those entrusted with the safety of commonwealths ought not to neglect. But Machiavel sprinkles these discourses with thoughts of a more general cast, and often applies a comprehensive knowledge of history, and a long experience of mankind.

41. Permanence, according to Machiavel, is the great aim of government.² In this very common sentiment among writers accustomed to republican forms, although experience of the mischiefs generally attending upon change might lead to it, there is, no doubt, a little of Machiavel's original taint, the reference of political ends to the benefit of the rulers rather than that of the community. But the polity which he seems for the most part to prefer, though he does not speak explicitly, nor always perhaps consistently, is one wherein the people should at least have great weight. In one passage he recommends, like Cicero and Tacitus, the triple form, which endeavours to conciliate the power of a prince

with that of a nobility and a popular assembly; as the best means of preventing that cycle of revolutions through which, as he supposes, the simpler institutions would naturally, if not necessarily, pass; from monarchy to aristocracy, from that to democracy, and finally to monarchy again; though, as he observes, it rarely happens that there is time given to complete this cycle, which requires a long course of ages, the community itself, as an independent state, being generally destroyed before the close of the period.⁴ But, with his predilection for a republican polity, he yet saw its essential weakness in difficult circumstances; and hence observes that there is no surer way to ruin a democracy than to set it on bold undertakings, which it is sure to misconduct.⁵ He has made also the profound and important remark, that states are rarely either formed or reformed, except by one man.⁶

42. Few political treatises can even now be read with more advantage than the Discourses of Machiavel; and in proportion as the course of civil society tends farther towards democracy, and especially if it should lead to what seems the inevitable consequence of democracy, a considerable subdivision of independent states, they may acquire an additional value. The absence of all passion, the continual reference of every public measure to a distinct end, the disregard of vulgar associations with names or persons, render him, though too cold of heart for a very generous reader, a sagacious and useful monitor for any one who can employ the necessary methods of correcting his theorems. He formed a school of subtle reasoners upon political history, which, both in Italy and France, was in vogue for two centuries; and, whatever might be its errors, has hardly been superseded for the better by the loose declamation that some dignify with the name of philosophical politics, and in which we continually find a more flagitious and undisguised abandonment of moral rules for the sake of some idol of a general principle than can be imputed to The Prince of Machiavel.

Their use
and influ-
ence.

⁴ c. ii. and vi.

⁵ c. liii.

⁶ c. 9. Corniani, iv. 70, has attempted to reduce into system the Discourses of

Machiavel, which have no regular arrangement, so that nearly the same thoughts recur in different chapters.

43. Besides these two works, the History of Florence is enough to immortalise the name of Nicolas Machiavel. Seldom has a more giant stride been made in any department of literature than by this judicious, clear, and elegant history: for the preceding historical works, whether in Italy or out of it, had no claims to the praise of classical composition, while this has ranked among the greatest of that order. Machiavel was the first who gave at once a general and a luminous development of great events in their causes and connexions, such as we find in the first book of his History of Florence. That view of the formation of European societies, both civil and ecclesiastical, on the ruins of the Roman empire, though it may seem now to contain only what is familiar, had never been attempted before, and is still, for its conciseness and truth, as good as any that can be read.

44. The little treatises of Giannotti and Contarini on the republic of Venice, being chiefly descriptive of actual institutions, though the former, a Florentine by birth, sometimes reasons upon and even censures them, would not deserve notice, except as they display an attention to the workings of a most complicated, and at the same time a most successful machine. The wonderful permanency, tranquillity, and prosperity of Venice became the admiration of Europe, and especially, as was most natural, of Italy; where she stood alone, without internal usurpation, or foreign interference, strong in wisdom more than in arms, the survivor of many lines of petty princes, and many revolutions of turbulent democracy, which had, on either side of the Apennine, run their race of guilt and sorrow for several preceding centuries.[†]

45. Calvin alone, of the reformers in this period, has touched upon political government as a theme of rational discussion; though he admits that it is needless to dispute which is the best form of polity, since private men have not the right of altering that under which they live. The change from monarchy to despotism, he says, is easy; nor is that from aristocracy to the dominion of a few much more difficult;

[†] These are both published in Grævius, *Thesaur. Antiq. Italiae*. See, too, Ginguéné, viii. 126.

but nothing is so apt to follow as sedition from a popular regimen. But upon the whole he considers an aristocratic form to be far better than the other two, on account of the vices and infirmity of human nature.^u

SECT. III. 1501-1510.

Jurisprudence.

46. UNDER the name jurisprudence, we are not yet to seek for writings on that high department of moral philosophy, which treats of the rules of universal justice, by which positive legislation and courts of judicature ought to be directed. Jurisprudence confined to Roman law. Whatever of this kind may appear in works of this period arises incidentally out of their subject, and does not constitute their essence. According to the primary and established sense of the word, especially on the Continent, jurisprudence is the science of the Roman law, and is seldom applied to any other positive system, but least of all to the law of nature. Yet the application of this study has been too extensive in Europe, and the renown of its chief writers too high, to admit of our passing wholly over this department of literature, as we do some technical and professional subjects.

47. The civil or Roman law is comprehended in four leading divisions (besides some later than the time of Justinian), very unequal in length, but altogether forming that multifarious collection usually styled the *Corpus Juris Civilis*. The laws not well arranged. As this has sometimes been published in a single, though a vast and closely printed volume, it may seem extraordinary that by means of arranged indexes, marginal references, and similar resources, it was not, soon after it came into use as a standard authority, or, at least, soon after the invention of printing, reduced into a less disorderly state than its present disposition exhibits. But the labours of the older jurists, in accumulating glosses or short marginal

^u Calv. Inst. l. iv. c. 20, § 8.

interpretations, were more calculated to multiply than to disentangle the intricacies of the Pandects.

48. It is at first sight more wonderful, that many nations of Europe, instead of selecting the most valuable portion of the civil law, as a directory to their own tribunals, should have bestowed decisive authority on that entire unwieldy body which bore the name of Justinian; laws which they could not understand, and which, in great measure, must, if understood, have been perceived to clash with the new order of human society. But the homage paid to the Roman name, the previous reception of the Theodosian code in the same countries, the vague notion of the Italians, artfully encouraged by one party, that the Conrads and Frederics were really successors of the Theodosii and Justinians, the frequent clearness, acuteness, and reasonableness of the decisions of the old lawyers which fill the Pandects, the immense difficulty of separating the less useful portion, and of obtaining public authority for a new system, the deference, above all, to great names, which cramped every effort of the human mind in the middle ages, will sufficiently account for the adoption of a jurisprudence so complicated, uncertain, unintelligible, and ill fitted to the times.

49. The portentous ignorance of the earlier jurists in everything that could aid their textual explanations has been noticed in the first chapter of this volume. This could not hold out long after the revival of learning. Budæus, in his Observations on the Pandects, was the first to furnish better verbal interpretations; but his philological erudition was not sustained by that knowledge of the laws themselves which nothing but long labour could impart.* Such a knowledge of the Latin language as even after the revival of letters was given in the schools, or, we may add, as is now obtained by those who are counted learned among us, is by no means sufficient for the understanding those Roman lawyers, whose short decisions, or, as we should call them, opinions, occupy the fifty books of the Pandects. They had not only a technical terminology, as is perhaps necessary in professional

Adoption
of the entire
system.

Utility of
general
learning to
lawyers.

* Gravina, Origines Jur. Civ., p. 211.

usage, but many words and phrases not merely technical occur, as to the names and notions of things, which the classical authors, especially such as are commonly read, do not contain. Yet these writers of antiquity, when diligently pursued, throw much light upon jurisprudence; they assist conjecture, if they do not afford proof, as to the meaning of words; they explain allusions, they connect the laws with their temporary causes or general principles; and if they seem a little to lead us astray from the great object of jurisprudence, the adjudication of right, it was still highly important, in the conditions that Europe had imposed upon herself, to ascertain what it was that she had chosen to obey.

50. Ulric Zasius, a professor at Friburg, and Garcia d'Erzilla, whose Commentaries were printed in 1515, should have the credit, according to Alciati; bis reform of law. Andrès, of leading the way to a more elegant jurisprudence.[†] The former of these is known, in some measure, as a scholar and a correspondent of Erasmus; for the latter I have to depend on the testimony of his countryman. But the general voice of Europe has always named Andrew Alciati of Milan as the restorer of the Roman law. He taught, from the year 1518 to his death in 1550, in the universities of Avignon, Milan, Bourges, Paris, and Bologna. Literature became with him the handmaid of law: the historians of Rome, her antiquaries, her orators and poets, were called upon to elucidate the obsolete words and obscure allusions of the Pandects; to which, the earlier as well as the more valuable and extensive portion of the civil law, this method of classical interpretation is chiefly applicable. Alciati had another advantage, denied to his predecessors of the middle ages, in the possession of the Byzantine jurists; with whom, says Gravina, the learning of Roman law had been preserved in a more perfect state amidst other vestiges of the empire, and while almost extinguished in Italy by the barbarians, had been in daily usage at Constantinople down to its capture.

[†] Andrès, xvi. 143. Savigny agrees with Andrès as to the merits of Zasius, and observes that the revival of the study of the laws in their original sources, instead of the commentators, had been announced by several signs

before the sixteenth century. Ambrogio Traversari had recommended this, and Lebriza wrote against the errors of Accursius, though in a superficial manner. *Gesch. des Römischen Rechts*, vi. 364.

Alciati was the first who taught the lawyers to write with purity and elegance. Erasmus has applied to him the eulogy of Cicero on Scævola, that he was the most jurisprudent of orators, and the most eloquent of lawyers. But he deserved also the higher praise of sweeping away the rubbish of conflicting glosses, which had so confounded the students by their contrary subtilties, that it had become a practice to count, instead of weighing, their authorities. It has been regretted that he made little use of philosophy in the exposition of law; but this could not have been attempted in the sixteenth century without the utmost danger of misleading the interpreter.*

51. The practical lawyers, whose prejudices were nourished by their interests, conspired with the professors of the old school to clamour against the introduction of literature into jurisprudence. Alciati was driven sometimes from one university to another by their opposition; but more frequently his restless disposition and his notorious desire of gain were the causes of his migrations. They were the means of diffusing a more liberal course of studies in France as well as Italy, and especially in the great legal university of Bourges. He stood not, however, alone in scattering the flowers of polite literature over the thorny brakes of jurisprudence. An eminent Spaniard, Antonio Agustino, might perhaps be placed almost on a level with him. The first work of Agustino, *Emendationes Juris Civilis*, was published in 1544. Andrès, seldom deficient in praising his compatriots, pronounces such an eulogy on the writings of Agustino, as to find no one but Cujacius worthy of being accounted his equal, if indeed he does not give the preference in genius and learning to the older writer.^a Gravina is less diffusely panegyric; and in fact it is certain that Agustino, though a lawyer of great erudition and intelligence, has been eclipsed by those for whom he prepared the way.

* Bayle, art. Alciati; Gravina, p. 206; Tiraboschi, ix. 115; Corniani, v. 57.

^a Vol. xvi. p. 148.

CHAPTER VIII.

HISTORY OF THE LITERATURE OF TASTE IN EUROPE FROM
1520 TO 1550.

SECT. I. 1520-1550.

Poetry in Italy — In Spain and Portugal — In France and Germany — In England
— Wyatt and Surrey — Latin Poetry.

1. THE singular grace of Ariosto's poem had not less distinguished it than his fertility of invention and brilliancy of language. For the Italian poetry, since the days of Petrarch, with the exception of Lorenzo and Politian, the boasts of Florence, had been very deficient in elegance; the sonnets and odes of the fifteenth century, even those written near its close, by Tibaldeo, Serafino d'Aquila, Benivieni, and other now obscure names, though the list of poets in Crescimbeni will be found very long, are hardly mentioned by the generality of critics but for the purpose of censure; while Boiardo, who deserved most praise for bold and happy inventions, lost much of it through an unpolished and inharmonious style. In the succeeding period, the faults of the Italian school were entirely opposite; in Bembo, and those who, by their studious and servile imitation of one great master, were called Petrarchists, there was an elaborate sweetness, a fastidious delicacy, a harmony of sound, which frequently served as an excuse for coldness of imagination and poverty of thought. "As the too careful imitation of Cicero," says Tiraboschi, "caused Bembo to fall into an affected elegance in his Latin style, so in his Italian poetry, while he labours to restore the manner of Petrarch, he displays more of art than of natural genius. Yet by banishing the rudeness of former poetry, and

pointing out the right path, he was of no small advantage to those who knew how to imitate his excellences and avoid his faults."^a

2. The chief care of Bembo was to avoid the un-
Its beauties and defects. polished lines which deformed the poetry of the fifteenth century in the eyes of one so exquisitely sensible to the charms of diction. It is from him that the historians of Italian literature date the revival of the Petrarchan elegance; of which a foreigner, unless conversant with the language in all its varieties, can hardly judge, though he may perceive the want of original conception, and the monotony of conventional phrases, which is too frequently characteristic of the Italian sonnet. Yet the sonnets of Bembo on the death of his Morosina, the mother of his children, display a real tenderness not unworthy of his master; and the canzone on that of his brother has obtained not less renown; though Tassoni, a very fastidious critic, has ridiculed its centonism, or studious incorporation of lines from Petrarch; a practice which the habit of writing Latin poetry, wherein it should be sparingly employed, but not wholly avoided, would naturally encourage.^b

3. The number of versifiers whom Italy produced in the sixteenth century was immensely great.
Character of Italian poetry. Crescimbeni gives a list of eighty earlier than 1550, whom he selects from many hundred ever-forgotten names. By far the larger proportion of these confined themselves to the sonnet and the canzone or ode; and the theme is generally love, though they sometimes change it to religion. A conventional phraseology, an interminable repetition of the beauties and coldness of perhaps an ideal, certainly to us an unknown mistress, run through these productions; which so much resemble each other as sometimes to suggest to any one who reads the Sceltas which bring together many extracts from these poets, no other parallel than that of the hooting of owls in concert; a sound melancholy and not unpleasing to all ears in its way, but monotonous, unintellectual, and manifesting as little real sorrow or sentiment in the bird as these compositions do in the poet.^c

^a Vol. x. p. 3.

^b Tiraboschi, *ibid.*; Corniani, *iv.* 102.

^c Muratori himself observes the tantalizing habit in which sonnetteers in-

4. A few exceptions may certainly be made. Alamanni, though the sonnet is not his peculiar line of strength, and though he often follows the track of Petrarch with almost servile imitation, could not, with his powerful genius, but raise himself above the common level. His *Lygura Pianta*, a Genoese lady, the heroine of many sonnets, is the shadow of Laura; but when he turns to the calamities of Italy and his own, that stern sound is heard again that almost reminds us of Dante and Alfieri. The Italian critics, to whom we must of course implicitly defer as to the grace and taste of their own writers, speak well of Molza, and some other of the smaller poets, though they are seldom exempt from the general defects above mentioned. But none does Crescimbeni so much extol as a poetess, in every respect the most eminent of her sex in Italy, the widow of the Marquis of Pescara, Vittoria Colonna, surnamed, he says, by the public voice, the divine. The rare virtues and consummate talents of this lady were the theme of all Italy, in that brilliant age of her literature; and her name is familiar to the ordinary reader at this day. The canzone dedicated to the memory of her illustrious husband is worthy of both.^d

5. The satires of Ariosto, seven in number, and composed in the Horatian manner, were published after his death in 1534. Tiraboschi places them at the head of that class of poetry. The reader will find an analysis of these satires, with some extracts, in Ginguéné.^e The twelve satires of Alamanni, one of the Florentine exiles, of which the first edition is dated in 1532, though of earlier publication than those of Ariosto, indicate an acquaintance with them. They are to one another as Horace and Juvenal, and as their fortunes might lead us to expect; one gay, easy, full of

dulge themselves, of threatening to die for love, which never comes to anything; quella volgare smania che mostrano gl' amanti di voler morire, e che tante volte s' ode in bocca loro, ma non mai viene ad effetto.

^d Crescimbeni della volgar Poesia, vols. II. and III. For the character of Vittoria Colonna, see II. 360. Roscoe (Leo X., III. 314) thinks her canzone on her husband in no respect inferior to

that of Bembo on his brother. It is rather by a stretch of chronology that this writer reckons Vittoria, Berni, and several more, among the poets of Leo's age.

^e ix. 100—129; Corniani, iv. 55. In one passage of the second satire Ariosto assumes a tone of higher dignity than Horace ever ventured, and inveighs against the Italian courts in the spirit of his rival Alamanni.

Alamanni.

Vittoria
Colonna.

