

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.

THE LIFE  
OF  
HENRY CORNELIUS AGRIPPA  
VON NETTESHEIM,

DOCTOR AND KNIGHT,  
Commonly known as a Magician.

BY HENRY MORLEY,  
AUTHOR OF "PALISSY THE POTTER," "JEROME CARDAN," &c.



IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.

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CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

THE FIFT

WARRIOR-CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

VON NETTSEHEIM

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WARRIOR-CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

BY HENRY W. WHEAT

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE AUTHOR



IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

LONDON

CHAMBERLAIN AND HALL, 100, FLEET STREET

MDCCCXXV

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## P R E F A C E.

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THIS narrative completes a design, upon the execution of which many hours of recreation have been occupied. It was not intended to produce an indefinite series of the Lives of Scholars of the Sixteenth Century, but it was thought possible, by help of the free speech about themselves, common to men of genius in that age, for the lives of three men to be written, in whose histories there might be shown, with a minuteness perhaps not unimportant to the student or uninteresting to the miscellaneous reader, what the life of a scholar was in the time of the revival of learning and the reformation of the Church. These biographies it never was proposed to unite under a common title; each, it was felt, must make or miss its own way in the world. They are, no doubt, the issue of a single purpose, but they are not necessary to each other, and there is no reason why the possessor of one should possess all, or incur the penalty of owning a book marked as a fragment on the title-page or cover.



It may be convenient, however, to some readers, and will be certainly a satisfaction to the writer, briefly to indicate what the intention was that has been carried out as well as power served in the writing of the trilogy of lives now brought to a conclusion. It was desired that of the three lives each should be in itself worth telling, and in itself an addition of some new and well-authenticated matter to the available stores of minute information that give colour and life to history. It was desired that they should treat not of political heroes, but of scholars, living in the same age of the world, although no two of the same country. It was desired, too, that they should be not only representatives of separate nations of Europe, but also of separate and absolutely different careers of study. Palissy was a Frenchman, with the vivacity, taste, and inventive power commonly held to be characteristic of his nation; Cardan was an Italian, with Italian passions; but Agrippa was a contemplative German. According even to the vulgar notion, therefore, they were characteristic men. Palissy was by birth a peasant; Cardan belonged to the middle class; Agrippa was the son of noble parents, born to live a courtier's life. All became scholars. Palissy learnt of God and nature; and however men despised his knowledge, his advance was marvellous upon the unknown paths of truth; he was the first man of his age as a true scholar, though he had heaven and earth only for his books. No heed was paid to the scholarship of Bernard Palissy, but the civilised world rang with the fame of the great Italian physician, who had read and written upon almost every-



thing, Jerome Cardan. Hampered by a misleading scholarship, possessed by the superstitions of his time, bound down by the Church, Cardan, with a natural wit as acute as that of Palissy, became the glory of his day, but of no day succeeding it. The two men are direct opposites, as to their methods and results of study. In a strange place of his own between them stands Agrippa, who began his life by mastering nearly the whole circle of the sciences and arts as far as books described it, and who ended by declaring the Uncertainty and Vanity of Arts and Sciences. The doctrine at which he arrived was that, in brief, fruitful must be the life of a Palissy, barren the life of a Cardan;—since for the world's progress it is needful that men shake off slavery to all scholastic forms, and travel forward with a simple faith in God, inquiring the way freely.

More might be said to show, but it is enough to have suggested, what has been the purpose of these books. A time has come when it is out of the question to suppose that any reasonable student, not directed by some special purpose, can, or ought to, trouble himself with the careful reading of such extinct literature as the works of Cardan or Agrippa. It remains, therefore, that these men, and others like them influential in their time, types of a most important age in the world's history, should as men, though not as names, be forgotten altogether, or remembered only by the aid of any one who will do what is attempted in the book now offered to the reader.

I believe that there is here told for the first time the



exact story of Cornelius Agrippa's life, by the right knowledge of which only it is possible to understand his character. His works include a large pile of old Latin letters, written by him and to him, in every year of his life between the twentieth and almost the last. Under these his pulse still beats; from these, by help of his other works and a sufficient knowledge of the day when they were written, it is possible to gather the whole story of his aspiration, toil, and sorrow. I have endeavoured in this book not only to narrate his life, but also to give a view of the true purport and spirit of his writings. I hope there is no sentence in the narrative for which authority cannot be shown. I know that there is no discoverable incident that has been kept back or altered in significance to suit a theory as to the character portrayed. Before his death, Cornelius Agrippa was the victim of the calumnies of priests, because he denounced their misdoing. They made good use of the fact that he had in his youth written a volume upon Magic; and to this day he has come down to us defiled by their aspersions. In subsequent literature, when he has been mentioned, it has been almost always with contempt or ridicule. He was scarcely in his grave when Rabelais reviled him as Herr Trippa. Butler jests over him in Hudibras, and uses the Church legend of his demon dog:

“Agrippa kept a Stygian pug,  
I' th' garb and habit of a dog,  
That was his tutor, and the cur  
Read to th' occult philosopher,  
And taught him subtly to maintain  
All other sciences are vain.”



While in our own day Southey writes a ballad on another of the monkish tales against him. It is that about the youth who was torn to pieces by the fiends when conjuring in Agrippa's study with one of his books:

"The letters were written with blood therein,  
And the leaves were made of dead men's skin."

I wish to show how the man really lived, what the man really wrote, of whom these stories have so long been current.

The woodcut portrait on the title-page to this volume is copied from that issued by Cornelius himself with the first complete edition of his *Magic*. The inscription round it appears in his collected works. The emblem on the title-page of the second volume is from a contemporary book, the "*Margarita Philosophica*."

*London, October, 1856.*



APPENDIX

While it is true that the British writers have failed to understand the true nature of the situation in India. It is true that the British were not to be blamed for the failure of the Indian National Congress's early work with one of its leaders.

I want to know how the British writers have failed to understand the true nature of the situation in India. It is true that the British were not to be blamed for the failure of the Indian National Congress's early work with one of its leaders. The British writers have failed to understand the true nature of the situation in India. It is true that the British were not to be blamed for the failure of the Indian National Congress's early work with one of its leaders.



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# CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

AT COLOGNE, on the 14th of September, 1486<sup>1</sup>, there was born into the noble house of Nettesheim a son, whom his parents called in baptism Henry Cornelius Agrippa. Some might, at first thought, suppose that the last of the three was a Christian name likely to find especial favour with the people of Cologne, the site of whose town, in days of Roman sovereignty, Marcus Agrippa's camp suggested and the colony of Agrippina fixed. But the existence of any such predilection is disproved by some volumes filled with the names of former natives of Cologne. There were as few Agrippas there as elsewhere, the use of the name being everywhere confined to a few individuals taken from a class that was itself not numerous. A child who came into the world feet-foremost was called

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 26, Lib. vii. Opera (Lugduni, 1536), Tom. ii. p. 1041, where he says to the senators of Cologne: "Sum enim et ego civitate vestra oriundus, et prima pueritia apud vos enutritus."



an Agrippa<sup>1</sup> by the Romans, and I know not what exceptions there may have been to the rule that all persons who received this word as a forename were Agrippas born. Since ancient writers upon medicine and science long ranked as the best teachers of the moderns, the same use of the word Agrippa was retained till many years after the date with which this chapter commences. The Agrippas of the sixteenth century were usually sons of scholars, or of persons in the upper ranks, who had been mindful of a classic precedent; and there can be little doubt that a peculiarity attendant on the very first incident in the life here to be told was expressed by the word used as appendix to an already sufficient Christian name.

The son thus christened became a scholar and a subject of discussion among scholars, talking only Latin to the world. His family name, Von Nettesheim, he never latinised, inasmuch as the best taste suggested that—if a Latin designation was most proper for a scholar—he

<sup>1</sup> The word itself was invented to express the idea, being compounded of the trouble of the woman and the feet of the child. So Aulus Gellius explains it (*Noct. Attic. Lib. xvi. cap. 16*): "Quorum in nascendo non caput, sed pedes primi exstiterant (qui partus difficillimus ægerrimusque habetur); AGRIPPÆ appellati, vocabulo ab ægritudine et pedibus conficto." The following passage from a medical writer who was of authority in the year 1700, shows that the original use of the word was not then obsolete: "Casus est periculosissimus, quando pedibus primò prodit infans, ita ut etiam manus deorsum versus inclinent: nam sic fit, ut egresso tempore orificium uteri internum circa collum iterum se stringat, ita ut fœtus extra uterum, caput autem ejus adhuc in utero hæreat, et reddat partum difficilem. Tales fœtus dicuntur AGRIPPÆ." Michaelis Ettmulleri *Collegium Practicum Doctrinale*, sect. vii. cap. i. art. 2. Op. (Frankfort-on-M. 1708), Tom. ii. pars 1, p. 1015.



could do, or others could do for him, nothing simpler than to set apart for literary purposes that half of his real style which was already completely Roman. Henry Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim became therefore to the world what he is also called in the succeeding narrative—Cornelius Agrippa.

This is the only member of the family of Nettesheim concerning whom any records have been left for the instruction of posterity. Nettesheim, or Nettersheim, itself is a place of little note, distant about twenty-five miles to the south-west of Cologne, and at about the same distance to the south-east of Aix-la-Chapelle—that is to say, in the direction of the Eiffelberg. It lies in a valley, through which flows the stream from one of the small sources of the Roer. The home of the Von Nettesheims, when they were not personally attached to the service of the emperor, was at Cologne, where many nobles lived on terms not altogether friendly with the merchants and the traders of the place. The ancestors of Cornelius Agrippa had been for generations in the service of the house of Austria; his father had in this respect walked in the steps of his forefathers, and from a child Cornelius looked for nothing better than to do the same<sup>1</sup>.

Born in Cologne did not mean then what it has meant

<sup>1</sup> "Et pater et avi et atavi et tritavi Cæsarum Romanorum Austria-corumque Principum a longo ævo ministri fuerunt. Horum vestigia et ego insecutus, Divo Maximiliano Cæsari et pace et bello non segniter inservavi." Ep. 18, Lib. vi. (Op. Tom. ii. p. 971). Elsewhere, after a fuller recital, he speaks of himself as "D. Maximiliano Cæsari a prima ætate destinatus." Ep. 21, Lib. vii.



for many generations almost until now, born into the darkness of a mouldering receptacle of relics. Then the town was not priest-ridden, but rode its priests. For nearly a thousand years priestcraft and handicraft have battled for predominance within its walls. Priestcraft expelled the Jews, banished the weavers, and gained thoroughly the mastery at last. But in the time of Cornelius Agrippa handicraft was uppermost, and in sacred Cologne every trader and mechanic did his part in keeping watch on the archbishop. Europe contained then few cities larger, busier, and richer, for the Rhine was a main highway of commerce, and Cologne—great enough to be called the daughter of the Roman Empire—was enriched, not only by her manufacturers and merchants, but, at the same time also, by a large receipt of toll.

The temporal government of this city had been placed in the hands of churchmen from a very early time<sup>1</sup>. In the year 953 the rule over the town of bishops, subject to imperial control, began with Archbishop Bruno<sup>2</sup>, brother to Otto the First and Duke of Lorraine. To the imperial brother of this archbishop, Cologne was indebted

<sup>1</sup> A local handbook—*Köln und Bonn mit ihren Umgebungen*, Köln, 1828—compiled from the best authorities accessible to a scholar on the spot, contains a good historical sketch of the relations between Cologne and its archbishop, drawing for information on a public report against the independence of the city, addressed to the Kurfürst, and published at Bonn in 1687 with the title *Securis ad radicem posita, oder gründlicher Bericht, loco libelli, worin der Stadt Cölln Ursprung und Erbauung klärlich dargestellt ist, &c.* The document itself I have not seen.

<sup>2</sup> *Bibliotheca Coloniensis*. . . . Josephi Hartzheim, fol. Colon. 1747, p. 40, for his eulogy; but the little handbook just mentioned draws the spirit of his life from a work printed in 1494, entitled *Chronica von der hilligen Stat van Coellen*.



for various immunities and privileges; but the chief efforts of Bruno and his successors had in view the extension of their personal authority. They succeeded so well in the attainment of this object, that, after the tenth century, they had absolute rank as masters of the town. Their subjects were even at that time noted for prosperity as merchants; educated among the luxuries of city life, they were without experience in the affairs of war, "about which they discoursed over their banquets and their wine when the day's trade was over<sup>1</sup>."

It was one of the archbishops, Philip von Heinsberg, who, towards the close of the twelfth century, enclosed the city and a part of the adjacent country within walls. Very few years before that time the citizens had made a weak attempt at the establishment of an independent representative constitution, by which their archbishop was to be shut out from interference in affairs that did not concern his spiritual office. Commerce is the most powerful antagonist to despotism, and in whatever place both are brought together one of them must die. Cologne, in the middle ages, had become a great commercial port. Its weights and measures were used throughout Europe<sup>2</sup>. By the Rhine, one of the two great European highways, there was conveyed that main part

<sup>1</sup> "Colonienses ab ineunte ætate inter urbanas delicias educati, nullam in bellicis rebus experientiam habebant, quidquid post venditas merces inter vinum et epulas de re militari disputari solitas." Lambert von Aschaffenburg in Pistorius (*Rerum Germanicarum Veteres jam primum publicati Scriptores*, Frankfort, 1607).

<sup>2</sup> Fischer's *Geschichte des deutschen Handels*, vol. ii. p. 235.



of the traffic between east and west which passed through Venice to the Netherlands. At Cologne all merchandise that passed paid toll both to the town and the right reverend lord of the town; and it not only paid a direct toll, but had to be transhipped into vessels owned by the local merchants, who thus were enriched by the monopoly which made them masters of the Rhine. While prosperity was secured in this manner to its merchants, the manufacturers and traders of Cologne took excellent advantage of the opportunities for commerce offered them by the position of their town. They began early to form strong guilds, and with trade and commerce the arts flourished<sup>1</sup>. Except Nuremberg, there is no city in Germany able to show a series of works of art, dating from the earliest times to the sixteenth century, so perfect as that which may still be studied here. The goldsmiths and painters of the place had an extended reputation. In the "Parcival" of Wolfram von Eschenbach, written before 1215, the Cologne painters are referred to as notorious for their great skill<sup>2</sup>; and the Cologne builders were in even more renown. It is proper, also, to mention in the narrative that among the scholars of Germany one, who before the time of Cornelius Agrippa was known as

<sup>1</sup> F. C. J. Fischer's *Geschichte des deutschen Handels*, 8vo, Hanover, 1793, vol. i. pp. 945-947.

<sup>2</sup> Praising a knight's great beauty, he says—

"Von Cöllen noch von Mastricht  
Nicht ein Schildrer entwarf ihn bass"—

the conception of a painter from Cologne or Maestricht being assumed as an ideal of beauty by this poet, who was the greatest of the Minnesingers.



the most famous of magicians, belonged to the same city; for there, in the thirteenth century, Albertus Magnus taught, and it is there that he was buried.

Prosperous Cologne, then, did not submit humbly to episcopal direction. A shrewd and active archbishop, Conrad von Hochstetten<sup>1</sup>—the same who, in 1248, laid the foundations of the cathedral—secured to the town fresh privileges from the emperor; but was at more trouble to secure his own supremacy among the townspeople. He began the attempt to do so, like a wise churchman, by promoting strife between the resident nobles and the citizens, but soon found himself driven to the necessity of putting armour on, and leading troops against his stubborn flock. At the last he triumphed only by effecting an alliance with the tradesmen, and subduing with their aid the power of the nobles. Conrad died master of the town; but his nephew and successor, Engelbert, who vigorously carried on his policy, was involved soon in another outbreak of the civil war, for three of the leading nobles had been kept in prison, and their companions in arms engaged in a new struggle to wipe out their disgrace. Finally they got possession, not of the town only, but also of the person of the archbishop, whom they imprisoned for three years in the castle of Nydeck, and occasionally hung out in an iron cage for public mockery<sup>2</sup>.

Peace was soon afterwards established in the town, but not on a sure basis. The increased influence of the trades

<sup>1</sup> Fischer's *Geschichte des deutschen Handels*, vol. ii. p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Pistorius, *Rer. Germ. Vet. Script.* (Frankf. 1607), pp. 260, 261.



caused the establishment of a new system of corporate government in the year 1321; but the representatives were chosen from the noble families. Not quite thirty years later there was a devilish persecution of the Jews in many parts of Europe; and the Jews of Cologne, alarmed by the sufferings to which others of their race had been exposed, withdrew into their houses, with their wives and children, and burnt themselves in the midst of their possessions. The few who had flinched from this self-immolation were banished, and their houses and lands, together with all the land that had belonged to Cologne Jews, remained as spoils in the hands of the Cologne Christians. All having been converted into cash, the gains of the transaction were divided equally between the town and the archbishop. Twenty years later, Jews were again suffered to reside in the place, on payment of a tax for the protection granted them.

In 1369 the city was again in turmoil, caused by a dispute concerning privileges between the church authorities and the town council. The weavers took occasion to express their views very strongly as the maintainers of a democratic party, and there was once more fighting in the streets. The weavers were subdued; they fled to the churches, and were slain at the altars. Eighteen hundred of them, all who survived, were banished, suffering, of course, confiscation of their property, and Cologne being cleared of all its weavers—who had carried on no inconsiderable branch of local manufacture—their guild was



demolished<sup>1</sup>. This event occurred twenty years after the town had lost, in the Jews, another important part of its industrial population, and the proud city thus was passing into the first stage of its decay.

In 1388 an university was established at Cologne, upon the model of the University of Paris. Theology and scholastic philosophy were the chief studies cultivated in it, and they were taught in such a way as to win many scholars from abroad<sup>2</sup>. Eight years afterwards, churchmen, nobles, and traders were again contesting their respective claims, and blood was again shed in the streets. The nobles, assembled by night at a secret meeting, were surprised, and the final conquest of the trading class was in that way assured. Again, therefore, a new constitution was devised; and this was the constitution that continued still to be in force during the lifetime of Cornelius Agrippa. At the head of the temporal government were six burgomasters, acting in pairs, who formed three double mayors, ruling in rotation, and retiring upon the presidency of the exchequer at the conclusion of their term of office. The citizens were classed into two-and-twenty liveries, electing thirty-six councilmen, who added to their body thirteen aldermen to preside over the several judicial courts—the petty criminal court, court of appeal, &c. Each livery placed also at its head a deputy—the banner-master—and the banner-masters acted for the

<sup>1</sup> *Geschichte des Ursprungs der Stände in Deutschland.* Von Karl Dietrich Ullman. Frankf. an der Oder, 1806-8. B. 3, pp. 140-149.

<sup>2</sup> See Hartzheim.



citizens as their immediate representatives in all important deliberations<sup>1</sup>. I have expressed the idea of this constitution by the use of such English terms as are most nearly indicative of the various offices appointed; and the facility with which this can be done shows that Cologne achieved for itself a municipal government of a tolerably perfect kind. Jurisdiction in the high criminal court, and the power over capital conviction, remained with the archbishop, whose court was to be composed wholly of nobles born within the city. Having achieved so much, the townspeople proceeded by their representatives to the formation of a body of statutes and the complete defining of their own judicial system; and accordingly, in 1437, town and archbishop having mutually consented to the scheme perfected in this way, it was confirmed to them as an addition to their privileges by the Emperor Frederic. By this arrangement the archbishop owned himself mastered, for he consented to hold two palaces in Cologne, with the condition that, when he entered the town, he was to bring with him only a small suite, and that he was to remain within the city walls not longer than for three days at a time. Cologne was confirmed in its independence of all external authority, except that of the emperor, and the inhabitants agreed to swear fidelity to their archbishop on condition of his swearing fidelity to them. The decay of the place was thus arrested, and for a hundred

<sup>1</sup> This account, and much else, I take from the little handbook *Köln und Bonn*, the author of which here founds his narrative on the contemporary chronicle of Gottfried Hagene, published in Brewer's *Vaterländischer Chronik* for 1825.



years, under archbishops of the house of Meurs, this adjustment of the old dispute remained in force. Such was the position of affairs in Cologne during the lifetime of Cornelius Agrippa. I am convinced that the spirit either of a place or person is expressed less truly by elaborate description than even by the very simplest biographic sketch. It is for this reason that I have told in as few words as possible the previous life of a town which is to be the central point of interest, so far as concerns places, in the present narrative.

In size and general appearance, Cologne at the beginning of the sixteenth century differed not much from the Cologne of our own day. The place had reached the highest point of its prosperity during the lifetime of Cornelius Agrippa. The great changes wrought by the discovery of the New World and of a sea-road to India, by the revolution in the art of war, and by the revival of letters, soon made the daughter of the Empire almost obsolete as a commercial port, a fortress, or a seat of learning. The destruction of her commerce had already been hastened by an increased greediness for taxes levied upon merchandise. Then, as the trade of the town declined, the spirit that had beaten down the worldly despotism of the Church departed with it, and the archbishops trampled out in their own way what little life was left. There are signs now of a revival, but ten years since the city lay dead on the Rhine, retaining perfectly the shape of the great mart through which the traffic of half Europe passed three centuries ago. Nearly as large as it now is it was then.



Now, it is of no mean size in comparison with the great seats of commerce which have grown while it has mouldered. Then, when a scanty population yielded hamlets inhabited by dozens, provincial towns by hundreds, capitals by but a few thousands, Cologne, issuing her own coinage, and a foremost member of the Hanseatic League, was indeed not unworthy to be flattered by successive sovereigns of Germany, and favoured as the daughter of their empire.

In this city Cornelius Agrippa was born, as it has been said, of a family belonging to the noble class. His parents at his birth were probably not very far advanced in life, at any rate they continued to reside in Cologne, and to maintain a home which he occasionally visited for some time after he had himself reached years of discretion<sup>1</sup>. The Von Nettesheims, as nobles of Cologne, were likely in those days to be on more cordial terms with the archbishop than with the burghers, and they were engaged directly in the service of the emperor. In both respects the life of Cornelius was influenced by his position, and it may not be considered fanciful to suppose that the character of the town, as it has been here briefly suggested, acted in more than a slight degree upon his own character in childhood and after life. In his first years, and to the very last, he had a rare aptitude for study, and was distinguished for his power of retaining knowledge once acquired. Cologne being an university town, he had but

<sup>1</sup> "Sed quoties reversus sum in vestram urbem, meam autem patriam . . . . vix inveni . . . . qui me diceret Ave." Ep. 26, Lib. vii. p. 1041.



to acquire the studies of the place, and these may have sufficed in determining his bias for scholastic theology. He was born soon after the discovery of printing, and the use made in Cologne of that discovery shows well enough what was the humour of the students there. The first Cologne printer was Ulrich Zell, who began his labours in or about the year 1463. Between that year and the year 1500, the annals of typography<sup>1</sup> contain the titles of as many as five hundred and thirty books, issued by him and by other printers in the town, but among these there are to be found only fourteen Latin classics, and there is not one volume of Greek. The other works consisted wholly of the writings of ascetics, scholastics, canonists, &c., including the works of Thomas Aquinas, and of Albertus Magnus. Of this sort were the springs at which as a boy Cornelius Agrippa was compelled to slake his thirst for knowledge. Among writers of this description it was only natural that he should find the eager fancy of youth satisfied best with the wonderful things written by the magicians, and accordingly he states that at a very early age he was possessed with a curiosity concerning mysteries<sup>2</sup>.

But there were successful studies of another kind for which also Cornelius was remarkable in youth. He

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Typographici ab artis inventæ origine ad annum MD., post Maittaireii Denisii aliorumque . . . curas.* Opera Georgii Wolfg. Sanzer (Norimb. 1793), Tom. i. pp. 274-348.

<sup>2</sup> "... Qui ab ineunte ætate semper circa mirabilium effectuum et plenas mysteriorum operationes curiosus intrepidusque extiti explorator." Ep. 23, Lib. i. Op. Tom. ii. p. 703.



became versed in many European languages, and it is most probable, that while the position of Cologne as a halting-place on one of the great highways of European traffic must have caused the gift of tongues to be appreciated by its merchants, the unusual opportunities there offered for its acquisition surely would not be neglected in a family like that of Nettesheim, which sought to rise by the performance of good service to an emperor whose daily business, now war and now diplomacy, was being carried on in many lands.

After some years of home-training, subject to the influences here discussed, the age arrived at which youths destined to serve princes were considered fit to be produced at court. Cornelius Agrippa was then taken from beneath the friendly shade of the Archbishop of Cologne, to bask in light as an attendant on the Emperor of Germany.



## CHAPTER II.

## TREATS OF A BAND OF YOUNG CONSPIRATORS.

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA served the Emperor of Germany at first as a secretary, afterwards for seven years as a soldier<sup>1</sup>. The distinct statement of this fact, and the impossibility of otherwise accounting for the time, compels us to interpret strictly the accompanying assertion that he entered, while still very young, into the imperial service. If it were not so, we might suppose that at the age of nineteen he was perfecting his studies at the University of Paris, and that the wild scheming, presently to be described, naturally arose there out of the enthusiasm of youth in the hot blood of a few students. It would in that case have to be said that after leaving Paris he first entered the service of a court, by which his designs were countenanced as leading to a chivalrous adventure, from which some political advantage might, perchance, arise, and no great harm could follow.

The master of the young diplomatist was Maximilian the

<sup>1</sup> "Maximiliano a prima ætate destinatus aliquandiu illi a minoribus secretis fui, deinde in Italicis castris septennio illius stipendio militavi." Ep. 21, Lib. vii. Op. Tom. ii. p. 1021.



First, a prince at whose court chivalry was much in favour, and from whom bold enterprises had at all times ready praise. As emperor it had not seemed to him beneath his dignity to fight a duel<sup>1</sup> in the presence of his lords, and to give evidence therein of prowess that was said by his courtiers to be stupendous. A daring man at arms undoubtedly he was, but he was more than that. There were fine qualities in Maximilian that must have given him strong hold upon the minds of the young men under his influence. Late in development, he was nine years of age before he could speak clearly, and when he was twelve his father thought it possible that he would die a fool. When, however, the time came for his mind to ripen, it had a distinct flavour of its own. He had been ill taught in his youth by Peter, Bishop of Neustadt, a pedant, who worried him with dialectics; and, forasmuch as he did not take to them with a good grace, beat him sorely. "Ah," said Maximilian, at dinner, one day, after he had been crowned King of Rome (this happened in the birth-year of Cornelius Agrippa), "if Bishop Peter were alive to-day, though we owe much to good teachers, he should have cause to repent that he had ever been my master." But in spite of all bad teaching, Maximilian contrived to educate himself into the power of conversing fluently and accurately in Italian, French, and Latin, as well as in his native German; and while he readily confessed himself to have been ill brought up, he valued

<sup>1</sup> The duel was with Claude de Batre, and the prowess, says Cuspinian, "conspectu stupendum."



learning, and was liberal to men of letters. He caused search to be made for genealogies and local annals; he took pleasure in entertaining questions of philosophy and science, even himself conducting some experiments. The master of the young Agrippa was also, according to the humour of his time, a sharp arguer upon nice questions in theology. In his latter years he was glad often to discuss privately with learned men, and acquire knowledge from them. It may even be said that he was, himself, a member of the literary body. He professed to despise poetry, yet it was he who wrote in verse the allegorical, "Dewrdank," wherein he represented himself as having overcome envy and curiosity. He wrote also "The Gate of Honour," to induce all learned men in Germany to preserve ancient chronicles from loss. He founded on his own story the narrative of "The White King," illustrated with honourable reference to, and pictures of, almost every trade followed by his subjects; and finally, some of the finest woodcuts ever executed were designed from his dictation, to represent his ideal of a triumph<sup>1</sup>, which should sweep before the eyes of all posterity upon a pictured page, and celebrate the glories of his reign. "His bent," says his secretary, Cuspinian, "was to scholarship, but, having been ill taught, he chose war for his profession<sup>2</sup>."

It is absolutely certain that the young son of the house

<sup>1</sup> *Kaiser Maximilian's Triumph.*

<sup>2</sup> The sketch of Maximilian in this chapter is chiefly founded upon details given in Joanni Cuspiniani . . . . *de Cæsaribus atque Imperatoribus Romanis* (Basle, 1561), pp. 602-615.



of Nettesheim, who being a scholar by taste began service to his imperial master as a secretary, who was curious about the mysteries of nature, relished keenly all the nice points of theology, was versed in languages, and as ambitious as the emperor himself, was not a youth whom Maximilian would overlook. Already disposed to smile upon a new retainer who was noticeable among courtiers for the extent of his attainments and his assiduity in study, the emperor would quickly have discovered that the young Cornelius Agrippa had a spirit not bound wholly to books, but that he could enter heartily into his master's relish for bold feats of arms.

There are men to whom it is natural from childhood upwards to assume the tone of a leader, and in whom the excess of self-reliance represents the grain of an otherwise amiable character. It is so subtly combined with everything they say or do as to appear but rarely in the offensive form of violent or obvious self-assertion; it is not displayed by them, but it is felt by others in whom the same element of character is more weakly developed. They are not by any means necessarily great or able men who go through the world as centres of their great or little circles with this spirit in them, but it must be a very great man indeed who can keep any one of them within the circumference of a circle whereof he is not the centre. Cornelius Agrippa had a disposition of this kind, and as a youth, it might be said, there was some reason for his self-reliance, since, if not by his rare abilities, yet by his advantageous position near the emperor, and his



activity of character, there seemed to be assured to him an enviable future. And yet clouds gather about the face of many a day that gives the brightest promise in its morning.

In Cornelius Agrippa the emperor his master appears to have seen nothing but promise. The quick perceptions of the learned youth, his acquaintance with foreign languages, his daring and his self-reliance, were no doubt the qualities by which he was commended most to Maximilian's attention, and there was no time lost in making use of them. Cornelius, even at the age of twenty, was employed on secret service by the German court, and the very enthusiasm of his character, and of his period of life, seems to have been reckoned upon as the edge proper to such a tool as the state made of him.

The relation in which the young Von Nettesheim stood to the emperor, and the character of the influence that may have been exerted on him in the court of Austria, will be sufficiently indicated by adding to what has been already said the little sketch of Maximilian's character and habits left by Cuspinian, his confidential secretary. Though not a perfect picture of the emperor, it shows him, as we now desire to see him, from a secretary's point of view.

It is well known that Maximilian was a prince in difficulties very often, that the imperial exchequer was more apt to weigh as a load upon his mind than upon his pocket, yet, says Cuspinian, he never allowed to be touched the gold, silver, and hereditary jewels left him by



his ancestors, for they were the inheritance due to his heirs. Ferdinand, after his father's death, was amazed when he saw what was in the treasury. Maximilian was a square-built man, with good health, capable of enduring heavy labour; he wrote sometimes far into the night, broke a lance often in jest with his princes, or in earnest with his foes. He was frugal in his repasts, "and so clean" (for emperors then ate meat with their fingers) "that nobody could see him dining or supping without pleasure." He drank little between meals, and at table drank only three times. He was of good morals, but loved to dine or dance in company with honest ladies, not behaving to them as proud princes do, but accosting them with modest reverence. He had a singular love of music, "and," says his indignant secretary, "musical professors, instruments, &c., sprang up at his court like mushrooms after a shower. I would write a list of the musicians I have known if I were not afraid of the size of the work. He revived the art of war, introduced new machines, and was the only general of his time. Some say that he was too fond of hunting, by which he was taken into great danger while following the wild goat up the highest rocks. He spent largely on dogs, hunters, and huntsmen; but that," Cuspinian adds, "is royal sport. Kings cannot walk in squares and streets (as common people do, who sharpen for themselves their hunger by that exercise), but must follow the chase of wild beasts to improve their bodies. This emperor was affable in his manners, he set at their ease those people who conversed with him, and as he had



a good memory, pleased them by showing knowledge of their names and their affairs. He did not mind asking mean persons for their opinion on mighty things." He was likely, therefore, to flatter greatly, by his show of confidence and frankness, a young scribe whose temper and abilities he meant to turn to some account. Once, when there was a conspiracy against him in his camp, he went into the tent of the chief conspirator, and sat down cheerfully to dinner with his wife. Many enemies he subdued by kindly speech, and sometimes (hints the secretary) paid his soldiers' wages with it. He turned no ear at all to slander, and bade Cuspinian cease from addressing him with words of flattery, reminding him of the proverb, "Self-praise makes a stinking mouth."

Such a man as this was master to Cornelius Agrippa ; surely an Austrian diplomatist as well as a brave soldier and not unenlightened prince. Even his secretary and admirer, when he tells of the match-making feats by which Maximilian laboured to extend the influence of his own family, talks half-contemptuously of "the marrying house of Austria." With all his chivalry and all his mother's southern blood (she was a Portuguese), Maximilian was an Austrian born, son of an Austrian father. The diplomatic service of the Austrian court, at every period of history, has been what it is now and ever will be, slippery and mean. It may spend the energies of a fine mind upon base labour ; delude, when necessary, its own agents into the belief that they do brave deeds and speak true words, though they are working out designs



contrived upon no honourable principle. In this way some use may have been made of the fresh spirit of the youth, whom we are now to find, at the age of twenty, with the cares of a conspirator upon him.

It is not at all possible that this conspiracy, of which the precise nature can only be inferred from overt acts, distinctly originated at the court of Maximilian, although it was fostered there. It related to the affairs of Spain, and the political events of the time appear to throw some doubtful light upon its meaning. Ferdinand of Spain, the widower of Isabella, was excluded from the crown of Castile after his wife's death, that inheritance having passed with his daughter Joanna as a dower to her husband Philip, one of the marrying house of Austria, the son of Maximilian. Ferdinand had made a vain effort to retain some hold upon his authority over the Castilians; but he was repelled by them, and referred to his own kingdoms of Aragon and Naples. Suddenly, in September, 1506, news of the death of Philip startled European politicians. He was a young man of eight-and-twenty, upon whose death no person had yet begun to speculate; over-exertion in a game of ball, at an entertainment given by his favourite Don Manuel, led, it is said, to this unexpected issue. A wide field was at once opened for Austrian diplomacy. Those nobles of Castile who had most actively opposed the claims of Ferdinand against his son-in-law, partly in self-defence, maintained their opposition. Ferdinand, when the event happened, was not in Spain; he was engaged upon a journey to his



Neapolitan dominions. The country, therefore, fell into confusion, for the widowed queen Joanna, overwhelmed with an insane grief, refused to perform any act of government; and Maximilian of Austria had lost no time in urging strongly upon Ferdinand his own right to be regent of Castile. From the distracted country several Spanish nobles came to Maximilian's court, Manuel himself among the rest, where they continually urged upon the Austrian more measures against Ferdinand than he considered it worth while to take.

It appears to have been during this period of excitement and political uncertainty that Cornelius von Nettesheim, then twenty years of age, was sent to Paris, perhaps in company with a superior diplomatist, but probably alone. His unusual power as a linguist<sup>1</sup>—his learning, which was of an extent far beyond his years—the quickness of his parts, which in some sense was as valuable as an older man's experience—marked him out subsequently, while he was still very young, as a fit agent to be sent abroad on confidential missions<sup>2</sup>. France had been hostile to the son of Maximilian, and war against France had been declared by Philip only a short time before his death. The business of Cornelius at Paris was, I think,

<sup>1</sup> "Il savait parler huit sortes de langues, &c. &c. &c., d'où je ne m'étonne que Paule Jove l'appelle Portentosum Ingenium, que Jacques Gohory le met inter clarissima sui sæculi lumina, que Ludwigius le nomme Venerandum Dom. Agrippam, literarum, literatorumque omnium miraculum." *Apologie pour tous les Grands Personnages qui ont esté faussement soupçonnez de Magie*. Par G. Naudé, Paris. La Haye, 1653, pp. 406, 407.

<sup>2</sup> *Defensio Propositionum de Beat. Annæ Monogamia*. Op. Tom. ii. p. 596.



simply in accordance with his duty as a clever scribe, to take trustworthy note of what he saw and heard. A political crisis had occurred, affecting intimately the interests of Maximilian, and the relations of the emperor with France were thereby placed in a most difficult position. While doing whatever else was needful, Maximilian may, very likely, have considered it worth while to send to the French capital one of the young men belonging to his court, who could for a short time take a quiet post of observation as a scholar in the University, and make himself the master of more knowledge than would be communicated to him in the schools. Foremost among young pundits was Cornelius von Nettesheim, a person apt in every respect for such a purpose. He might go to his own home in Cologne, and proceed thence, as a studious youth, to Paris. After a short residence there, it was, indeed, in the first instance, to his father's house that he returned<sup>1</sup>.

Cornelius was engaged on secret service more than once; but all his great or little diplomatic secrets were well kept, though on his own affairs he was, in his pub-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 2, Lib. i. p. 682. The letters of Agrippa are in the second volume of the Lyons edition of his works, already referred to, and published in his lifetime "per Beringos Fratres," in and about the year 1532. It was printed and reprinted by them, probably often, certainly once. My own copy is undated, and shows, by comparison with that in the British Museum, that although precisely alike both as to general appearance and as to paging, and issued about the same time by the same printer, the whole of the type must have been distributed and set up afresh in the interval between the issue of one book and of the other. The second volume of this issue is the book of which the page is given in all notes referring to Agrippa's letters.



lished works, abundantly communicative. It is left for us, then, to construct what theory we can upon his business at this period in Paris. We know only that he was there at the time described, and that he made himself while there the centre of a knot of students, members with him, as it will afterwards be seen, of a secret association of theosophists, and bent upon a wild and daring enterprise that was in several respects very characteristic both of the age of the schemers, and of the age of the world in which they lived to scheme.

The disturbances in Castile had extended to Aragon and Catalonia. The Catalonians, since their annexation to the crown of Aragon, had frequently caused trouble by their independent spirit, had established one successful revolt, and were at this period violently excited in many places against the oppression of the nobles. From the district of Tarragon they had chased at least one of their local masters, the Señor de Gerona; and this gentleman, while holding from King Ferdinand the authority which he appears to have abused, must have had something of the traitor in his composition, for we find him among other Spaniards at the court of Maximilian, by whom the interests of Ferdinand were at this time especially opposed<sup>1</sup>.

At Paris, Cornelius met with the young Spaniard, who, perhaps, was then upon his way to Germany; and by the conversation of Juanetin de Gerona<sup>2</sup>, the bold spirit of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 4, Lib. i. p. 683.

<sup>2</sup> Ianotus Bascus de Charona is the Latin form.



enterprise was stirred within him. In concert with some other students he devised a plan, not merely for the restoration of Juanetin to his own domain—itsself a student's freak of tolerable magnitude,—but for the achievement, by a stroke of wit, of some more serious adventure, which seems to have included the mastering of Tarragon<sup>1</sup> itself, and the maintenance of that stronghold against the people of the district. Upon the information of the Señor de Gerona, Cornelius Agrippa based his plans; the Spaniard had doubtless contributed to the plot suggestions of advantage that might be secured to Maximilian by the enterprise. In the emperor's discussion with King Ferdinand he was to be helped in some wild way by the young soldier-scribe against the Catalonians. It is certain that Cornelius Agrippa had in view nothing more than the advantage of his master, except the renown that was to follow from the magnitude of his success, if he succeeded<sup>2</sup>. While the idea was fresh with him he must have made its purport known to a friend at court, whom he calls Galbianus, who most strongly urged him to pursue it, and partook of his enthusiasm<sup>3</sup>.

After a few months, early in 1507, Cornelius went from Paris to his own home at Cologne, his absence from the University being considered only temporary<sup>4</sup>. The chief friend whom he left behind, as faithful lieutenant, to com-

<sup>1</sup> The Latin form used by Agrippa is Arcona.

<sup>2</sup> "Neque diffido . . . me clarissimo hoc facinore immortalem gloriam nobis paraturum." Ep. 4, Lib. i. p. 683.

<sup>3</sup> "Qui in hunc labyrinthum mihi dux fuisti." *Loc. cit.*

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 1 and 2, Lib. i.



plete the necessary preparations, was an Italian, who studied medicine in Paris, Blasius Cæsar Landulphus. He lived to be a professor in the University of Pavia<sup>1</sup>, and wrote upon "The Cures of Fevers," with some other matter, a book published at Venice in 1521, and republished at Basle in 1535, with again other matter added to it.

We find him with a fever of his own still to be cured, a man ripe for excitement, who has hitherto, as he says, been leading an unsettled life, writing from Paris, on the 26th of March, to his accepted chieftain at Cologne, that he can send no pleasanter tidings than news of the success of their business, so often desired. He writes in a tone of strong affection for Cornelius; and hints at a wish also, now and then expressed between them, that after all the accidents of fortune he had suffered, Providence might find him business near his friend in Germany: "For you know that I plant a foot not altogether fearless on the soil of Paris, though I have repelled with a divine shield the various bites and blows of serpents, and the greedy wolves who were armed against me seem only to have heaped coals on their own heads. Take these matters in brief: I would have written more at large, my sweetest Agrippa, of what is in my mind, and of the course of my life and business in hand, but those things, on account of the danger of our present letters and considering the time, I put aside. Do you hasten your return as much as you can<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> Jücher's *Gelehrten Lexicon*. Theil 2, p. 2242 (ed. Leipzig, 1750).

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 1, Lib. i. p. 681.



The tone of this letter shows how strong an ascendancy Cornelius Agrippa had established over its writer; it was the ascendancy undoubtedly of friend over friend, but the young diplomatist seems also to have strengthened his position with suggestions of a means of settlement in life that might perhaps be discovered for Landulph in Germany. A month after the receipt of his friend's letter, addressed to him at Cologne, Cornelius thus answered it<sup>1</sup>:

"Your letter written on the twenty-sixth of March, my most faithful Landulph, I received joyfully on the twentieth of May. It grieves me much to have been so long absent from you, and to miss the enjoyment of your most faithful companionship; but I do not in absence follow you with the less care, or yield to any one in love for you: so that I am capable of neglecting nothing that concerns the defending and amplifying of your honour, or the augmentation of your worldly welfare. Day and night solicitous on your account, I now again vehemently and faithfully warn you to leave your present place of residence, and to leave straightway; for the time is near when you will either be glad that you left or sorry that you stayed. Take these matters in brief: for I cannot safely venture to commit to this letter all that I should wish you to know. I am glad, however, that you have lately overcome the wiles of so many serpents, so many Lycaons. Yet it is safer to fly from such animals than vanquish them, for even when dead they are hurtful, and retain the poison with which often they undo their victors.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 2, Lib. i. p. 682.



My happy position in life is matter of mutual satisfaction to us, for whatever good fortune may have befallen me is common to you also, since our friendship is of a kind that suffers nothing to be proper to one of us only. I await here the commission and command of a certain great Jove, with whom I shall some day have it in my power to be not a little useful to you. I am living here, and am to return again to France, where I shall see you. Meantime salute in my name Messieurs Germain, Gaigny, and Charles Foucard, M. de Molin flor, and Juanetin Bascara, Señor de Gerona. The happiest farewell to you. From Cologne, the twentieth of May, 1507."

Of the friends here saluted, Germain<sup>1</sup> was a spirited law student, who became afterwards an advocate at Forcalquier, in Provence. He published, nine-and-twenty years after this date, the "Very brief History of Charles V., ejected and paid out by the peasants of Provence," and wrote also a macaronic satire. Gaigny<sup>2</sup>, or Gagnée, was a Parisian born, afterwards known as a good theologian and linguist, as well as a tolerable Latin poet. Nineteen years subsequent to this date he became procurator for France in his native University, five years later its rector, and fifteen years later still—thirty-nine years after the present date—its chancellor, which office he held till he died—three years after his election. He also, it seems, had indulged in wild schemes in his youth, though he lived to be known chiefly as a scholiast on the New Testament, and was made

<sup>1</sup> Jöcher's *Gelehrten Lexicon* in Adelung's *Fortsetzung* (Leipzig, 1787). Theil 2.

<sup>2</sup> Jöcher. Theil 2, p. 826.



first almoner to the king Francis I. The last person named in the list, Juanetin Bascara de Gerona, was the young Catalonian nobleman of whom we have already spoken. Landulph speaks again<sup>1</sup>:

“The letter that you wrote me on the twentieth of May, Henry Cornelius, ever to be most regarded by me, I received right joyfully, and read on the sixteenth of June: for which I can scarcely thank you enough, especially for that part wherein you faithfully and vehemently exhort me that I shall be glad to have left my first residence, or led to penitence for still abiding there. Certainly, with a warning of that kind, I hold you to have prophesied by some divine oracle according to the aim of my own intention, which during a long course of days I have been whispering to myself quietly. I will expect your return, upon which we will, as it was formerly resolved between us, visit Spain, and finally seek my native Italy. For should the eagle chance to fly across the Alps, I hope that we may count for something there among the other birds. M. Molin flor salutes you. Juanetin has been absent for some months, and is not yet returned. Farewell. From the University of Paris. In the year 1507, on the day above mentioned.”

Landulph, therefore, who had nothing to wait for but the coming of Agrippa, answered his friend's letter instantly. The absence of Juanetin referred, no doubt, to the business in hand. We hear of him next at the court of Maximilian.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 3, Lib. i. p. 682.



Nine months have elapsed ; perhaps Cornelius has half-repent-ed of his plan, some of the motives to it may be failing, when suddenly we find his credit with his court staked on success. The matter has been talked about, and he is forced on the adventure. On the road to it he writes thus to a comrade still at court<sup>1</sup> :

“ You see, my Galbianus, how dangerous it is to make any rash boasts before those youths of the palace, who blab whatever they hear to their princes and kings, and hunt up for them pleasure in our perils. But they, as soon as they have begun to believe anything of our mysteries, desire us speedily to bring them to the proof by deeds; and they make their demand upon us with entreaties that blend hard and soft together, so that we may easily understand how those services which are not obtained from us by high words will be compelled by force and violence. I own that thus far this our fortune is *superne mulier formosa*; but who can discern her tail? We quaff honey so mixed with gall that we are unable to judge whether it be sweet or bitter. I own that thus far promises are great, and there are great rewards proposed: but against these are to be set threats and dangers. Have I not warned you from the beginning not to lead us into any labyrinth from which we could not escape at our own pleasure? You, nevertheless, wish to talk big, an orator more bold than prudent; and the Señor de Gerona, by his credit, has so enforced faith in your words, and suggested to the king so great an opinion of us, that there is no

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 4, Lib. i. p. 683.



way left of drawing back from what we have begun. Now, therefore, I am forced at my own great peril to redeem your promises on my behalf, hard bound by so inevitable a necessity of danger, that if I were to draw aside, or if the event should happen otherwise than you have convinced yourself it will, we all shall have lost for ever not our object only, but our fame also and credit; we shall have enemies instead of helpers, accusers instead of promoters, anger instead of thanks, and be enriched with persecution for our payment.

“But if, indeed, we obey, and the matter chance to issue well, it is doubtful whether in place of reward we may not be destined to new perils; of which perils, rising to the level of our skill, we may at last perish. Thus it may happen that the blow prepared for the head of another may fall on ourselves, unless, indeed, others are destitute of contrivances equal to ours, or better, or at least not by us to be foreseen.

“But this I write to you, not because I seek to turn back, but that I may signify to you that I am ready boldly to take chance of life or death. Nor do I doubt that, unless fate or some evil genius stand in the way, I shall prepare for us immortal glory by this brilliant action, needing no other forces than you only, of whom I have often heretofore experienced that you are a faithful comrade. In this trust I now approach the risk and venture, holding already in my grasp that golden branch of the tree difficult to climb. If you are by my side, it readily will suffer itself to be plucked, otherwise I could



not prevail or wrench it off, even with hard steel: but I should cast myself as a bone to Cerberus, by whom, nevertheless, I would rather be devoured, than like Prometheus be eaten piecemeal in a struggle with incessant dangers. You, therefore, who counselled me to enter on so great an enterprise, who were my leader into this maze, will see that you take as much pains in leading me out, and restoring me to myself, as you spent in urging me thereinto. Farewell, and, returning with the bearer of this, let us have your presence here, so that straightway we may deliberate and put our plan in execution. From the Palace of Granges, April, 1508."

The palace and lands of Granges, or Grangey, on the borders of Franche Comté, belonged then to a quasi-independent lord. They are distant about eight miles from Châtillon-sur-Seine, but a geographical fact far more important to this narrative is, that they are a third of the way in a perfectly direct line from Cologne to Tarragona.



## CHAPTER III.

## THE PLOT AND ITS ISSUE.

To Galbianus, who had returned to court after visiting Granges, in obedience to the summons of his friend, there came Agrippa's servant, Stephen, bringing verbal tidings and a letter from his master, dated at a place still nearer to the point of action<sup>1</sup>. In it Galbianus is reminded again that chiefly to him and Juanetin the writer is indebted for the service upon which he is engaged. "Did I not foretel you long since," he adds, "that so it would be, that when we thought to depart free we should prove to have sold our liberty for misty names of rank, that under the pretext of honours and employments we should be appointed to the worst of perils, and that new work would be set before us whereof death is the hire. Let it content us to have enjoyed this kind of lot once; why should we tempt fortune more? Juanetin, so far as I see,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 5, Lib. i. p. 684. I do not name the place in the text, because I cannot identify it. The letter dated only with the year is written from *Arx Vetus*. The nomenclature is so barbarous in many of these letters that I almost fear *Arx Vetus* may have been Agrippa's Latin for Clermont in Auvergne!



would rather please the king with our dangers than abate in any of his desires out of regard for our well-being. By Jove, I fear the omen of that Acherontine name" (he Latinised his friend—Charona); "our Charon may some day be tumbling us into the Styx. Do you therefore straightway put your mind into his counsels, and whilst your hand is near, however the boat may turn, compel it to the right shore, before our Charon can run it to the left. See therefore how you may deaden by some means the strokes of Juanetin, or shorten them, or be ready with a stout pull of your own at the right season: otherwise, while we must obey the decision of one angry king, we may offend an entire people, and even have those young men of the court in no benignant mood towards us. Do you not remember, my Galbianus, how those youths passed their opinions upon us while they schemed against our independence, telling the king that if he sent us off it might happen that our work would recoil upon his own head, and that the discomfiture carried among enemies he himself at last might suffer; with more in the same vein. See whether we ought up to this point to submit our heads to their counsels, and by an odious subservience precipitate ourselves into greater dangers than humanity itself could bear; let one fit of insanity suffice for us. But with a profligate conscience to wish to continue in such cruel devices, which after all have more in them of crime than of high daring, and for the sake of the rage of one ill-advised prince to expose ourselves to universal hatred, would be utterly impious and mad. Nothing of this sort



was agreed between us at the palace of Granges. I wish now to remind you of our deliberations there, and to assure you of this my opinion, according to which we must depart hence while all is well, or else I will throw myself into some place where I shall be found of nobody, and then you will all see how you can get on without me. You will learn the rest from Stephen. Farewell,—and reply to me at once by the same messenger.” From (Clermont?) 1508.

However it may have pleased his wit when put before him hypothetically, it is quite evident that the enterprise to which he is committed, when it has actually to be faced, pleases Agrippa's wit no better than his conscience. The court of Austria has forced the young man on a work of which the main features are cruelty and treachery. The scheme of treachery his own cunning either suggested or perfected; but what had amused him as an exercise of ingenuity in thought, revolts him as a crime now that he finds himself upon the brink of action. The revulsion of feeling is assisted, evidently in no small degree, by a near view of the perils to be braved for an unworthy purpose. Noticeable also in this letter is the impatience of forced action, the restless desire for independence, often hereafter to be manifested and too seldom asserted with success.

In this case, the effort to shake off his duty of obedience to the emperor's command was unsuccessful. His messenger returned, bringing no favourable response to his expostulation. No way of retreat was opened. The work was to be done.



Tarragon<sup>1</sup> is a province broken up by mountain chains that come as spurs from the adjacent Pyrenees. The town of Tarragon stands like a citadel upon a rock; and on

<sup>1</sup> The identification of places in the narrative of this Spanish adventure, though at first sight difficult, may be considered, I think, certain. Vallis Rotunda, Arx Nigra, and Arcona were the names to be interpreted. There is no town answering directly to the name with which Barcelona and Valencia can be associated as is necessary in the story. This fact, and the whole texture of the narrative which belongs naturally to what Mr. Ford calls "the classical country of revolt," pointed to Catalonia. "Hispaniæ pete Tarraconis arces," Terra Arcona must have been Agrippa's construction of the word Tarragona. In the *Diccionario de España* of Pascual Madoz, we find etymologies enough to justify the rough assumption of Cornelius. It is from the Phœnician tarah and gev, a citadel and strong, says one authority. It is Hebrew, says another, and means good land for buyers. It is from Tarraco, or Tabal, of the family of Noah, says one; no, says another, Tarraco was an Egyptian chief who landed here; wrong, says a third, it is Terra Acon, the land of the Phœnician Acon. Says another, it is Latin, and was called the Place of Fights, Terra Agonium, by the Scipios, because it cost them so much fighting to subdue the natives of that soil. Having assumed that Cornelius read Terra Arcona, and meant by Arcona Tarragona, the rest of the names fit perfectly with this interpretation. Precisely where we might expect to find Vallis Rotunda, we find Villarodona; and "Janotus Bascus de Charona" suggests straightway De Gerona, Gerona being a Catalonian town, of which the bishopric was subject to the see of Tarragon, a place to which a governor of the district about Tarragon, as Janotus was, might naturally belong, and the naming of men of standing by their towns having been at that time the rule in Catalonia. We then find that at a very short distance from Gerona is Bascara, to which place we may attribute, though with less absolute certainty, the origin of the name Bascus; and for Janotus, I have felt reasonably safe in putting Juanetin, since in a history of the *Guerra de Catalonia*, which refers to the same century, I find that, and no other name among the Catalonians answering to Janotus. Error in such points is unimportant. Of the essential facts I feel no doubt, that Arcona is Tarragon; Charona, Gerona; and Vallis Rotunda, Villarodona. Having identified Arcona with Tarragon, it was a satisfaction to be led straightway to the meaning of "Arx Nigra," which is a locality important to the narrative. In the account of the fortifications of Tarragon, by Señor Madoz (*Diccionario de España*), reference is made to the *Fuerte Negro*; and we have also its locality defined. Everything, therefore, tallies with Agrippa's narrative.



the summit, near to the archbishop's palace, within walls supposed to have been raised by the ancient Celts, is the Black Fort—the Fuerte Negro. The seizure of this fort, by a treacherous device, seems to have been the opening act of the adventure. It was successfully accomplished; but as Cornelius only alludes to the attempt in writing to a friend who knows its details, we must be content simply to know that it succeeded. After remaining for a certain time within the Fuerte Negro, Cornelius was sent with others to garrison the house of Juanetin at Villarodona, and protect it from the wrath of an excited people. The small town of Villarodona, in the province of Tarragon, and district of Valls, lies on a pleasant slope by the river Gaya. The mountains of Valls, which are not very notable, were known long after the sixteenth century as an unpeopled wilderness<sup>1</sup>.

After many days spent in discussion of their perilous position, the conspirators in the house of Juanetin learnt that their associate Landulph, who had gone back upon some mission, had recrossed the Garonne and was upon his way to Barcelona<sup>2</sup>. For sufficient reasons it was

<sup>1</sup> . . . . "Pueden decirse despoblados. Madoz, *loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 10, Lib. i. pp. 687-695 is the authority for this and the succeeding details. It is very remarkable that this most striking narrative, coherent in every part, giving names of places and people, and describing a thing so extremely credible as a Catalonian tumult, should have been neglected by all writers. Because the Lyons printers (whose edition of Cornelius was unauthorised, and sometimes mutilated, in submission to the priests), because these "Beringi fratres," misunderstanding the first sentence, and regarding their author simply as a magician, put an absurd commentary in the margin, to this day nobody, in speaking of Agrippa, has referred to these adventures beyond saying that he "went to Spain," and adding, or



judged most prudent that Juanetin should at once repair to Barcelona, and there meet his friend. To Villarodona Barcelona was the nearest port, its distance being about forty miles. Leaving, therefore, Cornelius Agrippa captain of the garrison, the Señor de Gerona set out on his journey. He had determined that he should be back by the festival of John the Baptist; and for that day a feast was accordingly appointed by him, to which he had bidden sundry of his friends, the Prior of St. George's Monastery, and a Franciscan priest who was a member of his family, with many others. Whether Juanetin did at Barcelona see Landulph, and whether anything was planned by them, the little garrison at Villarodona never knew. The master of the house did not return. The day of the appointed dinner-party was at hand; and when the sun had set upon the eve of it, Cornelius, expecting still in vain the absent man, and pondering the cause of his delay; anxious, beset with terrible suspicions, uncertain how to act; with his mind, as he says, disturbed by presage of the coming ill and dread of the approaching night, revolved in his mind many conflicting counsels. At last he retired to rest; but when all in the castle were asleep, night not being far advanced, the abbot's steward came, for whom, when he had given the password to the sentries, the drawbridge was let down, and the gate opened. He summoned Cornelius Agrippa, Perotti the Franciscan,

not adding, that he was engaged there in efforts to make gold. A stupid man scribbles a stupid note upon the margin of a letter, and the letter is a dead letter for three hundred years in consequence.



and two other of Gerona's relatives, to tell them that on his way home from Barcelona their chief had been waylaid by a savage crowd of rustics, and that, two of his followers being killed, he with the others had been bound hand and foot, and carried up the mountains.

"Take heed," added the messenger, "to the danger that is threatening yourselves, unless you can be strongly, suddenly prepared. Meet instantly, and hasten to take wise thought for your affairs here and your very lives!"

The receivers of these tidings were astonished and alarmed; they had no counsel that sufficed to meet the suddenness of the exigency and the greatness of the threatened peril—no one doubting that the castle would be soon surrounded by a hostile people. "And I, too," says Cornelius, "the counsellor of so many enterprises, who had recently been master of so many plots, was wanting to myself." All, therefore, agreed in begging that the abbot's steward, who had told them of the danger, would also tell them, if he could, in what way to avert it.

Said he: "You must either escape by making a well-managed sally, or you must fortify the castle, and that strongly, against the seditious rustics; probably in a few days they will separate for want of any guiding head, or else be put down by the rough hand of the king."

Now the country being in arms, it seemed impossible to escape by breaking through the watches of the peasantry; and for a few men to defend against numerous besiegers a place that was already in ruins, was an undertaking perilous indeed. But there was an old



half-ruined tower three miles distant, situated in one of those mountain wildernesses which, as it has been said, characterise the district of Valls. The tower stood between Villarodona and Tarragon, in a craggy, cavernous valley, where the broken mountains make way for a gulf containing stagnant waters, and jagged, inaccessible rocks hem the place in. At the gorge by which this place is entered stood the tower, on a hill which was itself surrounded by deep bogs and fishers' pools, while it also was within a ring of lofty crags. There was but one way to this tower, except when the ground was frozen, and we speak now of events happening at midsummer, the midsummer of the year 1508. The way among the pools was by a narrow path of stone, hedged with turf walls. The site of the tower made it inexpugnable in summer time. It was tenanted by a poor bailiff of the abbot's, who was set in charge over the fishponds; the abbot's steward, therefore, told his friends that they should occupy and fortify that mountain hold.

The advice seemed good, and was adopted instantly. Pack and baggage were brought out, with every accessible provision for munition or victualling. Conveying all that was most precious and necessary on their horses' backs, and themselves bearing the burden of their powder and artillery, the little band marched under cover of a dark night, as silently as possible, by devious and unfrequented ways, to the appointed place. Having entered the tower, they entrusted their horses, which they had no means of keeping by them, to the steward's care. He rode away



with them, and not long afterwards day broke—St. John the Baptist's festival—the day appointed for the banquet to which he who bade the guests had not returned; and his bold soldiers, says Cornelius, had been transformed into bats, flitting out of daylight to their cavern.