Satires of
Ariosto and
Alamanni.

the best form of Epicurean philosophy, cheerfulness, and content in the simpler enjoyments of life; the other ardent, scornful, unsparing, declamatory, a hater of vice, and no great lover of mankind, pouring forth his moral wrath in no feeble strain. We have seen in another place his animadversions on the court of Rome; nor does anything in Italy escape his resentment.^f The other poems of Alamanni are of a very miscellaneous description; eclogues, little else than close imitations of Theocritus and Virgil, elegies, odes, hymns, psalms, fables, tragedies, and what were called *selve*, a name for all unclassified poetry.

6. Alamanni's epic, or rather romantic poem, the *Avarchide*, is admitted by all critics to be a work of old age, little worthy of his name. But his poem on agriculture, *La Coltivazione*, has been highly extolled. A certain degree of languor seems generally to hang on Italian blank verse, and in didactic poetry it is not likely to be overcome. The *Bees of Rucellai* is a poem written with exquisite sweetness of style; but the critics have sometimes forgotten to mention that it is little else than a free translation from the fourth *Georgic*.^g No one has ever pretended to rescue from the charge of dulness and insipidity the epic poem of the father of blank verse, Trissino, on the liberation of Italy from the Goths by Belisarius. It is, of all long poems that are remembered at all, the most unfortunate in its reputation.

7. A very different name is that of Berni, partly known by his ludicrous poetry, which has given that style the appellation of *Poesia Bernesca*, rather on account of his excellence than originality, for nothing is so congenial to the Italians,^h but far more by his

^f The following lines, which conclude the twelfth and last satire, may serve as a specimen of Alamanni's declamatory tone of invective, and his bitter attacks on Rome, whom he is addressing:—

O chi vedesse il ver, vedrebbe come
 Più dismor tu, che 'l tuo Luther Martino
 Porti a te stessa, e più gravose some;
 Non la Germania, nè; ma l'ocio, il vino,
 Avarizia, ambition, lussuria e gola,
 T'è mena al fin, che già veggiam vicino.
 Non par questo dico io non Francia sola,

Non pur la Spagna, tutta Italia ancora
 Che ti tien d'heresia, di vizi scuola.
 E che nol crede, ne dimandi ogn'ora
 Urbin, Ferrara, l'Orso, e la Colonna,
 La Marca, il Romagnuol, ma più che plora
 Per te servendo, che fu d'altri donna.

^g Roscoe's *Leo*, iii. 351; Tiraboschi, x. 85; Algarotti and Corniani (v. 116), who quotes him, do not esteem the poem of Rucellai highly.

^h Corniani, iv. 252; Roscoe, iii. 323.

ri-faccimento, or remoulding of the poem of Boiardo. The Orlando Innamorato, an ill-written poem, especially to Tuscan ears, had been encumbered by the heavy continuation of Agostini. Yet if its own intrinsic beauties of invention would not have secured it from oblivion, the vast success of the Orlando Furioso, itself only a continuation, and borrowing most of its characters from Boiardo's poem, must have made it impossible for Italians of any curiosity to neglect the primary source of so much delight. Berni therefore undertook the singular office of writing over again the Orlando Innamorato, preserving the sense of almost every stanza, though every stanza was more or less altered, and inserting nothing but a few introductory passages, in the manner of Ariosto, to each canto.¹ The genius of Berni, playful, satirical, flexible, was admirably fitted to perform this labour; the rude Lombardisms of the lower Po gave way to the racy idiom of Florence; and the Orlando Innamorato has descended to posterity as the work of two minds, remarkably combined in this instance; the sole praise of invention, circumstance, description, and very frequently that of poetical figure and sentiment, belonging to Boiardo; that of style, in the peculiar and limited use of the word, to Berni. The character of the poem, as thus adorned, has sometimes been misconceived. Though Berni is almost always sprightly, he is not, in this romance, a burlesque or buffoon poet.² I once heard Foscolo prefer him to Ari-

¹ The first edition of the *Rifaccimento* is in 1541, and the second in 1542. In that of 1545 the first eighty-two stanzas are very different from those that correspond in former editions; some that follow are suspected not to be genuine. It seems that we have no edition on which we can wholly depend. No edition of Berni appeared from 1545 to 1725, though Domenicchi was printed several times. This reformer of Boiardo did not alter the text nearly so much as Berni. Pannizzi, vol. II.

² Tiraboschi, vii. 195, censures Berni for "motti e racconti troppo liberi ed empj, che vi ha inseriti." Ginguéne exclaims, as well he may, against this imputation. Berni has inserted no stories; and unless it were the few stanzas against monastic hypocrisy that remain at the

head of the twentieth canto, it is hard to say what Tiraboschi meant by impieties. But though Tiraboschi must have read Berni, he has here chosen to copy Zeno, who talks of "il poema di Boiardo, rifatto dal Berni, e di serio trasformato in ridicolo, e di onesto in iscandoloso, e però giustamente dannato dalla chiesa." (Fontanini, p. 273.) Zeno, even more surely than Tiraboschi, was perfectly acquainted with Berni's poem: how could he give so false a character of it? Did he copy some older writer? and why? It seems hard not to think that some suspicion of Berni's bias towards Protestantism had engendered a prejudice against his poem, which remained when the cause had been forgotten, as it certainly was in the days of Zeno and Tiraboschi.

osto. A foreigner, not so familiar with the peculiarities of language, would probably think his style less brilliant and less pellucid; and it is in execution alone that he claims to be considered as an original poet. The Orlando Innamorato was also remoulded by Domenichi in 1545; but the excellence of Berni has caused this feeble production to be nearly passed over by the Italian critics.^m

8. Spain now began to experience one of those revolutions in fashionable taste which await the political changes of nations. Her native poetry, whether Castilian or Valencian, had characteristics of its own, that placed it in a different region from the Italian. The short heroic, amatory, or devotional songs, which the Peninsular dialects were accustomed to exhibit, were too ardent, too hyperbolic for a taste which, if not correctly classical, was at least studious of a grace not easily compatible with extravagance. But the continual intercourse of the Spaniards with Italy, partly subject to their sovereign, and the scene of his wars, accustomed their nobles to relish the charms of a sister language, less energetic, but more polished than their own. Two poets, Boscan and Garcilasso de la Vega, brought from Italy the softer beauties of amorous poetry, embodied in the regular sonnet, which had

^m "The Ingenuity," says Mr. Panizzi, "with which Berni finds a resemblance between distant objects, and the rapidity with which he suddenly connects the most remote ideas—the solemn manner in which he either alludes to ludicrous events or utters an absurdity; the air of innocence and naïveté with which he presents remarks full of shrewdness and knowledge of the world; that peculiar *bonhomme* with which he seems to look kindly and at the same time unwillingly on human errors or wickedness; the keen irony which he uses with so much appearance of simplicity and aversion to bitterness; the seeming singleness of heart with which he appears anxious to excuse men and actions, at the very moment that he is most inveterate in exposing them; these are the chief elements of Berni's poetry. Add to this the style, the loftiness of the verse contrasting with the frivolity of the argument, the gravest conception expressed

in the most homely manner; the seasonable use of strange metaphors and of similes sometimes sublime, and for this very reason the more laughable, when considered with relation to the subject which they are intended to illustrate, form the most remarkable features of his style."—p. 120.

"Any candid Italian scholar who will peruse the *Rifacimento* of Berni with attention will be compelled to admit that, although many parts of the poem of Boiardo have been improved in that work, such has not always been the case, and will, moreover, be convinced that some parts of the *Rifacimento*, besides those suspected in former times, are evidently either not written by Berni, or have not received from him, if they be his, such corrections as to be worthy of their author."—p. 141. Mr. P. shows in several passages his grounds for this suspicion.

hitherto been little employed in the Peninsula. These poems seem not to have been printed till 1543, when both Boscan and Garcilasso were dead, and their new school had already met with both support and opposition at the court of Valladolid. The national character is not entirely lost in these poets; love still speaks with more impetuous ardour, with more plaintive sorrow, than in the contemporary Italians; but the restraints of taste and reason are perceived to control his voice. An eclogue of Garcilasso, called *Salicio* and *Nemoroso*, is pronounced by the Spanish critics to be one of the finest works in their language. It is sadder than the lament of saddest nightingales. We judge of all such poetry differently in the progressive stages of life.

9. Diego Mendoza, one of the most remarkable men for variety of talents whom Spain has produced, ranks with Boscan and Garcilasso as a reformer of Castilian poetry. His character as a soldier, as the severe governor of Siena, as the haughty minister of Charles at the court of Rome and the council of Trent, is notorious in history.^a His epistles, in an Horatian style, full of a masculine and elevated philosophy, though deficient in harmony and polish, are preferred to his sonnets; a species of composition where these faults are more perceptible; and for which, at least in the style then popular, the stern understanding of Mendoza seems to have been ill adapted. "Though he composed," says Bouterwek, "in the Italian manner with less facility than Boscan and Garcilasso, he felt more correctly than they or any other of his countrymen the difference between the Spanish and Italian languages, with respect to their capabilities for versification. The Spanish admits of none of those pleasing elisions, which, particularly when terminating vowels are omitted, render the mechanism of Italian versification so easy, and enable the poet to augment or diminish the number of syllables according to his pleasure; and this difference in the two languages renders the composition of a Spanish sonnet a difficult task. Still more does the Spanish language seem hostile to the soft termination of a succession

^a Sadoleit, in one of his epistles dated 1532 (*Ib.* vi. p. 309, edit. 1554), gives an interesting character of Mendoza, then young, who had visited him at Carpentras on his way to Rome, a journey undertaken solely for the sake of learning.

of feminine rhymes; for the Spanish poet, who adopts this rule of the Italian sonnet, is compelled to banish from his rhymes all infinitives of verbs, together with a whole host of sonorous substantives and adjectives. Mendoza therefore availed himself of the use of masculine rhymes in his sonnets; but this metrical licence was strongly censured by all partisans of the Italian style. Nevertheless, had he given to his sonnets more of the tenderness of Petrarch, it is probable that they would have found imitators. Some of them, indeed, may be considered as successful productions, and throughout all the language is correct and noble."°

10. The lyric poems of Mendoza, written in the old national style, tacitly improved and polished, ^{Saa di} ^{Miranda.} are preferred by the Spaniards to his other works. Many of them are printed in the *Romancero General*. Saa di Miranda, though a Portuguese, has written much in Castilian, as well as in his own language. Endowed by nature with the melancholy temperament akin to poetic sensibility, he fell readily into the pastoral strain, for which his own language is said to be peculiarly formed. The greater and better part of his eclogues, however, are in Castilian. He is said to have chosen the latter language for imagery, and his own for reflection.^p Of this poet, as well as of his Castilian contemporaries, the reader will find a sufficient account in Bouterwek and Sismondi.

11. Portugal, however, produced one who did not ^{Ribeyro.} abandon her own soft and voluptuous dialect, Ribeyro; the first distinguished poet she could boast. His strains are chiefly pastoral, the favourite style of his country, and breathe that monotonous and excessive melancholy, with which it requires some congenial emotion of our own to sympathise. A romance of Ribeyro, *Menina e Moça*, is one of the earliest among the few specimens of noble prose which we find in that language. It is said to be full of obscure allusions to real events in the author's life, and cannot be read with much interest; but some have thought that it is the prototype of the *Diana* of Montemayor, and the whole school of pastoral romance, which was afterwards ad-

° P. 195.

P Bouterwek, p. 240. Sismondi.

mired in Europe for an entire century. We have, however, seen that the *Arcadia* of Sannazzaro has the priority; and I am not aware that there is any specific distinction between that romance and this of Ribeyro. It may be here observed, that Ribeyro should in strictness have been mentioned before; his eclogues seem to have been written, and possibly published, before the death of Emanuel in 1521. The romance however was a later production.⁴

12. The French versifiers of the age of Francis I. are not few. It does not appear that they rise above the level of the three preceding reigns, Louis XI., Charles VIII., and Louis XII.; some of them mistaking insipid allegory for the creations of fancy, some tamely describing the events of their age, others, with rather more spirit, satirising the vices of mankind, and especially of the clergy; while many, in little songs, expressed their ideal love with more perhaps of conventional gallantry than passion or tenderness, yet with some of those light and graceful touches which distinguish this style of French poetry. Clement Marot ranks far higher. The psalms of Marot, though famous in their day, are among his worst performances. His distinguishing excellence is a naïveté, or pretended simplicity, of which it is the highest praise to say that it was the model of La Fontaine. This style of humour, than which nothing is more sprightly or diverting, seems much less indigenous among ourselves, if we may judge by our older literature, than either among the French or Italians.

13. In the days of Marot French poetry had not put on all its chains. He does not observe the regular alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes, nor scruple to use the open vowel, the suppression of a mute *e* before a consonant in scanning the verse, the carrying on the sense without a pause to the middle of the next line. These blemishes, as later usage accounts them, are common to Marot with all his contemporaries. In return, they dealt much in artificial schemes of recurring words or lines, as the *chant royal*,

⁴ Bouterwek, *Hist. of Portuguese Liter.*, p. 24; Sismondi, iv. 280.

² Goujet, *Bibliothèque Française*, vols.

x. and xi. passim; Auguis, *Recueil des anciens Poëtes Français*, vols. ii. and iii.

where every stanza was to be in the same rhyme and to conclude with the same verse; or the *rondeau*, a very popular species of metre long afterwards, wherein two or three initial words were repeated at the refrain or close of every stanza.*

14. The poetical and imaginative spirit of Germany, German subdued as it had long been, was never so poetry. weak as in this century. Though we cannot say that this poverty of genius was owing to the Reformation, it is certain that the Reformation aggravated very much in this sense the national debasement. The controversies were so scholastic in their terms, so sectarian in their character, so incapable of alliance with any warmth of soul, that, so far as their influence extended, and that was to a large part of the educated classes, they must have repressed every poet, had such appeared, by rendering the public insensible to his superiority. The *Meister-Singers* were sufficiently prosaic in their original constitution; they neither produced, nor perhaps would have suffered to exhibit itself, any real excellence in poetry. But they became in the sixteenth century still more rigorous in their requisitions of a mechanical conformity to rule; while at the same time they prescribed a new code of law to the versifier, that of theological orthodoxy. Yet one man, Hans Sachs. of more brilliant fancy and powerful feeling than the rest, Hans Sachs, the shoemaker of Nuremberg, stands out from the crowd of these artisans. Most conspicuous as a dramatic writer, his copious muse was silent in no line of verse. Heinsius accounts the bright period of Hans Sachs's literary labours to have been from 1530 to 1538; though he wrote much both sooner and after that time. His poems of all kinds are said to have exceeded six thousand; but not more than one fourth of them are in print. In this facility of composition he is second only to Lope de Vega; and it must be presumed that, uneducated, unread, accustomed to find his public in his own class, so wonderful a fluency was accompanied by no polish, and only occasionally by gleams of vigour and feeling. The German critics are divided concerning the genius of Hans Sachs: Wieland

* Goujet, *Bibl. Française*, xi. 36; Gall- *Recherches de la France*, l. vii. c. 5. lard, *Vie de François I.*, vii. 20; Pasquier, *Auguis*, vol. iii.

and Goethe gave him lustre at one time by their eulogies; but these having been as exaggerated as the contempt of a former generation, the place of the honest and praiseworthy shoemaker seems not likely to be fixed very high; and there has not been demand enough for his works, some of which are very scarce, to encourage their republication.[†]

15. The Germans, constitutionally a devout people, were never so much so as in this first age of ^{German} Protestantism. And this, in combination with ^{hymns.} their musical temperament, displayed itself in the peculiar line of hymns. No other nation has so much of this poetry. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the number of religious songs was reckoned at 33,000, and that of their authors at 500. Those of Luther have been more known than the rest; they are hard and rude, but impressive and deep. But this poetry, essentially restrained in its flight, could not develop the creative powers of genius.[‡]

16. Among the few poems of this age none has been so celebrated as the *Theuerdanks* of Melchior ^{Theuerdanks} Pfintzing, secretary to the emperor Maximilian; ^{of Pfintzing.} a poem at one time attributed to the master, whose praises it records, instead of the servant. This singular work, published originally in 1517, with more ornament of printing and delineation than was usual, is an allegory, with scarce any spirit of invention or language; wherein the knight *Theuerdanks*, and his adventures in seeking the marriage of the princess *Ehrreich*, represent the memorable union of Maximilian with the heiress of Burgundy. A small number of German poets are commemorated by *Bouterwek* and *Heinsius*, superior no doubt in ability to *Pfintzing*, but so obscure in our eyes, and so little extolled by their countrymen, that we need only refer to their pages.

17. In the earlier part of this period of thirty years we can find very little English poetry. Sir ^{English} David Lyndsay, an accomplished gentleman ^{poetry.} and scholar of Scotland, excels his contemporary ^{Lyndsay.} *Skelton* in such qualities, if not in fertility of genius. Though inferior to *Dunbar* in vividness of

[†] *Heinsius*, iv. 150; *Bouterwek*, ix. 381; *Retrospective Review*, vol. x.

[‡] *Bouterwek*, *Heinsius*.

imagination and in elegance of language, he shows a more reflecting and philosophical mind; and certainly his satire upon James V. and his court is more poignant than the other's panegyric upon the Thistle. But in the ordinary style of his versification he seems not to rise much above the prosaic and tedious rhymers of the fifteenth century. His descriptions are as circumstantial without selection as theirs; and his language, partaking of a ruder dialect, is still more removed from our own. The poems of Lyndsay are said by Herbert to have been printed in 1540, and would be among the first fruits of the Scottish press; but one of these, the Complaint of the Papingo, had appeared in London two years before.* Lyndsay's poetry is said to have contributed to the Reformation in Scotland; in which, however, he is but like many poets of his own and preceding times. The clergy were an inexhaustible theme of bitter reproof.

18. "In the latter end of King Henry VIII.'s reign," Wyatt and Surrey. says Puttonham in his Art of Poesie, "sprung up a new company of courtly makers, of whom Sir Thomas Wyatt the elder and Henry Earl of Surrey were the two chieftains, who having travailed into Italy, and there tasted the sweet and stately measures and style of the Italian poesie, as novices newly crept out of the schools of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch, they greatly polished our rude and homely manner of vulgar poesie, from that it had bene before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English meeter and stile. In the same time or not long after was the Lord Nicolas Vaux, a man of much facilitie in vulgar makings."† The poems of Sir Thomas Wyatt, who died in 1544, and of the Earl of Surrey, executed in 1547, were first published in 1557, with a few by other hands, in a scarce little book called Tottel's Miscellanies. They were, however, in all probability, known before; and it seems necessary to mention them in this period, as they mark an important epoch in English literature.

19. Wyatt and Surrey, for we may best name them in the order of time, rather than of civil or poetical rank, have had recently the good fortune to be recommended

* [Pinkerton, however, denies that there is any genuine Scots edition before 1568.—1842.]
 † Puttonham, book i. ch. 31.

by an editor of extensive acquaintance with literature, and of still superior taste. It will be a gratification to read the following comparison of the two poets, which I extract the more willingly that it is found in a publication somewhat bulky and expensive for the mass of readers.

20. "They were men whose minds may be said to have been cast in the same mould; for they differ only in those minuter shades of character which always must exist in human nature; shades of difference so infinitely varied, that there never were and never will be two persons in all respects alike. In their love of virtue and their instinctive hatred and contempt of vice, in their freedom from personal jealousy, in their thirst after knowledge and intellectual improvement, in nice observation of nature, promptitude to action, intrepidity and fondness for romantic enterprise, in magnificence and liberality, in generous support of others and high-spirited neglect of themselves, in constancy in friendship, and tender susceptibility of affections of a still warmer nature, and in everything connected with sentiment and principle, they were one and the same; but when those qualities branch out into particulars, they will be found in some respects to differ.

Dr. Nott's
character
of them.

21. "Wyatt had a deeper and more accurate penetration into the characters of men than Surrey had; hence arises the difference in their satires. Surrey, in his satire against the citizens of London, deals only in reproach; Wyatt, in his, abounds with irony, and those nice touches of ridicule which make us ashamed of our faults, and therefore often silently effect amendment.* Surrey's observation of nature was minute; but he directed it towards the works of nature in general, and

* Wyatt's best poem in this style, the Epistle to John Poles, is a very close imitation of the tenth satire of Alamanni; it is abridged, but every thought and every verse in the English is taken from the Italian. Dr. Nott has been aware of this, but it certainly detracts a leaf from the laurel of Wyatt, though he has translated well.

The lighter poems of Wyatt are more unequal than those of Surrey; but his *Ode to his Lute* does not seem inferior to any production of his noble competitor.

The sonnet in which he intimates his secret passion for Anne Boleyn, whom he describes under the allegory of a doe bearing on her collar—

Noli me tangere. I Caesar's am,

is remarkable for more than the poetry, though that is pleasing. It may be doubtful whether Anne were yet queen; but in one of Wyatt's latest poems, he seems to allude penitentially to his passion for her.

the movements of the passions, rather than to the foibles and characters of men; hence it is that he excels in the description of rural objects, and is always tender and pathetic. In Wyatt's *Complaint* we hear a strain of manly grief which commands attention, and we listen to it with respect for the sake of him that suffers. Surrey's distress is painted in such natural terms that we make it our own, and recognise in his sorrows emotions which we are conscious of having felt ourselves.

22. "In point of taste and perception of propriety in composition, Surrey is more accurate and just than Wyatt; he therefore seldom either offends with conceits or wearies with repetition, and when he imitates other poets he is original as well as pleasing. In his numerous translations from Petrarch he is seldom inferior to his master; and he seldom improves upon him. Wyatt is almost always below the Italian, and frequently degrades a good thought by expressing it so that it is hardly recognisable. Had Wyatt attempted a translation of Virgil, as Surrey did, he would have exposed himself to unavoidable failure."^a

23. To remarks so delicate in taste and so founded in knowledge, I should not venture to add much of my own. Something, however, may generally be admitted to modify the ardent panegyrics of an editor. Those who, after reading this brilliant passage, should turn for the first time to the poems either of Wyatt or of Surrey, might think the praise too unbounded, and, in some respects perhaps, not appropriate. It seems to be now ascertained, after sweeping away a host of foolish legends and traditionary prejudices, that the Geraldine of Surrey, Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, was a child of thirteen, for whom his passion, if such it is to be called, began several years after his own marriage.^b But in fact there is more of the conventional tone of amorous song, than of real emotion, in Surrey's poetry. The

"Easy sighs, such as men draw in love,"

are not like the deep sorrows of Petrarch, or the fiery transports of the Castilians.

^a Nott's edition of Wyatt and Surrey, *Lady Frances Vere* in 1535, fell in love, if so it was, in 1541, with Geraldine, who

^b Surrey was born about 1518, married was born in 1523.

24. The taste of this accomplished man is more striking than his poetical genius. He did much for his own country and his native language. The versification of Surrey differs very considerably from that of his predecessors. He introduced, as Dr. Nott says, a sort of involution into his style, which gives an air of dignity and remoteness from common life. It was, in fact, borrowed from the licence of Italian poetry, which our own idiom has rejected. He avoids pedantic words, forcibly obtruded from the Latin, of which our earlier poets, both English and Scots, had been ridiculously fond. The absurd epithets of Hoccleve, Lydgate, Dunbar, and Douglas are applied equally to the most different things, so as to show that they annexed no meaning to them. Surrey rarely lays an unnatural stress on final syllables, merely as such, which they would not receive in ordinary pronunciation; another usual trick of the school of Chaucer. His words are well chosen and well arranged.

Surrey improves our versification.

25. Surrey is the first who introduced blank verse into our English poetry. It has been doubted whether it had been previously employed in Italian, save in tragedy; for the poems of Alamanni and Rucellai were not published before many of our noble poet's compositions had been written. Dr. Nott, however, admits that Boscan and other Spanish poets had used it. The translation by Surrey of the second book of the Æneid, in blank verse, is among the chief of his productions. No one had, before his time, known how to translate or imitate with appropriate expression. But the structure of his verse is not very harmonious, and the sense is rarely carried beyond the line.

Introduces blank verse.

26. If we could rely on a theory, advanced and ably supported by his editor, Surrey deserves the still more conspicuous praise of having brought about a great revolution in our poetical numbers. It had been supposed to be proved by Tyrwhitt that Chaucer's lines are to be read metrically, in ten or eleven syllables, like the Italian, and, as I apprehend, the French of his time. For this purpose it is necessary to presume that many terminations, now mute, were syllabically pronounced; and where verses prove refractory after all our endeavours, Tyrwhitt has

Dr. Nott's hypothesis as to his metre.

no scruple in declaring them corrupt. It may be added that Gray, before the appearance of Tyrwhitt's essay on the versification of Chaucer, had adopted without hesitation the same hypothesis.^c But, according to Dr. Nott, the verses of Chaucer, and of all his successors down to Surrey, are merely rhythmical, to be read by cadence, and admitting of considerable variety in the number of syllables, though ten may be the more frequent. In the manuscripts of Chaucer the line is always broken by a *cæsura* in the middle, which is pointed out by a virgule; and this is preserved in the early editions down to that of 1532. They come near, therefore, to the short Saxon line, differing chiefly by the alternate rhyme, which converts two verses into one. He maintains that a great many lines of Chaucer cannot be read metrically, though harmonious as verses of cadence. This rhythmical measure he proceeds to show in Hoccleve, Lydgate, Hawes, Barclay, Skelton, and even Wyatt; and thus concludes that it was first abandoned by Surrey, in whom it very rarely occurs.^d

27. This hypothesis, it should be observed, derives some additional plausibility from a passage in Gascoyne's 'Notes of instruction concerning the making of verse or rhyme in English,' printed in 1575. "Whosoever do peruse and well consider his (Chaucer's) works, he shall find that, although his lines are not always of one self-same number of syllables, yet, being read by one that hath understanding, the longest verse, and that which hath most syllables in it, will fall (to the ear) correspondent unto that which hath fewest syllables; and likewise that which hath fewest syllables shall be found yet to consist of words that have such natural sound as may seem equal in length to a verse which hath many more syllables of lighter accents."

28. A theory so ingeniously maintained, and with so much induction of examples, has naturally gained a good deal of credit. I cannot, however, by any means concur in the extension given to it. Pages may be read in Chaucer, and still more in Dunbar, where every line is regularly and harmoniously decasyllabic; and though the *cæsura* may

But seems
too exten-
sive.

^c Gray's Works (edit. Mathias), II. 1.

^d Nott's Dissertation, subjoined to the second volume of his Wyatt and Surrey

perhaps fall rather more uniformly than it does in modern verse, it would be very easy to find exceptions, which could not acquire a rhythmical cadence by any artifice of the reader.* The deviations from the normal type, or decasyllable line, were they more numerous than, after allowance for the licence of pronunciation, as well as the probable corruption of the text, they appear to be, would not, I conceive, justify us in concluding that it was disregarded. For these aberrant lines are much more common in the dramatic blank verse of the seventeenth century. They are, doubtless, vestiges of the old rhythmical forms; and we may readily allow that English versification had not, in the fifteenth or even sixteenth centuries, the numerical regularity of classical or Italian metre. In the ancient ballads, Scots and English, the substitution of the anapaest for the iambic foot is of perpetual recurrence, and gives them a remarkable elasticity and animation; but we never fail to recognise a uniformity of measure, which the use of nearly equipollent feet cannot, on the strictest metrical principles, be thought to impair.

29. If we compare the poetry of Wyatt and Surrey with that of Barclay or Skelton, about thirty or forty years before, the difference must appear wonderful. But we should not, with Dr. Nott, attribute this wholly to superiority of genius. It is to be remembered that the later poets wrote in a court, and in one which, besides the aristocratic manners of chivalry, had not only imbibed a great deal of refinement from France and Italy, but a considerable tinge of ancient literature. Their predecessors were less educated men, and they addressed a more vulgar

Politeness of
Wyatt and
Surrey.

* Such as these among multitudes more:—

A lover, and a lusty bachelor.

Chaucer.

But reason, with the shield of gold so shene.

Dunbar.

The rock, again the river resplendent.

Id.

Lydgate apologises for his own lines,—

Because I know the verse therein is wrong.

As being some too short, and some too long.—

In Gray, ll. 4. This seems at once to

exclude the rhythmical system, and to account for the imperfection of the metrical. Lydgate has, perhaps, on the whole, more aberrations from the decasyllable standard than Chaucer.

Puttenham, in his Art of Poesie (1586), book ii. ch. 3, 4, though he admits the licentiousness of Chaucer, Lydgate, and other poets, in occasionally disregarding the caesura, does not seem to doubt that they wrote by metrical rules, which indeed is implied in this censure. Dr. Nott's theory does not admit a disregard of caesura.

class of readers. Nor was this polish of language peculiar to Surrey and his friend. In the short poems of Lord Vaux, and of others about the same time, even in those of Nicolas Grimoald, a lecturer at Oxford, who was no courtier, but had acquired a classical taste, we find a rejection of obsolete and trivial phrases, and the beginnings of what we now call the style of our older poetry.

30. No period since the revival of letters has been so conspicuous for Latin poetry as the present. Three names of great reputation adorn it, Sannazarius, Vida, Fracastorius. The first of these, Sannazarius, or San Nazaro, or Actius Sincerus, was a Neapolitan, attached to the fortunes of the Aragonese line of kings; and, following the last of their number, Frederic, after his unjust spoliation, into France, remained there till his master's death. Much of his poetry was written under this reign, before 1503; but his principal work, *De Partu Virginis*, did not appear till 1522. This has incurred not unfair blame for the intermixture of classical mythology, at least in language, with the Gospel story; nor is the latter very skilfully managed. But it would be difficult to find its equal for purity, elegance, and harmony of versification. The unauthorised word, the doubtful idiom, the modern turn of thought, so common in Latin verse, scarce ever appear in Sannazarius; a pure taste enabled him to diffuse a Virgilian hue over his language; and a just ear, united with facility in command of words, rendered his versification melodious and varied beyond any competitor. The Piscatory Eclogues of Sannazarius, which are perhaps better known, deserve at least equal praise; they seem to breathe the beauty and sweetness of that fair bay they describe. His elegies are such as may contend with Tibullus. If Sannazarius does not affect sublimity, he never sinks below his aim; the sense is sometimes inferior to the style, as he is not wholly free from conceits; but it would perhaps be more difficult to find

The following lines, on the constellation Taurus, are more puerile than any I have seen in this elegant poet:—

*Turva bovi facies; sed qua non altera
coelo*

*Dignior, imbriferum quæ cornibus in-
choet annum,*

*Nec quæ tam claris mugitibus astræ
lacezat.*

cold and prosaic passages in his works than in those of any other Latin poet in modern times.

31. Vida of Cremona is not by any means less celebrated than Sannazarius; his poem on the Art of Poetry, and that on the Game of Chess, were printed in 1527; the *Christiad*, an epic poem, as perhaps it deserves to be called, in 1535; and that on Silk Worms in 1537. ^{Vida.} Vida's precepts are clear and judicious, and we admire, in his Game of Chess especially, and the poem on Silk Worms, the skill with which the dry rules of art, and descriptions the most apparently irreducible to poetical conditions, fall into his elegant and classical language. It has been observed that he is the first who laid down rules for imitative harmony, illustrating them by his own example. The *Christiad* shows not so much, I think, of Vida's great talents, at least in poetical language; but the subject is better managed than by Sannazarius. Yet, notwithstanding some brilliant passages, among which the conclusion of the second book *De Arte Poetica* is prominent, Vida appears to me far inferior to the Neapolitan poet. His versification is often hard and spondaic, the elisions too frequent, and the *cæsura* too much neglected. The language, even where the subject best admits of it, is not always so elevated as we should desire.

32. Fracastorius has obtained his reputation by the *Syphilis*, published in 1530; and certainly, as he thought fit to make choice of the subject, ^{Fracastorius.} there is no reader but must admire the beauty and variety of his digressions, the vigour and nobleness of his style. Once only has it been the praise of genius to have delivered the rules of practical art in all the graces of the most delicious poetry, without inflation, without obscurity, without affectation, and generally, perhaps, with the precision of truth. Fracastorius, not emulous in this of the author of the *Georgics*, seems to have made Manilius, rather, I think, than Lucretius, his model in the didactic portion of his poem.

33. Upon a fair comparison we should not err much, in my opinion, by deciding that Fracastorius is the greater poet, and Sannazarius the better author of Latin verses. ^{Latin verse not to be disdained.} In the present age it is easy to anticipate the supercilious disdain of those

who believe it ridiculous to write Latin poetry at all, because it cannot, as they imagine, be written well. I must be content to answer, that those who do not know when such poetry is good, should be as slow to contradict those who do, as the ignorant in music to set themselves against competent judges. No one pretends that Sannazarius was equal to Ariosto. But it may be truly said that his poetry and a great deal more that has been written in Latin, beyond comparison excels most of the contemporary Italian; we may add that its reputation has been more extended and European.