They had not fled too soon. At early dawn on that day the armed peasantry was already assembling about the walls of the abandoned dwelling of Juanetin. Some bringing ladders scaled the crumbling battlements, others beat with strong axes at the doors; the house was seized, and everything it contained scattered in wreck, destroyed, or carried away by the people. That was the festival. The people ran from hall to chamber in vain search for the companions of their enemy. The women and children, who had been left quietly asleep, woke in alarm, but knew not what to say. They could not help the search, which was maintained most fiercely for The German. Under that name was sought Cornelius Agrippa, for from all quarters had come the rumour that he had been the author of the atrocious counsel of the cruel deed, that it was he whose arts had caused the fall of the Black Fort, impregnable by violence, the miserable massacre of the garrison, and the subversion of the public liberty. Troops of peasantry descending from the mountains filled the valley; everywhere were to be heard the shouts of an angry host of men eager to put an end to the conspiracy against their public rights. The hiding place of the conspirators becoming known, the flood of wrath poured down towards the tower, but the strength of the position



was then felt. With a barricade of overthrown waggons that had been used by the bailiff, the sole path to the besieged was closed, and behind this barrier they posted themselves with their arquebuses, of which one only sufficed to daunt a crowd of men accustomed to no weapons except slings or bows and arrows. After suffering some slaughter, the peasantry discovered that the tower was not to be stormed, and altering their design, they settled down with dogged perseverance to beset the place, and by a strict siege starve the little garrison into surrender.

There were, indeed, among the besiegers, says Agrippa, some whose experience of sedition had been great, professing that they still abided by their customary loyalty towards the king. By the help of these the abbot himself, who always had enjoyed a high repute among the people, while the storm of rebellion was raging called at Tarragon a public meeting, pointed out to those who gathered round him the futility of their efforts, the emptiness of their purpose, and persuaded them against disloyalty towards the king; he urged also the restoration of Juanetin and the raising of the siege laid to the tower. But his labour for his friends was vain. If by the abbot here mentioned is meant the Archbishop of Tarragon, it was Don Gonzalo Fernandez de Heredia, who held that office between the years 1489 and 1511. The vicinity of the Black Fort to the archbishop's palace would compel that dignitary, if he was not absent, to a strong feeling for or against the party of Gerona, and the veneration of the people for the abbot,



as well as the course of proceeding taken by him, would, in a slight degree, favour the opinion that under this name Cornelius referred to the archbishop himself. Archbishop or not, and from the sequel of the narrative I think not, he pleaded to deaf ears; the peasantry, risen in arms, scarcely allowed the upholders of the king's authority to speak, replying promptly that their wrath was not against the king, but against Juanetin and his tyranny, whereby they had been lorded over savagely, contrary to all former usage, and vexed with slavery beneath intolerable burdens, so that under the name and form of the protection of the king they had been robbed of the liberty inherited from their forefathers. With many threats of vengeance they urged the wresting from them of the Fuerte Negro, clamouring with the bitterest accusations against the Señor de Gerona and Cornelius Agrippa; against the one as the betrayer of his country, and against the other as the man who by detestable contrivances had robbed them of their fortress and their liberty; against both as men who had moved the king to cruel exercise of his authority, and to so atrocious a use of his victory, that their blood, they asserted, and their lives would not content him. A liberty, regained by force of arms, they would not barter for the flattery of cheating words, but they would acknowledge the king for their master upon those conditions under which he had held rule over their elders: to the lowest slavery he ought not to compel them, and they would not be compelled. All with one voice cried, touching Juanetin and his colleagues in the tower, that



they would rather take the enemies delivered into their possession, than dismiss them to become a second time avengers. Surely, they said, they ought not to prefer the safety of these people to their own; and added, proudly, that in their being loose they had more matter for fear than in the anger of the king, that more help could be got out of their death than out of the king's promises. They who had lost relations at the massacre in the Black Fort laboured especially to keep alive the fury of the people. All being agreed in urgent accusation against Juanetin de Gerona, all determined not to suffer the escape of his companions closely beset in the tower, the abbot, or archbishop, parted at dusk from the men whose wrath he had been utterly unable to appease.

The Catalonians in those days were bold asserters of their rights, and very ready to chastise the nobles who opposed them. Not many years had elapsed since they had forcibly set up a prince of their own choosing, and forty years afterwards a famous Catalonian war was the result of the high value set by them on public liberty. The sympathies of Englishmen can only be against Cornelius and his associates. Juanetin de Gerona was a double traitor, probably; a traitor to his country, as the people said, because in the name of the King of Aragon he became its oppressor. But if he was not playing a double game, how was it that, while professing to recover Ferdinand's authority, he used the help offered him by Maximilian? There was so much bold treachery and petty meanness forming, in the sixteenth century, a part



of the routine of statecraft, the relations between what is done and what is meant become often so complex, that it needs the wit of a sixteenth century diplomatist fairly to understand the significance of many an action not directly labelled with its meaning. Be it enough for us here to know that the young Cornelius Agrippa suffered in Spain merited discomfiture; that, as he approached his undertaking there, he came to see it in its true light, as a matter not of glory, but of shame, and would have removed his hand from it had he been able. Self-conscious, ambitious as he was, much as he yearned, out of the largeness of his mind and its self-occupation, for a perfect independence, it has been seen how he allowed his course to be determined by the pressure from without. Self-conscious without being fully self-possessed, ambitious, powerful, yet failing in that lofty reach of power which makes poverty a source of wealth, discomfiture the root of triumph, already we perceive how he may hereafter—should he venture on an independent path—be hindered by the opposition he begets.



## CHAPTER IV.

HOW CORNELIUS AGRIPPA, BESIEGED IN A TOWER NEAR VILLARODONA, VANISHED WITH ALL HIS COMPANIONS IN ARMS—THE END OF THE CATALONIAN ADVENTURE.

PERILOUS weeks were being passed by the adventurers within the mountain hold. More formidable than the actual conflict was the famine consequent on their blockade. Perrot, the keeper of the fish-ponds, and erewhile the solitary occupant of that old tower among the rocks and marshes, taking cunning counsel with himself to help his guests and to get rid of them, explored with indefatigable zeal every cranny in the wall of rock by which they were surrounded. Clambering among the wastes, with feet accustomed to the difficulties of the mountain, he hoped that perchance he might be the discoverer of some route worthy, at least, to be tried by men who fled from an extremest peril. At length a devious and rugged way, by which unconquerable obstacles of crag and chasm were avoided and the mountain top was to be reached, this friendly peasant found. Looking down from the heights he saw how, upon the other side, the mountain rose out of a lake, known to him as the



Black Lake, which has an expanse of about four miles, and upon the farther shore of which his master's abbey stood. Attempting next the difficult descent upon that other side, he boldly struck into a gorge by which the mountain snows had poured a torrent down. But Perrot, at the lake, was still far from the abbey; and, to men without a boat, the water was a barrier yet more impassable than the steep mountain. He retraced his way, therefore, and by sunset reached the tower, where an assembly of the garrison was held to hear the result of his explorations. The judgment upon it, of course, was that escape was impossible, unless the boat could be obtained, of getting which there was no hope, unless a letter could be carried through the midst of the besiegers to the abbot's hand.

Now the besieging army\* of the peasants posted and kept constantly relieved strong guards upon every path into the valley, and allowed no person either to go in or pass out on any pretence whatever. Moreover, from the tower no path could be reached except by the one narrow lane across the marshes, barricaded as before described; and to prevent a sally by the doomed band of conspirators, the outlet by this lane was the point best guarded, and, indeed, held by an overwhelming force. The perplexed conspirators, in council, saw no hope for themselves, except through any further help Perrot might furnish; him they besought accordingly, and he informed them that there was a way, known to himself only, by which the marshes could be forded; but that such knowledge



was in this case of no use, because, once across them, there were still guards posted upon every path out of the valley.

Under these desperate circumstances the ingenuity of young Agrippa was severely tested, and he justified the credit he had won for subtle wit. The keeper of the fish-ponds had a son, who was a shepherd-boy. Cornelius took this youth, disfigured him with stains of milk-thistle and juice of other herbs, befouled his skin and painted it with shocking spots to imitate the marks of leprosy, adjusted his hair into a filthy and unsightly bunch, dressed him in beggar's clothes, and gave him a crooked branch for stick, within which there was scooped a hollow nest for the concealment of the letter. Upon the boy so equipped—a dreadful picture of the outcast leper—the leper's bell was hung, his father seated him upon an ox, and, having led him during the darkness of the night across the marshes by the ford, deposited him before sunrise on dry ground, and left him. Stammering, as he went, petitions for alms, this boy walked without difficulty by a very broad road made for him among the peasantry. Even the guards set upon the paths regarded his approach with terror, and, instead of stopping at their posts to question him, fled right and left as from a snake that could destroy them with its evil eye, and flung alms to him from a distance.

So the boy went upon his errand safely, and, returning next day at about the first watch of the night to the border of the marsh, announced his return by ringing of



the bell. His father, on the bullock, crossed the ford to bring him in, and, as he came with the desired answer, there was great rejoicing by Cornelius and his companions.

They spent the night in preparation for departure. Towards dawn they covered their retreat by a demonstration of their usual state of watchfulness and desperation, fired several guns, and gave other indications of their presence. This done, they set forth, in dead silence, carrying their baggage, and were guided by Perrot to the summit. There they lay gladly down among the stones to rest, while their guide descended on the other side and spread the preconcerted signal, a white cloth, upon a rock. When he returned, they ate the breakfast they had brought with them, all sitting with their eyes towards the lake. At about nine o'clock in the morning two fishermen's barks were discerned, which hoisted a red flag, the abbot's signal. Rejoicing at the sight of this, the escaped men fired off their guns in triumph from the mountain-top, a hint to the besieging peasantry of their departure, and, at the same time, a signal to the rescuers. Still following Perrot, they descended, along ways by him discovered, to the meadows bordering the lake, entered the boats, and before evening were safe under the abbot's roof. The day of this escape was the 14th of August. They had been suffering siege, therefore, during almost two months in the mountain fastness.

To the peasants an escape like this seemed a pure miracle, and it produced among them much anxiety, for



they misdoubted whether the same cunning arts which opened unknown ways out of the tower, might not by a strange road bring suddenly an army of the king's into their midst, to plague the whole valley with fire and sword. Insecure, as they believed, by night or day, many seceded from the work of insurrection; but the leaders of it, who had scattered the goods of Juanetin, had taken him and kept him prisoner, abided firmly by their purpose, for they thought no safety possible if he were free. They dreaded not only confiscation, exile, but they doubted also whether life even would be spared to them and theirs if the Señor de Gerona were restored to power.

Cornelius Agrippa being safe could quit the scene, and quitted it without waiting to see how the difficulty would be solved between the Catalonian peasants and their master. It perplexed him much that he had no tidings of his friend Landulph, who either had been or was to have been at Barcelona; and the abbot counselled him, in his perplexity, to go to court again, where the favour he had formerly enjoyed would be regained, and he could easily repair his shattered fortune. He declared, however, that he had no mind to risk being again sent upon hazardous missions, and remained several days in the abbey, doubtful as to the course which he should next pursue, and not very cheerfully disposed to trust himself in travel to the unknown temper of the people.

The German youth then found a friend in an old man,



Antonius Xanthus<sup>1</sup>, whose advice was, that he should take heart, go into strange countries and among strange people, see the world, feel his way in it, and spread his sails for any gale of fortune; that he should constitute himself, in fact, knight-errant and adventurer, with not the discovery of a lady or a giant, but of his comrade Landulph, for a special object of desire. "Moderate your concern," said the old man, "explore the shores of Spain, look for your friend in his own Italy, and I will go as your companion on the way."

The person thus offering his companionship was an unlettered old man, who had seen much of the rough side of the world, and appeared to Cornelius worthy of especial patronage. Though he was no philosopher, he had a vast store of experience. Captured by Djem, the unfortunate brother of Bajazet the Second, he had once served as an interpreter among the Turkish galleys; he had lived to a great age, filling his mind constantly with every-day knowledge, and was therefore useful as a travelling companion in strange regions. It was his merit also to be faithful and silent—one who might safely be admitted to a knowledge of the mysteries in which Cornelius indulged, and who was content to be instructed and sworn into the league of which Cornelius and Landulph were important members.

With this singular companion and his servant Stephen, the young courtier, after a stay of nine or ten days at the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 8 and 10, Lib. i. pp. 686, 694, for this and for what follows until the next reference.



abbey<sup>1</sup>, on the 24th of August, 1508, went forth to seek an independent fortune in the world. Of course their first visit was to Barcelona, where they hoped to find some clue to the position of Landulph; but after spending three days in the town, nothing discovered, they proceeded to Valentia. There dwelt a most practised astrologer and philosopher, Comparatus Saracenus, the disciple of Zacutus, but from him also no information could be had. The travellers then sold their horses, and sailed from Valentia for Italy. By way of the Balearic Islands and Sardinia they went to Naples, where they were disheartened by their ill success, and determined to pass forthwith into France. They took ship, therefore, at Naples for Leghorn, and travelling to Avignon, there halted. In that town they learnt, after a few days, from a travelling merchant, that the person of whom they sought tidings was at Lyons.

At once, therefore, on the 17th of December, to Landulph at Lyons, Cornelius wrote, from Avignon, a letter, expressing joy at his friend's safety, and giving tidings of his own happy escape; for since the Italian left Villarodona to procure help for his friends, neither had been certain whether the other was alive or dead. From Villarodona itself Cornelius had dated two epistles to his friend<sup>1</sup>, urging him to make all speed in his embassy, and by putting a prompt end to their dangers, put an end also to the state of compulsion under which he lived; but whether those letters might not have been written to a

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 6 and 7, Lib. i. pp. 685-6.



dead man or a captive he had no opportunity of knowing. Writing from Avignon, Cornelius expressed briefly the magnitude of the danger recently escaped, announced that all was well with him again, and added, "Nothing now remains but that, after so many dangers, we insist upon a meeting of our brother combatants, and absolve ourselves from the oaths of our confederacy, that we may recover our old state of fellowship and have it unmolested." He undertook to advise two confederates in Aquitaine, MM. de Bouelles<sup>1</sup> and Clairchamps, of their safety in Avignon and Lyons, while he left to Landulph the business of sending word to Germain de Brie and another delegate in Burgundy, as well as Fasch and Wigand<sup>1</sup>, who were at Paris.

Of the associates here mentioned some only were men active enough to produce work remembered by posterity. Charles de Bouelles, or Bovil, born at Sancourt, in Vermandois, studied at Paris, and travelled afterwards in Italy, Germany, and Spain. At Noyon he became a canon and professor of theology, and he died in the middle of the sixteenth century. He had already, in 1503, published a book on metaphysics and geometry, the quadrature of the circle, and the cubication of the sphere. When republished in 1510, a year or two after the present mention of him as one of Cornelius Agrippa's fellow-searchers after wisdom, the character of the work showed that he also must have been at that time an active inquirer into curiosities of knowledge. It contained

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. i. p. 687.



recently-written books on Sense, on Nothing, on Generation, on Wisdom, on the Twelve Numbers, Letters upon the Quadripartite Work, and so forth. Later in life he wrote a good deal of theology, something of language, a book on the utility of arts, and collected three books of common proverbs.

Germain de Brie, native of Auxerre, became known as a canon of Paris, who was a good linguist, and wrote excellent Greek verse. He translated some of the works of Chrysostom, and produced before he died, in 1550, *Anti-Morum*, the fruit of a controversy with Sir Thomas More. Of the other friends I find no trace, unless—but that is not in the least likely—Wigand was the Dominican Wirt or Wigandus who quarrelled about the Immaculate Conception, attacked the Minorites, supported his views with false miracles, and was burnt at Berne in 1509.

Cornelius, then, having arranged concerning these associates, therewith commended himself to his dearest friend, who on receipt of his letter, twenty days afterwards, namely, on the 9th of January, 1509, began his reply<sup>1</sup> with “Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!” and a comparison of his joy to that of Mary Magdalen or the apostles when they learnt the resurrection of the Lord. He is unable to express the energy of his congratulations, and has also to relate how he had made inquiry for his friend across the Pyrenees, by sea and land, by lake and river, field, city, and town; how he had looked for him

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. i. p. 687.



through the entire kingdom of Navarre, through Gascony and Aquitaine ; had learnt nothing from De Bouelles and Clairchamps at Toulouse, and then had hastened to Lyons in the belief that, among the merchants of every tongue and clime by which that mart was visited, he might obtain some news of his friend's fate. The search, so vaunted, it will be observed, was only made on the straight road to France, the home of the conspiracy. At Lyons, said Landulph, he was panting to embrace his friend again, and when Agrippa came there, they could talk more at ease about the renewal of their confederation. He gave information of the movements of some comrades, and parted with the expression of a wish that his friend might live long, and a belief that his fame would surpass even his labours. He had asked in the course of this letter for a full account of the escape, which Cornelius sent, adding a hope that Landulph might be able to visit him at Avignon and talk their secrets over, since, being detained by the exhaustion of his funds till he could make some money<sup>1</sup>, he

<sup>1</sup> He says: "*Sumptuum tenuitate coacti Avenione nos, instructa solida nostra chrysotoci officina tantisper manere, et in opere perseverare oportebit, quoadusque longioris itineris nova fomenta excubemus.*" Which manner of speaking gets a marginal note from the commentator to the following effect: "*Hoc loco fateri videter apertissime, chrysopæam se exercuisse cum sociis fœdere sibi adjunctis, ob quam sæpius apud principes libertatis jacturam ferme fecisset, captivumque fuisse ob hanc rem detentum in Valle rotunda.*" In a former letter, when expecting honour from the expedition, he said metaphorically that he seemed already to hold "that golden branch of the tree difficult to climb," meaning success, the marginal note was "*Chymica paratam arte putat arborem, de qua Paracelsus, Lib. de natura rerum.*" Now, as to the likelihood of young Agrippa's taking it into his head



could not leave for Lyons until after the lapse of a little time.

to stop at Avignon till he had made, literally till he had created, money enough to carry him on further, we shall see that in a book written about this time he says, "apertissime," that to make an ounce of gold out of an ounce of gold is the extreme limit of his conjuring. And the letter, which, by misreading one sentence, under the influence of a general idea that it is a magician who writes, the commentator seems to have warned all subsequent readers against noticing, tells a true chapter of life surely "apertissime" enough.



## CHAPTER V.

## CORNELIUS A DOCTOR OF DIVINITY.

THE secrets to be talked over between Cornelius and his friend related to that study of the mysteries of knowledge in which the Theosophists assisted one another. Secret societies, chiefly composed of curious and learned youths, had by this time become numerous, and numerous especially among the Germans. Not only the search after the philosopher's stone, which was then worthy to be prosecuted by enlightened persons, but also the new realms of thought laid open by the first glance at Greek literature, and by the still more recent introduction of a study of the Hebrew language, occupied the minds of these associated scholars. Such studies often carried those who followed them within the borders of forbidden ground, and therefore secrecy was a condition necessary to their freedom of inquiry. Towards the close of the sixteenth century such associations (the foundation of which had been a desire to keep thought out of fetters) were developed into the form of brotherhoods of Rosicrucians: Physician, Theosophist, Chemist, and now, by the mercy of God, Rosicrucian, became then the style in which a



brother gloried. The brotherhoods of Rosicrucians are still commonly remembered, but in the social history of Europe they are less to be considered than those first confederations of Theosophists, which nursed indeed mystical errors gathered from the Greeks and Jews, but out of whose theories there was developed much of a pure spiritualism that entered into strife with what was outwardly corrupt and sensual in the body of the Roman Church, and thus prepared the way for the more vital attacks of the Reformers. When first Greek studies were revived, the monks commonly regarded them as essentially adverse to Roman interests, and the very language seemed to them infected with the plague of heresy. In the Netherlands it became almost a proverb with them that to be known for a grammarian was to be reputed heretic. Not seldom, indeed, in later times, has John Reuchlin, who, for his Greek and Hebrew scholarship was called, after the manner of his day, the Phoenix of Germans, and who was the object of an ardent hero-worship to men like Cornelius Agrippa, been called also the Father of the Reformation<sup>1</sup>. Certainly Luther, Erasmus, and Melancthon had instruction from him; by him it was that Schwartzerd had been taught to call himself Melancthon; and many will remember how, after his death, Erasmus, in a pleasant dialogue, raised his old friend to the rank of saint, and prayed to him, "Oh,

<sup>1</sup> He is so called on the title-page of an English adaptation of Mayerhoff's *Reuchlin und seine Zeit*, Berlin, 1830—*The Life and Times of John Reuchlin, or Capnion, the Father of the German Reformation*. By Francis Barham, Esq. Whittaker and Co. 1843.



holy soul, be favourable to the languages; be favourable to those that love honourers of the languages; be propitious to the sacred tongues." But Reuchlin—for the taste of smoke in it, Reuchlin *quasi* Reekie, his name was turned into the Greek form, Capnio—Reuchlin, or Capnio, never passed as a reformer beyond detestation of the vices of the priesthood. Like Cornelius, who began his life before the public as a scholar by an act of homage to his genius, Reuchlin loved liberty and independence, cherished the idol of free conscience, but never fairly trusted himself to its guidance. To the last an instinct of obedience to the Church governed his actions, and the spiritual gold he could extract from Plato, Aristotle, or the wonderful Cabala of the Jews, was in but small proportion to the dross fetched up with it from the same ancient mines.

A contemporary notion of the Reformation, not without some rude significance in this respect, is said to have been obtruded upon Charles V. by a small body of unknown actors, who appeared before him in 1530, when he was in Germany. He had been dining with his brother Ferdinand, and did not refuse their offer to produce a comedy in dumb show. One dressed as a scholar, labelled Capnio, brought before the emperor a bundle of sticks—some crooked and some straight—laid them down in the highway, and departed. Then entered another, who professed to represent Erasmus, looked at the sticks, shook his head, made various attempts to straighten the crooked ones, and finding that he could not do so, shook



his head over them again, put them down where he found them, and departed. Then came an actor, labelled Luther, with a torch, who set all that was crooked in the bundle blazing. When he was gone entered one dressed as an emperor, who tried in vain to put the fire out with his sword. Last came Pope Leo X., to whom, grieving dismally over the spectacle before him, there were two pails brought; one contained oil, the other water. His holiness, to quell the fire, poured over it the bucketful of oil, and while the flame attracted all eyes by the power, beyond mastery, with which it shot up towards heaven, the actors made their escape undetected<sup>1</sup>.

Now, it was over the crooked sticks of Capnio, and many other matters difficult of comprehension, that Cornelius and his confederates were bent in curious and anxious study. "The bearer of these letters," said Landulph, in excusing himself on the plea of illness, from a winter journey to his friend at Avignon<sup>2</sup>—"the bearer of these letters is a German, native of Nuremberg, but dwelling at Lyons; and he is a curious inquirer after hidden mysteries, a free man, restrained by no fetters, who, impelled by I know not what rumour concerning you, desires to sound your depths." That the man himself might be sounded, as one likely to have knowledge of some important things, and that if it seemed fit, he should be made a member of their brotherhood, was the

<sup>1</sup> *Johann Reuchlin und seine Zeit.* Von Dr. Ernst Theodor Mayerhoff. Berlin, 1830. Pp. 79, 80, in note. He cites the story from Majus.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. Corn. Agr. 11, Lib. i. p. 695.



rest of the recommendation of this person by Landulph to his friend Agrippa.

At Lyons were assembled many members of his league, awaiting the arrival of the young soldier-philosopher. His early taste for an inquiry into mysteries had caused him to take all possible advantage, as a scholar, of each change of place and each extension of acquaintance among learned men who were possessors of rare books. He had searched every accessible volume that might help him in the prosecution of the studies that had then a fascination, not for him only, but for not a few of the acutest minds in Christendom. At that time there was, in the modern sense, no natural science; the naturalists of ancient Greece and Rome being the sole authorities in whom the learned could put trust. Of the miraculous properties of plants and animals, and parts of animals, even at the close of the sixteenth century, careful and sober men placed as accepted knowledge many extravagant ideas on record. At the beginning of the century, when a belief in the influences of the stars, in the interferences of demons, and in the most wonderful properties of bodies, was the rule among learned and unlearned—Luther himself not excluded from the number—an attempt to collect and group, if it might be, according to some system, the most recondite secrets of what passed for the divine ordering of nature, was in no man's opinion foolish, though in the opinion of the greater number criminal. Belief in the mysteries of magic, not want of belief, caused men to regard with enmity and dread researches into secrets that might give to those by



whom they were discovered subtle and superhuman power, through possessing which they would acquire an influence, horrible to suspect, over their fellow-creatures. Detaching their search into the mysteries of the universe from all fear of this kind, the members of such secret societies as that to which Cornelius belonged gathered whatever fruit they could from the forbidden tree, and obtained mutual benefit by frank exchange of information. Cornelius had already, by incessant search, collected notes for a complete treatise upon magic, and of these not a few were obtained from Reuchlin's Hebrew-Christian way of using the Cabala.

From Avignon, after a short stay, Cornelius Agrippa went to Lyons<sup>1</sup>, and remaining there some weeks, compared progress with his friends, and no doubt also formally divested himself of any further responsibility connected with the Spanish enterprise. Towards the end of this year, a friend at Cologne, Theodoric, Bishop of Cyrene<sup>2</sup>, wrote, expressing admiration of him, as of one among so many thousand Germans who at sundry times and places had displayed in equal degree power to labour vigorously as a man at arms as well as man of letters. Who does not know, the bishop asks, how few of many thousands have done that? He envies those who can thus earn the wreath of Mars without losing the favour of Minerva, and calls the youth "in arms a man, in scholarship a teacher." To escape the soldier's life of bondage seems to be now the ambition of the scholar. With the world before him, in the twenty-third year of his age, well born, distinguished

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 12, Lib. i. p. 696.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 12, Lib. i. p. 700.



among all who knew him for the rare extent of his attainments, Cornelius, attended by his servant Stephen, quitted his friends at Lyons, and rode to Authun, where he was received in the abbey of a liberal and hospitable man, physician, theologian, and knight by turns, M. Champier, who, having been born at Saint Saphorin-le-Château, near Lyons, was called Symphorianus Champier, or Campegius, and who, not content with his own noble ancestry, assigned himself, by right of the Campegius, to the family of the Campeggi of Bologna, and assumed its arms. He studied at Paris *Litera humaniora*, at Montpellier medicine, and practised at Lyons. He lived to obtain great fame, deserving little, and losing after his death all. It was not until five years after this visit from Cornelius Agrippa that Symphorianus, acting as body physician to the Duke of Lorraine, was knighted on the battle-field of Marignano. Among his writings, those which most testify his sympathy with the inquiries of Cornelius, are a book on the Miracles of Scripture, a Life of Arnold of Villeneuve, and a French version of Sibylline oracles. This Champier then sympathised with the enthusiasm of the young theosophist, and under his roof the first venture of Cornelius before the world of letters seems to have been planned. In the last week of May<sup>1</sup>, we find that he has sent Stephen to fetch De Brie from Dôle, has summoned Antonius Xanthus from Niverne, and wishes, in association with Symphorianus, to arrange a meeting with Landulph, at any convenient place and time. He has some-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 12, Lib. i. p. 696.



thing in hand concerning which he wishes to take counsel with his comrades. A few days afterwards he and Landulph are at Dôle together; and while Cornelius has left Dôle for a short time to go to Châlon (sur Saône), his friend sends word to him that he has engaged on his behalf the interest of the Archbishop of Besançon (Antony I., probably not an old man, since he was alive thirty years afterwards<sup>1</sup>), who desires greatly to see him, and boasts that he can give information of some things unknown perhaps even to him. The archbishop is impatient to see the person who has stored up from rare books, even those written in Greek and Hebrew, so great a number of the secrets of the universe. Landulph, to content him, antedates the time appointed for his friend's return, and while reporting this, adds that there are many at Dôle loud in the praise of Cornelius, and none louder than himself<sup>2</sup>. The influence of his associates is evidently at work on his behalf among the magnates of the town and university of Dôle, and learned men in the adjoining towns of Burgundy, for it is at Dôle that he has resolved to make his first public appearance as a scholar, by expounding in a series of orations Reuchlin's book on the Mirific Word<sup>3</sup>. At Châlon, however, Cornelius fell sick of a summer pestilence<sup>4</sup>, from which he was recovering on the eighth of

<sup>1</sup> Zedler's *Universal Lexicon*, Art. *Besançon*.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 13. Lib. i. p. 696.

<sup>3</sup> H. C. Agr. *Expostulatio . . . . cum Joanne Catilineti*. Opuscula ed. 1532. Mense Maio. fol. D. iii.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 14. Lib. i. p. 696.



July. As soon as health permitted he returned to Dôle, where there was prepared for him a cordial reception.

Dôle is a pretty little town, and at that time possessed the university which was removed in after years to Besançon. Its canton was called, for its beauty and fertility, the Val d'Amour; and when Besançon was independent of the lords of Burgundy Dôle was their capital. A pleasant miniature capital, with not four thousand inhabitants, a parliament, a university, a church of Notre Dame whereof the tower could be seen from distant fields, a princely residence,—Dôle la Joyeuse they called it until thirty years before Cornelius Agrippa declaimed his orations there; but after it had been, in 1479, captured and despoiled by a French army, it was called Dôle la Dolente.