34. After this famous triumvirate, we might reckon several in different degrees of merit. Bembo comes forward again in these lists. His Latin poems are not numerous; that upon the lake Benacus is the best known. He shone more, however, in elegiac than hexameter verse. This is a common case in modern Latin, and might be naturally expected of Bembo, who had more of elegance than of vigour. Castiglione has left a few poems, among which the best is in the archaic lapidary style, on the statue of Cleopatra in the Vatican. Molza wrote much in Latin; he is the author of the epistle to Henry VIII., in the name of Catherine, which has been ascribed to Joannes Secundus. It is very spirited and Ovidian. These poets were, perhaps, surpassed by Nangerius and Flaminius; both, but especially the latter, for sweetness and purity of style, to be placed in the first rank of lyric and elegiac poets in the Latin language. In their best passages they fall not by any means short of Tibullus or Catullus. Aonius Palearius, though his poem on the Immortality of the Soul is equalled by Sadolet himself to those of Vida and Sannazarius, seems not entitled to anything like such an eulogy. He became afterwards suspected of Lutheranism, and lost his life on the scaffold at Rome. We have in another place mentioned the *Zodiacus Vitæ* of Palingenius Stellatus, whose true name was Manzolli. The *Deliciæ Poetarum Italorum* present a crowd of inferior imitations of classical models; but I must repeat that the volumes published by Pope, and entitled *Poemata Italorum*, are the best evidences of the beauties of these poets.

35. The Cisalpine nations, though at a vast distance from Italy, cannot be reckoned destitute, in this ^{In Germany.} age, of respectable Latin poets. Of these the best known, and perhaps upon the whole the best, is Joannes Secundus, who found the doves of Venus in the dab-chicks of Dutch marshes. The Basia, however, are far from being superior to his elegies, many of which, though not correct, and often sinning by false quantity, a fault pretty general with these early Latin poets, especially on this side of the Alps, are generally harmonious, spirited, and elegant. Among the Germans, Eobanus Hessus, Micyllus, professor at Heidelberg, and Melancthon, have obtained considerable praise.

SECT. II. 1520-1550.

State of Dramatic Representation in Italy — Spain and Portugal — France —
Germany — England.

36. WE have already seen the beginnings of the Italian comedy, founded in its style, and frequently in ^{Italian} its subjects, upon Plautus. Two of Ariosto's ^{comedy.} comedies have been mentioned, and two more belong to this period. Some difference of opinion has existed with respect to their dramatic merit. But few have hesitated to place above them the *Mandragola* and *Clitia* of a great contemporary genius, Machiavel. The ^{Machiavel.} *Mandragola* was probably written before 1520, but certainly in the fallen fortunes of its author, as he intimates in the prologue. Ginguéné, therefore, forgot his chronology when he supposes Leo X. to have been present, as cardinal, at its representation.^s It seems, however, to have been acted before this pope at Rome. The story of the *Mandragola*, which hardly bears to be told, though Ginguéné has done it, is said to be founded on a real and recent event at Florence, one of its striking resemblances to the Athenian comedy. It is admirable for its comic delineations of character, the management of the plot, and the liveliness of its idiomatic ^{Aretin.} dialogue. Peter Aretin, with little of the

^s Ginguéné, *vi.* 222.

former qualities, and inferior in all respects to Machiavel, has enough of humorous extravagance to amuse the reader. The licentiousness of the Italian stage in its contempt of morality, and even, in the comedies of Peter Aretin, its bold satire on the great, remind us rather of Athens than of Rome; it is more the effrontery of Aristophanes than the pleasant freedom of Plautus. But the depravity which had long been increasing in Italy gained in this first part of the sixteenth century a zenith which it could not surpass, and from which it has very gradually receded. These comedies are often very satirical on the clergy; the bold strokes of Machiavel surprise us at present; but the Italian stage had something like the licence of a masquerade; it was a tacit agreement that men should laugh at things sacred within those walls, but resume their veneration for them at the door.^h

37. Those who attempted the serious tone of tragedy were less happy in their model; Seneca generally represented to them the ancient buskin. The Canace of Sperone Speroni, the Tullia of Martelli, and the Orbecche of Giraldi Cinthio, esteemed the best of nine tragedies he has written, are within the present period. They are all works of genius. But Ginguéné observes how little advantage the first of these plays afforded for dramatic effect, most of the action passing in narration. It is true that he could hardly have avoided this without aggravating the censures of those who, as Crescimbeni tells us, thought the subject itself unfit for tragedy.ⁱ The story of the Orbecche is taken by Cinthio from a novel of his own invention, and is remarkable for its sanguinary and disgusting circumstances. This became the characteristic of tragedy in the sixteenth century; not by any means peculiarly in England, as some half-informed critics of the French school used to pretend. The Orbecche, notwithstanding its passages in the manner of Titus Andronicus, is in many parts an impassioned and poetical

^h Besides the plays themselves, see Ariosto are found in most editions of Ginguéné, vol. vi., who gives more than a hundred pages to the Calandra, and to the comedies of Ariosto, Machiavel, and Aretin. Many of the old comedies are reprinted in the great Milan collection of *Classici Italiani*. Those of Machiavel and

ⁱ *Della volgar Poesia*, ii. 391. Alfieri went still farther than Sperone in his *Mirra*. Objections of a somewhat similar kind were made to the *Tullia of Martelli*.

tragedy. Riccoboni, though he censures the general poverty of style, prefers one scene in the third act to anything on the stage: "If one scene were sufficient to decide the question, the *Orbecche* would be the finest play in the world."^k Walker observes that this is the first tragedy wherein the prologue is separated from the play, of which, as is very well known, it made a part on the ancient theatre. But in *Cinthio*, and in other tragic writers long afterwards, the prologue continued to explain and announce the story.^m

38. Meantime, a people very celebrated in dramatic literature was forming its national theatre. A few attempts were made in Spain to copy the classical model. But these seem not to have gone beyond translation, and had little effect on the public taste. Others, in imitation of the *Celestina*, which passed for a moral example, produced tedious scenes, by way of mirrors of vice and virtue, without reaching the fame of their original. But a third class was far more popular, and ultimately put an end to competition. The founders of this were Torres Naharro, in the first years of Charles, and Lope de Rueda, a little later. "There is very little doubt," says Bouterwek, "that Torres Naharro was the real inventor of the Spanish comedy. He not only wrote his eight comedies in *redondillas* in the romance style, but he also endeavoured to establish the dramatic interest solely on an ingenious combination of intrigues, without attaching much importance to the development of character, or the moral tendency of the story. It is besides probable that he was the first who divided plays into three acts, which, being regarded as three days' labour in the dramatic field, were called *jornadas*. It must therefore be unreservedly admitted that these dramas, considered both with respect to their spirit and their form, deserve to be ranked as the first in the history of the Spanish national drama; for in the same path which Torres Naharro first trod, the dramatic genius of Spain advanced to the point attained by Calderon, and the nation tolerated no dramas except those which belonged to the style which had thus been created."^o

^k *Hist. du Théâtre Italien*, vol. I.

^o P. 235. Andrés thinks Naharro low.

^m Walker, *Essay on Italian Tragedy*. insipid, and unworthy of the praise of Gluguené, vi. 61, 69.

Cervantes, v. 136.

39. Lope de Rueda, who is rather better known than his predecessor, was at the head of a company of players, and was limited in his inventions by the capacity of his troop and of the stage upon which they were to appear. Cervantes calls him the great Lope de Rueda, even when a greater Lope was before the world. "He was not," to quote again from Bouterwek, "inattentive to general character, as is proved by his delineation of old men, clowns, &c., in which he was particularly successful. But his principal aim was to interweave in his dramas a succession of intrigues; and as he seems to have been a stranger to the art of producing stage effect by striking situations, he made complication the great object of his plots. Thus mistakes, arising from personal resemblances, exchanges of children, and such-like commonplace subjects of intrigue, form the groundwork of his stories, none of which are remarkable for ingenuity of invention. There is usually a multitude of characters in his dramas, and jests and witticisms are freely introduced, but these in general consist of burlesque disputes, in which some clown is engaged."^p

40. The Portuguese Gil Vicente may perhaps contend with Torres Naharro for the honour of leading the dramatists of the Peninsula. His Autos, indeed, as has been observed, do not, so far as we can perceive, differ from the mysteries, the religious dramas of France and England. Bouterwek, strangely forgetful of these, seems to have assigned a character of originality and given a precedence to the Spanish and Portuguese Autos which they do not deserve. The specimen of one of these by Gil Vicente, given in the History of Portuguese Literature, is far more extravagant and less theatrical than our John Parfre's contemporary mystery of Candlemas Day. But a few comedies, or, as they are more justly styled, farces, remain; one of which, mentioned by the same author, is superior in choice and management of the fable to most of the rude productions of that time. Its date is unknown: Gil Vicente's dramatic compositions of various kinds were collectively published in 1562; he had died in 1557, at a very advanced age.

41. "These works," says Bouterwek of the dramatic productions of Gil Vicente in general, "display a true poetic spirit, which, however, accommodated itself entirely to the age of the poet, and which disdained cultivation. The dramatic genius of Gil Vicente is equally manifest from his power of invention, and from the natural turn and facility of his imitative talent. Even the rudest of these dramas is tinged with a certain degree of poetic feeling."⁹ The want of complex intrigue, such as we find afterwards in the Castilian drama, ought not to surprise us in these early compositions.

42. We have no record of any original dramatic composition belonging to this age in France, with the exception of mysteries and moralities, Mysteries and moralities in France. which are very abundant. These were considered, and perhaps justly, as types of the regular drama. "The French morality," says an author of that age, "represents, in some degree, the tragedy of the Greeks and Romans; particularly because it treats of serious and important subjects; and if it were contrived in French that the conclusion of the morality should be always unfortunate, it would become a tragedy. In the morality we treat of noble and virtuous actions, either true, or at least probable; and choose what makes for our instruction in life."[†] It is evident from this passage and the whole context, that neither tragedy nor comedy were yet known. The circumstance is rather remarkable, when we consider the genius of the nation and the politeness of the court. But from about the year 1540 we find translations from Latin and Italian comedies into French. These probably were not represented. *Les Amours d'Erostrate*, by Jacques Bourgeois, published in 1545, is taken from the *Suppositi* of Ariosto. Sibilet translated the *Iphigenia* of Euripides in 1549, Bouchetel

⁹ Hist. of Portuguese Lit., p. 83-111. It would be vain to look elsewhere for so copious an account of Gil Vicente, and very difficult probably to find his works. See, too, Sismondi, Hist. de la Litt. du Midi, iv. 448.

[A much fuller account of Gil Vicente has since been given in the Quarterly Review for January 1847.]

[†] Sibilet, Art Poétique (1548), apud

Beauchamps, Recherches sur le Théâtre Français, i. 82.

In the *Jardin de Plaisance*, an anonymous undated poem, printed at Lyons probably before the end of the fifteenth century, we have rules given for composing moralities. Beauchamps (p. 86) extracts some of these; but they seem not worth copying.

the Hecuba in 1550, and Lazarus Baif two other plays about the same time. But a great dramatic revolution was now prepared by the strong arm of the state. The first theatre had been established at Paris about 1400 by the Confrairie de la Passion de N. S., for the representation of Scriptural mysteries. This was suppressed by the parliament in 1547, on account of the scandal which this devout buffoonery had begun to give. The company of actors purchased next year the Hôtel de la Bourgogne, and were authorised by the parliament to represent profane subjects, "lawful and decent" (*licites et honnêtes*), but enjoined to abstain from "all mysteries of the passion, or other sacred mysteries."^{*}

43. In Germany, meantime, the pride of the meistersingers, Hans Sachs, was alone sufficient to pour forth a plenteous stream for the stage.

His works, collectively printed at Nuremberg in five folio volumes, 1578, and reprinted in five quartos at Kempton, 1606, contain 197 dramas among the rest. Many of his comedies in one act, called *Schwanken*, are coarse satires on the times. Invention, expression, and enthusiasm, if we may trust his admirers, are all united in Hans Sachs.[†]

44. The mysteries founded upon Scriptural or legendary histories, as well as the moralities, or allegorical dramas, which, though there might be an intermixture of human character with abstract personification, did not aim at that illusion which a possible fable affords, continued to amuse the English public. Nor were they confined, as perhaps they were before, to churches and monasteries. We find a company of players in the establishment of Richard III. while Duke of Gloucester; and in the subsequent reigns, especially under Henry VIII., this seems to have been one of the luxuries of the great. The frugal Henry VII. maintained two distinct sets of players; and his son was prodigally sumptuous in every

Moralities and similar plays in England.

^{*} Beauchamps, l. 91.

[†] Hans Sachs has met with a very laudatory critic in the *Retrospective Review*, x. 113, who even ventures to assert that Goethe has imitated the old shoemaker in Faust.

The Germans had many plays in this

age. Gesner says, in his *Pandectæ Universales*: *Germanicæ fabulæ multæ extant. Fabulæ decem ætatum et Fusio stultorum Colmarie actæ sunt. Fusio edita est 1537, chartis quatuor. Qui volet hoc loco plures ascribat in vulgari-bus linguis, nos ad alia festinamus.*

sort of court-exhibition, bearing the general name of revels, and superintended by a high-priest of jollity, styled the Abbot of Misrule. The dramatic allegories, or moral plays, found a place among them. It may be presumed that from their occasionality, or want of merit, far the greater part have perished.⁶ Three or four, which we may place before 1550, are published in Hawkins's *Ancient Drama* and Dodsley's *Old Plays*; one is extant, written by Skelton, the earliest that can be referred to a known author.⁷ A late writer, whose diligence seems to have almost exhausted our early dramatic history, has retrieved the titles of a few more. The most ancient of these moral plays he traces to the reign of Henry VI. They became gradually more complicated and approached nearer to a regular form. It may be observed that a line is not easily defined between the Scriptural mysteries and the legitimate drama; the choice of the story, the succession of incidents, are those of tragedy; even the intermixture of buffoonery belongs to all our ancient stage; and it is only by the meanness of the sentiments and diction that we exclude the *Candlemas Day*, which is one of the most perfect of the mysteries, or even those of the fifteenth century, from our tragic series.⁸ Nor were the moralities, such as we find them in the reign of Henry VIII., at a prodigious distance from the regular stage: deviations from the original structure of these, as Mr. Collier has well observed, "by the relinquishment of abstract for individual character, paved the way, by a natural and easy gradation, for tragedy and comedy, the representations of real life and manners."⁹

45. The moralities were, in this age, distinguished by the constant introduction of a witty, mischievous, and profligate character, denominated the Vice. This seems originally to have been an allegorical representation of what the word denotes; but the Vice gradually acquired a human individuality,

They are turned to religious satire.

⁶ Collier's *Annals of the Stage*, l. 34, &c.

⁷ Warton, *ll.* 188.

⁸ *Candlemas Day*, a mystery, on the murder of the Innocents, is published in Hawkins's *Early English Drama*. It is by John Parfre, and may be referred to

the first years of Henry VIII.

⁹ *Hist. of English Dramatic Poetry*, *ll.* 260. This I quote by its proper title; but it is in fact the same work as the *Annals of the Stage*, so far as being incorporated and sold together renders it the same.

in which he came very near to our well-known Punch. The devil was generally introduced in company with the Vice, and had to endure many blows from him. But the moralities had another striking characteristic in this period. They had always been religious, but they now became theological. In the crisis of that great revolution then in progress the stage was found a ready and impartial instrument for the old or the new faith. Luther and his wife were satirised in a Latin morality represented at Gray's Inn in 1529. It was easy to turn the tables on the clergy. Sir David Lyndsay's satire of the Three Estatis, a direct attack upon them, was played before James V. and his queen at Linlithgow, in 1539;^a and in 1543 an English statute was made, prohibiting all plays and interludes which meddle with the interpretation of Scripture. In 1549 the council of Edward VI. put a stop by proclamation to all kinds of stage-plays.^b

46. Great indulgence, or a strong antiquarian prejudice, is required to discover much genius in these moralities and mysteries. There was, however, a class of dramatic productions that appealed to a more instructed audience. The custom of acting Latin plays prevailed in our universities at this time, as it did long afterwards. Whether it were older than the fifteenth century seems not to be proved; and the presumption is certainly against it. "In an original draught," says Warton, "of the statutes of Trinity College at Cambridge, founded in 1546, one of the chapters is entitled, 'De Præfecto ludorum qui imperator dicitur,' under whose direction and authority Latin comedies and tragedies are to be exhibited in the hall at Christmas."^c It is probable that Christopherson's tragedy of Jephthah, and another by Grimoald on John the Baptist, both older than the middle of the century, were written for academical representation. Nor was this confined to the universities. Nicolas Udal, head master of Eton, wrote several plays in Latin to be acted in the long nights of winter by his boys.^d And if we

^a Warton, iv. 23.