Mistress of Dôle and Burgundy was Maximilian's daughter, Margaret of Austria, who, in this year of Agrippa's life, was twenty-nine years old. She was already twice a widow. When affianced twice—once vainly to France, a second time to Spain, and likely to perish in a tempest before reaching her appointed husband—she had wit to write a clever epitaph upon herself. Her Spanish husband died almost after the first embrace, and she had since, after four years of wedded happiness, lost her true husband, Philibert of Savoy. She was twenty-four years old when that happened, and resolved to make an end of marrying. In 1506, after the death of Archduke Philip, her father Maximilian being guardian of his grandson Charles the Fifth, made Margaret his governor over the



Netherlands, and appointed her to rule also over Burgundy and the Charolois. Thus she came to be, in the year 1509, mistress at Dôle. A clever, lively woman, opposed strongly to France, and always mindful of the interests of that house of Austria to which the family of young Agrippa was attached, Margaret was well known for her patronage of letters and her bounty towards learned men. It would be, therefore, a pleasant transfer of his loyalty, Agrippa thought, from Maximilian to Margaret, if he could thereby get rid of what he regarded as camp slavery under the one, and earn the favour of the other in the academic grove. To earn Margaret's good-will and help upon the royal road to fortune was one main object of Cornelius when he announced at Dôle that he proposed to expound Reuchlin's book, on the Mirific Word, in orations, to which, inasmuch as they were to be delivered in honour of the most serene Princess Margaret, the whole public would have gratuitous admission<sup>1</sup>.

Poor boy! he could not possibly have made a more genuine and honest effort, or one less proper to be used by evil men for the damnation of his character. Margaret was the princess to whom of all others he was able to pay unaffected homage, and Reuchlin, then the boast of Germans, was the scholar of whom before every other he, a German youth, might choose to hold discourse to the Burgundians. Of Reuchlin, Ægidius, chief of the

<sup>1</sup> Dedication prefixed to the treatise *De Nobilitate Famineæ Sexus*. Opuscula ed. 1532. Mense Maio. fol. A. i.



Austin Friars, wrote<sup>1</sup>, that he "had blessed him and all mortals by his works." Philip Beroaldus, the younger, wrote to him: "Pope Leo X. has read your Pythagorean book, as he reads all good books, greedily; then it was read by the Cardinal de' Medici, and I am expecting next to have my turn." This book, which had been read by the Pope himself with eager pleasure, was a wonder of the day, and was in the most perfect unison with the whole tone of the boy's mind; he really understood it deeply, it was most dear to him as a theosophist, and he was not to be blamed if he felt, also, that of all books in the world there was none of which the exposition would so fully serve his purpose of displaying the extent and depth of his own store of knowledge.

Mainly upon what was said and written by Cornelius Agrippa in this twenty-third year of his age has been founded the defamation by which, when he lived, his spirit was tormented and the hope of his existence miserably frustrated,—by which, now that he is dead, his character comes down to us defiled. This victim, at least, has not escaped the vengeance of the monks, and his crime was that he studied vigorously in his salad days those curiosities of learning into which, at the same time, popes, bishops, and philosophers, mature of years, inquired with equal faith and almost equal relish, but less energy or courage. For a clear understanding of the ground, and of the perils of the ground, now taken by Cornelius

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Mayenhoff, whom Mr. Barham oddly enough here translates, "Ægidius, general of the Eremites, wrote to the holy Augustin."



Agrippa, little more is necessary than a clear notion of what was signified by Reuchlin's book on the Mirific Word; but what has to be said of Reuchlin and his book, as well as of other matters that will hereafter concern the fortunes of Cornelius, requires some previous attention to a subject pretty well forgotten in these days by a people rich in better knowledge; we must recal, in fact, some of the main points of the Cabala.

The traditions, or Cabala, of the Jews<sup>1</sup> are contained in sundry books, written by Hebrew Rabbis, and consist of a strange mixture of fable and philosophy varying on a good many points, but all adhering with sufficient accuracy to one scheme of doctrine. They claim high and remote origin. Some say that the first Cabala were received by Adam from the angel Raziel, who gave him, either while he yet remained in Paradise, or else at the time of his expulsion, to console and help him, a book full of divine wisdom. In this book were the secrets of nature, and by knowledge of them Adam entered into conversation with the sun and moon, knew how to summon good and evil spirits, to interpret dreams, foretel events, to heal, and to destroy. This book, handed down from father to son, came into Solomon's possession, and by its aid Solomon became master of many potent secrets. A cabalistical

<sup>1</sup> This account of the Cabala is derived from German sources, among which the chief are Brucker's *Historia Philosophiæ* and the *Kabbala Denu-data*, a collection of old cabalistical writings arranged and explained by Christian Knorr von Rosenroth. The Germans of our own time have resumed investigation of the subject, and a volume has been published on the *Religions Philosophie des Sohar*, by D. H. Joel, Leipsic, 1849. The subject has also been discussed at large by more than one French Orientalist. It has obtained little distinct notice in England.



volume, called the Book of Raziel, was, in the middle ages, sometimes to be seen among the Jews.

Another account said that the first cabalistical book was the Sepher Jezirah, written by Abraham; but the most prevalent opinion was, that when the written law was given on Mount Sinai to Moses, the Cabala, or mysterious interpretation of it, was taught to him also. Then Moses, it was said, when he descended from the mountain, entered Aaron's tent, and taught him also the secret powers of the written word; and Aaron, having been instructed, placed himself at the right hand of Moses, and stood by while his sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, who had been called into the tent, received the same instruction. On the right and left of Moses and Aaron then sat Ithamar and Eleazar, when the seventy elders of the Sanhedrim were called in and taught the hidden knowledge. The elders finally were seated, that they might be present when all those among the common people who desired to learn came to be told those mysteries; thus the elect of the common people heard but once what the Sanhedrim heard twice, the sons of Aaron three times, and Aaron four times repeated of the secrets that had been made known to Moses by the voice of the Most High.

Of this mystical interpretation of the Scripture no person set down any account in writing, unless it was Esdras; but some Jews doubt whether he did. Israelites kept the knowledge of the doctrine by a pure tradition; but about fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Akiba, a great rabbi, wrote the chief part of it in that



book, *Sepher-jezireh*, or the Book of the Creation, which was foolishly ascribed by a few to Abraham. A disciple of the Rabbi Akiba was Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai, who wrote more of the tradition in a book called *Zoar*.

The truth probably is, that the literature of cabalism, which is full of suggestions derived from the Neoplatonics of Alexandria, began with the Jews of Alexandria under the first Ptolemys. In the book of Simeon ben Schetach it went to Palestine, where it at first was little heeded; but after the destruction of Jerusalem it gained importance, and then Rabbis Akiba and Simeon ben Jochai extended it. It is indisputable that Aristotle had been studied by the writer of the *Sepher-jezireh*, the oldest known book of the Cabalists. The Cabala went afterwards with other learning to Spain, and that part of it at least which deals with Hebrew anagrams cannot be traced to a time earlier than the eleventh century. Many rabbis—Abraham ben David, Saudia, Moses Botril, Moses bar Nachman, Eliezer of Garmiza, and others—have written Hebrew books for the purpose of interpreting the system of the Cabala; but it was, perhaps, not before the eighth century that it had come to receive very general attention from the Jews.

The Cabala consisted of two portions, the symbolical and the real; the symbolical Cabala being the means by which the doctrines of the real Cabala were elicited.

In the Hebrew text of the Scriptures, it was said, there is not only an evident, but there is also a latent meaning; and in its latent meaning are contained the mysteries of



God and of the universe. It need scarcely be said that a belief in secret wisdom has for ages been inherent in the Oriental mind, and in the Scriptures, it was reasoned by the later Jews, all wisdom must be, of necessity, contained. Of divine authorship, they cannot be like ordinary works of men. But if they were taken only in their natural sense, might it not be said that many human works contain marvels not less surprising and morality as pure. No, it was said, as we have entertained angels, and regarded them as men, so we may entertain the words of the Most High, if we regard only their apparent sense and not their spiritual mystery. And so it was that through a blind excess of reverence the inspired writings were put to superstitious use.

The modes of examining their letters, words, and sentences, for hidden meaning, in which wholly consisted the symbolical Cabala, were three, and these were called Gemantria, Notaricon, Themura.

Gemantria was arithmetical when it consisted in applying to the Hebrew letters of a word the sense they bore as numbers, letters being used also for figures in the Hebrew as in Greek. Then the letters in a word being taken as numbers and added up, it was considered that another word, of which the letters added up came to an equal sum, might fairly be substituted by the arithmetical gemantria. Figurative gemantria deduced mysterious interpretations from the shapes of letters used in sacred writing. Thus, in Numbers x. 35,  $\beth$  means the reversal of enemies. This kind of interpretation was known also by the name of



Zurah. Architectonic gemantria constructed words from the numbers given by Scripture when describing the measurements of buildings, as the ark, or temple.

By Notaricon more words were developed from the letters of a word, as if it had consisted of so many abbreviations, or else first and last letters of words, or the first letters of successive words, were detached from their places and put side by side. By Themura, any word might be made to yield a mystery out of its anagram ; these sacred anagrams were known as Zeruph. By the same branch of the symbolical Cabala three systems were furnished, in accordance with which words might be transformed by the substitution of one letter for another. The first of the systems, Albam, arranged the letters of the alphabet in two rows, one below another; the second, Athbath, gave another couple of rows ; the third, Athbach, arranged them by pairs in three rows, all the pairs in the first row being the numerical value ten, in the second row a hundred, in the third a thousand; any one of these forms might be consulted, and any letter in a word exchanged for another standing either in Albam, Athbath, or Athbach, immediately above it or below it, or on the right hand of it or the left.

This was the symbolical Cabala, and the business of it was to extract, by any of the means allowed, the hidden meaning of the Scriptures. The real Cabala was the doctrine in this way elicited. It was theoretical, explaining divine qualities, the ten sephiroth, the fourfold cabalistical worlds, the thirty-two footprints of wisdom, the



fifty doors to prudence, Adam Kadmon, &c.; or it was practical, explaining how to use such knowledge for the calling of spirits, the extinguishing of fires, the banning of disease, and so forth.

The theoretical Cabala contained, it was said by Christian students, many references to the Messiah. Its main points were: 1. The Tree; 2. The Chariot of Ezekiel; 3. The Work of Creation; 4. The Ancient of Days mentioned in Daniel. It concerns us most to understand the Tree. The Chariot of Ezekiel, or Maasseh Mercabah, was a description of prefigurements concerning ceremonial and judicial law. The doctrine of Creation, in the book Levischith, was a dissertation upon physics. The Ancient of Days treated of God and the Messiah in a way so mystical that cabalists generally declined to ascribe any meaning at all to the direct sense of the words employed. Of these things we need say no more, but of the Cabalistical Tree it will be requisite to speak in more detail.

It was an arrangement of the ten sephiroth. The word Sephiroth is derived by some rabbis from a word meaning to count, because they are a counting of the divine excellence. Otherwise it is considered an adaptation of the Greek word Sphere, because it represents the spheres of the universe which are successive emanations from the Deity.

In the beginning was Or Haensoph, the eternal light, from whose brightness there descended a ray through the first-born of God, Adam Kadmon, and presently, depart-



ing from its straight course, ran in a circle, and so formed the first of the sephiroth, which was called Kethei, or the crown, because superior to all the rest. Having formed this circle, the ray resumed its straight course till it again ran in a circle to produce the second of the ten sephiroth, Chochma, wisdom, because wisdom is the source of all. The same ray of divine light passed on, losing gradually, as it became more distant from its holy source, some of its power, and formed presently, in like manner, the third of the sephiroth, called Binah, or understanding, because understanding is the channel through which wisdom flows to things below—the origin of human knowledge. The fourth of the sephiroth is called Gedolah or Chesed, greatness or goodness, because God, as being great and good, created all things. The fifth is Geburah, strength, because it is by strength that He maintains them, and because strength is the only source of justice in the world. The sixth of the sephiroth, Thpereth, beauty or grace, unites the qualities of the preceding. The four last of the sephiroth are successsively named Nezach, victory; Hod, honour; Jesod, or Schalom, the foundation or peace; and finally, Malcuth, the kingdom. Each of the ten has also a divine name, and their divine names, written in the same order, are Ejeh, Jah, Jehovah, (pronounced Elohim), Eloah, Elohim, Jehovah (pronounced as usual), Lord Sabaoth, Jehovah Zebaoth, Elchai (the living God), Adonai (the Lord). By these circles our world is surrounded, and, weakened in its passage through them, but able to bring down with it powers that are the



character of each, divine light reaches us. These sephiroth, arranged in a peculiar manner, form the Tree of the Cabalists; they are also sometimes arranged in the form of a man, Adam Kadmon, according to the idea of the Neoplatonics that the figure of the world was that of a man's body. In accordance with another view derived from the same school, things in this world were supposed to be gross images of things above. Matter was said by the cabalists to have been formed by the withdrawal of the divine ray, by the emanation of which from the first source it was produced. Everything created was created by an emanation from the source of all, and that which being most distant contains least of the divine essence is capable of gradual purification; so that even the evil spirits will in course of time become holy and pure, and be assimilated to the brightest of the emanations from Or Haensoph. God, it was said, is all in all; everything is part of the divine essence, with a growing, or perceptive, or reflective power, one or all, and by that which has one all may be acquired. A stone may become a plant; a plant, a beast; a beast, a man; a man, an angel; an angel, a creator.

This kind of belief, which was derived also from the Alexandrian Platonists led to that spiritual cabalism by which such Christians as Reuchlin and Agrippa profited. It connected them by a strong link with the divine essence, and they, feeling perhaps more distinctly than their neighbours that they were partakers of the divine nature, and might, by a striving after purity of soul and



body, win their way to a state of spiritual happiness and power, cut themselves off from all communion with the sensuality that had become the scandal of the Church of Rome, and keenly perceived, as they expressed strongly, their sense of the degraded habits of the priests. It was in this way that the Christian Cabalists assisted in the labours of the Reformation.

Little more has to be said about their theory, and that relates to the Four Cabalistical Worlds. These were placed in the four spaces between the upper sephiroth. Between the first and second was placed Aziluth, the outflowing, which contained the purest beings, the producers of the rest. Between the second and third sephiroth was the world Briah, or the thrones, containing spirits less pure, but still not material. They were classed into wheels, lightnings, lions, burning spirits, angels, children of God, cherubim. Their prince was called Metatron. The world in the next interspace, called Jezireh, angels, approached more nearly to a material form; and the fourth, Asiah, was made wholly material. From this point density increases till our world is reached. Asiah is the abode of the Klippoth, or material spirits striving against God. They travel through the air, their bodies are of dense air, incorruptible, and they have power to work in the material world. With Catoriel, Adam Belial, Esau, Aganiel, Usiel, Ogiel, Thomiel, Theumiel, for captains, they fight in two armies under their chiefs Zamiel and Lilith. Their enemies are the angels, who contend against them with two armies, led by Metatron and Sandalphon.



Lilith is the begetter of the powers striving against light.

The nature of man's soul, said Cabalists, is threefold—vegetative, perceptive, intellectual—each embracing each. It emanates from the upper sephiroth, is composed of the pure elements—for the four elements, either in their pure and spiritual or their gross form, enter into all things—is expansive, separates after death, so that the parts return each to its own place, but reunite to praise God on the sabbaths and new moons. With each soul are sent into the world a guardian and an accusing angel.

Now, as the creative light runs round each upper world before coming to ours, it comes to us charged with supernal influences, and such an idea lies at the foundation of cabalistical magic. By what secret to have power over this line of communication with superior worlds it is for practical cabalism to discover.

The secret consisted chiefly in the use of names. God, it was said, gave to all things their names; He could have given no name that was not mystically fit; every such name, therefore, is a word containing divine power, and especially affecting that thing, person, or spirit to which it belongs. The Scripture tells us that there are names written in heaven; why, it was said, should they be written there, if they be useless. Through the knowledge of such divine names, it is affirmed, Moses overcame the sorcerers of Egypt, Elias brought fire from heaven, Daniel closed the mouths of lions. But of all names by which wonders can be wrought, the Mirific Word of Words



(here we come to the main thought of Reuchlin's book, and to the central topic of the oratory of Cornelius) was the concealed name of God—the Schem-hammaphoraseh. Whoever knows the true pronounciation of the name Jehovah—the name from which all other divine names in the world spring as the branches from a tree, the name that binds together the sephiroth—whoever has that in his mouth has the world in his mouth. When it is spoken angels are stirred by the wave of sound. It rules all creatures, works all miracles, it commands all the inferior names of deity which are borne by the several angels that in heaven govern the respective nations of the earth. The Jews had a tradition that when David was upon the point of fighting with Goliath, Jaschbi, the giant's brother, tossed him up into the air, and held a spear below, that he might fall upon it. But Abishai, when he saw that, pronounced the holy name, and David remained in the air till Jaschbi's spear no longer threatened him. They said, also, that the Mirific name was among the secrets contained in the Holy of Holies, and that when any person having entered that shrine of the temple learnt the word of power, he was roared at as he came out by two brazen lions, or bayed by brazen dogs, until through terror he lost recollection of it. Some Jews accounted also by a fable of this nature for our Saviour's miracles. They said that, having been admitted within the Holy of Holies, and having learnt the sacred mystery, he wrote it down upon a tablet, cut open his thigh, and having put the tablet in the wound, closed the flesh over it by utter-



ing the name of wonder. As he passed out the roaring lions caused the secret to pass from his mind, but afterwards he had only to cut out the tablet from his thigh, and, as the beginning of miracles, heal instantly the wound in his own flesh by pronouncing the Mirific Word. Such Jewish details were, of course, rejected by the Christians, who accepted the essential principles of the Cabala.

As the name of all power was the hidden name of God, so there were also names of power great, though limited, belonging to the angels and the evil spirits. To discover the names of the spirits, by applying to the Hebrew text of Scripture the symbolical Cabala, was to acquire some of the power they possessed. Thus, it being said of the Sodomites that they were struck with blindness, the Hebrew word for blindness was translated into Chaldee, and the Chaldee word by one of the symbolical processes was made to yield the name of a bad angel, Schabriri, which, being written down, was employed as a charm to cure ophthalmia. A common mode of conjuration with these names of power was by the use of amulets, pieces of paper or parchment on which, for certain purposes, certain names were written. At his first entrance into the world such an amulet, with the names "Senoi, Sansenoi, Semongeloph," upon it, was slipped round the neck of the new-born child, so that the infant scarcely saw the light before it was collared by the genius of superstition.

Another mode of conjuration consisted in the use, not of names, but of the Psalms of David. Whole volumes



were written upon this use of the Psalms. The first of them, written on doeskin, was supposed to help the birth of children; others could, it was thought, be so written as to make those who carried them invisible; others secured favour from princes; others extinguished fires. The transcription of a psalm for any such purpose was no trifling work, because, apart from the necessary care in the formation of letters, some having a mystical reason for being larger than others, it was necessary for the copyist, as soon as he had written down one line, to plunge into a bath. Moreover, that the charm might be the work of a pure man, before beginning every new line of his manuscript, it was thought necessary that he should repeat the plunge.

Such were the mysteries of the Hebrew Cabala, strangely blending a not unrefined philosophy with basest superstition. It remains for us to form some just opinion of the charm they had for many Christian scholars in the first years of the sixteenth century. Reuchlin, or Capnio, was of such scholars the leader and the type; as such, indeed, he was accepted by the young Cornelius Agrippa. He was the greatest Hebrew scholar of his day, and had become so by his own natural bent. Born at Pfortzheim, of the poorest parents, two-and-thirty years before Agrippa came into the world, taught Latin at the town-school, and winning in his youth a ducal patron by his tunable voice as chorister in the court chapel at Baden, by his quick wit, and his serene, lively, amiable temper, he never afterwards lacked powerful assistance.



The life of Reuchlin<sup>1</sup> is the story of the origin of Greek and Hebrew studies among learned Europeans. He was sent with the Margrave's son, afterwards Bishop of Utrecht, to Paris. The fall of Constantinople, in 1453, had caused fugitive Greeks to betake themselves to many European cities, where they sometimes gave instruction in their language. Reuchlin, at Paris, learned Greek from a Spartan, who gave him instruction also in caligraphy, and made him so clever a workman with his pen, that he could eke out his means and buy books with money earned as a Greek copyist. He studied Aristotle with the Spartan.<sup>x</sup> Old John Wessel, of Groningen, a disciple of Thomas à Kempis, taught him Hebrew, and invited him to a direct study of the Bible. At the age of twenty he was engaged by publishers to write a Latin dictionary, which he called *Breviloquus*. At the age of twenty he taught Greek publicly, laying his main stress on a study of the grammar; the good sense he spoke emptied the benches of the sophisters around him, and produced complaints from old-fashioned professors. It was then urged that all the views disclosed in Greek books were essentially opposed to the spirit and belief of Rome. The monks had no commerce with the language; and when they came to a Greek quotation in a book that they were copying, were used to inscribe the formula "Græca sunt; non leguntur." Reuchlin maintained his ground, at twenty-

<sup>1</sup> This sketch is drawn chiefly from Mayerhoff, with reference also to *Reuchlin's Leben und die Denkwürdigkeiten seiner Vaterstadt*, von Siegm. Fr. Gehres, Carlsruhe, 1815, where the citation is not direct from Reuchlin's works. Mr. Barham's book has also been before me.

*x Hermonymus*



five wrote a Greek grammar, lectured at Poitiers, and was made licentiate of civil law. His notion of law studies was expressed in a formula that has been applied in other terms to other things: In his first year the young lawyer knows how to decide all causes, in the second begins to be uncertain, in the third acknowledges that he knows nothing, and then first begins to learn. In the last of these stages of progress the licentiate of Poitiers repaired to Tubingen, and practised as an advocate with such success that he made money and married. At Tubingen, Reuchlin won the confidence of Eberhard of the Beard, became his private secretary and one of his privy-councillors, and went with him to Rome in 1482, his age then being eight-and-twenty. At Rome he distinguished himself as an orator before the Pope, and was considered to speak Latin wonderfully well for a German. After his return to Germany, John Reuchlin remained with Eberhard in Stuttgard, became assessor of the Supreme Court at the age of thirty, and a year afterwards was elected proctor for the body of the Dominicans throughout all Germany, which unpaid office he held for nearly thirty years. At the age of thirty-one he received at Tubingen his doctorate, and in the year following, that is to say, in the year of Cornelius Agrippa's birth, he was sent with two others to Frankfort, Cologne, and Aix-la-Chapelle, on the occasion of the coronation of Maximilian as Roman emperor. Then it was that Maximilian first became acquainted with him. Reuchlin had then a house at Stuttgard, and was known as a great cultivator of the



learned languages, while he was also high in the favour of his own prince, and in constant request as a practitioner of law. In 1490 he was sent to Rome on another mission, and on his way through Florence enjoyed personal intercourse with Giovanni Pico di Mirandola, the scholar who, although a determined antagonist to the astrologers, was a great friend to cabalism and the introducer of the cabalistic mysteries into the favour of Italian scholars. By him Reuchlin was further stimulated to the love of Hebrew lore. When, two years afterwards, Reuchlin was at Linz on state business with the Emperor Frederic III., it was something, indeed, that the base-born scholar was raised to the dignity of count palatine, but it was more to Reuchlin that the court physician was a learned Jew, Jehiel Loans, who perfected his intimacy with the Hebrew. His aim then was, above all things, first to study the original text of the Old Testament, and secondly to read the writings of the Cabalists. The emperor, whose life was then about to close (he died while Reuchlin was at Linz), saw here another way of gratifying the agreeable and kindly scholar, for he not only made Reuchlin a count palatine (his arms were a golden altar, from which smoke arose, with the inscription "Ara Capnionis"), but he also presented to him a very ancient Hebrew Bible, written carefully on parchment, a treasure then worth three hundred gold crowns, which is to be seen still in the library of the Grand Duke of Carlsruhe, where it is regarded as the oldest of its kind in Europe. With the knowledge imparted by Jehiel



Loans, and the actual text in which all mysteries lay hidden, Reuchlin went home enriched as much as he had been ennobled. Hebrew writing was at that time very rare, and was to be met with chiefly in the hands of Jews. At Hebrew Reuchlin laboured, collecting Hebrew books and works expounding the Cabala, whenever possible; and eventually he gave life in Germany, as Giovanni Pico di Mirandola was giving life in Italy, to the cabalistical philosophy, the great impulse to this German revival being the publication of the book on the Mirific Word. It first appeared at Basle, in the year 1495, the author's age then being forty-one. It was not published at Tübingen till 1514. The book was regarded as a miracle of heavenly wisdom. Philip Beroaldus told of the Pope's enjoyment, and wrote word also to its author that he had caused not only men of letters, but even statesmen and warriors, to betake themselves to studying the mysteries of the Cabala.

The death of Reuchlin's patron, Eberhard the elder, soon after his elevation to the rank of duke in 1495, was followed by a period of misrule in the little state. One of the first acts of Eberhard the younger was to release his favourite, a dissolute priest, named Holzinger, from the prison in which he had been kept by the good counsel of Reuchlin; and for the further discomfiture of the scholar this man was appointed chancellor over the university of Tübingen. Reuchlin of course resigned. He had been long wanted at Heidelberg, and went there to be cherished by a new patron in the Elector Palatine.



He showed, as usual, his lively energy by the establishment of a Greek chair, which the monks pronounced upon the spot to be a heresy; and by venting his wrath against Holzinger in a Latin comedy, denouncing dissolute priests, which he called *Sergius*, or the Head of the Head. It was written to be acted by the students. A Latin comedy was then a rare thing in the land; and the news that John Reuchlin had written one was noised abroad. Prudent friends counselled him to beware of such unscrupulous and powerful enemies as he would make if he attacked abuses of the priesthood; he submitted to advice, and as he was notoriously answerable for a comedy, and gossip must be satisfied, he suddenly composed a substitute for that first written. When, therefore, the day of the performance came, it was found that the Greek professor had composed a comedy against abuses in his own profession; it was a castigation of dishonest advocates. *Scenica Progymnastica* the piece was called.

After two years of misrule Eberhard the younger took its consequences; he was then deposed, and Holzinger, the monk, sent back to prison. "When the bricks are doubled, Moses comes," said Reuchlin, and returned to his old post at Tübingen. Hitherto his life of study had not been unprofitable, nor, much benefit as he received through patronage, was it a life wanting independence. "Whatever," he says<sup>1</sup>, "I spent in learning, I acquired by teaching<sup>1</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> "Nam universam stipem quam discendo impendi, docendo acquisivi."  
Preface to the *De Rudimentis Hebraicis*.



An anecdote of this good-humoured scholar may be here interpolated, which displays his character in half a dozen points of view. He was detained once in an inn when it was raining very heavily, and of course had his book with him. The rain had driven into the common room a large number of country-people, who were making a great noise. To quiet them Reuchlin called for a piece of chalk, and drew with it a circle on the table before which he sat. Within the circle he then drew a cross, and also within it, on the right side of the cross, he placed with great solemnity a cup of water, on the left he stuck a knife upright. Then placing a book—doubtless a Hebrew one—within the mysterious circle, he began to read, and the rustics who had gathered round him, with their mouths agape, patiently waited for the consequence of all this conjuration. The result was that Reuchlin finished comfortably the chapter he was reading without being distressed even by a whisper of disturbance.

In the year 1502 Reuchlin was elected to the post of general judge of alliance under the terms of the Suabian league. His office was to adjudicate in all matters of dispute among confederates and vassals, concerning the interests of the emperor as Archduke of Austria, the electors and princes. There was a second judge for prelates, counts, and nobles, a third for imperial cities. This post he held during eleven years; he was holding it, therefore, at the time when the young Cornelius Agrippa undertook to comment publicly at Dôle upon his book concerning the Mirific Word, Reuchlin then being fifty-



five years old, and at the summit of his fame, high, also, in the good esteem of Maximilian. Three years before this date, notwithstanding the great mass of legal business entailed on him by his judicial office, Reuchlin had, to the great help of all students, published a volume of the Rudiments of Hebrew, which included both a grammar and a dictionary<sup>1</sup>. This book, he wrote, "cost me the greatest trouble, and a large part of my fortune<sup>2</sup>." Cornelius no doubt had learnt his Hebrew by the help of it, and was already deep in studies which a few years afterwards brought the monks of Cologne into array against Reuchlin himself, their hostility somewhat embittered by an inkling of the Latin comedy that was not to be quite suppressed. Cornelius, however, was the first to feel the power of such enemies. By the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* the monks were destined to come off much worsted from their battle against Reuchlin and the scholars who defended his fair fame. Of their fortune in the battle fought against Cornelius Agrippa it is one part of this history to tell.

Reuchlin wrote at a later period (1517) a book upon the cabalistic art. If it is written God created heaven

<sup>1</sup> The volume in three books, *De Rudimentis Hebraicis*, was printed by Thomas Anshelm, of Pfortzheim, in a handsome quarto of 620 pages. The prefatory address, "Ad Dionysium Fratrem suum germanum," contains a brief autobiographical sketch. Though the book is written in Latin, interspersed with Hebrew letters and words as they are discussed, the paging is inverted, so that the volume begins at the end, in Hebrew style. The last words are "Exegi monumentum ære perennius nonis Martiis Anno M.D.VI."

<sup>2</sup> J. Reuchlin, *Phorc. LL. Dr. in Septem Psalmos Pœnitentiales Hebraicos Interpretatio*, &c., in preface.



and earth, he interpreted that to mean spirit and matter, the spirit consisting of the angels and ministers by whom the ways of man are influenced. Magic, he said, dealt with evil spirits, but the true Cabala only with the good. He believed in astrology; and so, indeed, did Luther and Melancthon; Giovanni Pico di Mirandola at Florence, while adopting the Cabala, was very singular in his hostility to a belief in influences of the stars. His own faith in cabalism Reuchlin enforced thus: God, out of love to his people, has revealed the hidden mysteries to some of them, and these could find in the dead letters the living spirit. For Scripture consists of single letters, visible signs, which stand in a certain connexion with the angels, as celestial and spiritual emanations from God. By the pronunciation of the one, the others also are affected; but with a true Cabalist, who penetrates the whole connexion of the earthly with the heavenly, these signs, rightly placed in connexion with each other, are a way of putting him into immediate union with the spirits, who through that are bound to satisfy his wishes<sup>1</sup>.