^b Collier, i. 144.

^c Hist. of Engl. Poetry, iii. 205.

^d Udal was not the first, if we could trust Harwood's Alumni Etonenses, who established an Eton theatre. Of Right-

wise, who succeeded Lily as master of St. Paul's, it is said by him, that he was "a most eminent grammarian, and wrote the tragedy of Dido from Virgil, which was acted before Cardinal Wolsey with great applause by himself and other scho-

had to stop here, it might seem an unnecessary minuteness to take notice of the diversions of school-boys, especially as the same is recorded of other teachers besides Udal. But there is something more in this. Udal has lately become known in a new and more brilliant light, as the father of English comedy. First English It was mentioned by Warton, but without any comedy. comment, that Nicolas Udal wrote some English plays to be represented by his scholars; a passage from one of which is quoted by Wilson in his *Art of Logic*, dedicated to Edward VI.^o It might have been conjectured, by the help of this quotation, that these plays were neither of the class of moralities or mysteries, nor mere translations from Plautus and Terence, as it would not have been unnatural at first to suppose. Within a few years, however, the comedy from which Wilson took his extract has been discovered. It was printed in 1565, but probably written not later than 1540. The title of this comedy is *Ralph Roister Doister*, a name uncouth enough, and from which we should expect a very barbarous farce. But Udal, an eminent scholar, knew how to preserve comic spirit and humour without degenerating into licentious buffoonery. *Ralph Roister Doister*, in spite of its title, is a play of some merit, though the wit may seem designed for the purpose of natural merriment rather than critical glory. We find in it, what is of no slight value, the earliest lively picture of London manners among the gallants and citizens, who furnished so much for the stage down to the civil wars. And perhaps there is no striking difference in this respect between the dramatic manners under Henry VIII. and James I. This comedy, for there seems no kind of reason why it should be refused that honourable name, is much superior to *Gammar Gurton's Needle*, written twenty years afterwards, from which it has wrested a long established precedence in our dramatic annals.¹

lars of Eton." But as Rightwise left Eton for King's College in 1508, this cannot be true, at least so far as Wolsey is concerned. It is said afterwards in the same book of one Halliwell, who went to Cambridge in 1632, that he wrote "the tragedy of Dido." Which should we believe, or were there two Didos? But

Harwood's book is not reckoned of much authority beyond the mere records which he copied.

^o *Hist. of Engl. Poetry*, iii. 213.

¹ See an analysis, with extracts of *Ralph Roister Doister*, in *Collier's Hist. of Dram. Poetry*, ii. 445-460.

["The plot," Mr. C. observes, "of

SECT. III. 1520-1550.

Romances and Novels — Rabelais.

47. THE popularity of Amadis de Gaul gave rise to a class of romances, the delight of the multitude in the sixteenth century, though since chiefly remembered by the ridicule and ignominy that has attached itself to their name—those of knight-errantry. Most of these belong to Spanish or Portuguese literature. Palmerin of Oliva, one of the earliest, was published in 1525. Palmerin, less fortunate than his namesake of England, did not escape the penal flame to which the barber and curate consigned many also of his younger brethren. It has been observed by Bouterwek, that every respectable Spanish writer, as well as Cervantes, resisted the contagion of bad taste which kept the prolix mediocrity of these romances in fashion.^g

48. A far better style was that of the short novel, which the Italian writers, especially Boccaccio, had rendered popular in Europe. But, though many of these were probably written within this period of thirty years, none of much distinction come within it, as the date of their earliest publication, except the celebrated Belphegor of Machiavel.^h The amusing story

Ralph Roister Doister is amusing and well conducted, with an agreeable intermixture of serious and comic dialogue, and a variety of character to which no other piece of a similar date can make any pretension. When we recollect that it was perhaps written in the reign of Henry VIII., we ought to look upon it as a masterly production. Had it followed Gammar Gurton's Needle by as many years as it preceded it, it would have been entitled to our admiration on its own separate merits, independent of any comparison with other pieces. The character of Matthew Merrygreeke here and there savours a little of the Vice of the moralities; but his humour never depends upon the accidents of dress and accoutrements."—1842.]

^g Hist. of Spanish Literature, p. 304; Dunlop's Hist. of Fiction, vol. II.

^h I cannot make another exception for Il Pellegrino by Caviceo of Parma, the first known edition of which, published at Venice in 1526, evidently alludes to one earlier: diligentemente in lingua toska corretto, e novamento stampato et historiato. The editor speaks of the book as obsolete in orthography and style. It is probably, however, not older than the last years of the fifteenth century, being dedicated to Lucrezia Borgia. It is a very prolix and tedious romance, in three books and two hundred and nineteen chapters, written in a semi-poetical, diffuse style, and much in the usual manner of love stories. Ginguéné and Tiraboschi do not mention it; the Biographie Universelle does.

Mr. Dunlop has given a short account of a French novel, entitled, Les Aven-

of *Lazarillo de Tormes* was certainly written by Men-
doza in his youth. But it did not appear in print within
our present period.¹ This is the first known specimen
in Spain of the picaresque, or rogue style, in which the
adventures of the low and rather dishonest part of the
community are made to furnish amusement for the great.
The Italian novelists are by no means without earlier
instances; but it became the favourite and almost pecu-
liar class of novel with the Spanish writers about the
end of the century.

49. But the most celebrated, and certainly the most
brilliant performance in the path of fiction, that
belongs to this age, is that of Rabelais. Few ^{Rabelais.}
books are less likely to obtain the praise of a rigorous
critic; but few have more the stamp of originality, or
show a more redundant fertility, always of language,
and sometimes of imagination. He bears a slight re-
semblance to Lucian, and a considerable one to Aris-
tophanes. His reading is large, but always rendered
subservient to ridicule; he is never serious in a single
page, and seems to have had little other aim, in his first
two volumes, than to pour out the exuberance of his
animal gaiety. In the latter part of *Pantagruel's* his-
tory, that is the fourth and fifth books, one published in
1552, the other after the author's death in 1561, a dis-
like to the church of Rome, which had been slightly
perceived in the first volumes, is not at all disguised;
but the vein of merriment becomes gradually less fertile,
and weariness steals on before the close of a work which
had long amused while it disgusted us. Allusions to
particular characters are frequent, and in general trans-
parent enough, with the aid of a little information about

tures de *Lycidas* et de *Cleorithe*, which he considers as the earliest and best specimen of what he calls the spiritual romance, un-
mixed with chivalry or allegory. *Hist. of Fiction*, III. 51. It was written in 1529 by Basire, archdeacon of Sens. I should suspect that there had been some of this class already in Germany; they certainly became common in that country afterwards.

¹ [Nicolas Antonio tells us that the first edition of *Lazarillo de Tormes* was in 1586. But Brunet mentions one printed at Burgos in 1554, and three at

Antwerp in 1553 and 1555. *Supplément au Manuel du Libraire*, art. Hurtado. The following early edition also is in the British Museum, of which I transcribe the title-page:—*La Vida de Lazarillo de Tormes y de sus fortunas y adversidades, nuevamente impressa, corregida, y de nuevo añadida ex este segunda impression. Vendense en Alcalá de Henares en casa de Salredo librero año de N. D. 1554. A colophon recites the same date and place of impression.*—1842.]

contemporaneous history, in several parts of Rabelais; but much of what has been taken for political and religious satire cannot, as far as I perceive, be satisfactorily traced beyond the capricious imagination of the author. Those who have found Montluc, the famous bishop of Valence, in Panurge, or Antony of Bourbon, father of Henry IV., in Pantagruel, keep no measures with chronology. Panurge is so admirably conceived that we may fairly reckon him original; but the germ of the character is in the gracioso, or clown, of the extemporaneous stage; the roguish, selfish, cowardly, cunning attendant, who became Panurge in the plastic hands of Rabelais, and Sancho in those of Cervantes. The French critics have not in general done justice to Rabelais, whose manner was not that of the age of Louis XIV. The Tale of a Tub appears to me by far the closest imitation of it, and to be conceived altogether in a kindred spirit; but in general those who have had reading enough to rival the copiousness of Rabelais have wanted his invention and humour, or the riotousness of his animal spirits.

SECT. IV. 1520-1550.

Struggle between Latin and Italian Languages — Italian and Spanish Polite Writers — Criticism in Italy — In France and England.

50. AMONG the polished writers of Italy, we meet on every side the name of Bembo; great in Italian as well as in Latin literature, in prose as in verse. It is now the fourth time that it occurs to us; and in no instance has he merited more of his country. Since the fourteenth century, to repeat what has been said before, so absorbing had become the love of ancient learning, that the natural language, beautiful and copious as it really was, and polished as it had been under the hands of Boccaccio, seemed to a very false-judging pedantry scarce worthy of the higher kinds of composition. Those, too, who with enthusiastic diligence had acquired the power of writing Latin well, did not brook so much as the equality of their native lan-

Contest of
Latin and
Italian lan-
guages.

guage. In an oration delivered at Bologna in 1529 before the emperor and pope, by Romolo Amaseo, one of the good writers of the sixteenth century, he not only pronounced a panegyric upon the Latin tongue, but contended that the Italian should be reserved for shops and markets and the conversation of the vulgar; * nor was this doctrine, probably in rather a less degree, uncommon during that age. A dialogue of Sperone relates to this debated question, whether the Latin or Italian language should be preferred; one of the interlocutors (probably Lazaro Buonamici, an eminent scholar) disdaining the latter as a mere corruption. It is a very ingenious performance, well conducted on both sides, and may be read with pleasure. The Italians of that age are as clever in criticism as they are wearisome on the commonplaces of ethics. It purports to have been written the year after the oration of Romolo Amaseo, to which it alludes.

51. It is an evidence of the more liberal spirit that generally accompanies the greatest abilities, that Bembo, superior even to Amaseo in fame, Influence of Bembo in this. as a Latin writer, should have been among the first to retrieve the honour of his native language by infusing into it that elegance and selection of phrase which his taste had taught him in Latin, and for which the Italian is scarcely less adapted. In the dialogue of Sperone, quoted above, it is said that "it was the general opinion no one would write Italian who could write Latin; a prejudice in some measure lightened by the poem of Politian on the tournament of Julian de' Medici, but not taken away till Bembo, a Venetian gentleman, as learned in the ancient languages as Politian, showed that he did not disdain his maternal tongue." ^m

52. It is common in the present age to show as indiscriminating a disdain of those who wrote in Latin as they seem to have felt towards their Apolo-
gy for Latinists. own literature. But the taste and imagination of Bembo are not given to every one; and we must remember, in justice to such men as Amaseo, who, though they imitate well, are yet but imitators in style, that there was really scarce a book in Italian prose written with any elegance,

* Tiraboschi, x. 389.

^m P. 430 (edit. 1596).

except the Decamerone of Boccaccio; the manner of which, as Tiraboschi justly observes, however suitable to those sportive fictions, was not very well adapted to serious eloquence.^a Nor has the Italian language, we may add, in its very best models, attained so much energy and condensation as will satisfy the ear or the understanding of a good Latin scholar; and there can be neither pedantry nor absurdity in saying that it is an inferior organ of human thought. The most valid objection to the employment of Latin in public discourses or in moral treatises is its exclusion of those whose advantage we are supposed to seek, and whose sympathy we ought to excite. But this objection, though not much less powerful in reality than at present, struck men less sensibly in that age, when long use of the ancient language, in which even the sermons of the clergy were frequently delivered, had taken away the sense of its impropriety.^o

53. This controversy points out some degree of change in public opinion, and the first stage of that struggle against the aristocracy of erudition which lasted more or less for nearly two centuries, till, like other struggles of still more importance, it ended in the victory of the many. In the days of Poggio and Politian the native Italian no more claimed an equality than the plebeians of Rome demanded the consulship in the first years of the republic. These are the revolutions of human opinion, bearing some analogy and parallelism to those of civil society, which it is the business of an historian of literature to indicate.

54. The life of Bembo was spent, after the loss of his

^a x. 402. [Bettinelli speaks not very favourably of the style of the Decamerone. Certo è, che il costume, il dipingere, l' arte del dialogo, la grazia de' motti, la verità e varietà di caratteri nel Decamerone fanno un' opera molto eloquente. Ma certo è non meno, che affettata è la sua rotondità di periodo, faticosa la costruzione, dure e spiacevoli le trasposizioni, etc. L' altre opere sue di fatti non sono autorevoli fuorchè in Crusca. Risorgimento d' Italia dopo il Millesimo, vol. i. p. 192.—1842.]

^o Sadolet himself had rather discouraged Bembo from writing Italian, as

appears from one of his epistles, thanking his friend for the present of a book, perhaps *Le Prose*. Sed tu fortasse concijis ex eo, illa mihi non placere, quod te avocare solebam ab illis literis. Faciebam ego id quidem, sed consilio, ut videbar, bono. Cum enim in Latinis major multo inesset dignitas, tuque in ea facultate princeps mihi longe viderere, non tam abstraherem te illinc, quam huc vocabam. Nec studium reprehendebam in illis tunc, sed te majora quedam spectare debere arbitrabar. Epist., lib. ii. p. 55

great patron Leo X., in literary elegance at Padua. Here he formed an extensive library and collection of medals; and here he enjoyed the society of the learned, whom that university supplied, or who visited him from other parts of Italy and Europe. Far below Sadolet in the solid virtues of his character, and not probably his superior in learning, he has certainly left a greater name, and contributed more to the literary progress of his native country. He died at an advanced age in 1547; having a few years before obtained a cardinal's hat on the recommendation of Sadolet.^p

Life of
Bembo.

55. The style of some other Italian and Spanish writers, Castiglione, Sperone, Machiavel, Guëvara, Oliva, has been already adverted to when the subject of their writings was before us; and it would be tedious to dwell upon them again in this point of view. The Italians have been accustomed to associate almost every kind of excellence with the word *cinquecento*. They extol the elegant style and fine taste of those writers. But André has remarked, with no injustice, that if we find purity, correctness, and elegance of expression in the chief prose writers of this century, we cannot but also acknowledge an empty prolixity of periods, a harsh involution of words and clauses, a jejune and wearisome circuitry of sentences, with a striking deficiency of thought. "Let us admit the graces of mere language in the famous authors of this period; but we must own them to be far from models of eloquence, so tedious and languid as they are."^q The Spanish writers of the same century, he says afterwards, nourished as well as the Italian with the milk of antiquity, transfused the spirit and vigour of these ancients into their own compositions, not with the servile imitation of the others, nor seeking to arrange their phrases and round their periods, the source of languor and emptiness, so that the best Spanish prose is more flowing and harmonious than the contemporary Italian.^r

Character
of Italian
and Spanish
style.

56. The French do not claim, I believe, to have produced at the middle of the sixteenth century any prose writer of a polished or vigorous

English
writers.

^p Tiraboschi, ix. 296; Corniani, iv. 99; Sadolet. Epist., lib. xii. p. 555.

^q André, vii. 68.

^r Id. 72.

style, Calvin excepted, the dedication of whose Institutes in French to Francis I. is a model of purity and elegance for the age.* Sir Thomas More's Life

of Edward V., written about 1509, appears to me the first example of good English language; pure and perspicuous, well-chosen, without vulgarisms or pedantry.† His polemical tracts are inferior, but not ill-written. We have seen that Sir Thomas Elyot had some

vigour of style. Ascham, whose *Toxophilus*, or *Dialogue on Archery*, came out in 1544, does not excel him. But his works have been reprinted in modern times, and are consequently better known than those of Elyot. The early English writers are seldom select enough in their phrases to bear such a critical judgment as the academicians of Italy were wont to exercise.

57. Next to the models of style we may place those Italian writings which are designed to form them. In criticism. all sorts of criticism, whether it confines itself to the idioms of a single language, or rises to something like a general principle of taste, the Italian writers had a decided priority in order of time as well as of merit. We have already mentioned the earliest work, that of Fortunio, on Italian grammar. Liburnio, at Venice, in 1521, followed with his *Volgari Eleganzie*. But this was speedily eclipsed by a work of Bembo, published in 1525, with the rather singular title, *Le Prose*. These observations on the native language, commenced more than twenty years before, are written in dialogue, supposed to originate in the great controversy of that age, whether it were worthy of a man of letters to employ his mother-tongue instead of Latin. Bembo well defended the national cause, and by judicious criticism on the language itself and the best writers in it, put an end to the most specious argument under which the advocates of Latin sheltered themselves—that the Italian, being a mere assemblage of independent dialects, varying not only in pronunciation and orthography, but in their words and idioms, and

* Neufchâteau, *Essai sur les meilleurs ouvrages dans la langue Française*, p. 135.
 † This has been reprinted entire in *Hollingshed's Chronicle*; and the reader may find a long extract in the preface to Todd's edition of Johnson's Dictionary. I should name the account of Jane Shore as a model of elegant narration.

having been written with unbounded irregularity and constant adoption of vulgar phrases, could afford no certain test of grammatical purity or graceful ornament. It was thought necessary by Bembo to meet this objection by the choice of a single dialect; and, though a Venetian, he had no hesitation to recognise the superiority of that spoken in Florence. The Tuscan writers of that century proudly make use of his testimony in aid of their pretensions to dictate the laws of Italian idiom. Varchi says, "The Italians cannot be sufficiently thankful to Bembo, for having not only purified their language from the rust of past ages, but given it such regularity and clearness, that it has become what we now see." This early work, however, as might be expected, has not wholly escaped the censure of a school of subtle and fastidious critics, in whom Italy became fertile."

58. Several other treatises on the Italian language appeared even before the middle of the century; though few comparatively with the more celebrated and elaborate labours of criticism in its latter portion. None seem to deserve mention, unless it be the Observations of Lodovico Dolce (Venice, 1550), which were much improved in subsequent editions. Of the higher kind of criticism, which endeavours to excite and guide our perceptions of literary excellence, we find few or no specimens, even in Italy, within this period, except so far as the dialogues of Bembo furnish instances.

59. France was not destitute of a few obscure treatises at this time, enough to lay the foundations of her critical literature. The complex rules of French metre were to be laid down; and the language was irregular in pronunciation, accent, and orthography. These meaner, but necessary, elements of correctness occupied three or four writers, of whom Goujet has made brief mention: Sylvius, or Du Bois, who seems to have been the earliest writer on grammar;* Stephen Dolet, better known by his unfortunate fate, than by his essay on French punctuation;† and though Goujet does not name him, we may add an

Gramma-
rians and
Critics in
France.

* Ginguéné, vii. 390; Corniani, iv. 111.

† [The Sylvius here mentioned was, as I have been informed, James Du Bois, the physician, brother of Francis, who

is recorded, p. 271.—1842.]

† Goujet, Bibliothèque Française, i. 42, 81.

Englishman, Palsgrave, who published a French grammar in English as early as 1530.^a An earlier production than any of these is the *Art de plaine rhétorique*, by Peter Fabry, 1521; in which, with the help of some knowledge of Cicero, he attempted, but with little correctness, and often in absurd expressions, to establish the principles of oratory. If his work is no better than Goujet represents it to be, its popularity must denote a low condition of literature in France.^a The first who aspired to lay down anything like laws of taste in poetry was Thomas Sibilet, whose *Art Poétique* appeared in 1548. This is in two books; the former relating to the metrical rules of French verse, the latter giving precepts, short and judicious, for different kinds of composition. It is not, however, a work of much importance.^b

60. A more remarkable grammarian of this time was Louis Meigret, who endeavoured to reform orthography by adapting it to pronunciation. In a language where these had come to differ so prodigiously as they did in French, something of this kind would be silently effected by the printers; but the bold scheme of Meigret went beyond their ideas of reformation; and he complains that he could not prevail to have his words given to the public in the form he preferred. They were ultimately less rigid; and the new orthography appears in some grammatical treatises of Meigret, published about 1550. It was not, as we know, very successful; but he has credit given him for some improvements which have been retained in French printing. Meigret's French Grammar, it has been said, is the first that contains any rational or proper principles of the language. It has been observed, I know not how correctly, that he was the first who denied the name of case to those modifications of sense in nouns which are not marked by inflexion; but the writer to whom I am indebted for this adds, what all will not alike admit, that this limited meaning of the word case, which the modern grammars generally adopt, is rather an arbitrary deviation from their predecessors.^c

^a Biogr. Univ.: Palsgrave.

^b Goujet, i. 361.

^c Goujet, iii. 92.

^c Biogr. Univ.: Meigret, a good article; Goujet, i. 83.

61. It would have been strange, if we could exhibit a list of English writers on the subject of our language in the reign of Henry VIII., when it has at all times been the most neglected department of our literature. The English have ever been as indocile in acknowledging the rules of criticism, even those which determine the most ordinary questions of grammar, as the Italians and French have been voluntarily obedient. Nor had they as yet drunk deep enough of classical learning to discriminate, by any steady principle, the general beauties of composition. Yet among the scanty rivulets that the English press furnished, we find 'The Art or Craft of Rhetoryke,' dedicated by Leonard Cox to Hugh Faringdon, abbot of Reading. This book, which, though now very scarce, was translated into Latin, and twice printed at Cracow, in the year 1526,^a is the work of a schoolmaster and man of reputed learning. The English edition has no date, but was probably published about 1524. Cox says: "I have partly translated out of a work of rhetoric written in the Latin tongue, and partly compiled of my own, and so made a little treatise in manner of an introduction into this aforesaid science, and that in the English tongue, remembering that every good thing, after the saying of the philosopher, the more common the better it is." His art of rhetoric follows the usual distribution of the ancients, both as to the kinds of oration and their parts; with examples, chiefly from Roman history, to direct the choice of arguments. It is hard to say how much may be considered as his own. The book is in duodecimo, and contains but eighty-five pages; it would of course be unworthy of notice in a later period.

^a Panzer.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE SCIENTIFIC AND MISCELLANEOUS LITERATURE OF EUROPE,
FROM 1520 TO 1550.

SECT. I.

On Mathematical and Physical Science.

1. THE first translation of Euclid from the Greek text Geometrical treatises. was made by Zamberti of Venice, and appeared in 1505. It was republished at Basle in 1537. The Spherics of Theodosius and the Conics of Apollonius were translated by men, it is said, more conversant with Greek than with geometry. A higher praise is due to Werner of Nuremberg, the first who aspired to restore the geometrical analysis of the ancients. The treatise of Regiomontanus on triangles was first published in 1533. It may be presumed that its more important contents were already known to geometers. Montucla hints that the editor Schæner may have introduced some algebraic solutions which appear in this work; but there seems no reason to doubt that Regiomontanus was sufficiently acquainted with that science. The treatise of Vitello on optics, which belongs to the thirteenth century, was first printed in 1533.*

2. ORONCE Finée, with some reputation in his own times, has, according to Fernel. Montucla, no pretension to the name of a geometer; and another Frenchman, Fernel, better known as a physician, who published a *Cosmotheoria* in 1527, though he first gave the length of a degree of the meridian, and came not far from the truth, arrived at it by so unscientific a method, being in fact no other than counting the revolutions of a

* Montucla, Kästner.

wheel along the main road, that he cannot be reckoned much higher.^b These are obscure names in comparison with Joachim, surnamed Rhœticus, from his native country. After the publication of the work of Regiomontanus on trigonometry, he conceived the project of carrying those labours still farther, and calculated the sines, tangents, and secants, the last of which he first reduced to tables, for every minute of the quadrant, to a radius of unity followed by fifteen ciphers; one of the most remarkable monuments, says Montcula, of human patience, or rather of a devotion to science, the more meritorious that it could not be attended with much glory. But this work was not published till 1594, and then not so complete as Rhœticus had left it.^c

3. Jerome Cardan is, as it were, the founder of the higher algebra: for, whatever he may have borrowed from others, we derive the science from his *Ars Magna*, published in 1545. It contains many valuable discoveries; but that which has been most celebrated is the rule for the solution of cubic equations, generally known by Cardan's name, though he had obtained it from a man of equal genius in algebraic science, Nicolas Tartaglia. The original inventor appears to have been Scipio Ferreo, who, about 1505, by some unknown process, discovered the solution of a single case; that of $x^3 + p x = q$. Ferreo imparted the secret to one Fiore, or Floridus, who challenged Tartaglia to a public trial of skill, not unusual in that age. Before he heard of this, Tartaglia, as he assures us himself, had found out the solution of two other forms of cubic equation; $x^3 + p x^2 = q$, and $x^3 - p x^2 = q$. When the day of trial arrived Tartaglia was able not only to solve the problems offered by Fiore, but to baffle him entirely by others which resulted in the forms of equation, the solution of which had been discovered by himself. This was in 1535; and four years afterwards Cardan obtained the secret from Tartaglia under an oath of

^b Montcula, ii. 316; Kästner, ii. 329. [It has lately been shown by Professor de Morgan (*Philosophical Magazine* for December, 1841) that Montcula, Delambre, and others have made an egregious error about Fernel's measurement, which they have reduced to French toises, in

direct opposition to what he has said himself. He estimates the degree of latitude at 68° 096 Italian miles (equal to 63 or 64 English), and consequently falls very short of the truth.—1842.]

^c Montcula, i. 582; *Biogr. Univ.*, art. Joachim; Kästner, i. 561.

secrecy. In his *Ars Magna*, he did not hesitate to violate this engagement; and, though he gave Tartaglia the credit of the discovery, revealed the process to the world.^d He has said himself, that by the help of Ferrari, a very good mathematician, he extended his rule to some cases not comprehended in that of Tartaglia; but the best historian of early algebra seems not to allow this claim.^e

4. This writer, Cossali, has ingeniously attempted to trace the process by which Tartaglia arrived at this discovery;^f one which, when compared with the other leading rules of algebra, where the invention, however useful, has generally lain much nearer the surface, seems an astonishing effort of sagacity. Even Harriott's beautiful generalisation of the composition of equations was prepared by what Cardan and Vieta had done before, or might have been suggested by observation in the less complex cases.^g

^d Playfair, in his second dissertation in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, though he cannot but condemn Cardan, seems to think Tartaglia rightly treated for having concealed his discovery; and others have echoed this strain. Tartaglia himself says, in a passage I have read in Cossali, that he meant to have divulged it ultimately; but in that age money as well as credit was to be got by keeping the secret; and those who censure him wholly forget that the solution of cubic equations was, in the actual state of algebra, perfectly devoid of any utility to the world.

^e Cossali, *Storia Critica d'Algebra* (1797), ii. 96, &c.; Hutton's *Mathematical Dictionary*; Montucla, i. 591; Kästner, i. 152.

^f *Ibid.*, p. 145. Tartaglia boasts of having discovered, by a geometrical construction, that the cube of $p+q=p^3+p^2q+pq^2+q^3$. I give the modern formula, but literal algebra was unknown to him.

^g Cardan strongly expresses his sense of this recondite discovery. And as the passage in which he retraces the early progress of algebra is short, and is quoted from Cardan's works, which are scarce in England, by Kästner, who is himself not very commonly known here, I shall trans-

scribe the whole passage as a curiosity for our philomaths. *Hæc ars olim a Mahomete Mosis Arabis filio initium sumpsit. Etenim hujus rei locuples testis Leonardus Pisanus. Reliquit autem capitula quatuor, cum suis demonstrationibus quas nos locis suis ascribemus. Post multa vero temporum intervalva tria capitula derivativa addita illis sunt, incerto autore, quæ tamen cum principibus a Luca Paciolo posita sunt. Demum etiam ex primis, alia tria derivativa, a quodam ignoto viro inventa legi, hæc tamen minimè in lucem prodierant, cum essent aliis longe utiliora, nam cubi et numeri et cubi quadrati æstimationem docebant. Verum temporibus nostris Scipio Ferreus Bononiensis, capitulum cubi et rerum numero æqualium [$x^3+px=q$] invenit, rem sane pulchram et admirabilem: cum omnem humanam subtilitatem, omnis ingenii mortalis claritatem ars hæc superet, domum profecto caeleste, experimentum autem virtutis animorum, atque adeo illustre, ut qui hæc attigerit nihil non intelligere posse se credat. Hujus æmulatione Nicolaus Tartalea Brixellensis, amicus noster, cum in certamen cum filius discipulo Antonio Maria Florido venisset, capitulum idem ne vinceretur invenit, qui mihi ipsum multis precibus exoratus tradidit. De-*

5. Cardan, though not entitled to the honour of this discovery, nor even equal, perhaps, in mathematical genius to Tartaglia, made a great epoch in the science of algebra; and, according to Cossali and Hutton, has a claim to much that Montucla has unfairly or carelessly attributed to his favourite Vieta. "It appears," says Dr. Hutton, "from this short chapter (lib. x. cap. 1 of the *Ars Magna*), that he had discovered most of the principal properties of the roots of equations, and could point out the number and nature of the roots, partly from the signs of the terms, and partly from the magnitude and relations of the co-efficients." Cossali has given the larger part of a quarto volume to the algebra of Cardan; his object being to establish the priority of the Italian's claim to most of the discoveries ascribed by Montucla to others, and especially to Vieta. Cardan knew how to transform a complete cubic equation into one wanting the second term; one of the flowers which Montucla has placed on the head of Vieta; and this he explains so fully, that Cossali charges the French historian of mathematics with having never read the *Ars Magna*.^h Leonard of Pisa had been aware that quadratic equations might have two positive roots; but Cardan first perceived, or at least first noticed, the negative roots, which he calls "*fictæ radices*."ⁱ In this perhaps there is nothing extraordinary; the algebraic language must early have been perceived by such acute men as exercised themselves in problems to give a double solution of every quadratic equation; but, in fact, the conditions of these problems, being always numerical, were such as to

Cardan's
other dis-
coveries.

ceptus enim ego verbis Lucae Pacioli, qui ultra sua capitula generale ullum aliud esse posse negat (quanquam tot jam antea rebus a me inventis sub manibus esset), desperabam tamen invenire quod quaerere non audebam.¹ Inde autem illo habito demonstrationem venatus, intellexi complura alia posse haberi. Ac eo studio, auctaque jam confidentia, per me partim, ac etiam aliqua per Ludovicum

Ferrarium, olim alumnus nostrum, inveni. Porro quæ ab his inventa sunt, illorum nominibus decorabuntur, cætera quæ nomine carent nostra sunt. At etiam demonstrationes, præter tres Mahometis, et duas Ludovici, omnes nostras sunt, singulæque capitibus suis præponentur, inde regula addita, subjicietur experimentum. Kistner, p. 152. The passage in italics is also quoted by Cossali, p. 159.

^h P. 164.

ⁱ Montucla gives Cardan the credit due for this; at least in his second edition (1799), p. 595.

¹ [This was very erroneously printed in the first edition; in consequence, as I believe, of a mistake I had made in transcription.—1842.]

render a negative result practically false, and impertinent to the question. It is therefore, perhaps, without much cause that Cossali triumphs in the ignorance shown of negative values by Vieta, Bachet, and even Harriott, though Cardan had pointed them out;^k since we may better say that they did not trouble themselves with what, in the actual application of algebra, could be of no utility. Cardan also is said to have discovered that every cubic equation has one or three real roots; and (what seems hardly probable in the state of science at that time) that there are as many positive or true roots as changes of sign in the equation; that the coefficient of the second term is equal to the sum of the roots, so that where it is wanting, the positive and negative values must compensate each other;^m and that the known term is the product of all the roots. Nor was he ignorant of a method of extracting roots by approximation; but in this again the definiteness of solution, which numerical problems admit and require, would prevent any great progress from being made.ⁿ The rules are not perhaps all laid down by him very clearly; and it is to be observed that he confined himself chiefly to equations not above the third power; though he first published the method of solving biquadratics, invented by his coadjutor Ferrari. Cossali has also shown that the application of algebra to geometry, and even to the geometrical construction of problems, was known in some cases by Tartaglia and Cardan; thus plucking another feather from the wing of Vieta, or of Descartes. It is a little amusing to see that, after Montucla had laboured with so much success to despoil Harriott of the glory which Wallis had, perhaps with too national a feeling, bestowed upon him for a long list of discoveries contained in the writings of Vieta, a claimant by an

^k l. 23.

^m It must, apparently, have been through his knowledge of this property of the co-efficient of the second term, that Cardan recognised the existence of equal roots, even when affected by the same sign (Cossali, ii. 362), which, considered in relation to the numerical problems then in use, would seem a kind of absurdity.

ⁿ Kästner, p. 161. In one place Cos-

sali shows that Cardan had transported all the quantities of an equation to one side, making the whole equal to zero, which Wallis has ascribed to Harriott as his leading discovery, p. 324. Yet in another passage we find Cossali saying: *Una somma di quantità uguale al zero avea un' aria mostruosa, e non sapeasi di equazione si fatta concepire idea.* p. 169.

older title started up in Jerome Cardan, who, if we may trust his accomplished advocate, seems to have established his right at the expense of both.