In his book called *Capnio*, or the *Mirific Word*, expounded at Dôle by Cornelius Agrippa, Reuchlin placed the Christian system in the centre of old heathen philosophies, considering many of the doctrines of Pythagoras and Plato as having been taken from, not introduced into, the wisdom of the Cabalists. The argument is stated in the form of dialogue, which is immediately preceded by a summary of its intention that may very well suffice

<sup>1</sup> This passage is quoted through Mayerhoff, *loc. cit.*, p. 100.



here for a summary of its contents<sup>1</sup>: "Receive, then, in this book the argument on the Mirific Word of three philosophers, whom I have feigned to be holding such dispute among themselves as the controversies proper to their sects would occasion, as to the best elucidation of the hidden properties of sacred names. Out of which, great as they are in number and importance, occasion will at last be the more easily afforded for selecting one name that is above all names supremely mirific and beatific. And thus you may know the whole matter in brief. Sidonius, at first ascribed to the school of Epicurus, but found afterwards, *nullius jurare in verba magistri*, an unfettered philosopher, travels about to satisfy his thirst for knowledge, and after many experiences enters Suabia, where he meets in the town of Pfortzheim" (Reuchlin's birthplace) "two philosophers — Baruch, a Jew, and Capnio" (Reuchlin himself), "a Christian, with whom he disserts upon many systems, and presently upon the knowledge itself of divine and human things, upon opinion, faith, miracles, the powers of words and figures, secret operations, and the mysteries of seals. In this way question arises concerning the sacred names and consecrated characters of all nations which have anything excellent in their philosophy, or not unworthy in their ceremonies; an enumeration of symbols is made by each speaker zealously on behalf of the rites cherished in his sect, until at last

<sup>1</sup> *Johannis Reuchlin, Phorcen. LL. Doctoris de Verbo Mirifici. Libri Tres. Ed. Coloniae, 1532, fol. A iii.*



Capnio, in the third book, collects out of all that is holy one name, Jehosua, in which is gathered up the virtue and power of all sacred things, and which is eternally, supremely blessed."

Here was a vast theme for the oratory of a youth of twenty-three, and it was one also that enabled him to display the whole range of his learning. The newly recovered treasures of Greek literature; the study of Plato, that had lately been revived by Marsilius Ficinus in Italy; the study of Aristotle, urged and helped in France by Faber Stapulensis (d'Etaples), appeared to bring the fullest confirmation of the principles of the Cabala to men ignorant, as all were then, of the Greek source of more than half the later mysticism of the Hebrews, which attributed to itself an origin so ancient. That he had acquired so early in his life Hebrew and Greek lore, that he was deeply read in studies which were admired from afar only by so many scholars of his day, and, thus prepared, that he discussed mysteries about which men in all ages feel instinctive curiosity, and men in that age reasoned eagerly, would alone account sufficiently for the attention paid to the young German by the university of Dôle. Moreover, while fulfilling his own private purpose, he appealed also to the loyalty of the Burgundians, by delivering his orations to all comers gratuitously, for the honour of the Princess Margaret, their ruler, and opening them with her panegyric. The young orator being also remarkable for an effective manner of delivery, the grave and learned



men who came to his prelections honoured him by diligent attendance.<sup>1</sup> The exposition was made from the pulpit of the gymnasium, before the parliament and magistracy of Dôle, the professors and the readers of the university. Simon Vernet, vice-chancellor of the university, dean of the church, and doctor in each faculty, was not once absent. The worthy vice-chancellor, or dean, appears, indeed, to have taken an especial interest in the fame of their visitor. He had himself a taste for public declamation, and to a friend who was urging on Cornelius that he should seek durable fame rather by written than by spoken words, expressed a contrary desire on his behalf. He preferred orator to author<sup>2</sup>. When Cornelius had complied with the request of another friend, who wished to translate into the vernacular his panegyric upon Margaret, praising his oratory for the perfect fitness of each word employed in it, and its complete freedom from verbiage, and desiring that through a translation the illustrious princess might be informed how famously Cornelius had spoken in her honour, and so be the more disposed to reward him with her favour, the translation came back with a note, saying that the vice-chancellor had been its censor and corrector<sup>3</sup>. Vernet was diligent, in fact, on the young scholar's behalf, and his interests were seconded by the Archbishop of Besançon. Not a syllable was whispered about heresy. The friend who urged Cornelius, in spite of the dean's

<sup>1</sup> Libellus *De Nobilitate et Præc. Fæm. Sex.* in preface. The same authority covers the next fact or two.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 18. Lib. i. p. 698.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 16. Lib. i. p. 697.



contrary counsel, to become an author, gave a familiar example from his own experience of the vanity of spoken words. He had declaimed publicly from memory, and without one hitch, upwards of two thousand two hundred verses of his own composition, yet, because they were not printed, earned only a temporary local fame. Of the value of the written word evidence very soon afterwards was enclosed to Cornelius by that other friend who had translated his oration. Zealous to do good service, he had caused a copy of the panegyric to proceed, by way of Lyons, on the road to royal notice, and delighted the aspirant after patronage by enclosing to him flatteries from John Perreal, a royal chamberlain<sup>1</sup>, probably the same learned Frenchman who became known twenty or more years later as *Johannis Perellus*, translated into Latin *Gaza* on the Attic Months, and wrote a book about the Epacts of the Moon.

To the youth flushed with triumph as a scholar there came also reminders of the military life he was so ready to forsake. A correspondent sent him news of a defeat of the Venetians by the French, near Agnadello, the first fruits of the discreditable league of Cambray. The French, it will be remembered, won this victory while Maximilian, their new ally, was still perplexed by the dissatisfaction of his subjects evidenced during the late diet at Worms. Agrippa's friend wished to have in return for his news any knowledge that his relation to the emperor might

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 18. Lib. i. p. 698.



give him of intentions that might be disclosed at an approaching diet<sup>1</sup>. His real intentions were to break a pledge by marching against the Venetians; his fate, to retire ere long, defeated, from before the walls of Padua. He was renewing with his enemy, the King of France, the treaty of Cambray, and sending a messenger to Spire to burn the book in which he had recorded all the injuries and insults suffered by his family, or empire, at the hands of France. Cornelius cared little for France or Padua; his hopes as a scholar were with Margaret at Ghent, though she, too, being another member of the league, could have employed him as a soldier. Other hopes, as a man, he was directing towards a younger and a fairer mistress. He desired not only to prosper but to marry.

The little university of Dôle favoured the young man heartily. His prelections had excited great attention, and procured for him the admiration of the neighbourhood. From the university they won for him at once the degree of doctor in divinity, together with a stipend<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 19. Lib. i. p. 699.

<sup>2</sup> *Defensio Propositionum de Beatæ Annæ Monogamiâ*, &c. Op. Tom. ii. p. 596.



## CHAPTER VI.

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA WRITES A TREATISE TO PROVE WOMAN THE BETTER  
HALF OF MAN—IN THE SAME YEAR HE TAKES A WIFE.

ANGLING for private patronage was in the sixteenth century correlative to the habit not very uncommon in these days of using baits to catch the public favour. Men who once lived by the help of princes now owe their support to the whole people, and the pains bestowed upon a cultivation of the good-will of the people in these days are neither less nor more to be reprehended than the pains taken by scholars of past time to procure a safe means of subsistence through the good-will of a prince. It may be said, with a fair approximation to the truth, that as much as a man may do now with the intention of deserving popularity, and not discredit himself in his own eyes or those of the great number of his neighbours, he might have done with as little discredit in the sixteenth century with the design of earning favour from the great. We have seen how, in the case of Reuchlin, a poor cho-ri-ster was fostered at first by small princes of Germany, afterwards even by the emperor, and enabled to develop into a great Hebrew scholar, when one patron died having



another ready to befriend him, and enjoying dignity and wealth with a complete sense of independence. That age was, in fact, as far removed as this is from the transition period, during which the patronage of letters by the great, extinct as a necessity, survived as a tradition, and the system that had once been vigorous and noble became imbecile and base.

Nobody at Dôle was ignorant that the design of Cornelius Agrippa was to earn the patronage of Margaret, a liberal encourager of learning. Nobody considered it dishonourable to seek this by showing that it was deserved. The prevalent feeling was so far removed from any such impression, that from many quarters the young man was urged to magnify his claim on Margaret's attention by devoting not only the orations, but also some piece of writing to her honour. Even the cordial vice-chancellor, desirous to advance the interests of the young orator, set aside his predilection for the spoken word, and was among the foremost in admonishing Cornelius to write. Not slow to profit by advice that ran the same course with his inclinations, the new Doctor of Divinity set himself to display his powers as a theologian in the true manner of the day, and with theological acuteness to combine a courtier's tact, by dedicating to the most conspicuous example of his argument a treatise on the Nobility and Pre-excellence of the Female Sex. As I have hinted, too, there was a private example of it known to his own heart.

Before following him into this new field of study, there is a private letter to be read—a letter of recommendation



sent from a friend of Cornelius at Châlon, one of the mystical brethren perhaps, by a servant of the person recommended<sup>1</sup>.

“The bearer of these is the page of a certain nobleman in Châlon, sent to fetch you hither, because his master is in want of help and counsel: he is rich, and does not spare his money. I have warned you of this for your gain’s sake: but just attend to what counsel I wish to give you on this subject, for I desire to promote equally your honour and profit. If, then, you can come handsomely dressed, so come, it will bring you trust and advantage” (perhaps the young scholar was a little negligent of his attire), “for you are not ignorant how much respect and confidence is put on, if I may say so, with a comely garment, especially in the opinion of those purblind people who see only outsides of men. And if you come directly you are wanted it will be much to your hurt: therefore dissemble if you can, make excuses, put off your coming to another time: meanwhile I will promote your interests. But if this nobleman, more greedy to have you, goes to Dôle for you himself, mind this, that though you may know everything, be able to do everything,—do nothing, promise nothing, unless after reiterated urging. Only let yourself be forced to receive favours. Even if you are in want of anything, dissemble the want. The man grows warm, and when the iron glows is the right time for striking. Understand these matters secretly, the affair is yours, the counsel yours; you

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 20. Lib. i. p. 699.



hold the reins of your own fortune. I will not be wanting to you with my help as the occasion serves. Farewell."

Angling for patronage shown from another point of view!—mean arts used by mean spirits to compel the favour of the rich and base. But to secure the favour of the rich and noble the arts used were not to be accounted mean.

Now let us trace in a brief summary the argument for the Nobility of the Female Sex and the Superiority of Woman over Man, written at Dôle, in the year 1509, by a Doctor of Divinity, aged twenty-three<sup>1</sup>. He sets out with the declaration that when man was created male and female, difference was made in the flesh, not in the soul. He quotes Scripture to show that after the corruption of our bodies difference of sex will disappear, and that we shall all be like angels in the resurrection. As to soul, then, man and woman are alike; but as to everything else the woman is the better part of the creation.

In the first place, woman being made better than man, received the better name. Man was called Adam, which means Earth; woman Eva, which is by interpretation Life. By as much as life excels earth woman therefore excels man. And this, it is urged, must not be thought trivial reasoning, because the Maker of those creatures knew what they were before He named them,

<sup>1</sup> *Henrici Cornelii Agrippæ de Nobilitate et Præcellentia Fæminei Sexus, ad Margaretam Augustam Austriacorum et Burgundionum Principem, &c. &c. An. M.D.XXXII. Mense Maio.* The outline is made from this, the first, edition. The publication of the work was delayed for reasons that will afterwards appear.



and was One who could not err in properly describing each. We know, and the Roman laws testify, that ancient names were always consonant with the things they represented, and names have been held always to be of great moment by theologians and jurisconsults. It is written thus of Nabal: "As his name is, so is he; Nabal is his name, and folly is with him." (1 Samuel, xxv. 25.) Saint Paul, also, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, speaks of his Lord and Master, as "made so much better than the angels, as he hath obtained a more excellent name than they." (Heb. i. 4.) The reader's memory will at once supply the next passage of Scripture quoted, I do not like to cite it. Agrippa then dilates, as well he may, on the immense importance of words, according to the practice of all jurists; he tells how Cyprian argued against the Jews that Adam's name was derived from the initials of the Greek words meaning east, west, north, and south: ἀνατολῇ, δὺσις, ἄρκτις, μεσίμβριος, because his flesh was made out of the earth, though that derivation was at variance with Moses, who put only three letters in the Hebrew name. For this, however, adds Agrippa, Cyprian was not to blame, since, like many saints and expounders of the sacred text, he had not learnt the Hebrew language.

Upon the word Eva it is further maintained that it suggests comparison with the mystic symbols of the Cabalists, the name of the woman having affinity with the ineffable Tetragrammaton, the most sacred name of the Divinity; while that of the man differed entirely from it.



All these considerations, however, Agrippa consents to pass over, as matters read by few and understood by fewer. The pre-eminence of the woman can be proved out of her constitution, her gifts, and her merits.

The nature of woman is discussed, however, from the theologian's point of view. Things were created in the order of their rank. First, indeed, incorruptible soul, then incorruptible matter, but afterwards, out of that matter, more or less corruptible things, beginning with the meanest. First minerals, then herbs, and shrubs and trees, then zoophytes, then brutes in their order, reptiles first, afterwards fishes, birds, quadrupeds. Lastly, two human beings, but of these first the male, and finally the female, in which the heavens and the earth and their whole adornment were perfected. The divine rest followed, because the work was consummated, nothing greater was conceived ; the woman was thus left the most perfect and the noblest of the creatures upon earth, as a queen placed in the court that had been previously prepared for her. Rightly, therefore, do all beings round about her pay to this queen homage of reverence and love.

The difference between the woman and the man is yet more strongly marked, says the deeply read theologian, because the man was made like the brutes in open land outside the gates of paradise, and made wholly of clay, but the woman was made afterwards in paradise itself; she was the one paradisaical creation. Presently there follow Scripture arguments to show that the place of their birth was a sign to men of honour or dishonour. The



woman, too, was not made of clay, but from an influx of celestial matter ; since there went into her composition nothing terrestrial except only one of Adam's ribs, and that was not gross clay, but clay that had been already purified and kindled with the breath of life.

The theological demonstrations Cornelius next confirms by the evidence of some natural facts equally cogent and trustworthy, which were held in that day by many wise men to be equally true. It is because she is made of purer matter that a woman, from whatever height she may look down, never turns giddy, and her eyes never have mist before them like the eyes of men. Moreover, if a woman and man tumble together into water, far away from all external help, the woman floats long upon the surface, but the man soon sinks to the bottom. Is there not also the divine light shining through the body of the woman, by which she is made often to seem a miracle of beauty. Then follows a clever inventory of all a woman's charms of person, written with due reserve, which might be here translated, if the English language had the terseness of the Latin. In short, woman is the sum of all earth's beauty, and it is proved that her beauty has sometimes inspired even angels and demons with a desperate and fatal love. Then follows a chain of Scripture texts honouring female beauty, which all lead up to the twenty thousand virgins, solemnly celebrated by the church, and the admiration of the beauty of the Virgin Mary by the sun and moon.

Texts follow that must be omitted, and then the argu-



ment takes anatomical grounds of the most ingenious character, and hows how every difference of structure between the man and the woman gives to woman the advantage due to her superior delicacy. Even after death nature respects her inherent modesty, for a drowned woman floats on her face, and a drowned man upon his back. The noblest part of a human being is the head; but the man's head is liable to baldness, woman is never seen bald. The man's face is often made so filthy by a most odious beard, and so covered with sordid hairs, that it is scarcely to be distinguished from the face of a wild beast; in women, on the other hand, the face always remains pure and decent. For this reason women were, by the laws of the twelve tables, forbidden to rub their cheeks lest hair should grow and obscure their blushing modesty. But the most evident proof of the innate purity of the female sex is, that a woman having once washed is clean, and if she wash in second water will not soil it; but that a man is never clean, though he should wash in ten successive waters, he will cloud and infect them all.

Some other marvellous peculiarities I must omit, and pass to Agrippa's appreciation of the woman's predominance in the possession of the gift of speech, the most excellent of human faculties, which Hermes Trismegistus thought equal to immortality in value, and Hesiod pronounced the best of human treasures. Man, too, receives this gift from woman, from his mother or his nurse; and it is a gift bestowed upon woman herself with such libe-



rality that the world has scarcely seen a woman who was mute. Is it not fit that women should excel men in that faculty, wherein men themselves chiefly excel the brutes?

The argument again becomes an edifice of Scripture text, and it is well to show the nature of it, though we may shrink from the misuse of sacred words, because it is well thoroughly to understand how Scripture was habitually used by professed theologians in the sixteenth century, and from this light example to derive a grave lesson, perhaps, that may be, even to the people of the nineteenth century, not wholly useless.

Solomon's texts on the surpassing excellence of a good woman of course are cited, and a cabalistic hint is given of the efficacy of the letter H, which Abram took away from his wife Sarah, and put into the middle of his own name, after he had been blessed through her. Benediction has come always by woman, law by man. We have all sinned in Adam, not in Eve; original sin we inherit only from the father of our race. The fruit of the tree of knowledge was forbidden to man only, before woman was made; woman received no injunction, she was created free. She was not blamed, therefore, for eating, but for causing sin in her husband by giving him to eat; and she did that not of her own will, but because the devil tempted her. He chose her as the object of temptation, as St. Bernard says, because he saw with envy that she was the most perfect of creatures. She erred in ignorance because she was deceived; the man sinned knowingly. Therefore our Lord made atonement in the figure of the sex that had



sinned, and also for more complete humiliation came in the form of a man, not that of a woman, which is nobler and sublimer. He humbled himself as man, but overcame as a descendant of the woman; for the seed of the woman, it was said, not the seed of man, should bruise the serpent's head. He would not, therefore, be born of a man; woman alone was judged worthy to be the earthly parent of the Deity. Risen again, he appeared first to women. Men forsook him, women never. No persecution, heresy, or error in the Church ever began with the female sex. They were men who betrayed, sold, bought, accused, condemned, mocked, crucified the Lord. Peter denied him, his disciples left him. Women were at the foot of the cross, women were at the sepulchre. Even Pilate's wife, who was a heathen, made more effort to save Jesus than any man among believers. Finally, do not almost all theologians assert that the Church is maintained by the Virgin Mary?

Aristotle may say that of all animals the males are stronger and wiser than the females, but St. Paul writes that weak things have been chosen to confound the strong. Adam was sublimely endowed, but woman humbled him; Samson was strong, but woman made him captive; Lot was chaste, but woman seduced him; David was religious, but woman disturbed his piety; Solomon was wise, but woman deceived him; Job was patient, and was robbed by the devil of fortune and family; ulcerated, grieved, oppressed, nothing provoked him to anger till a woman did it, therein proving herself stronger than the devil.



Peter was fervent in faith, but woman forced him to deny his lord. Somebody may remark that all these illustrations tend to woman's shame, not to her glory, Woman, however, may reply to man as Innocent III. wrote to some cardinal, "If one of us is to be confounded, I prefer that it be you." Civil law allows a woman to consult her own gain to another's hurt; and does not Scripture itself often extol and bless the evil deeds of the woman more than the good deeds of the man. Is not Rachel praised who deceived her father? Rebecca, because she obtained fraudulently Jacob's benediction? Is not the deceit of Rahab imputed to her as justice? Was not Jael blessed among women for a treacherous and cruel deed? What could be more iniquitous than the counsel of Judith? what more cruel than her wiles? what worse than her perfidy? Yet for this she is blessed, lauded, and extolled in Scripture, and the woman's iniquity is reputed better than the goodness of the man. Was not Cain's a good work when he offered his best fruits in sacrifice and was reprov'd for it? Did not Esau well when he hunted to get venison for his old father, and in the mean time was defrauded of his birthright, and incurred the divine hate? Other examples are adduced, and robust scholars, ingenious theologians, are defied to find an equal amount of evidence in support of the contrary thesis, that the iniquity of the man is better than the goodness of the woman. Such a thesis, says Agrippa, could not be defended.

From this point to the end Agrippa's treatise consists of a mass of illustrations from profane and Scripture



history, classified roughly. Some are from natural history. The queen of all birds, he says, is the eagle, always of the female sex, for no male eagles have been found. The phoenix is a female always. On the other hand, the most pestilent of serpents, called the basilisk, exists only as a male; it is impossible for it to hatch a female.

All evil things began with men, and few or none with women. We die in the seed of Adam and live in the seed of Eve. The beginning of envy, the first homicide, the first parricide, the first despair of divine mercy was with man; Lamech was the first bigamist, Noah was the first drunkard, Nimrod the first tyrant, and so forth. Men were the first to league themselves with demons and discover profane hearts. Men have been incontinent, and had, in innumerable instances, to each man many wives at once; but women have been continent, each content with a single husband, except only Bathsheba. Many women are then cited as illustrations of their sex in this respect, or for their filial piety, including Abigail, Lucretia, Cato's wife, and the mother of the Gracchi, the vestal Claudia, Iphigenia. If any one opposes to such women the wives of Zoilus, Samson, Jason, Deiphobus, and Agamemnon, it may be answered that these have been unjustly accused, that no good man ever had a bad wife. Only bad husbands get bad wives, or if they get a good one, are sometimes able to corrupt her excellence. If women made the laws, and wrote the histories and tragedies, could they not justly crowd them with testimony to the wickedness of men. Our prisons are full of men, and slain men



cumber the earth everywhere, but women are the beginners of all liberal arts, of virtue, and beneficence. Therefore the arts and virtues commonly have feminine names. Even the corners of the world receive their names from women: the nymph Asia; Europa, the daughter of Agenior; Lybia, the daughter of Epaphus, who is called also Aphrica.

Illustrations follow of the pre-eminence of women in good gifts, and it is urged that Abraham, who by his faith was accounted just, was placed in subjection to Sarah his wife, and was told, "In all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice." (Gen. xxi. 12.)

There follows a host of other illustrations of the excellence of woman, drawn from all sources; among others, illustrations of her eminence in learning. "And," adds Agrippa, "were not women now forbidden to be literary, we should at this day have most celebrated women, whose wit would surpass that of men. What is to be said upon this head, when even by nature women seem to be born easily superior to practised students in all faculties? Do not the grammarians entitle themselves masters of right speaking? Yet we learn this far better from our nurses and our mothers than from the grammarians. . . . For that reason Plato and Quintilian so solicitously urged a careful choice of children's nurses, that the children's language might be formed on the best model. Are not the poets in the invention of their whims and fables, the dialecticians in their contentious garrulity, surpassed by women? Was ever orator so good or so successful, that



a courtesan could not excel his powers of persuasion? What arithmetician by false calculation would know how to cheat a woman in the payment of a debt? What musician equals her in song and in amenity of voice? Are not philosophers, mathematicians, and astrologers often inferior to country-women in their divinations and predictions, and does not the old nurse very often beat the doctor?" Socrates himself, the wisest of men, did not disdain to receive knowledge from Aspasia, nor did Apollo the Theologian despise the teaching of Priscilla.

Then follows a fresh string of illustrations by which we are brought to a contemplation of the necessity of woman for the perpetuation of any state, and the cessation of the human race that may be consequent on her withdrawal. Through more examples we are brought then to consider the honour and precedence accorded by law and usage to the female sex. Man makes way for woman on the public road, and yields to her in society the highest places. Purple and fine linen, gold and jewels are conceded as the fit adornments of her noble person, and from the sumptuary laws of the later emperors women were excepted. Illustrations follow of the dignity and privileges of the wife, and of the immunities accorded to her by the law. Reference is made to ancient writers, who tell how, among the Getulians, the Bactrians, and others, men were the softer sex, and sat at home while women laboured in the fields, built houses, transacted business, rode abroad, and went out to do battle. Among the Cantabrians men brought dowries to their wives, brothers were given in



marriage by their sisters, and the daughters of a household were the heirs. Among the Scythians, Thracians, and Gauls, women possessed their rights, but among us, said Agrippa, "the tyranny of men prevailing over divine right and the laws of nature, slays by law the liberty of woman, abolishes it by use and custom, extinguishes it by education. For the woman, as soon as she is born, is from her earliest years detained at home in idleness, and as if destitute of capacity for higher occupations, is permitted to conceive of nothing beyond needle and thread. Then when she has attained years of puberty she is delivered over to the jealous empire of a man, or shut up for ever in a shop of vestals. The law also forbids her to fill public offices. No prudence entitles her to plead in open court." A list follows of the chief disabilities of women, "who are treated by the men as conquered by the conquerors, not by any divine necessity, for any reason, but according to custom, education, fortune, and the tyrant's opportunity."

A few leading objections are then answered. Eve was indeed made subject to man after the fall, but that curse was removed when man was saved. Paul says that "Wives are to be subject to their husbands, and women to be silent in the church," but he spoke of temporal church discipline, and did not utter a divine law, since "in Christ there is neither male nor female, but a new creature." We are again reminded of the text subjecting Abraham to Sarah, and the treatise closes then with a short recapitulation of its heads. "We have shown," Agrippa says, "the pre-eminence of the female sex by its name, its



order and place of creation, the material of which it was created, and the dignity that was given to woman over man by God, then by religion, by nature, by human laws, by various authority, by reason, and have demonstrated all this by promiscuous examples. Yet we have not said so many things but that we have left more still to be said, because I came to the writing of this not moved by ambition, or for the sake of bringing myself praise, but for the sake of duty and truth, lest, like a sacrilegious person, I might seem, if I were silent, by an impious taciturnity (and as it were a burying of my talent) to refuse the praises due to so devout a sex. So that if any one more curious than I am should discover any argument which he thinks requisite to be added to this work, let him expect to have his position not contested by me, but attested, in as far as he is able to carry on this good work of mine with his own genius and learning. And that this work itself may not become too large a volume, here let it end."

Such was the treatise written by Cornelius at Dôle for the more perfect propitiation of the Princess Margaret. Many years elapsed before it was printed and presented to the princess; doubtless, however, the youth read the manuscript to his betrothed very soon after it was written. Towards the close of the year a friend in Cologne wrote to Agrippa of the impatience of his parents for their son's return, but at the close of November another friend in Cologne, Theodoric, Bishop of Cyrene, asking as an especial favour for his views upon judicial astrology so hotly



opposed by Pic di Mirandola, says that his expressions on the subject had appeared to him ambiguous when they conversed together<sup>1</sup>. Probably he had then been offering to the embrace of his parents not a son only, but a son and daughter, for it is said to have been in the year 1509, when all was honour for him in the present, all hope in the future, that Cornelius von Nettesheim married Jane Louisa Tyssie<sup>2</sup>, of Geneva, a maiden equal to him in rank, remarkable for beauty, and yet more remarkable for her aspirations and her worth. She entered with her whole soul into the spirit of her husband's life, rejoiced in his ambition, and knew how to hold high converse with his friends<sup>3</sup>. The marriage was in every respect a happy one; there was a world of gentleness and loving kindness in Agrippa's heart. We shall have revelation of it as the narrative proceeds. The tenderness of his nature mingles strangely, sadly, with his restlessness, his self-reliance, and his pride.

So, full of hope and happiness, at the age of twenty-three, he took to wife a maiden who could love him for his kindliness, and reverence him for his power. He was no needy adventurer, but the son of a noble house, who was beginning, as it seemed, the achievement of the highest honours. He was surrounded by admirers, already a doctor of divinity, hereafter to attain he knew not what. Fostered by Maximilian's daughter, what might not his intellect achieve?

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 21. Lib. i. p. 700.

<sup>2</sup> Thevet. *Portraits et Vies des Hommes Illustres* (ed. Paris, 1584), Tom. ii. p. 542. "Il espousa Mademoiselle Louyse Tyssie, issue de fort noble maison, l'an de son aage vingt et trois, et de salut, mil cinq cens et neuf."

<sup>3</sup> She is made in this character the subject of verses by Agrippa's friends.



Poor boy, even in that year of hope the blight was already settling on his life! While he was writing praise of womanhood at Dôle to win the smiles of Margaret, Catilinet, a Franciscan friar<sup>1</sup>, who had been at the adjacent town of Gray when Reuchlin was expounded, meditated cruel vengeance on the down-chinned scholar. At Ghent, as preacher before the Regent of the Netherlands and all her court, Catilinet was to deliver in the Easter following the Quadragesimal Discourses. Against the impious Cabalist he was preparing to arouse the wrath of Margaret during those same days which were spent by the young student in pleasant effort to deserve her kindness.

<sup>1</sup> *Expost. contra Catilinet*, and Preface to the *De Nob. et Præc. F. S.*



## CHAPTER VII.

CORNELIUS AGRIPPA WRITES THREE BOOKS OF MAGIC—AN ACCOUNT OF THE PRINCIPLES OF MAGIC CONTAINED IN THE FIRST OF THEM.

STILL in the year 1509 and in the first months of the year 1510, in that year of activity, twenty-third only of his life, which set a stamp upon his subsequent career, and is the most important date in this biography, Cornelius Agrippa, with the courage of youth and the ambition of youth, compiled into a system all the lore he had been gathering, and wrote his Books of Magic<sup>1</sup>. Magical studies were for the most part discouraged in those days, not by enlightened scepticism, but by ignorant credulity and superstitious fear. Only a few men of that age had stepped very far in intellect before their time, and to the number of these Cornelius did not belong. But the part of his own time which he represented (I leave out of account its foremost pioneers) was certainly the best part. Truth was better served, the right of free

<sup>1</sup> They had not only been submitted to the Abbot Trittenheim, but had been read and were criticised by him on the 8th of April, 1510, in a letter which is both included in the correspondence and prefixed to all editions of the work itself.



inquiry was more manfully asserted, by the writing of those books, which seem to us so full of error and absurdity, than by that spirit in the priests and in the populace which caused the writer of them to be looked upon with a vague dread and with aversion.

We must know now what the young man wrote, and in what spirit it was written. To a comprehension of the meaning of Agrippa's life, and to a just opinion of his right place in the history of literature, a careful survey of these books of magic is essential. In this chapter, therefore, and in the three chapters which succeed it, an attempt is made to represent them, of course very much reduced in scale, but still with enough fulness of detail to suggest their scope and spirit. Such a sketch, too, may not be without an adventitious use, by showing how much wisdom may have once gone to the begetting of ideas for which even the ignorant are now either pitied or reviled; that it is man's reason of yesterday which has become his superstition of to-day.