6. These anticipations of Cardan are the more truly wonderful when we consider that the symbolical language of algebra, that powerful instrument not only in expediting the processes of thought, but in suggesting general truths to the mind, was nearly unknown in his age. Diophantus, Fra Luca, and Cardan make use occasionally of letters to express indefinite quantities, besides the *res* or *cosa*, sometimes written shortly, for the assumed unknown number of an equation. But letters were not yet substituted for known quantities. Michael Stifel, in his *Arithmetica Integra*, Nuremberg, 1544, is said to have first used the signs + and -, and numeral exponents of powers.^o It is very singular that discoveries of the greatest convenience, and apparently not above the ingenuity of a parish schoolmaster, should have been overlooked by men of extraordinary acuteness, like Tartaglia, Cardan, and Ferrari, and hardly less so, that by dint of this acuteness they dispensed with the aid of these contrivances, in which we suppose that so much of the utility of algebraic expression consists.

Imperfections of algebraic language.

7. But the great boast of science during this period is the treatise of Copernicus on the revolutions of the heavenly bodies, in six books, published at Nuremberg, in 1543.^p This founder of modern astronomy was born at Thorn, of a good family, in 1473, and, after receiving the best education his country furnished, spent some years in Italy, rendering himself master of all the mathematical and astronomical science at that time attainable. He became possessed afterwards of an ecclesiastical benefice in his own country. It appears to have been about 1507 that, after meditating on various

Copernicus.

^o Hutton, Kästner.

^p The title-page and advertisement of so famous a work, and which so few of my readers will have seen, are worth copying from Kästner, ff. 595. Nicolai Copernici Torinensis, de revolutionibus orbium coelestium libri vi.

Habes in hoc opere jam recens nato et edito, studiosè lector, motus stellarum tam fixarum quam erraticarum, cum ex

veteribus tum etiam ex recentibus observationibus restitutos; et novis insuper ac admirabilibus hypothesibus ornatos. Habes etiam tabulas expeditissimas, ex quibus eosdem ad quodvis tempus quam facillime calculare poteris. Igitur eme, lege, fructe. Αλεξανδρου του οιδειου εισαγω. Noribergæ, apud Joh. Petreium, anno MDXLIII.

schemes besides the Ptolemaic, he began to adopt and confirm in writing that of Pythagoras, as alone capable of explaining the planetary motions with that simplicity which gives a presumption of truth in the works of nature.⁶ Many years of exact observation confirmed his mind in the persuasion that he had solved the grandest problem which can occupy the astronomer. He seems to have completed his treatise about 1530; but perhaps dreaded the bigoted prejudices which afterwards oppressed Galileo. Hence he is careful to propound his theory as an hypothesis; though it is sufficiently manifest that he did not doubt of its truth. It was first publicly announced by his disciple Joachim Rhœticus, already mentioned for his trigonometry, in the *Narra'tio de Revolutionibus Copernici*, printed at Dantzic in 1540. The treatise of Copernicus himself, three years afterwards, is dedicated to the pope, Paul III., as if to shield himself under that sacred mantle. But he was better protected by the common safeguard against oppression. The book reached him on the day of his death; and he just touched with his hands the great legacy he was to bequeath to mankind. But many years were to elapse before they availed themselves of the wisdom of Copernicus. The progress of his system, even among astronomers, as we shall hereafter see, was exceeding slow.⁷ We may just mention here that no kind of progress was made in mechanical or optical science during the first part of the sixteenth century.

⁶ This is the proper statement of the Copernican argument, as it then stood; it rested on what we may call a metaphysical probability, founded upon its beauty and simplicity; for it is to be remembered that the Ptolemaic hypothesis explained all the phenomena then known. Those which are only to be solved by the supposition of the earth's motion were discovered long afterwards. This excuses the slow reception of the new system, interfering as it did with so many prejudices, and incapable of that kind of proof which mankind generally demand.

⁷ Gassendi, *Vita Copernici*; Biogr. Univ.; Montucla; Kästner; Playfair. Gassendi, p. 14-22, gives a short ana-

lysis of the great work of Copernicus *de orbium coelestium revolutionibus*, p. 22. The hypothesis is generally laid down in the first of the six books. One of the most remarkable passages in Copernicus is his conjecture that gravitation was not a central tendency, as had been supposed, but an attraction common to matter, and probably extending to the heavenly bodies, though it does not appear that he surmised their mutual influences in virtue of it: *gravitatem esse affectionem non terre totius, sed partium ejus propriam, qualem soli etiam et lunæ cæterisque astris convenire credibile est*. These are the words of Copernicus himself, quoted by Gassendi, p. 19.

SECT. II.

On Medicine and Anatomy.

8. THE revival of classical literature had an extensive influence where we might not immediately anticipate it,—on the science of medicine. Jurisprudence itself, though nominally and exclusively connected with the laws of Rome, was hardly more indebted to the restorers of ancient learning than the art of healing, which seems to own no mistress but nature, no code of laws but those which regulate the human system. But the Greeks, among their other vast superiorities above the Arabians, who borrowed so much, and so much perverted what they borrowed, were not only the real founders, but the best teachers of medicine, a science which in their hands seems, more than any other, to have anticipated the Baconian philosophy, being founded on an induction proceeding by select experience, always observant, always cautious, and ascending slowly to the generalities of theory. But instead of Hippocrates and Galen, the Arabians brought in physicians of their own, men, doubtless, of considerable, though inferior, merit, and substituted arbitrary or empirical precepts for the enlarged philosophy of the Greeks. The scholastic subtilty also obtruded itself even into medicine; and the writings of the middle ages on these subjects are alike barbarous in style and useless in substance. Pharmacy owes much to this oriental school, but it has retained no reputation in physiological or pathological science.

9. Nicolas Leoniceus, who became professor at Ferrara before 1470, was the first restorer of the Hippocratic method of practice. He lived to a very advanced age, and was the first translator of Galen from the Greek.* Our excellent countryman, Linacre, did almost as much for medicine. The College of Physicians, founded by Henry VIII. in 1518, venerates him as its original president. His primary object was to secure a learned profession, to rescue the art of healing from mischievous ignorance, and to guide the industrious student in the path of real knowledge, which

Revival of
Greek medicine.

Linacre and
other physicians.

* Biogr. Univ.; Sprengel, Hist. de la Médecine (traduite par Jourdan), vol. II.
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at that time lay far more through the regions of ancient learning than at present. It was important, not for the mere dignity of the profession, but for its proper ends, to encourage the cultivation of the Greek language or to supply its want by accurate versions of the chief medical writers.¹ Linacre himself, and several eminent physicians on the continent, Cop, Ruel, Gonthier, Fuchs, by such labours in translation, restored the school of Hippocrates. That of the Arabians rapidly lost ground, though it preserved through the sixteenth century an ascendancy in Spain; and some traces of its influence, especially the precarious empiricism of judging diseases by the renal secretion, without sight of the patient, which was very general in that age, continued long afterwards in several parts of Europe."

10. The study of Hippocrates taught the medical writers of this century to observe and describe like him. Their works, chiefly indeed after the period with which we are immediately concerned, are very numerous, and some of them deserve much praise, though neither the theory of the science nor the power of judiciously observing and describing was yet in a very advanced state. The besetting sin of all who should have laboured for truth, an undue respect for authority, made Hippocrates and Galen, especially the former, as much the idols of the medical world as Augustin and Aristotle were of theology and metaphysics. This led to a pedantic erudition and contempt of opposite experience which rendered the professors of medicine an inexhaustible theme of popular ridicule. Some, however, even at an early time, broke away from the trammels of implicit obedience to the Greek masters. Fernel, one of the first physicians in France, rejecting what he could not approve in their writings, gave an example of free inquiry. Argentier of Turin tended to shake the influence of Galen by founding a school which combated many of his leading theories.² But the most successful opponent of the orthodox creed was Paracelsus. Of his speculative philosophy, or

Medical
innovators.

Paracelsus.

¹ Johnson's *Life of Linacre*, p. 207, the first to lay down a novel and true principle, that the different faculties of the soul are not inherent in certain distinct parts of the brain.

² Sprengel, vol. iii. *passim*.

³ *Id.* 204. "Argentier," he says, "was

rather the wild chimeras which he borrowed or devised, enough has been said in former pages. His reputation was originally founded on a supposed skill in medicine; and it is probable that, independently of his real merit in the application of chemistry to medicine, and in the employment of very powerful agents, such as antimony, the fanaticism of his pretended philosophy would exercise that potency over the bodily frame, to which disease has, in recent experience, so often yielded.[†]

11. The first important advances in anatomical knowledge since the time of Mundinus were made ^{Anatomy.} by Berenger of Carpi, in his commentary upon ^{Berenger.} that author, printed at Bologna in 1521, which it was thought worth while to translate into English as late as 1664, and in his *Isagogæ breves in anatomiam*, Bologna, 1522. He followed the steps of Mundinus in human dissection, and thus gained an advantage over Galen. Hence we owe to him the knowledge of several specific differences between the human structure and that of quadrupeds. Berenger is asserted to have discovered two of the small bones of the ear, though this is contested on behalf of Achillini. Portal observes that, though some have regarded Berenger as the restorer of the science of anatomy, it is hard to strip one so much superior to him as Vesalius of that honour.[‡]

12. Every early anatomist was left far behind when Vesalius, a native of Brussels, who acquired in ^{Vesalius.} early youth an extraordinary reputation on this side of the Alps, and in 1540 became professor of the science at Pavia, published at Basle, in 1543, his great work *De Corporis humani Fabrica*. If Vesalius was not quite to anatomy what Copernicus was to astronomy, he has yet been said, a little hyperbolically, to have discovered a new world. A superstitious prejudice against human dissection had confined the ancient anatomists in general to pigs and apes, though Galen, according to Portal, had some experience in the former. Mundinus and Berenger, by occasionally dissecting the human body, had thrown much additional light on its structure; and the superficial muscles, those immediately under the integuments, had been studied by Da Vinci

[†] Sprengel, vol. iii.

[‡] Hist. de l'Anatomie, l. 277.
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and others for the purposes of painting and sculpture. Vesalius first gave a complete description of the human body, with designs, which, at the time, were ascribed to Titian. We have here, therefore, a great step made in science; the precise estimation of Vesalius's discoveries must be sought, of course, in anatomical history.*

13. "Vesalius," says Portal, in the rapturous strain of one devoted to his own science, "appears to me one of the greatest men who ever existed. Let the astronomers vaunt their Copernicus, the natural philosophers their Galileo and Torricelli, the mathematicians their Pascal, the geographers their Columbus, I shall always place Vesalius above all their heroes. The first study for man is man. Vesalius has had this noble object in view, and has admirably attained it; he has made on himself and his fellows such discoveries as Columbus could only make by travelling to the extremity of the world. The discoveries of Vesalius are of direct importance to man: by acquiring fresh knowledge of his own structure man seems to enlarge his existence; while discoveries in geography or astronomy affect him but in a very indirect manner." He proceeds to compare him with Winslow, more than a century later, in order to show how little had been done in the intermediate time. Vesalius seems not to have known the osteology of the ear. His account of the teeth is not complete; but he first clearly described the bones of the feet. He has given a full account of the muscles, but with some mistakes, and was ignorant of a very few. In his account of the sanguineous and nervous systems the errors seem more numerous. He describes the intestines better than his predecessors, and the heart very well; the organs of generation not better than they, and sometimes omits their discoveries; the brain admirably, little having since been added.

14. The zeal of Vesalius and his fellow-students for anatomical science led them to strange scenes of adventure. Those services which have since been thrown on the refuse of mankind they voluntarily undertook.

Entire affection scorneth nicer hands.

* Portal, l. 394-433.

They prowled by night in charnel-houses, they dug up the dead from the grave, they climbed the gibbet, in fear and silence, to steal the mouldering carcass of the murderer; the risk of ignominious punishment, and the secret stings of superstitious remorse, exalting no doubt the delight of these useful but not very enviable pursuits.^b

15. It may be mentioned here that Vesalius, after living for some years in the court of Charles and Philip as their physician, met with a strange reverse, characteristic enough of such a place. Being absurdly accused of having dissected a Spanish gentleman before he was dead, Vesalius only escaped capital punishment, at the instance of the Inquisition, by undertaking a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, during which he was shipwrecked, and died of famine in one of the Greek islands.^c

16. The best anatomists were found in Italy. But Francis I. invited one of these, Vidus Viduus, to his royal college at Paris; and from that time France had several of respectable name. Such were Charles Etienne, one of the great typographical family, Sylvius and Gonthier.^d A French writer about 1540, Levasseur, has been thought to have known, at least, the circulation of the blood through the lungs, as well as the valves of the arteries and veins, and their direction, and its purpose; treading closely on an anticipation of Harvey.^e But this seems to be too hastily inferred. Portal has erroneously supposed the celebrated passage of Servetus on the circulation of the blood to be contained in his book *De Trinitatis erroribus*, published in 1531,^f whereas it is really found in the *Christianismi Restitutio*, which did not appear till 1553.

17. The practice of trusting to animal dissection, from which it was difficult for anatomists to extricate themselves, led some men of real merit into errors. They seem also not to have pro-

Imperfection of the science.

^b Portal, p. 395.

^c Portal; Tiraboschi, ix. 34; Biogr. Univ. [Sprengel, *Hist. de la Médecine*, vol. iv. p. 6, treats the cause of the pilgrimage of Vesalius, assigned by these writers, as a fable,—1842.]

^d Portal, i. 330 et post.

^e Portal, p. 373, quotes the passage, which at first seems to warrant this inference, but is rather obscurely worded. We shall return to this subject when we arrive at Harvey.

^f P. 300.

fited sufficiently by the writings of their predecessors. Massa of Venice, one of the greatest of this age, is ignorant of some things known to Berenger. Many proofs occur in Portal how imperfectly the elder anatomists could yet demonstrate the more delicate parts of the human body.

SECT. III.

On Natural History.

18. THE progress of natural history, in all its departments, was very slow, and should of course be estimated by the additions made to the valuable materials collected by Aristotle, Theophrastus, Dioscorides, and Pliny. The few botanical treatises that had appeared before this time were too meagre and imperfect to require mention. Otto Brunfels of Strasburg was the first who published, in 1530, a superior work, *Herbarum vivæ Eicones*, in three volumes folio, with 238 wooden cuts of plants.^a Euricius Cordus of Marburg, in his *Botanilogicon*, or dialogues on plants, displays, according to the *Biographie Universelle*, but little knowledge of Greek, and still less observation of nature. Cordus has deserved more praise (though this seems better due to Lorenzo de' Medici), as the first who established a botanical garden. This was at Marburg in 1530.^b But the fortunes of private physicians were hardly equal to the cost of an useful collection. The university of Pisa led the way by establishing a public garden in 1545, according to the date which Tiraboschi has determined: that of Padua had founded a professorship of botany in 1533.^c

^a Biogr. Univ.

^b Id.; André, xiii. 80; Eichhorn, iii. 304. See, too, Roscoe's *Leo X.*, iv. 125, for some pleasing notices of the early studies in natural history. Pontanus was fond of it; and his poem on the cultivation of the lemon, orange, and citron (*De hortis Hesperidum*) shows an acquaintance with some of the operations

of horticulture. The garden of Bembo was also celebrated. Theophrastus and Dioscorides were published in Latin before 1500. But it was not till about the middle of the sixteenth century that botany, through the commentaries of Matthioli on Dioscorides, began to assume a distinct form, and to be studied as a separate branch.

19. Ruel, a physician of Soissons, an excellent Greek scholar, had become known by a translation of Dioscorides in 1516, upon which Huët has bestowed high praise. His more celebrated treatise *De Natura Stirpium* appeared at Paris in 1536, and is one of the handsomest offspring of that press. It is a compilation from the Greek and Latin authors on botany, made with taste and judgment. His knowledge, however, derived from experience was not considerable, though he has sometimes given the French names of species described by the Greeks, so far as his limited means of observation and the difference of climate enabled him. Many later writers have borrowed from Ruel their general definitions and descriptions of plants, which he himself took from Theophrastus.^k

20. Ruel, however, seems to have been left far behind by Leonard Fuchs, professor of medicine in more than one German university, who has secured a verdant immortality in the well-known *Fuchsia*. Besides many works on his own art, esteemed in their time, he published at Basle in 1542 his *Commentaries on the History of Plants*, containing above 500 figures, a botanical treatise frequently reprinted, and translated into most European languages. "Considered as a naturalist, and especially as a botanist, Fuchs holds a distinguished place, and he has thrown a strong light on that science. His chief object is to describe exactly the plants used in medicine; and his prints, though mere outlines, are generally faithful. He shows that the plants and vegetable products mentioned by Theophrastus, Dioscorides, Hippocrates, and Galen had hitherto been ill known."^m

21. Matthioli, an Italian physician, in a peaceful retreat near Trent, accomplished a laborious repertory of medical botany in his *Commentaries on Dioscorides*, published originally, 1544, in Italian, but translated by himself into Latin, and frequently reprinted throughout Europe. Notwithstanding a bad arrangement, and the author's proneness to credulity, it was of great service at a time when no good work on that subject was in existence in Italy; and its

^k Biogr. Univ. (by M. du Petit Thouars).