Before passing to the following scheme of Cornelius Agrippa's Treatise upon Magic, as representing, at the period of his life which we have now reached, an important feature in its author's mind, it may be well to say, that we must imagine ourselves looking over it as it lies finished on its author's desk. It is, in the years 1509-10, a manuscript and not a book<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> There were translations into most languages of these Books of Occult Science within the century and a half succeeding their first publication. The best of the English translations (*Three Books of Occult Philosophy, written by Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim, Counsellor to Charles the Fifth,*



Every inferior is governed by its superior, and receives, transmitted through it, the influence of the First Cause of all. There is a threefold world—an elementary, a celestial, and an intellectual—and these three parts of the universe Cornelius intends to treat in his Three Books of Magic. Wise men conceive it in no way irrational to ascend by degrees through each world to the Author of All Worlds, and not only to admire the more exalted things, but to draw down their virtues from above. They search, therefore, the powers of the elementary world, by studying physics and the many combinations of things natural; they inquire into the harmonies of the celestial world, by studying the mysteries of numbers and proportion, and applying to a contemplation of the stars the rules discovered by astrologers. Finally, they ratify and confirm this knowledge by a study of the intelligences working in the world, and of the sacred mysteries. Upon these matters Cornelius says that he intends to treat. “I know not,” he adds, “whether it be an unpardonable presumption in me, that I, a man of so little judgment and learning, should, in my very youth, set upon a business so difficult, so hard, and intricate, as this is. Wherefore, whatsoever things have here been already,

*Emperor of Germany, and Judge of the Prerogative Court.* Translated by J. F. London, 1651.) is not very complete, and contains numerous blunders; but I have had it before me while making the succeeding abstract, and, as far as the sense allowed, when using Agrippa's words, have often made use of its old-fashioned phraseology. The first Book of Occult Science was issued before the rest, and it is to the first edition of it (*Henrici Cor. Agrippæ ab Nettesheym a Consiliis et Archivis Inditiarii sacre Cæsareæ Majestatis. De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres* (ending suddenly at Book I.). Antwerp, Joan. Graphæus, February, 1531) that succeeding notes refer.



and shall afterwards be said by me, I would not have any one assent to them, nor shall I myself, any further than they shall not suffer reprobation of the universal Church and congregation of the faithful<sup>1</sup>."

In the second chapter, Magic is defined and lauded as the whole knowledge of nature, the perfection of all true philosophy. For there is no regular philosophy that is not natural, mathematical, or theological, one teaching the nature of those things that are in the world, another teaching the quantity of bodies in their three dimensions, and the motion of celestial bodies, and the last teaching what God is, what the mind, what an intelligence, what an angel, what a devil, what a soul, what religion, what sacred rites and mysteries, instructing us, also, concerning faith, miracles, the virtues of words and figures, the secret operations and mysteries of seals. These three principal faculties Natural Magic joins and comprehends; there is no true magic apart from any one. Therefore, this was esteemed by the ancients as the highest and most sacred philosophy. Cornelius cites a roll of names, and adds, "It is well known that Pythagoras and Plato went to the prophets of Memphis to learn it, and travelled through almost all Syria, Egypt, Judæa, and the schools of the Chaldeans, that they might not be ignorant of the most sacred memorials and records of magic, as also that they might be imbued with divine things<sup>2</sup>."

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* ed. cit. ad fin. cap. i. B. (Pagination is by the lettering of sheets.)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* ed. cit. B 2.



The next four chapters, of which two are general and two are special, open the discussion upon natural philosophy with an account of the four elements, Fire, Earth, Water, Air, whereof by transmutation and union all inferior bodies are compounded. None of the sensible elements are pure, but more or less mixed, and they are convertible into each other; thus earth being dissolved produces water, which being evaporated becomes air, and kindled air is fire, and out of fire may come earth or stone, as is proved in the case of thunderbolts. Between the four elements there are many relations of likeness and unlikeness. Thus fire is hot and dry, earth is dry and cold, water is cold and moist, air is moist and hot; so that only fire and water, earth and air, are perfect contraries. Plato assigns to each three qualities: as to the fire, brightness, thinness, motion; to the earth darkness, thickness, quietness; to the others other combinations of these qualities, while by them all these qualities are possessed in contrasted proportions.

But beyond such necessary considerations, not less necessary is a knowledge of the fact that there are three separate states in which the elements exist. First, they are pure, distinct, and incorruptible, in which state they are the secondary causes of all natural operations. Secondly, they are compounded and impure, but capable of being resolved by art into their perfect form. Thirdly, they are elements that were from the beginning interchangeable and twice compounded. They are in this last form known as the infallible medium, or soul of middle nature, through which proceed all bindings, loosings, transmutations, and



which are operative in all mysteries, both mundane and divine.

We treat now separately of the power of each element.

Fire, it will be found, is spread abroad in the heavens, and the heat of it is sensible in the water and the earth. In itself it is one, but in that which receives it manifold. Whatever lives, lives by reason of the enclosed heat. The infernal fire parches and makes barren; the celestial fire drives away spirits of darkness, and our customary fire of wood drives them away, because it is the vehicle of that superior light, and comes through it from the Father of Lights. As, therefore, the spirits of darkness are stronger in the dark, so good spirits are more powerful in the light, not only of the sun, but of our common fire. Therefore it was ordained, by the first ceremonies of religion, that there should be lighted candles or torches wherever worship was performed, and hence the symbol of Pythagoras, You must not speak of God without a light<sup>1</sup>. Also for the driving away of evil spirits fires were kindled near the corpses of the dead; and the great Jehovah himself commanded that with fire all sacrifices should be offered.

But in the earth are the seeds of all things. Take as much of it as you please, wash it, purify it, let it lie in the open air, and it will, being full of heavenly virtues, of itself produce plants, worms and living things, stones and bright sparks of metal. If at any time earth shall be purified by fire, and reduced by a convenient washing to

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* ed. cit. C.



simplicity, it is the first matter of our creation, and the truest medicine that can restore or preserve us.

Water is the seminary virtue of all things. Only earth and water, Moses teaches, can bring forth a living soul; and Scripture testifies that herbs did not at first grow, because God had not caused it to rain upon the earth. Such is the efficacy of this element of water, that without it spiritual regeneration cannot be accomplished; very great, also, is the virtue of it, when it has been consecrated to religious worship.

Air is a vital spirit passing through all beings, filling, binding, moving. The Hebrew doctors, therefore, reckon it not as an element, but count it as a medium, or glue, joining all things together, or as the resonant spirit of the world's instrument. It receives into itself the influences of celestial bodies, and transmits them readily. As a divine mirror, it receives into itself the images of all things, and retains them. Carrying them with it, and entering into the bodies of men and other animals through their pores, as well when they sleep as when they wake, it furnishes the matter for strange dreams and divinations. Hence they say it is, that a person passing by the spot whereon a man was slain, or where the carcase has been recently concealed, is moved with fear and dread; because the air in that place being full of the dreadful image of manslaughter, doth, being breathed in, move and trouble the spirit of the passer-by with the like image, whence it is that he comes to be afraid. For by everything that makes a sudden impression nature is astonished. By the natural



images of trees and castles formed on clouds, by the rainbow, and by a strange way of reflecting writing back into the sky, together with a moonbeam falling on it, as well as by a reference to the echo, these matters are further illustrated. Of air in motion, or the winds, Agrippa speaks next, using chiefly the poetical descriptions to be found in Ovid, for these early writings of his are embellished liberally with quotations from the poets.

After the four elements there come to be discussed the four kinds of perfect compounds<sup>1</sup> generated by them: stones, metals, plants, and animals. Though each contains all four, in each one element predominates: earth in the stone, water in metals (as chemists find to be true, who declare that they are generated by a viscous water, or waterish quicksilver); with air plants have so much affinity, that unless they be abroad in it they give no increase, and fire is not less natural to animals. Then in each, according to its kind, and even in parts of each, the degrees of preponderance are varied. Thus in plants the roots resemble the earth, by reason of their thickness, and the leaves water, because of their juice; flowers the air, because of their subtilty, and the seeds the fire, by reason of their multiplying spirit. In animals the bones resemble the earth, flesh the air, the vital spirit fire, the humours water. Nay, even in the soul itself, according to Augustine, the understanding will resemble fire, reason the air, imagination water, and the senses earth. The senses, too, are so divisible; for the sight is fiery, acting only by the help of

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* ed. cit. cap. vii.



fire and light; the hearing is airy, for a sound is made by striking of the air; the smell and taste resemble water, for they act not without moisture; and lastly, the feeling is wholly earthy, taking gross bodies for its object. So, too, with man's character, for as the elements are the first of all things, so all things are of and according to them, and they are in all things, and diffuse their virtues through them.

For, in the exemplary as in the corporeal world, by the consent of Platonists, all things are in all. The elements are to be found everywhere, here feculent and gross, in celestials more pure and clear, but in super-celestials living and blessed. There are earthy, fiery, watery, airy angels, devils, stars; the elements exist, also, in the Great Source of all.

The first or secondary qualities of things, natural, elementary, or mixed, depend immediately upon the first virtues of the elements contained in them, or the proportion of their mixture<sup>1</sup>.

But there are in all things occult virtues<sup>2</sup>, and the consideration of these opens up a new division of the subject. For the occult virtue does not proceed from any element, but is a sequel of its species and form; so that, unlike the operation of an element, its being little in quantity (hear this, all homœopathists!) is of great efficacy, because these virtues, having much form and little matter, can do much; but an elementary virtue, having much materiality, requires more matter for its

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* ed. cit. cap, ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* cap. x.



acting. The universe abounds in examples of these qualities, called occult, because their causes lie beyond the reach of human intellect; philosophers attain to them by the help of experience alone. Thus, in the stomach the meat is digested by heat, which we know; but it is changed also by a secret virtue which we know not; for truly it is not changed by heat, because then it should rather be changed by the fireside than in the stomach. To this class belong, therefore, all accredited marvels which are past all ordinary comprehension. There was no lack of them when Cornelius Agrippa wrote, and it is hard to see how, without some such theory as this of occult powers, any rational attempt could be made to bring them into harmony with other knowledge. For we are, by this time, well assured that nothing is incredible by reason of its being marvellous; we call things incredible only when they oppose themselves to what we know to be the universal laws. When those laws remained yet for the most part undiscovered, and the eyes of students, dazzled by the newly-opened glories of Greek literature, had no means of perceiving that its science was less ripe than its philosophy, and that its philosophy was not as perfect as they knew its poetry to be, it was impossible to refuse credence to records left by the Greek sages, of their wide experience or knowledge. Nothing was yet known to refute their theories, and the wisest man could, as a mere scholar, do no more, till the old records of experience were practically tested by a generation or two, and found wanting, than accept the au-



thority of Plato, Aristotle, and bring their opinions into harmony with those then held to be indisputable by the Christian world. If it was right to make any attempt at all to form what was then known or believed of the universe into a comprehensive and coherent system, there was no better way of doing it than this.

At the basis of the theory of occult virtues, as stated by Cornelius Agrippa, lies the Platonic<sup>1</sup> notion of superior ideas. Everything below has a celestial pattern, and receives from its own idea operative powers through the

<sup>1</sup> Many parts of this philosophy are modifications of the doctrine to be found in the *Timæus*. The basis of the next following assertions, for example, may be found in the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of that exposition of the views of Plato on the constitution of the physical world; still more distinctly, however, in that later treatise on *The Soul of the World and Nature*, which its writer founded upon the *Timæus* of Plato, and palmed on the old philosopher himself, Timæus the Locrian. In Cornelius Agrippa's time this treatise of Timæus the Locrian was considered genuine, and it had been at least twice within ten years translated into Latin. Pliny's Natural History, the translated *De Mundo Liber*, and some of the other works of Apuleius, contain more of the doctrine and opinion expressed by Agrippa; and he had read the most famous of the Alexandrian Platonics, constantly quoting Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, but Proclus seldom. To the authorities here cited Aristotle must, of course, be added, and modifications by him of opinions cited from Plato (ὁ γενναῖος Πλάτων) and the Pythagoreans. Also the Orphic Hymns, and sundry books professing to be by disciples of Pythagoras. Also the books ascribed to the half-mythical Egyptian sage, Mercurius, or Hermes Trismegistus, of which the most important, *Poemander*, was one of the first things that came up with the revived study of Greek, a translation of it into Latin having been published at Venice by Marcilius Ficinus in 1483, and eight years afterwards reprinted. Other information was obtained from Avicenna, whose works had, in 1490, been published at Venice, translated into Latin "a Magistro Gerardo Cremonensi." Finally, it will be enough to name one only among the many later writers in whom Cornelius found congenial speculations, Albertus Magnus of Cologne, among whose works the *De Calo et Mundo*, *De Secretis Naturæ*, *De Virtutibus Herbarum*, &c., furnished a good deal of material for these Books of Occult Science.



help of the Soul of the World. For ideas not only give rise to the thing seen, but to the virtue that is in it, and things of the same kind vary in degree of power, not through any variation in the first idea, but through the various impurities and inequalities—according to the desert—of the matter into which it is infused. And soul being the *primum mobile*, as we say, when one man acts upon another, or the loadstone on the iron, that the soul of one thing went out and went into another thing, altering it or its operations, so it is conceived that some such medium is the spirit of the world, called the quintessence, because it is not composed of the four elements, but is a fifth essence, a certain first thing which is above them and beside them. This spirit exists in the body of the world, as the human spirit in the body of a man; and as the powers of a man's soul are communicated to the members of the body by his spirit, so, through this mundane spirit or quintessence, are the powers of the soul of the world diffused through all things; and there is nothing so base that it contains not some spark of its virtue, but there is most virtue in those things wherein this spirit does most abound. It abounds in the celestial bodies, and descends in the rays of the stars, so that things influenced by their rays become conformable to them so far forth in nature. By this spirit, therefore, every occult property is conveyed into herbs, stones, metals, and animals, through the sun, moon, planets, and through stars higher than the planets. If we can part spirit from matter, or use only those things in which spirit predominates, we can



obtain therewith results of great advantage to us. The alchemists attempt to separate this spirit from gold and silver, because, rightly separated and extracted, it will have power to convert into gold or silver any other metal into the substance of which it shall be properly projected. Cornelius says that he has done this himself, but that he could never produce more gold in this manner "than the weight of that was out of which we extracted the spirit<sup>1</sup>." The extent of his conjuring was, therefore, that out of an ounce of gold he could make an ounce of gold, by a long chemical process.

By what has been said we see how it will happen that, apart from the virtues common to its species, every individual person or thing may possess peculiar properties, because, from the beginning, it contracts, together with its essence, a certain wonderful aptitude both for doing and for suffering after a particular manner, partly through the influences of the celestial bodies streaming down from particular configurations, partly through the agreement of matter that is being generated to the conceptions of the soul of the world. But from a Divine Providence these influences proceed as their first cause, and by it they are distributed and brought into a peculiar harmonious consent. The seal of the ideas is given to the governing intelligences, who, as faithful officers, sign all things entrusted to them with ideal virtue. "Now the

<sup>1</sup> Et nos illud facere novimus, et aliquando vidimus, sed non plus auri fabricare potuimus, nisi quantum erat illud auri pondus, de quo spiritum extraximus. *De Occ. Phil.* ed cit. E 3 ad fin. cap. xiv.



first cause, which is God, although He doth by Intelligences and the Heavens work upon these inferior things, doth sometimes (these media being laid aside, or their officiating being suspended) work those things immediately by Himself, which works are then called miracles. And the reasons of these operations can by no rational discourse, no magic, or occult or profound science whatsoever, be found out, or understood, but are to be learned and inquired into by divine oracles only<sup>1</sup>."

These first principles having been laid down, seven chapters follow on the various means of discovering occult virtues of things. As they proceed from the spirit of the world, and are too subtle to be apprehended by the senses, they can "no otherwise but by experience and conjecture be inquired into by us<sup>2</sup>." We see at once how errors like those now denounced as superstition might most justly and honestly seem truth at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Greece and Rome furnished the learned with both science and philosophy, when to principles more or less resembling those above detailed were joined records of experience, utterly corrupt with fable, yet accredited by the most cultivated scholars that the world up to that epoch had known. Things now incredible were stated by them positively, believed by all their countrymen, and, as before said, up to the time when Cornelius was

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit. ad fin. cap. xiii.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. cap. xvi. Quæ a nobis non aliter quam experientia et conjectura indagari possunt.



writing, uncorrected by the mass of opposite experience that has been since acquired. It is proper that we should not travel from this point of view in looking through a book which was an attempt to show the reasonable origin of that whole system of belief whereof many a shred is still religiously preserved in Europe.

Now as to the experience of signs by which the character of occult powers may be detected. In the first place like turns to like, and virtues may come by way of similitude. Whatsoever hath long stood with salt becomes salt. The nutritive virtue in an animal turns into animal substance, herb, and grain. Fire moves to fire, water to water, and he that is bold moves to boldness, and it is well known among physicians that brain helps the brain and lung the lungs. Therefore, if we would obtain any property or virtue, let us look for things or animals in which such property or virtue is most largely contained, and use them, or the parts of them in which the property especially resides. Take, to promote love, some animal that is most loving, as a dove or sparrow, and take it at the time when these animals have this affection most intense. To increase boldness, look for a lion or a cock, and take of these, heart, eyes, or forehead. After the same manner doth a frog make one talkative, and the heart of a screech-owl, that is talkative of nights, laid over the heart of a woman when she is asleep, is said to make her utter all her secrets. Animals that are long-lived conduce to life, as is manifest of the viper and snake; and it is well



known that harts renew their old age by the eating of snakes<sup>1</sup>.

And the power of one thing can be given to another, as the power of the loadstone may be given to the iron; and the looking-glass used by a woman who is impudent will deprive of modesty another woman who looks often into it. For the same reason rings are put for a certain time into the nests of sparrows or swallows, which afterwards are used to procure love and favour<sup>2</sup>.

There are also between things that are different enmities and friendships. So in the elements fire is an enemy to water, air to earth, yet they agree among themselves. So among celestial bodies Mercury, Jupiter, the Sun, and Moon are friends to Saturn; Mars and Venus enemies to him. All the planets, except Mars, are friends to Jupiter; all, except Venus, enemies to Mars; Jupiter and Venus love the Sun, but Mars and Mercury, as well as the Moon, hate him. All love Venus except Saturn. Mercury has Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn for his friends, and the same friends has also the Moon, but the Moon is not a friend to Mercury, neither is the Sun or Mars, while Mars agrees with Mercury in his return of hatred to the Moon. There is another kind of enmity among the stars, namely, when they have opposite houses. And of what sort the friendships and enmities of the superiors be, such are the inclinations of things subjected to them among their inferiors. There are many such concords and discords. The dove loves the parrot, the vine loves the elm,

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* Lib. i. cap. xv. ed. cit. E 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xvi.



the olive-tree the myrtle. The emerald draws riches ; the agate, eloquence. If any one eats passion-flower he shall die of laughing. We learn, from the use made of them by the brutes, virtues of many things. The sick magpie puts a bay-leaf into her nest and is recovered. The lion, if he be feverish, is recovered by the eating of an ape. By eating the herb ditany, a wounded stag expels the dart out of its body. Cranes medicine themselves with bul-rushes, leopards with wolfsbane, boars with ivy; for between such plants and animals there is an occult friendship<sup>1</sup>.

But there are inclinations of enmities<sup>2</sup> of which we may make use. As a thing angrily shuns its contrary, or drives it away out of its presence, so acts rhubarb against bile, or treacle against poison, amethyst against drunkenness, topaz against covetousness and all animal excess. Marjoram loathes and destroys cabbage; cucumbers hate oil, and will run themselves into a ring lest they should touch it. Mice and weasels do so disagree, that it is said mice will not touch cheese if the brains of a weasel be put into the rennet. Nothing is so much an enemy to snakes as crabs; wherefore, also, when the sun is in Cancer snakes are tormented.

There are properties that belong only to individuals<sup>3</sup>, idiosyncrasies; as when a man trembles at a cat, or fattens upon spiders. Avicenna says there was a man

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* cap. xvii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xviii. ed. cit. F 2, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xix.



living in his time whom no poison hurt, and that whatever venomous thing bit him itself perished.

Again, virtues that are natural and common to a species are contained sometimes in the whole substance, sometimes only in a part<sup>1</sup>. The civet cat hath this in its whole substance, that dogs by the mere contact with its shadow cease to bark, but it hath in its eyes only the power to make whoso beholdeth them stand still and amazed. So in a man's body it is only the little bone, called by the Hebrews Luz, which fire cannot destroy or time corrupt, and which is the seed of the new body that shall spring up in the resurrection.

Finally, there is a distinction to be made between powers that exist only during the life of the thing operative and those which remain in force after its death<sup>2</sup>. It is only when alive that the Echinus can arrest the course of ships. They say also, that in the colic, if a live duck be applied to the stomach it takes away the pain, and the duck dies. Generally, parts of animals that are used should be taken from the animal while it still lives and is in fullest vigour. The right eye of a serpent being applied relieves watering of the eyes, if the serpent be let go alive, and the tooth of a mole will be a cure for toothache, if it was taken from a living mole who was allowed to run away after the operation. Some properties remain, however, after death, attached to things in which some part of the idea remains. So it is that herbs, when dried, retain their virtue, and the skin of a wolf corrodes the skin

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* cap. xx.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxi.



of a lamb, and acts upon it not only by contact of substance; for a drum made of the skin of a wolf being beaten will cause that a drum made of a lamb's skin shall not sound.

These points having been determined, the next thirteen chapters<sup>1</sup> are devoted to an exposition of the influences of celestial bodies. Things are solary or lunary, jovial, saturnine, martial, or mercurial, according to the nature of strong impressions that have been communicated. According to the doctrine of the Arabians, certain parts of the body, specified by them, are ruled over by each planet. Let us be content to name the Sun, who rules over the brain and heart, the thigh, the marrow, the right eye, and the spirit; also the tongue, the mouth, the rest of the organs of the senses, as well internal as external; also the hands, feet, legs, nerves, and the powers of imagination. A royal domain, truly, but in many places enjoyed only with divided sway. Two or more planets may be set in government together over one part of the body. Then, again, as saith Hermes, there are seven holes in the head of an animal, distributed to the seven planets. Also among the several signs of the Zodiac is each living body parcelled out for government, and there is the same relation between the parts as between signs or planets ruling. The agreement of the triplicity in the case of Pisces and Virgo accounts for the fact that, by putting the feet into hot water, one may sometimes relieve pain in the belly. The plants also are classed under signs and planets, and

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* cap. xxii.-xxxv.



in case of any disease help may be generally found by using things under the same sign as the part affected. Again, not only are the characters of men determined by the planets under which they have been born, but according to their character trades also are to be classed under celestial signs; as old men, monks, and others under Saturn; barbers, surgeons, soldiers, executioners, and butchers under Mars.

Now, it is very hard to know what star or sign everything is under. It is known sometimes through the imitation of the superior figure, as in the case of the sun in the blossom of the marigold, or the fruit of the lotus. Sometimes it is known by imitation of the rays of the superior, by its colour, odour, or effects. So gold is solary by reason of its splendour, and its receiving from the sun that which makes it cordial. Balsamic plants are solary, including Libanotis, called by Orpheus the sweet perfume of the sun. The baboon, also, is solary, because he barks twelve times a day, that is, every hour, and marks smaller intervals of time in a way that caused his figure to be carved by the Egyptians on their fountains<sup>1</sup>.

Among lunary things are the earth, water, all moist things, especially those that are white; silver, crystal, and

<sup>1</sup> "Solaris est Emocephalus qui per singulas horas duodecies in die latrat, et equinoctii tempore duodecies per singulas horas mingit: idem et in nocte, unde illum in hidrologiis sculpebant Ægyptii." *De Occ. Phil.* cap. xxii. ed. cit. G 4. Hermes Trismegistus, or a writer in his name, taught that the common division of time was suggested to man by the habits of this sacred animal.



all those stones that are white and green. Amongst plants the selenotrope, which turns to the moon, as doth the heliotrope towards the sun, and the palm-tree, which sends forth a bough at every rising of the moon. Among lunary animals are such as delight to be in man's company; and the panther, which it is said has a spot upon its shoulder waxing and waning as the moon doth. Cats also are lunary, whose eyes become greater or less according to the course of the moon. Lunary also are amphibious animals, and those which are equivocally generated, as mice sometimes are bred from putrefaction of the earth, wasps are bred of the carcasses of horses, bees of the putrefaction of cows, small flies of sour wine, and beetles of the flesh of asses<sup>1</sup>.

Saturnine<sup>2</sup> are again earth and water, and, among other things, the heavy metals, such as gold and lead; plants whereof the juices stupify, also the yew and passion flower; among animals all that creep, live apart, are dull, or gross, or those that eat their young; also such birds as have long necks and harsh voices.

Jovial<sup>3</sup> are the air, the blood, and spirit; things sweet to the taste and with a piquant flavour. Gold is under Jupiter as well as Saturn. Jovial are gems with airy colours; lucky trees, such as the oak, beech, hazel, apple, pear, and so forth; all manner of corn, raisins, liquorice, and sugar; such animals as are stately, wise, and of mild disposition; such as are gentle, such as are devout—peli-

*De Occ. Phil.* cap. xxiv. fol. H.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxv.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xxvi.



cans and storks, for example. The eagle is under Jupiter especially.

Martial<sup>1</sup> are fire and all things sharp, or of a burning, bitter taste that causes tears. Among humours, bile; among metals, iron and red brass; all red and sulphurous things, diamond, bloodstone; poisonous or prickly plants, or plants that sting; animals that are bold, ravenous, or warlike; offensive things, as gnats; and those which are called fatal birds, as the screech-owl or kestrel. These, and other such things, are all ruled by Mars.

Venus<sup>2</sup> rules air and water, over blood and spirit, over things sweet, unctuous, delectable, over silver and brass, over all fair, white, and green gems, over violets and maidenhair, over all sweet perfumes and fruits, especially pomegranates, which the poets say were in Cyprus first sown by Venus. It is this planet, also, that rules over all things prone to love.

Mercurial<sup>3</sup> are water and animal spirit; among humours, those which are mixed; among metals, quicksilver and tin; artificial stones, also, and glass; and things of a mixed nature, as, among plants, those that have much-indented leaves or flowers of divers colours; among animals, such as are quick, clever, and inconstant.

It will have been observed that the same thing is often ruled by many stars in the great distribution of all sublunary things among the planets<sup>4</sup>. Thus in fire the light is solary, the heat is martial, the surface of its stream

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxviii.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xxix.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. xxx.



lunary and mercurial. Every planet rules and disposes that which is like to it. All beauty, for example, is from Venus, and all strength from Mars; therefore in plants the flower is from Venus, and from Mars the wood; in gems, the fair surface is from Venus, and from Mars the hardness; and so of other planets, as when it is said of stones or gems that the weight or clamminess is of Saturn, the use and temperament of Jupiter, the life from the Sun, the occult virtue from Mercury, the common use from the Moon; or of plants, that the root is from Saturn, the fruit from Jupiter, the seed and bark from Mercury, and the leaves from the Moon.

Moreover, all the kingdoms and the provinces of earth<sup>1</sup> are found to be distributed under the several planets and celestial signs. Britain, France, Germany, Judæa, and other places, are thus under Mars with Aries; the Sun with Leo governs Italy, Phœnicia, and Chaldea; Mercury with Virgo, Greece, Assyria, and Babylon. "These," says Cornelius, after citing a sufficient number, "we have in this manner gathered from Ptolemy's opinion, to which, according to the writing of other astrologers, many more might be added. But he who knows how to compare these divisions of provinces according to the divisions of the stars, with the ministry of the ruling Intelligences and blessings of the tribes of Israel, the lots of the apostles and typical seals of the sacred Scripture, shall be able to obtain great and prophetic oracles con-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxi.



cerning every region, of things to come<sup>1</sup>." At any rate, there was a good deal to be done before one could be qualified to prophesy.

After having learned the influences of the planets, there are still the influences of the signs of the Zodiac and of the fixed stars to be studied<sup>2</sup>. The same principle extends throughout. The earthly ram is under the celestial ram, the ploughman's ox under the heavenly Taurus. The starry Ursa governs bears, and dogs are under Sirius. Apuleius has also assigned particular herbs to signs and planets, as the pimpernel to Sagittarius, the dock to Capricorn, marigold to the Sun, peony to the Moon, agrimony to the planet Jupiter. Again, we know by experience that asparagus is under Aries, and garden-basil under Scorpio; for of the shavings of rams' horns sown comes forth asparagus, and garden-basil rubbed between two stones produceth scorpions<sup>3</sup>.

But no inferior is ruled by one superior only, whether star or planet. Topaz is under the sun and the star Elpheia. Emerald is under Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, and the star Spica.

Here ends the detail of the theory of nature, upon which were based, so far as concerned natural things, the arts of sorcery and divination. From theory to practice, therefore, the young student passes.

<sup>1</sup> *Occ. Phil.* ed. cit. H 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxxii.

<sup>3</sup> Jamque etiam experientia cognoscimus, Asparagus subesse Arieti, et Basilicon Scorpioni. Nam seminata rasura cornu arietis nascuntur Asparagi, et Basilicon contritum inter duos lapides gignit scorpiones. Cap. xxii. H 4.



## CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE PRACTICE OF MAGIC AS DESCRIBED IN THE REST OF THE FIRST  
BOOK OF OCCULT SCIENCE.

EVERY star has its peculiar nature and property, the seal and character of which it impresses through its rays upon inferior things subject to it, and of the several stars which govern one thing, the star having chief rule will set its seal the most distinctly<sup>1</sup>. Thus marigold, being solary, shows in its root, when cut, the characters of the sun; so, also, in the bones, especially the shoulder-bones, of animals, whence there has arisen a kind of divination by the shoulder-blades. Now, these characters, or seals, retain in them the virtues of the stars whence they proceed, and can operate with those virtues upon other things on which they are reflected. But as the number of the stars is known only to God, and of the diversity of seals and operations man is able, with his brief experience and finite intellect, to understand only a few, we speak only of the signs that are upon man, who is the completest image of the universe.

Ancient sages, who inquired into the occult properties

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* cap. xxxiii.



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ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय



Now, whoso desires to receive virtue from any part of the world, or any star<sup>1</sup>, should bring himself under its influence by the use of those things that belong thereto; as whoso would prepare wood to receive flame should cover it with sulphur, pitch and oil. In this way, by applying together and combining wisely many things conformable to one idea, a singular gift is infused by the idea into that combination, by means of the soul of the world. With solary things, therefore, bring down virtues from the sun, and as all solar properties are not in one thing, but one solary thing will contain one property especially, another another, so to bring down the greatest effect, we must combine things all of them solary, but which attract the solar influence in diverse ways. This rule applies in every case<sup>2</sup>. Wonderful effects may be produced by the union of mixed things, and a more noble form drawn from above, if congruity be properly observed<sup>3</sup>. The like happens in nature by unions that take place between bodies through what the Greeks call sympathies; divine powers being thus drawn down, for nature is the great magician<sup>4</sup>. "So we see that when nature has framed the body of the infant, by this very preparative she presently draws down the spirit from the universe. This spirit is then the instrument to obtain of God the understanding and mind in the soul and body, as in wood the dryness is fitted to receive oil, and the oil being imbibed is food for the fire, the fire is the vehicle of light. By these examples

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxiv.<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxxv.<sup>3</sup> Cap. xxxvi.<sup>4</sup> Cap. xxxvii. fol. K.



you see how by certain natural and artificial preparations, we are in a capacity to receive certain celestial gifts from above. For stones and metals have a correspondency with herbs, herbs with animals, animals with the heavens, the heavens with intelligences, and those with divine properties and attributes and with God himself after whose image and likeness all things are created. . . . . For this is the band and continuity of nature, that all superior virtue doth flow through every inferior with a long and continued series, dispersing its rays even to the very last things: and inferiors, through their superiors, come to the very supreme of all. For so inferiors are successively joined to their superiors: that there proceeds an influence from their head, the first cause, as a certain string stretched out, to the lowermost things of all: of which string if one end be touched, the whole doth presently shake: and such a touch doth sound to the other end: and at the motion of the inferior the superior also is moved, to which the other doth answer: as strings in a lute well tuned<sup>1</sup>."

Not only vital, but also angelical and intellectual gifts may be drawn from above<sup>2</sup>, as Mercurius Trismegistus and Saint Augustine, in his eighth book, "*De Civitate Dei*," relate that an image rightly made of certain proper things, appropriated to any one certain angel, will presently be animated by that angel. Celestial spirits may, in this way, be invoked by men who are of a pure mind,

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* K 2. I have preserved the punctuation in this passage to show the use of the colon before semicolons were invented.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxxviii.



humble themselves, and pray secretly. And by foul and profane men, who use such arts profanely, no man is ignorant that evil spirits may be raised<sup>1</sup>.

Now, there are bindings<sup>2</sup>, as of a mill, that it can by no force whatever be turned round; or of a robber, that he shall not steal in any place; or of fire, that it cannot burn; and these and many like wonders are worked by methods that have next to be detailed. First, there are sorceries as that of which Saint Augustine reports, who heard of some women sorcerers that were so versed in these kind of arts, that, by giving cheese to men, they could presently turn them into working cattle, and, the work being done, restored them into men again<sup>3</sup>.

Now, I will show you what some of the sorceries are<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxix.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xl.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xli.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. xlii. The most wonderful, necessarily omitted from the text, is that described in the commencement of this chapter: "*Sanguis menstruus, qui quantas in veneficio vires habeat, videamus: Nam ut dicunt, acescunt ejus superventu musta novella, vitis ejus tactu in perpetuum læditur: sterilescent tactæ fruges, moriuntur insitæ, exuruntur hortorum germina, et fructus arborum decidunt, speculorum fulgor aspectu ipso hebetatur, et acies ferri in cultris tonsoriis eborisque nitor præstriguntur, etiam ferrum rubigine protinus corrumpitur: æs etiam contactum, grave virus diri odoris accipit, et eruginem: in rabiem aguntur gustato eo canes, atque insanabili veneno morsus infigitur, alvei apum emoriuntur, tactisque alveariis fugiunt, linaque cum coquuntur nigrescunt: eques si sint gravidæ contacto eo abortum patiuntur, abortum etiam facit illitum pregnantibus. Asinæ non concipiunt tot annis quot grana hordei eo contacta comederint, cinisque pannorum menstruorum si quis eum aspergat lavandis vestibus purpuram mutat, floribus colorem adimit. Ferunt tertianas quartanasque febres fugari menstruo in lana arietis nigri in argento brachiali incluso. Præterea tertianis quartanisque efficacissimum dicitur, plantas ægri cum eo subterlini: multoque efficacius ab ipsa muliere etiam ignoranti: sic et comitiales impetus morbosque sanari. Inter omnes autem convenit si aqua potiusve formidetur a morsu canis, supposita tantum calici lacinia menstruo tincta statim metum eum discuti. Præterea ferunt nudatas in mense si segetem ambient, erucas,*



The civet cat abounds with them: for, as Pliny reports, the posts of a door being touched with her blood, the arts of jugglers and sorcerers are so invalid that the gods cannot be called up. Also that they who are anointed with the ashes of the ankle-bone of her left foot, being decocted with the blood of a weasel, shall become odious to all. The same is done with the eye, being decocted. Also, it is said, that the straight gut is administered against the injustice and corruption of princes. Also, it is said, that the sword with which a man is slain hath wonderful power in sorceries: for, if the snaffle of the bridle, or spurs, be made of it, they say that with these any horse, though never so wild, may be tamed; and that if a horse should be shod with shoes made with it, he would be most swift and fleet, and never, though never so hard rode, tire. But yet they will that some characters and names be written upon it. They say also, if any man

ac vermiculos, scarabæosque, ac cantarides, et noxia quæque decidere, cavendum vero, ne id oriente sole faciant, sementem enim arescere. Similiter abigi grandines, turbinesque, ac contra fulgura prodesse, horum plura Plinius ipse recitat. Illud scias majus venenum esse si decrescente Luna accidat, sed vim eius maiorem esse si in silente Luna contingat, si vero in defectu Lunæ Solisve evenit, irremediabile fieri: Maximi vero ac potentissimi vigoris esse, quando purgatio illa primis annis evenit, atque in virginitate prima sit, id quoque convenit tunc ei: nam tactis omnino postibus domus, irritum in ea fit omne maleficium. Præterea ferunt quod fila vestis contactæ, ne igne quidem vincuntur, atque si in incendium projiciantur, non dilatarî amplius: dicitur quoque quod si radix Peoniæ cum castoreo et litura pannorum menstruosorum detur patienti, sanari morbum comitiale. Præterea si stomachum cervi cremaveris, vel assaveris, adjungasque de pannis menstruois suffitus, eo balistas nihil proficere ad venationem: capillos etiam mulieris menstruosæ, si sub fimo ponantur generari serpentes, ac etiam si crementur fugari eorum odore serpentes, tanta vis ejus veneficii est, ut etiam venenosis sit venenum."



shall dip a sword, wherewith men were beheaded, in wine, and the sick drink thereof, he shall be cured of his quartan.

Some suffumigations<sup>1</sup> or perfumings, also, that are proper to the stars, are of great force for receiving celestial gifts under the rays of the stars, inasmuch as they work strongly on the air and breath. Wherefore the inhaling of such vapours was wont to be used by soothsayers to affect their fancy and dispose them for reception of the influences which those vapours draw: so they say that fumes made with linseed and fleabane seed and roots of violets and parsley make one to foresee things to come. Great things can suffumigations do in the air, as the liver of a chameleon, being burnt on the top of the house, doth, as it is manifest, raise showers and lightnings. There are also suffumigations under opportune influences of the stars that cause the images of spirits forthwith to appear in the air or elsewhere. The author gives several recipes; this part of his work consisting mainly of a compilation of those secrets by which wonders were said to be worked, gathered from all sources and given to the world. "The fume of the burnt hoof of a horse drives away mice, the same doth the hoof of a mule, with which also, if it be the hoof of the left foot, flies are driven away. And they say, if a house be smoked with the gall of a cuttle-fish, made into a confection with red styrax, roses, and aloe wood, and if then there be some sea-water or blood cast into that place, the whole house will seem to be full of

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xliii. L 2.



water or blood; and if some earth of ploughed ground be cast there, the earth will seem to quake.

Now, with such vapours anything can be infected, as the poisonous vapour of the plague being retained for two years in the walls of a house can infect the inhabitants, and as the contagion of plague or leprosy lying hid in a garment doth long after infect him who wears it. Therefore were certain suffumigations used to images, rings, and such-like instruments of magic, as Porphyry saith, very effectually. So they say, if any one shall hide gold, or silver, or any other precious thing, the moon being in conjunction with the sun, and shall fumigate the place with coriander, saffron, henbane, smallage, and black poppy, of each a like quantity, bruised together and tempered with the juice of hemlock, that which is so hid shall never be found, or taken away, and that spirits shall continually keep it; and if any one shall endeavour to take it away, he shall be hurt by them, and shall fall into a frenzy. And Hermes saith, that there is nothing like the fume of spermaceti for the raising of spirits; wherefore, if a fume be made of that and lignum aloes, pepperwort, musk, saffron, red styrax, tempered together with the blood of a lapwing, it will quickly gather airy spirits together, and if it be used about the graves of the dead, it gathers together spirits, and the ghosts of the dead.

But as often as we direct any work to the sun<sup>1</sup>, we must make suffumigations with solary things; if to the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlv. L 4.



moon, with lunary things, and so of the rest. And we must know, that as there is a contrariety and enmity in stars, and spirits, so also in suffumigations unto the same. So there is a contrariety betwixt aloes wood and sulphur, frankincense and quicksilver; and spirits that are raised by the fume of aloes wood are laid by the burning of sulphur. As Proclus gives an example in a spirit, which was wont to appear in the form of a lion, but by the setting of a cock before it, vanished away, because there is a contrariety betwixt a cock and a lion.

It is necessary, therefore, to know of what substances the fumes are appropriated to each planet, and a list of some of them is given by the young magician in another chapter. He then passes, in his forty-fifth chapter, to an account of eye-waters, ointments, and love-spells. Our spirit is the subtle vapour of the blood, and by applying to the body substances which mingle with that vapour subtle vapour of their own, the natural powers of the spirit take part in the virtues brought down by the collyrium or unguent used. Very great is the power of a collyrium or eye-water, because the sight perceives more purely than the other senses, and agrees more than any other sense with the fantastic spirit, as is apparent in dreams, when things seen present themselves to us oftener than things heard, or anything coming under the other senses. Wherefore it is possible by eye-waters to give apparent external perception to images conceived within the mind, and images of spirits so formed can be made visible in the air, "as," says the youth, "I know how to make of the gall



of a man, and the eyes of a black cat, and of some other things." They are the passions and the delusions of maniacal and melancholy men that can by these means be induced. But great, also, is the power of fascination, which comes from the spirit of a witch<sup>1</sup>, by its flow out of the eyes in a pure, lucid, subtle vapour, generated of the purer blood, by the heat of the heart. And as the vapour from blear eyes falling upon eyes that are sound may corrupt them, so may the motions and imaginations of one spirit be poured through the eyes and be the vehiculum of that spirit through the eyes of him that is opposite. Whence Apuleius saith, "thy eyes sliding down through my eyes, into mine inward breast, stir up a most vehement burning in my marrow." Thus love may be lit by the rays of the eyes only, and the witch uses her power of fascination which she makes intense by mingling with those rays the power of collyria and ointments, using martial eye-waters to strike with fear, saturnine to procure sickness or misery, and so forth. Upon the same principle can use be made of potions.

Upon the same principle, also, are made charms which may be worn upon the body, bound to any part of it, or hung about the neck<sup>2</sup>, changing sickness into health, or health into sickness, and rendering those who wear them terrible or gracious, acceptable or abominable, to their neighbours. In like manner, we see that the torpedo being touched afar off with a long pole doth presently stupify the hand of him that toucheth it. So they say,

<sup>1</sup> Cap. I. N 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xlv. M 2.



that if a starfish be fastened with the blood of a fox and a brass-nail to a house gate, in that house evil medicines can do no hurt. It is necessary that we know the certain rule of alligation and suspension—namely, that they be done under a certain and suitable constellation, and that they be done with wire or silken threads, with hair or sinews of certain animals. And things that are to be wrapped up must be wrapped in leaves, skins, or fine cloth, chosen according to the suitableness of things; as if thou wouldst procure the solary virtue of anything, this being wrapped up in bay-leaves or skin of a lion, hang it about thy neck with a golden thread, or silk of a yellow colour, whilst the sun rules in the heavens; so shalt thou be endowed with the solary virtue of that thing. But if thou dost desire the virtue of any saturnine thing, thou shalt in like manner take that thing whilst Saturn reigns, and wrap it up in the skin of an ass, or in a cloth used at a funeral, especially if thou desirest it for sadness, and with a black thread hang it about thy neck.

Like to this, also, is the use of rings<sup>1</sup>. When any star ascends fortunately, take a stone and herb that are under that star, make a ring of the metal that is congruous therewith, and in that fix the stone with the herb under it. We read in Philostratus Iarchus, that a wise prince of the Indies gave seven rings made after this manner, marked with the names and virtues of the seven planets, to Apollonius, of which rings he wore every day one, distinguishing them according to the names of the days,

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlvii. M 2.



and by the benefit of them lived one hundred and thirty years, as also always retained the beauty of youth.

There are also virtues that belong to places<sup>1</sup>. Look for the footmark of a cuckoo in that place where he hath first been heard, and if his right foot be marked about and the footstep digged up, there will no fleas breed in that place where it is scattered. Particular places are appropriated to each star. To Saturn foul or gloomy places, churchyards, caves, or fens. To Jupiter privileged places, as consistories, tribunals, schools. To Mars fiery and bloody places, such as fields of battle, bake-houses, or shambles. To the sun light places, the serene air, palaces and thrones. To Venus, pleasant fountains, green meadows, and wherever those under her rule resort. To Mercury, shops, warehouses, exchanges. To the moon, wildernesses, woods, rocks and mountains, waters and sea-shores, highways and granaries for corn. In seeking to draw virtue from any star or planet, collect things suitable in a place suitable. Stand also, while doing any work of this kind, in a suitable position, for the four corners of the earth belong to this matter. Thus, they that are to gather a saturnal, martial, or jovial herb, must look towards the east or south, partly because they desire to be oriental from the sun, or partly because their principal houses—namely, Aquarius, Scorpio, Sagittarius—are southern signs, so also are Capricorn and Pisces. In any solary work, also, we must look towards the east or south, but rather towards the solary body and light.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlviii. M 3.



In labouring under the other planets, look, for the opposite reasons, in the opposite directions.

Because of the subtlety of light<sup>1</sup> and its quick passage into bodies, and especially into man through the eyes, great is the power of light to mar or make enchantments. Therefore, enchanters have a care to cover their enchantments with their shadow. By artificial lights of many kinds and colours, properly confected, strange things may be made to appear. They say that if, when grapes are in flower, any one shall tie a bottle of oil to the grapevine, and so leave it till the fruit is ripe, that oil being thereafter lighted in a lamp, a vision of grapes is produced. Such force also is in sepia, that it, being put into a lamp, makes blackamoors appear. It is also reported, that a candle made of some saturnine things, if being lighted it be extinguished in the mouth of a man newly dead, will afterwards, as often as it shines alone, bring great sadness and fear upon them that stand about it.

Of colours of lights and of all colours it should be known that there are to each planet certain colours that are proper. These Cornelius details.

The fifty-first chapter of the first book of Occult Science contains notes of various conditions that, if they be observed, will produce wonderful results. Thus, if a man have ague, let all the parings of his nails be put into pismires' caves, and they say that that which began to draw the nails first must be taken and bound to the neck, and by this means will the disease be removed. Also

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlix. M 4.



they say that a man's eyes being washed three times with the water wherein he has washed his feet will never be sore. And a little frog climbing up a tree, if any one shall spit in his mouth, and then let him escape, is said to cure the cough. It is a wonderful thing, but easy to experience, that Pliny speaks of, "If any one shall be sorry for any blow that he hath given another afar off, or nigh at hand, if he shall presently spit into the middle of the hand with which he gave the blow, the party that was smitten shall presently be freed from pain." This, we are told, hath been approved of in a four-footed beast that hath been sorely hurt. Some there are that, in the same way, aggravate a blow before they give it (as to this day do our pugilists and our spade-labourers). Also they say, that if any one shall measure a dead man with rope, first from the elbow to the biggest finger, then from the shoulder to the same finger, and afterwards from the head to the feet, making those measurements three times, if any one afterwards be measured with the rope in the same manner, he shall not prosper, but be unfortunate and fall into misery and sadness.

Countenance, gesture, gait, and figure of the body<sup>1</sup>, conduce to the receiving of celestial gifts, and expose us to the superior bodies, and produce certain effects in us, no otherwise than as in hellebore, which, when thou gatherest, if thou pullest the leaf upward, it draws the humours upward and causeth vomiting; if downward, it causeth purging, by drawing the humour downward.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lii. N 3, 4.



A pleasant face spreads joy around, a gloomy face discomfort; certain characters are formed by the disposition of the heavens, whether martial, mercurial, saturnine. And the heavens produce, not only characters, but shapes. For Saturn rules a man to be of a black and yellowish colour, lean, crooked, of a rough skin, with great veins, hairy all over his body, little eyes intent upon the ground; a frowning forehead, a thin beard, great lips; a heavy gait, striking his feet together as he walks. But Jupiter signifies a man to be of a pale colour, darkish red, a handsome body, good stature, bold, with great, large-pupilled eyes that are not altogether black, short nostrils not equal, large front teeth, and curly hair. Thus upon the features, and the marks and lines upon the face and body, are founded physiognomy, metoposcopy, and cheiromancy, arts of divination not to be slighted or condemned when prognostication is made by them, not out of superstition, but by observation of the harmonies and correspondences of all parts of the body. And whosoever, in gesture, countenance, or passion, with a due regard to fitness of opportunity, makes himself accordant to any one of the celestial bodies, by so much as his accordance is made greater can receive from them the larger gifts.

The treatise turns, in the next place, to divination, by means of auguries and auspices<sup>1</sup>, lightning and prodigies. To a compilation of the belief and practice of the ancients Agrippa finds matter to add. There is Michael Scot's twelvefold division of auguries; six on the right hand,

<sup>1</sup> Cap. liii.-lvi. O-P 4.



which he calls Fernova, Fervetus, Sonnasarnova, Sonnasarvetus, Confert, Emponenthem; and six on the left hand, which are Confernova, Confervetus, Scassarnova, Scassarvetus, Viarum, Herrenam. When a flying bird alights on the right-hand side of any one, then it is Confernova, a good sign. When a man or bird passing you stops to rest on the left-hand side, then it is Scassarvetus, and an evil sign. There is divination from the cry or song of any bird, and there is divination also from its nature. Swallows, because when they are dying they provide a place of safety for their young, portend a great patrimony, or legacy, from the death of friends. A sparrow is a bad omen to one that runs away, for she flies from the hawk and makes haste to the owl, where she is in as great danger. There are like omens from all other animals. If a snake meet thee, take heed of an ill-tongued enemy; for this animal hath no other power but in his mouth. Meeting of monks, declares Cornelius, is commonly accounted an ill omen, and so much the rather if it be early in the morning, because these kind of men live for the most by the sudden death of men, as vultures do by slaughter.

The ancients did also prognosticate from sneezings, because they thought they proceeded from a sacred place—namely, the head, in which the intellect is vigorous and operative. Whence also, whatsoever speech comes unawares into the mind of a man rising in the morning is a presage.

Now there is, as saith William of Paris, in most animals



an instinct of nature more sublime than human apprehension, and very near to prophecy. This manifestly appears in some dogs, who know by this instinct thieves and men that are hid. In like manner vultures foresee future slaughter in battles, and gather themselves together into places where they foresee that the heaps of carcasses will be. The animal world also is distributed among the stars.

There are, moreover, presages to be obtained out of the elements. From colours, motions, forms, and celestial congruities of earth, water, air, and fire, there are drawn those four famous kinds of divination: Geomancy, Hydromancy, Aeromancy, Pyromancy<sup>1</sup>.

In the next chapter upon the revival of the dead<sup>2</sup>, the sleeping for many years together,—as it is said that Epimenides slept fifty years, and gave rise to the proverb against sluggards, to outsleep Epimenides,—of these things, and of long-continued abstinence from food, Cornelius says that they are hard to be believed, but that they are to be credited, inasmuch as they are certified abundantly by approved historians. He accumulates in evidence of this a great number of cases.

Divination by dreams<sup>3</sup> that are not vain dreams, but caused by the celestial influences in the fantastic spirit, mind, or body, properly disposed, is not to be carried on by the one common rule provided in astrology, because dreams come by use to divers men in divers manners. It is proper that each man should note carefully his own

Cap. lvii. P 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lviii. Q.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lix. Q 3.



manner of dreaming, remembering that dreams are most efficacious when the moon passes over that sign which was in the ninth number of the nativity, or revolution of that year, or in the ninth sign from the sign of perfection.

There is also a prophetic madness falling upon men who are awake, and so great is the force of melancholy<sup>1</sup> in some persons that it sometimes draws celestial spirits down into men's bodies, by whose presence and instinct, antiquity testifies, men have been made drunk, and spoken most wonderful things. And this, it is thought, may happen in three ways, according to a threefold apprehension of the soul, imaginative, rational, and mental. When the mind is forced by melancholy beyond the bonds of the members wholly into one of these, if it be into the first, an ignorant man may become suddenly an artist; and if a prophet, prophetier of disturbances among the elements; but if it be with the second he may become suddenly a philosopher, physician, orator; and if a prophet, prophesies mutations of kingdoms and the work of man in ages yet to come.

The few remaining chapters of this first book of Occult Philosophy, treat of the nature and power of the human mind and passions. Man<sup>2</sup> was created, not by God immediately, but by the heavenly spirits under his command; and when these mixed the elements to make a body servant to the soul, they built it up with all its meaner parts in lower places, and the highest still the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lx. Q 4.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxi.



best. As in the case of the external senses, the eyes, which have the uppermost place, are the most pure, and have affinity with fire and light; the ears next below have an affinity to air; the nostrils are of middle nature and watery; below them the mouth, more like to the nature of water; and over the whole body the touch, which is compared to the grossness of earth. But the interior senses are, according to Averroes, divided into four: (1.) Common sense, which collects and perfects the impressions brought in from without; (2.) Imagination, which takes and retains impressions, and presents them to (3.) Fancy, which judges what the things are, of which representations are thus brought to it, forms opinions upon them, and gives them to (4.) Memory to keep. Common sense and imagination occupy the two front chambers of the brain; Fancy, or the cogitative power, takes the middle and the highest place; and memory is lodged in the hindmost chamber. There are three appetites and four passions of the soul. The Appetites are—1, natural, an inclination of nature to its end, as of a stone to fall; 2, animal, which the sense follows, and it is subdivided into irascible and concupiscible; 3, rational<sup>1</sup>, the will, which is free by its essence, and from the depravities of which the four Passions proceed, namely, Oblectation, which is a disposition to effeminacy; Effusion, which is a melting and pouring of the whole mind into an enjoyment; Vaunting, and Envy. These passions are

<sup>1</sup> Plato's division of the soul was into rational, irascible, and concupiscible. *Republic*, Lib. iv. cap. xvi.



movements the result of apprehensions<sup>1</sup>, which are of three sorts, sensual, rational, and intellectual; and over passions following the sensual apprehension Fancy is the ruler<sup>2</sup>, but according to the nature of the passions Fancy acts in producing sensible mutations in the accidents of the body. So in joy the spirits are forced outwards, in fear drawn back, in bashfulness moved to the brain; anger produces heat, fear cold, sadness a sweat and bluish whiteness; anxiety induces dryness and blackness, and how love stirs the pulse physicians know who can discern therefrom the name of her that is beloved. So Naus-tratus knew that Antiochus was taken with the love of Stratonica. And how much vehement anger, joined with great audacity can do, Alexander the Great shows, who, being surrounded in a battle in India, was seen to send forth from himself lightning and fire.

Now the passions produce changes in the body, by way of imitation<sup>3</sup>, as when he who sees another gape, gapes also; and William of Paris knew a man upon whom any purgative draught would take effect at sight. So Cyppus, after he was chosen king of Italy, dwelt for a whole night upon the vivid recollection and enjoyment of a bull-fight, and in the morning was found horned, no otherwise than by the vegetative power being stirred up by a vehement imagination, elevating corniferous humours into his head. By this action of the Fancy (so great is the rule of the soul over the body) men are stirred to move from place to place, made able to weep at pleasure, to simulate the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxii.<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxiii.<sup>3</sup> Cap. lxiiii.



voices of birds, cattle, dogs, or of neighbours; and Augustine makes mention of some men who would move their ears at their pleasure, and some that would move the crown of their head to their forehead, and could draw it back again when they pleased.

But the passions, following the fancy when they are most vehement, can not only change their own body, but can transcend so much as to work also on another body, to produce wonderful impressions on its elements, and remove or communicate disease<sup>1</sup>. So the soul, being strongly elevated, sends forth health or sickness to surrounding objects; and Avicenna believed that with a strong action of the fancy in this manner one might kill a camel. Such is the known action of the parent on the unborn child. We see how a diseased body, as in the case of plague, will spread disease. The like is true of a diseased mind. And ever of bad something bad, of good something good, is derived from them that are nigh, and, like the smell of musk, adheres for a long time. Therefore it is well to avoid immoral company, to be much near the rich and fortunate when seeking to be wealthy, or with the virtuous when seeking to do well. Now the passions act most powerfully when the influence of the celestials is co-operative with them, and by conforming our minds strongly to the nature of a star<sup>2</sup>, we can increase their power by attraction to them of the virtues of that star, as to a fitly-prepared receptacle. And they can act strongly only by help of a strong faith; therefore we

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxy.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxvi.



must in every work, of whatever sort, if we would prevail in it, hope and believe strongly. Physicians own that a belief in them is more potent for cure than even medicine, and by a strong belief in their own power of curing, they give new strength to their remedies. Therefore, whoever works in magic must have belief strong always, be credulous, and nothing doubting. Distrust and doubting dissipate and break the power of the worker's mind, whence it comes that he is frustrated of the desired influence of the superiors.

Let, therefore, every one who would work in magic study to conform himself in such manner to the outer universe as that he shall assimilate to himself the powers he desires, and be in right union with celestials, or with minds of other men; and every one that is willing to work in magic must know the property, virtue, measure, order, and degree of his own soul among the powers in the universe<sup>1</sup>. The superior binds the inferior, and the inferior is subject to the superior<sup>2</sup>. Thus a lion is afraid of a cock, because the presence of the solary power is more agreeable to a cock than to a lion; loadstone draws iron because it hath a superior degree of the celestial bear. Words<sup>3</sup> are of power in proportion to the worthiness of the tongue speaking, the influence of the voice, and virtue of the speaker; and they are of most efficacy which express the greater things—as intellectual, celestial, supernatural. They are of efficacy, also, in proportion to the worthiness and holiness of the language in which they

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxvii.<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxviii.<sup>3</sup> Cap. lxix.



are spoken. The essence of things signified lies in their proper names<sup>1</sup>. Adam first named things, knowing the influences of the heavens and the properties of all below, so that he named them perfectly in right accordance with their natures and their powers. Every name is significative by the celestial harmony, or by imposition of man; when both significations meet in any name, the power then is double, being at once natural and arbitrary, and great is its influence if uttered with a faithful meaning and belief, in proper place and time.

The power of sentences<sup>2</sup> exceeds that of words, inasmuch as they are more full of mind and purpose. In composing verses, or phrases, to attract the power of a star, set forth and extol what is congenial to it, vilify what is in antagonism to it; invoke it by enumeration of its qualities, and of the things that it is able to perform or has performed. Thus Psyche in Apuleius prays to Ceres, by her fruitful right hand, by the joyful ceremonies of harvests, by the quiet silence of her chests, by the winged dragons her servants, by the furrows of the Sicilian soil, by the snatching waggon, by the clammy earth, by the cellar-stairs at the light nuptials of Proserpina, &c., &c. Stars, also, should be called upon by their own names and by the names of the intelligences ruling over them, and verses so framed should be spoken with significance and animation, with gesture, motion, and affection in full harmony, and with a blowing or breathing upon the words as they pass out, so that they may be over-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxx.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxi.



flowed with the whole virtues of the inner soul. And from the use of sentences so formed, even by writing or pronouncing any of them backwards, there proceed unusual effects. The succeeding chapter on the power of such enchantments is composed chiefly of illustrations quoted out of Apuleius, Lucan, Virgil, Ovid, and Tibullus.

A written word or sentence has more power than a spoken one<sup>1</sup>. It is the last and most emphatical expression of the mind. Therefore it is ordered by magicians that to give force to the expression of the will, when they gather a herb, make a figure, or do any work, they not only think and say, but also write why that is done<sup>2</sup>.

Now there have been given to man mind and speech: the speech in divers languages not formed by chance, but from above, having proper characters whereby they agree with things superior and celestial; but before all figures and in writing, the letters of the Hebrews are in matter, form, and spirit, the most sacred<sup>3</sup>. They were formed after the figures of the stars, and the profoundest Hebrew Mecubals do undertake by the figure of their letters, the form of characters, and their signature, simpleness, composition, separation, crookedness, directness, defect, abounding, greatness, littleness, crowning, opening, shutting, order, transmutation, joining together, revolution of

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> So Virgil, of this duty of expression :

“Necte tribus nodis ternos Amarylli colores,  
Necte Amarylli modo, et, Veneris, dic, vincula nodo.”