^m *Id.*

reputation seems to have been not only general, but of long duration.²

22. It was not singular that much should have been published, imperfect as it might be, on the natural history of plants, while that of animal nature, as a matter of science, lay almost neglected. The importance of vegetable products in medicine was far more extensive and various; while the ancient treatises, which formed substantially the chief knowledge of nature possessed in the sixteenth century, are more copious and minute on the botanical than the animated kingdom. Hence we find an absolute dearth of books relating to zoology. That of P. Jovius de Piscibus Romanis is rather one of a philologer and a lover of good cheer than a naturalist, and treats only of the fish eaten at the Roman tables.³ Gillius de vi et natura animalium is little else than a compilation from Ælian and other ancient authors, though Nicéron says that the author has interspersed some observations of his own.⁴ No work of the least importance, even for that time, can perhaps be traced in Europe on any part of zoology, before the *Avium præcipuarum historia* of our countryman Turner, published at Cologne in 1548, though this is confined to species described by the ancients. Gesner, in his *Pandects*, which bear date in the same year, several times refers to it with commendation.⁵

23. Agricola, a native of Saxony, acquired a perfect knowledge of the processes of metallurgy from the miners of Chemnitz, and perceived the immense resources that might be drawn from the abysses of the earth. "He is the first mineralogist," says Cuvier, "who appeared after the revival of science in Europe. He was to mineralogy what Gesner was to zoology: the chemical part of metallurgy, and especially what relates to assaying, is treated with great care, and has been little improved down to the end of the eighteenth cen-

² Tiraboschi, ix. 2; Andès, xiii. 85; a high compliment from so illustrious a naturalist. He quotes also a book on quadrupeds lately printed in German by Corniani, vi. 5.

³ Andès, xiii. 143; Roscoe's *Leo X.*, ubi supra.

⁴ Vol. xxiii.; *Biogr. Univ.*; Andès, xiii. 144.

⁵ *Pandect. Univers.*, lib. 14. Gesner may be said to make great use of Turner; towards dean of Wells, and was one of the early Puritans. See Chalmers's Dictionary.

ture. It is plain that he was acquainted with the classics, the Greek alchemists, and many manuscripts. Yet he believed in the goblins to whom miners ascribe the effects of mephitic exhalations.”†

SECT. IV.

On Oriental Literature.

24. THE study of Hebrew was naturally one of those which flourished best under the influence of Protestantism. It was exclusively connected with Scriptural interpretation; and could neither suit the polished irreligion of the Italians nor the bigotry of those who owned no other standard than the Vulgate translation. Sperone observes in one of his dialogues, that as much as Latin is prized in Italy, so much do the Germans value the Hebrew language.* We have anticipated in another place the translations of the Old Testament by Luther, Pagninus, and other Hebraists of this age. Sebastian Munster published the first grammar and lexicon of the Chaldee dialect in 1527. His Hebrew Grammar had preceded in 1525. The Hebrew Lexicon of Pagninus appeared in 1529, and that of Munster himself in 1543. Elias Levita, the learned Jew who has been already mentioned, deserves to stand in this his natural department above even Munster. Among several works that fall within this period we may notice the Masorah (Venice, 1538, and Basle, 1539), wherein he excited the attention of the world by denying the authority and antiquity of vowel points, and a Lexicon of the Chaldee and Rabbinical dialects, in 1541. “Those,” says Simon, “who would thoroughly understand Hebrew should read the Treatises of Elias Levita, which are full of important observations necessary for the explanation of the sacred text.”† Pellican, one of the first who embraced the principles of the Zuinglian reform, has merited a warm eulogy from Simon for his *Commentarii Bibliorum* (Zurich, 1531–1536, five volumes in folio), especially for avoiding that display of rabbinical learning which the German Hebraists used to affect.‡

† Biogr. Univ.

* P. 102 (edit. 1596).

‡ Biogr. Univ.

§ Id.

25. Few endeavours were made in this period towards the cultivation of the other Oriental languages. Pagnino printed an edition of the Koran at Venice in 1530, but it was immediately suppressed, a precaution hardly required while there was no one able to read it. But it may have been supposed that the leaves of some books, like that recorded in the Arabian Nights, contain an active poison that does not wait for the slow process of understanding their contents. Two crude attempts at introducing the Eastern tongues were made soon afterwards. One of these was by William Postel, a man of some parts and more reading, but chiefly known, while he was remembered at all, for mad reveries of fanaticism, and an idolatrous veneration for a saint of his own manufacture, La Mère Jeanne, the Joanna Southcote of the sixteenth century. We are only concerned at present with his collection of alphabets, twelve in number, published at Paris in 1538. The greater part of these are Oriental. An Arabic Grammar followed the same year, but the types are so very imperfect that it would be difficult to read them. A polyglott alphabet on a much larger scale appeared at Pavia the next year, through the care of Teseo Ambrogio, containing those of forty languages. Ambrogio gave also an introduction to the Chaldee, Syriac, and Armenian, but very defective, at least as to the two latter. Such rude and incorrect publications hardly deserve the name of beginnings. According to Andrès, Arabic was publicly taught at Paris by Giustiniani, and at Salamanca by Clenardus. The Æthiopic version of the New Testament was printed at Rome in 1548.

SECT. V.

On Geography and History.

26. THE curiosity natural to mankind had been gratified by various publications since the invention of printing, containing either the relations of ancient travellers, such as Marco Polo, or of those under the Spanish or Portuguese flags, who had laid open two new worlds to the European reader. These were for the

first time collected, to the number of seventeen, by Simon Grynaeus, a learned professor at Basle, in *Novus orbis regionum et insularum veteribus incognitarum*, printed at Paris in 1532. We find in this collection, besides an introduction to cosmography by Sebastian Munster, a map of the world bearing the date 1531. The *Cosmography of Apianus*, professor at Ingoldstadt, published in 1524, contains also a map of the four quarters of the world. In this of Grynaeus's collection a rude notion of the eastern regions of Asia appears. Sumatra is called Taprobane, and placed in the 150th meridian. A vague delineation of China and the adjacent sea is given, but Catay is marked farther north. The island of Gilolo, which seems to be Japan, is about 240° east longitude. South America is noted as *Terra Australis recenter inventa, sed nondum plane cognita*; and there is as much of North America as Sebastian Cabot had discovered, a little enlarged by lucky conjecture. Magellan, by circumnavigating the world, had solved a famous problem. We find accordingly in this map an attempt to divide the globe by the 360 meridians of longitude. The best account of his voyage, that by Pigafetta, was not published till 1556; but the first, *Maximilianus de insulis Moluccis*, appeared in 1523.

27. The *Cosmography of Apianus*, above mentioned, was reprinted with additions by Gemma Frisius ^{Apianus.} in 1533 and 1550. It is, however, as a work of mere geography, very brief and superficial, though it may exhibit as much of the astronomical part of the science as the times permitted. That of Sebastian Munster, published in 1546, notwithstanding ^{Munster.} its title, extends only to the German empire.^x The *Isolario of Bordone* (Venice, 1528) contains a description of all the islands of the world, with maps.^y

^x Eichhorn, iii. 294.

^y Tiraboschi, ix. 179. [The best map, probably, of this period is one in the British Museum, executed in France before 1536, as is inferred from the form of the French king's crown, which was altered in that year. This map is generally superior to some which were engraved at a later time, and represents the figure of the African continent. It has excited some attention in consequence of an apparent delineation of

Australia, under the name of Java Grande. But this, which seems to come immediately from some Italian work, may be traced to Marco Polo, the great father of geographical conjecture in the middle ages. He gives an account, such as he picked up in China, of two islands, Java major and Java minor. The continent delineated in this French map is only the island of Java, vastly enlarged. —1842.]

28. A few voyages were printed before the middle of the century, which have, for the most part, found their way into the collection of Ramusio. Voyages. The most considerable is the History of the Indies, that is, of the Spanish dominions in America, by Oviedo. Gonzalo Hernandez, sometimes called Oviedo, by which name he is recorded in the Biographie Universelle. The author had resided for some years in St. Domingo. He published a summary of the general and natural history of the Indies in 1526, and twenty books of this entire work in 1535. The remaining thirty did not appear till 1783. In the long list of geographical treatises given by Ortelius a small number belong to this earlier period of the century. But it may be generally said that the acquaintance of Europe with the rest of the world could as yet be only obtained orally from Spanish and Portuguese sailors or adventurers, and was such as their falsehood and blundering would impart.

29. It is not my design to comprehend historical literature, except as to the chief publications, in Historical works. these volumes; and it is hitherto but a barren field; for, though Guicciardini died in 1540, his great history did not appear till 1564. Some other valuable histories, those of Nardi, Segni, Varchi, were also kept back, through political or other causes, till a comparatively late period. That of Paulus Jovius, which is not in very high estimation, appeared in 1550, and may be reckoned, perhaps, after that of Machiavel, the best of this age. Upon this side of the Alps several works of this class, to which the historical student has recourse, might easily be enumerated, but none of a philosophical character, or remarkable for beauty of style. I should, however, wish to make an exception for the Memoirs of the Chevalier Bayard, written by his secretary, and known by the title of *Le Loyal Serviteur*; they are full of warmth and simplicity. A chronicle bearing the name of Carion, but really written by Melanchthon, and published in the German language, 1532, was afterwards translated into Latin, and became the popular manual of universal history.* But ancient and mediæval history was as yet very imperfectly made known to those who had no access to its original sources. Even in Italy

* Bayle, art. Carion; Eichhorn, iii. 285.

little had yet been done with critical or even extensive erudition.

30. Italy in the sixteenth century was remarkable for the number of her literary academies; institutions which, though by no means peculiar to Italian academies. her, have in no other country been so general or so conspicuous. We have already taken notice of that established by Aldus Manutius at Venice early in this century, and of those of older date, which had enjoyed the patronage of princes at Florence and Naples, as well as of that which Pomponius Lætus and his associates, with worse auspices, had endeavoured to form at Rome. The Roman academy, after a long season of persecution or neglect, revived in the genial reign of Leo X. "Those were happy days," says Sadolet in 1529, writing to Angelo Colocci, a Latin poet of some reputation, "when in your suburban gardens, or mine on the Quirinal, or in the Circus, or by the banks of the Tiber, we held those meetings of learned men, all recommended by their own virtues and by public reputation. Then it was that, after a repast, which the wit of the guests rendered exquisite, we heard poems or orations recited to our great delight,—productions of the ingenious Casanuova, the sublime Vida, the elegant and correct Beroaldo, and many others, still living or now no more." ^a Corycius, a wealthy German, encouraged the good-humoured emulation of these Roman luminaries. ^b But the miserable reverse that not long after the death of Leo befell Rome put an end to this academy, which was afterwards replaced by others of less fame.

31. The first academies of Italy had chiefly directed their attention to classical literature; they compared manuscripts, they suggested new They pay regard to the language. readings or new interpretations, they deciphered inscriptions and coins, they sat in judgment on a Latin ode, or debated the propriety of a phrase. Their own poetry had, perhaps, never been neglected; but it was not till the writings of Bembo founded a new code of criticism in the Italian language that they began to

^a Sadolet, Epist., p. 225 (edit. 1554). Roscoe has quoted this interesting letter.

^b Roscoe, iii. 480.

study it minutely, and judge of compositions with that fastidious scrupulousness which they had been used to exercise upon modern Latinity. Several academies were established with a view to this purpose, and became the self-appointed censors of their native literature. The reader will remember what has been already mentioned, that there was a peculiar source of verbal criticism in Italy, from the want of a recognised standard of idiom. The very name of the language was long in dispute. Bembo maintained that Florentine was the proper appellation. Varchi and other natives of the city have adhered to this very restrictive monopoly. Several, with more plausibility, contended for the name Tuscan; and this, in fact, was so long adopted, that it is hardly yet, perhaps, altogether out of use. The majority, however, were not Tuscans; and while it is generally agreed that the highest purity of their language is to be found in Tuscany, the word Italian has naturally prevailed as its denomination.

32. The academy of Florence was instituted in 1540 to illustrate and perfect the *Tuscan* language, especially by a close attention to the poetry of Petrarch. Their admiration of Petrarch became an exclusive idolatry; the critics of this age would acknowledge no defect in him, nor excellence in any different style. Dissertations and commentaries on Petrarch, in all the diffuseness characteristic of the age and the nation, crowd the Italian libraries. We are, however, anticipating a little in mentioning them; for few belong to so early a period as the present. But by dint of this superstitious accuracy in style, the language rapidly acquired a purity and beauty which has given the writers of the sixteenth century a value in the eyes of their countrymen not always so easily admitted by those who, being less able to perceive the delicacy of expression, are at leisure to yawn over their frequent tediousness and inanity.

33. The Italian academies which arose in the first half of the century, and we shall meet with others hereafter, are too numerous to be reckoned in these pages. The most famous were the *Intornati* of Siena, founded in 1525, and devoted, like that of Florence, to the improvement of their language; the *Infiammati* of Padua, founded by some men of high

Their fondness for Petrarch.

They become numerous.

attainments in 1534; and that of Modena, which, after a short career of brilliancy, fell under such suspicions of heresy, and was subjected to such inquisitorial jealousy about 1542, that it never again made any figure in literary history.^c

34. Those academies have usually been distinguished by little peculiarities, which border sometimes on the ridiculous, but serve probably, at least in the beginning, to keep up the spirit of such societies. They took names humorously quaint; they adopted devices and distinctions, which made them conspicuous and inspired a vain pleasure in belonging to them. The Italian nobility, living a good deal in cities, and restrained from political business, fell willingly into these literary associations. They have, perhaps, as a body, been better educated, or, at least, better acquainted with their own literature and with classical antiquity, than men of equal rank in other countries. This was more the case in the sixteenth century than at present. Genius and erudition have been always honoured in Italy; and the more, probably, that they have not to stand the competition of overpowering wealth or of political influence.

35. Academies of the Italian kind do not greatly favour the vigorous advances in science, and much less the original bursts of genius, for which men of powerful minds are designed by nature. They form an oligarchy, pretending to guide the public taste, as they are guided themselves, by arbitrary maxims and close adherence to precedents. The spirit of criticism which they foster is a salutary barrier against bad taste and folly, but is too minute and scrupulous in repressing the individualities that characterise real talents, and ends by producing an unblemished mediocrity, without the powers of delight or excitement, for which alone the literature of the imagination is desired.

36. In the beginning of this century several societies were set on foot in Germany for the promotion of ancient learning, besides that already mentioned, of the Rhine, established by Camerarius of Dalberg and Conrad Celtes in the preceding age.

^c Tiraboschi, viii. ch. 4, is my chief authority about the Italian academies of this period.

Wimpfeling presided over one at Strasburg in 1514, and we find another at Augsburg in 1518. It is probable that the religious animosities which followed stood in the way of similar institutions; or they may have existed without obtaining much celebrity.^d

37. Italy was rich, far beyond any other country, in public and private libraries. The Vatican, Libraries. first in dignity, in antiquity, and in number of books, increased under almost every successive pope, except Julius II., the least favourable to learning of them all. The Laurentian library, purchased by Leo X. before his accession to the papacy, from a monastery at Florence, which had acquired the collection after the fall of the Medici in 1494, was restored to that city by Clement VII., and placed in the newly-erected building which still contains it. The public libraries of Venice and Ferrara were conspicuous; and even a private citizen of the former, the Cardinal Grimani, is said to have left one of eight thousand volumes; at that time, it appears, a remarkable number.^e Those of Heidelberg and Vienna, commenced in the fifteenth century, were still the most distinguished in Germany; and Cardinal Ximenes founded one at Alcalá.^f It is unlikely that many private libraries of great extent existed in the empire; but the trade of bookselling, though not yet, in general, separated from that of printing, had become of considerable importance.

^d Jugler, in his *Hist. Litteraria*, mentions none between that of the Rhine, and one established at Weimar in 1617, alibi. p. 1294.

^e Tiraboschi, viii. 197-219.

^f Jugler, *Hist. Litteraria*, p. 206 et

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