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lxxiiii.



letters and of points and tops, and by the supputation of numbers, by the letters of things signified to explain all things, how they proceed from the first cause, and are again to be reduced into the same. Moreover, they divide the letters of their Hebrew alphabet into twelve simple, seven double, and three mothers, which, they say, signify, as characters of things, the twelve signs, seven planets, and three elements, for they account air no element but as the glue and spirit of the rest. With a discussion of these letters and an illustrative table the first book of Occult Philosophy is closed, the last topic being the occult use of the letters when employed as representatives of number. Upon this topic the writer touches very lightly, and so passes from studying the power of natural things in his first book to the direct consideration of the power that belongs to numbers in his second.

We must not pause to dwell long on the spirit of the scheme of nature he detailed. Little disguised by Hebrew admixture, and little perverted by the speculations of the Platonists of Alexandria, Philo the Jew, Plotinus, and Iamblichus, whom the young student quotes most frequently, we have again the Attic Moses, Plato, speaking through a young and strong heart to the world. Very great was the influence of Plato in this period of wakening to thought. Nothing was known by experience of nature, for little had been learnt since the time when Plato, theorising upon nature, owned it to be impossible to arrive at any certain result in our speculations upon the creation of the visible universe and its authors; "wherefore," he



said, "even if we should only advance reasons not less probable than those of others, you should still be content<sup>1</sup>." In this spirit alone Cornelius Agrippa taught his age.—There are these marvels well accredited; there is this cumbrous and disjointed mass of earthly, sensible experience, which there is no way of explaining left to me but one. I accept the marvels, foolish as they seem; they are as well accredited as things more obviously true. With God all things are possible. In God all things consist. I will adopt Plato's belief, that the world is animated by a moving soul, and from the soul of the world I will look up to its Creator. I cannot rest content with a confused mass of evidence; I will animate with my own soul, and a faith in its divine origin, the world about me. I will adopt the glorious belief of Plato<sup>2</sup>, that we sit here as in a cavern with our faces held from looking to the cavern's mouth, down which a light is streaming and pours in a flood over our heads, broken by shadows of things moving in the world above. We see the shadows on the wall, hear echoes, and believe in all as the one known truth of substance and of voice, although these are but the images of the superiors. I also will endeavour to climb up out of the cave into the land flooded with sunlight. I connect all that we see here with Plato's doctrine of superior ideas, I subdue matter to spirit, I will see true knowledge in apparent foolishness, and connect the meanest clod with its divine Creator. I will seek to draw down influences, and to fill

<sup>1</sup> *Timæus*, section ix.

<sup>2</sup> *Politeia*, Lib. vii. cap. i. ii.



my soul with a new strength imparted by the virtue of ideas streaming from above. The superior manifest in the inferior<sup>1</sup> is the law of nature manifested in the thing created. My soul is not sufficient for itself; beyond it and above it lie eternal laws, subtle, not having substance or form, yet the cause of form and substance. I cannot hope to know them otherwise than as ideas; to unborn generations they will be revealed, perhaps; to me they are ideas, celestial influences, working intelligences. I believe in them, and I desire to lay open my soul to their more perfect apprehension. They are not God, though God created them; they are not man, though they have by divine ordainment formed him. The more I dwell upon their qualities, the more I long for the divine, the more shall I be blessed by the reception of their rays. The more intensely I yearn heavenward, the more shall I bring down heaven to dwell in my soul.

So we may hear, if we will, the spirit of the young inquirer pleading to us from across the centuries, and if our own minds ever yearned for an escape from the delusions of the grosser sense and the restriction set by crowds on free inquiry, there is no true heart that will not say, You laboured well, my brother.

<sup>1</sup> See this explanation of Platonic doctrine admirably enforced in a work published while these sheets are passing through the press, the late Professor Butler's *Lectures on the History of Ancient Philosophy*.



## CHAPTER IX.

## WHAT IS CONTAINED IN CORNELIUS AGRIPPA'S SECOND BOOK OF OCCULT SCIENCE.

ARITHMETIC and geometry are, in a certain sense, a part of the first principles of magic. To show this is the object of the second book of Occult Science<sup>1</sup>. After a chapter<sup>2</sup>, which points out the wonders that have been achieved by those who have made only a mechanical use of the principles of mathematics, Cornelius proceeds to discuss their more recondite mysteries and powers. He treats first of Numbers, by the proportion of which, as saith Severinus Boethius, all things were formed<sup>3</sup>. If there are so many occult virtues in natural things, what marvel if in numbers, which are pure and commixed only

<sup>1</sup> The second and third books of Occult Philosophy appeared first at Cologne, preceded by a new edition of the first book, in July, 1533, as "*Henrici Cornelii Agrippæ ab Nettesheim et Consilijs et Archivis Inditiarii sacræ Cæsareæ Majestatis: De Occulta Philosophia, Libri Tres.*" There is a portrait on the title-page which, inasmuch as it is authenticated by the fact of its having been issued by himself, is the one chosen for transfer to the title-page of this biography. This, being the first of the Books II. and III., is the edition cited in succeeding notes.

<sup>2</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* Lib. ii. cap. i. p. xcix. c.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. ii. p. ci.



with ideas in the divine mind, there should be found virtues greater and more occult. Even time must contain the mystery Number, so also does motion or action, and so, therefore, must all things that move, act, or are subjected to time. But the mystery is in the abstract power of number, in its rational and formal state<sup>1</sup>, not in the expression of it by the voice, as among people who buy and sell. The power of numbers has been taught not only by the best philosophers, but also by Catholic doctors, Jerome, Augustine, Origen, Ambrose, Gregory of Nazianzen, Athanasius, Basil, Hilary, Bede. It is asserted also in nature, by the herb called cinquefoil, or five-leaved grass; for this resists poison, and bans devils by virtue of the number five, and one leaf of it taken in wine twice a day cures the quotidian, three the tertian, four the quartan fever. There is also a wonderful experience, that every seventh son born to parents who have not had daughters, is able to cure the king's evil by touch or word alone. The Pythagoreans profess that they can discern many things in the numbers of names; and if there did not lie herein a great mystery, St. John had not said in the Revelations, "He that hath understanding let him compute the number and name of the beast."

Now Unity<sup>2</sup> is not a number, but the common measure and original of numbers; multiplied by itself it produceth nothing but itself; if divided it is not cut, but multiplied into parts, each of which still is unity, not more nor less. Therefore some call it concord or friendship, being so

<sup>1</sup> Cap. iii. p. cii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. iii. p. ciii.



knit that it cannot be divided; but Martian, according to the opinion of Aristotle, calls it Cupid, or desire, because as one only and beyond itself having nothing, it bewails and torments itself. From one all things proceed, of one all things partake. In the exemplary world there is one God, and his name Iod is written with one letter; in the intellectual world there is one supreme intelligence, the soul of the world; in the celestial world one king of stars, the sun; in the elemental world one subject and instrument of all virtues, natural and supernatural, the philosopher's stone; in the lesser world one first living and last dying, chief member of the body, the heart; in the infernal world there is one Prince of Rebellion, Lucifer.

Two<sup>1</sup> is the first number, because it is the first expressing multitude; it is the first procreation, the first form of parity and equity. It is called the number of science, and of man, the other and the lesser world; also the number of charity, of marriage, and society, as it was said, They twain shall be one flesh. And Solomon teaches it is better that two be together, and woe be to him that is alone, because when he falls he hath not another to help him. Two is sometimes also regarded as the number of confusion and uncleanness, especially unhappy to astrologers when it occurs under a saturnine or a martial influence. Unclean beasts went by twos into the ark. Unity, it is said, was God; duality was a devil; therefore, say

<sup>1</sup> Two to ten occupy for each number a chapter, and extend, therefore, to cap. xiii. p. cxxxi.



the Pythagoreans, two is not a number, but a confusion of unities. This number, it is also reported, will cause fearful goblins to appear to men travelling by night. There is a divine name of two letters, and it may here at once be said that there is a divine name answering as to its letters to each number up to twelve, and to each number a certain set of things answers in the scale of worlds under the divine or exemplary, namely, the intellectual, celestial, elementary, lesser, and infernal.

Three is a holy, powerful, uncompounded number of perfection. It is the number of the trinity. Three comprehends all time—past, present, and future; all space—length, breadth, and thickness. There are three states of existence for a man—under nature, law, and grace; there are three heavenly virtues—Faith, Hope, Charity; there are the three worlds—Intellectual, Celestial, and Elemental; and in man—the lesser world—three parts, which correspond to them—Brain to the Intellectual, Heart to the Celestial, and the viler parts to the Elemental.

But the Pythagoreans preferred before all others, as the fountain of nature, the number four, called the Tetractis, and by it they swore. It signifies solidity, and the foundations of all things are laid foursquare. There are four elements, four corners of the earth, four seasons, four qualities of things—heat, cold, moisture, and dryness. Most nations have written the divine name with four letters. There are four evangelists, and in Revelations



there are said to be four beasts full of eyes standing round about the throne.

The number five is of no small power, inasmuch as it is composed of the first even and the first odd (unity not being regarded as a number); but odd is male, and even female. Therefore this is the number of wedlock, as the Pythagoreans say; and they call it also the number of justice, because it divides ten, the number which contains all others, in an even scale. There are five senses, there were five wounds, and five is a number associated intimately with the cross. By this number evil demons are expelled, and poison is made harmless. The five-lettered name of the Deity is the name of omnipotence. Under the rule of nature, the divine trigrammaton—the three-lettered name—was used; under law, the tetragrammaton; but under the rule of grace, the pentagram.

Six is the number of perfection; having this perfection in itself, shared by no other, that by the assemblage of its half, its third part, and its sixth part, three, two, one, it is made perfect. Therefore it is connected with production, and is called the sign of the world, for in six days the world was made complete. It is also the number of labour and servitude: for six days shalt thou labour, for six years shalt thou till the earth, and for six years the Hebrew slave obeyed his master. There are six tones also in all harmony, namely, five tones and two semi-tones making one tone, which is the sixth.

Very many are the powers of the number seven, for it consists of unity and six, of two and five, of three and



four, and absorbs into itself the dignity of its components. Pythagoreans have entitled it the vehicle of life, for it contains body and soul; the body is of four elements, spirit, flesh, bone, and humour, affected with four qualities, choleric, sanguine, phlegmatic, melancholic; but the soul is triple, made of reason, passion, and desire. Again, from the moment of conception all the stages of man's life are performed by sevens, and with the completion of the tenth seven he has reached the appointed number of his years. The extreme height to which man can attain is seven feet. There are seven main parts of the body; beyond seven hours life cannot go on without breath; beyond seven days life cannot go on without food. The seventh days in disease are critical. The moon, the seventh of the planets, and the nearest to us, observes always this number in her courses. The sacred power of this number is great; it is the oath number, and among the Hebrews to seven meant to swear. It is also the number of blessing and of rest, for on the seventh day He rested who blessed it. It is also the number of purification, as was seen when Elijah bade the leper wash seven times in Jordan, and the seventh year was set aside for penitence and remission of sins. Seven is the number of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer, and it is the number not only of prayer, but also of praise, as says the prophet, "Seven times a day will I praise thee." This number is allied to twelve, for out of three added to four comes seven, but out of three multiplied by four comes twelve. A very long list has, of course, to be cited of the sacred things and mysteries



associated by the ancients generally and in Scripture with the number seven. There are seven planets, seven wise men, seven openings in a man's head, seven angels standing before the throne—Zaphkiel, Zadkiel, Raphael, Camael, Haniel, Michael, Gabriel.

Eight is, according to the Pythagoreans, the number of justice and plenitude. If divided it forms perfect and equal halves, and if twice divided there is still equality in its division; therefore it is the number of justice. This number also represents eternity and the consummation of the world, because it follows seven, which is the symbol of this life and time. Therefore, also, it is the number of blessedness; and eight is the number of those who are declared blessed, namely, the peacemakers, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, the meek, the persecuted for righteousness' sake, the pure in heart, the merciful, the poor in spirit, they that mourn.

Nine is the number of the muses, and of the moving spheres that sing in harmony together. Calliope is attached to the outer sphere, or *primum mobile*, Urania to the starry heaven, Polyhymnia to Saturn, Terpsichore to Jupiter, Clio to Mars, Melpomene to the Sun, Erato to Venus, Euterpe to Mercury, Thalia to the Moon. There are nine orders of blessed angels, and the number has occult relation to the highest mysteries, for it was at the ninth hour that the Holy Spirit came. Astrologers observe nine years in a man's life; and nine has also relation to imperfection, incompleteness, as wanting one of ten, as St. Augustine interpreted concerning the ten lepers.



Nor are we to suppose that there is no meaning in the length of nine cubits ascribed to Og, King of Basan, who is the type of the devil.

Ten is called the complete number, because there is no counting beyond it except by combinations formed with it and with the other numbers, of which every one may be obtained out of it by some form of decomposition. Therefore the ancients called their sacred ceremonies denary, initiation being preceded by ten days of abstinence. There were ten chords to the psalter, and ten instruments of music to which psalms were sung. The first effluence of the One source of all was ternary, then denary into the ten sephiroth, and there are in all tens the trace of a divine principle.

The number eleven is not sacred, but twelve is divine<sup>1</sup>. Eleven exceeds the number of the commandments, and falls short of twelve, which is of grace or perfection; yet sometimes it hath from God a gratuitous favour, as in the case of him who was called to the vineyard in the eleventh hour. Twelve is the number of signs in the Zodiac, of chief joints in the body of a man, of the tribes of Israel, of the Apostles, and of the gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Of the numbers above twelve<sup>2</sup> the mysteries are evolved on a like principle, and determined also by a reduction of them to their elements as multiples of the first ten. Cornelius describes the most important from which it will suffice to select eighteen and twenty as un-

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil. Lib. ii. cap. xiii. ed. cit. p. cxxx.*

<sup>2</sup> *Cap. xv. p. cxxxvi.*



fortunate, because in the former Israel served Eglon, King of Moab, in the other, Jacob served and Joseph was sold; twenty-two as the fulness of wisdom, for it is the number of the Hebrew letters and the number of the books of the Old Testament; twenty-eight as a number favoured by the moon; forty as the number of expiation, for in the time of the Deluge it rained forty days, the children of Israel were detained forty years in the wilderness, the destruction of Nineveh was put off during forty days, forty days fasted Moses, and Elias, and the Lord. Fifty signifies remission and liberty. The number a hundred, in which the lost sheep was found, is holy, and because it consists of tens, shows a complete perfection; but the complement of all numbers is a thousand, which is the cube of the number ten, signifying a complete and absolute perfection. Plato in his Republic also celebrates two numbers, which are not disallowed by Aristotle in his Politics, namely, the square and cube of twelve, which last number, 1728, is fatal: to which when any city or commonwealth hath attained it shall decline. And let thus much suffice for numbers in particular.

Certain gestures used by the magicians, seemingly absurd, are meant to express numbers by notation on the body<sup>1</sup>. Cornelius gives a set of rules from Bede, and refers to others in the Arithmetic of Brother Luca de Burgo. They are of this kind: when you would express one, bend the little finger of the left hand over the palm; when you would express a thousand, put the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xvi. p. cxxxviii.



left hand on the breast, the fingers pointing towards heaven; when expressing sixty thousand, hold the left thigh with the left hand, fingers downwards. The next chapter is on the various notes of numbers used among the Romans, with which is set the notation commonly used with magical characters—a cross to represent ten, a small horizontal line touching its lower limb to represent another five; short upright strokes for units; a circle for a hundred; and the same circle placed over any of the before-mentioned signs to represent that number of hundreds. The next two chapters<sup>1</sup> describe the notation by letters of Greeks, Hebrews, and Chaldeans, and include the depiction of a peculiar system of marks used for notation in two very ancient books of the astrologers and magicians.

By extracting the significance of numbers from the letters in a name, occult truths may be discovered<sup>2</sup>, as was shown by the Pythagoreans. This is the science of Arithmancy. If you desire to know the horoscope of any one, compute his name and that of his father and mother, add them and divide by twelve; if the remainder be one, he is under Leo; if two, under Aquarius, &c. Let no one marvel at these mysteries. The Most High created all things by number, measure, and weight, and nothing that was done was casual, but all was by a certain divine rule.

Moreover, the Pythagoreans have attributed certain numbers to each god or planet, and each element<sup>3</sup>; one

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xviii. and xix.    <sup>2</sup> Cap. xx. p. cxliii.    <sup>3</sup> Cap. xxi. p. cxliiii.



to the sun, two to the moon, three to the three fortunate planets, Sun, Jupiter, Venus, and so forth; eight to air, five to fire, six to earth, and twelve to water. Each of the seven planets has also a sacred table<sup>1</sup>, endowed with many great celestial virtues, representing the divine order of numbers impressed upon it by the superior Idea acting through the soul of the world, and the most sweet harmony of their celestial rays, which can be expressed only by images that represent the supramundane intelligences, and can be informed by them with their power. The sacred tables for each planet are then given with the sacred seals or signs of itself, its intelligence, and its demon or spirit. The tables are in squares, progressively enlarging; we take as an illustration the third, that of Mars:

|    |    |    |    |    |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 11 | 24 | 7  | 20 | 3  |
| 4  | 12 | 25 | 8  | 16 |
| 17 | 5  | 13 | 21 | 9  |
| 10 | 18 | 1  | 14 | 22 |
| 23 | 6  | 19 | 2  | 15 |

Beside this is placed a version of it in the Hebrew notation, and beneath it these figures, the seals of Mars, 1, of its intelligence, 2, and of its demon, 3:

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxii. pp. cxlv.-cliii.



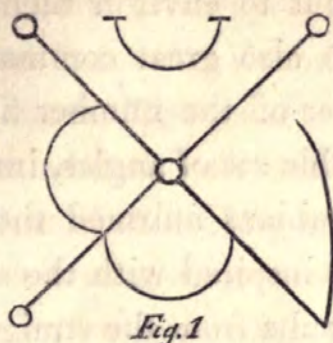


Fig. 1

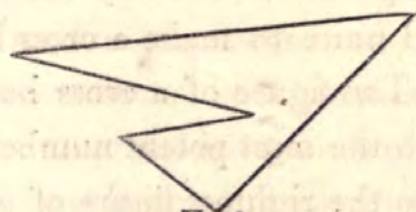


Fig. 2

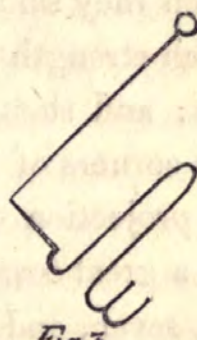


Fig. 3

Now, if these sacred tables and characters are engraven at a time when the planet is auspicious on an iron plate, or sword, it makes a man powerful in war and judgment, terrible to enemies ; and if they be engraved upon cornelian, it arrests a flow of blood ; but if the tables and characters be drawn when Mars is inauspicious on a plate of red brass, such a plate causes discord among men and beasts, drives away bees, pigeons, or fish, stops mills, deprives men of fortune in the chase, and compels the enemies of its possessor to submit themselves to him.

From arithmetic we turn to geometry. Partly from the mystery of numbers, partly from the mystery of form, arises the power of geometrical figures. The circle answering to unity and ten, the largest and most perfect of lines, being indeed infinite, is judged to be most fit for bindings and conjurations ; whence they who adjure



evil spirits are wont to environ themselves with a circle. A pentangle hath also great command over evil spirits, through the power of the number five, and through the mystery of its double set of angles, inner and outer. The Egyptians and Arabians affirmed the power of the cross, which they said is inspired with the strength of the stars, which strength results from the straightness of angles and rays; and stars are then most potent when they occupy four corners of the heaven, and unite to make a cross by the projection of their rays. The figure of a cross hath also a great correspondency with the most potent numbers, five, seven, and nine. It is also the rightest figure of all, containing four right angles. The power of these signs, let it always be remembered, is not in the things themselves, but in the reflexion from them as it were by echo of the higher powers, which they attract by their correspondency and harmony. We must not pass over here the figures which Pythagoras and his followers assigned to the elements and the heavens—a cube to the earth, a pyramid to fire, a dodecahedron to the heavens, and so forth. By such knowledge many wonderful things may be done with glasses; and I have learnt, adds Cornelius, how to make glasses by which any one may see what he pleases at a very great distance<sup>1</sup>.

From geometry we turn to the harmony of music; and, in the first place, a chapter of recorded marvels<sup>2</sup> illustrates

<sup>1</sup> "Et ego novi ex illis miranda conficere, et specula in quibus quis videre poterit quæcunque voluerit a longissima distantia."

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxiv. p. clv.



the mighty power of sound. Then follows the ancient theory concerning the harmonious tones and motions of the heavens, with a slight discussion on the music of the voice,—which carries subtle soul with it into the souls of others,—the mechanism of the voice, the music of instruments, and the air as a condition necessary to the perception of all sound by human ears. After this we are told what sound and harmony is correspondent with each star<sup>1</sup>. Saturn, Mars, and the Moon, have more of voice than music: and to Saturn belong hoarse, heavy, and slow words and sounds; to Mars, rough, sharp, and menacing ones; while there is observed by the Moon a mean between the two. Jupiter, the Sun, Venus, and Mercury, possess harmonies: those of Jupiter are grave, sober, and yet pleasant; those of Mercury, more careless, various, merry, and pleasant, with a certain boldness. The ancients, who used four strings only, assigned them to the four elements; the bass was earth, then followed water and fire, and air was the treble. This part of the book goes very minutely into the correspondence of the musical laws with all the harmonies of nature, explains the belief that a harmonious set of musical intervals will denote the distances between the planets, and discovers also a musical harmony in the relations of the elements to one another. A chapter of some length, illustrated with seven woodcuts<sup>2</sup>, then displays some of the proportion and harmony in a man's body; and a chapter follows that, upon the harmony of the soul. Man is the most perfect work of God, the sum

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxvi. p. clviii.<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxvii. p. clx.



and image of the lesser world; in whom, therefore, with the most perfect harmony, are contained all numbers, measures, weights, motions, and elements. On the number of his fingers has arithmetic been built; measures and proportions were invented from his very joints; temples and palaces, by divine order the Ark of Noah, have been constructed in proportion to man's body, which is the microcosm, or lesser world, that images the macrocosm, or whole fabric. There is no sign or star that has not correspondence with some part of man. The whole measure tends to roundness; yet again, let a man stretch out his arms, and his feet, head, and hands touch the four sides of a perfect square. Let him stand within the circumference of a circle, with his feet so much parted and his arms so much raised as that feet, fingers, and head touch its circumference, then by these parts is there described within that circle a perfect pentagon. Man is next shown in various other positions, which display the geometrical and arithmetical harmony of his proportions. A very minute detail of proportions follows, which descends even to such particulars as that the second joint of the middle finger is in length equal to the distance from the lower lip to the bottom of the chin. There are also proportions of solid form, proportions of musical harmony, proportions of weight (in a sound man, eight of blood, four of phlegm, two of choler, one of melancholy).

The motions, also, of the members of men's bodies answer to the celestial motions, and every man hath in himself the



motion of his heart, which answers to the motion of the sun, and, being diffused through the arteries into the whole body, signifies by a most sure rule, years, months, days, hours, and minutes. Moreover, there is a certain nerve found by the anatomists about the nod of the neck, which being touched doth so move all the members of the body, that every one of them stirs according to its proper motion; by which like touch Aristotle thinks the members of the world are moved by God. The application of the same rule of harmony to the several parts of the mind is made on the same principle, but with less fulness of detail.

We turn next to the harmonies of the celestial bodies. No magical work is to be undertaken without observation of them<sup>1</sup>, and particularly, in all works, of the moon, also of Mercury the messenger between the higher and the lower gods, who when he is with the good increases goodness, and when with the bad increases evil. When planets are most powerful—in exaltation, or triplicity, or term, or face—and how to observe and know the temper of the fixed stars, Cornelius discusses in the next two chapters, after which we get specially to the sun and moon, and to their magical considerations<sup>2</sup>. They rule the heavens, and all under them; the sun, lord of the elements, the moon, mistress of increase and decrease. The sun is consonant to God; in its essence is the Father imaged, in its light the Son, and in its heat the Holy Ghost. But the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxix. p. clxxi.<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxxii. p. cxliiii.



moon, as the receptacle of heavenly influences, and as it were the wife of all the stars, is nearest to the earth, on which she pours the superior influences which she hath received; and by this planet, on account of her familiarity and propinquity, a stronger influence is exercised on the inferiors that here receive her power in a stream.

Now to the moon, measuring the whole zodiac in twenty-eight days, there were appointed by the wise men of the Indians and most ancient astrologers twenty-eight mansions<sup>1</sup>, and in each the moon obtaineth some especial power. The first is called Alnath, or the Ram's Horns; its beginning is from the head of Aries, and it causes discords, journeys. The second is Allothaim, or Albochan, the Ram's Belly; its beginning is from the twelfth degree of the same sign, fifty-one minutes, twenty-two seconds; it conduces to the finding of treasures, the retaining of captives. In this manner Cornelius goes on to define the whole twenty mansions, in which lie hidden many secrets of the wisdom of the ancients, by the which they wrought wonders on all things that are under the circle of the moon; and they attributed to every mansion its resemblances, images, and seals, and its presiding intelligences, and they did work by the virtue of them after divers manners.

It is necessary, also, to observe the true movements of the heavenly bodies in the eighth sphere, and to take note of the planetary hours<sup>2</sup>, the hours of a day being apportioned successively by astrologers to planets, begin-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxiii. p. cxlv.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxxiii. p. cxlvi.



ning with the one that is lord of the day. Thirteen chapters<sup>1</sup> follow on the images by which power may be drawn from planets, stars, signs of the zodiac, and houses of the moon. All images are powerful; St. Thomas Aquinas says, in his book *De Fato*, that even garments, houses, fountains, do by their form receive a certain qualification from the stars. So certain images on seals, rings, glasses, do bring certain powers down, and that most efficaciously, if such seals, rings, or glasses be made at a fit time of material fitly chosen. The stars in the heavens form traceable images that have been set down by the Egyptians, Indians, and Chaldeans, who have for this reason placed twelve general images in the circle of the zodiac. The pictures of such signs acting in suitable triplicities, are powerful: thus, Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces, because they constitute the watery and northern triplicity, prevail against dry and hot fevers. Then there are also thirty-six images placed in the zodiac according to the number of its faces; Cornelius describes each, and states what its power is. Thus, in the first face of Aries, ascends the image of a black man, clothed in a white garment, large-bodied, reddish-eyed, strong, and displaying anger. This image signifies and causes boldness, fortitude, loftiness and shamelessness. Each planet has a variety of images, and for the power of each image it is proper to depict it on a stated sort of stone, metal, &c. Each image so depicted represents and exerts one of the virtues of the planet. Thus, Saturn ascending, draw upon a load-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxv.-xlvii. pp. clxxvi.-clxxxix.



stone Saturn as a man with a stag's face, and camel's feet, carrying a scythe in his right hand, a dart in his left, and sitting on a dragon; that image was expected to be profitable for the lengthening of life. An image of Saturn on cast metal, as a beautiful man, was promised to foretell things to come. The Egyptians and Phœnicians did use also a certain image<sup>1</sup>, the head and tail of the dragon of the moon (cause of its eclipses), to introduce, where it was worn, anguish, infirmity, and misfortune. They made also images for every mansion of the moon; as, for example, in the first, for the destruction of some one, they made in an iron ring the image of a black man in a garment of hair and girdled, casting a small lance with his right hand; they sealed this in black wax, and perfumed it with liquid storax, and wished some evil to come. Cornelius specifies in the same way the images used for the other twenty-seven mansions. He adds the images used to obtain virtue from the chief of the fixed stars, or constellations: as, under the Pleiades, they made the image of a little maiden, or the figure of a lamp; its power was said to increase the light of the eyes, to raise winds, assemble spirits, reveal secret things.

There are other figures formed out of arrangements of stars which are ascribed to elements, planets, and heavenly signs, which have like power to that of images, and which are described in books on Geomancy. Cornelius shows some of them to his reader.

Two chapters follow upon the magical use of images

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlviii. p. clxxxix.



not drawn after celestial figures<sup>1</sup>, but according to the worker's thought: as when to procure love one makes images embracing one another, to procure damage, broken images of that which we would destroy,—all which Albertus Magnus describes in his *Speculum*. Such images are made diversely and sometimes buried, sometimes hung on a tree to wave in the wind, sometimes within a chimney to be smoked, sometimes kept with the head downwards and sometimes with the head up. The art of making these is astrological. Thus, for gain, let there be made an image under the ascendant of the nativity of the man, or under the ascension of that place to which you would appoint the gain, and you must make the lord of the second house, which is in the house of substance, to be joined with the lord of the ascendant in the trine or sextile, and let there be a reception amongst them; you must make fortunate the eleventh and the lord thereof, and, if you can, put part of the fortune in the ascendant or second; and let the image be buried in that place, or carried from that place, to which you would appoint the gain.

The next chapter<sup>2</sup> is on characters, deduced out of geomantical figures from the true characters of the heavens, which are the writing of the angels, Malachim, describing in the sky all things to the man competent to read. There are also characters not taken from celestials, but adapted, as in the case of images lately described, to a thought of them within the mind<sup>3</sup>. In this way, the characters of the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlix. L, pp. exci.-exciii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. li. p. exciii.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lii. p. excvi.



Ram and Bull were taken from their horns, ♈ ♉, that of Aquarius from waters, ♒, and so with the rest. And the sign of Saturn was deduced from a sickle, that of Jupiter from a sceptre, that of Mars from a bolt of war, of Venus from a looking-glass, of Mercury from a wand. In the same way characters have been formed to represent various combinations of signs, stars, and natures.

Of all operations in occult science there is not one that is not rooted in astrology<sup>1</sup>, of which science, since "huge volumes are everywhere extant," Cornelius does not think it necessary to detail the principles. By the use of dice made under certain celestial influences future destinies may be divined. Nor is it a blind chance that works in divination by lot<sup>2</sup>, by throwing cockles, opening a page of Virgil, or in other ways. For, as the Platonists teach, accident can be in no case the prime sufficient cause, we must look higher, and find out, therefore, in these matters, a cause which may know and govern the effect. Now this is not material but immaterial, and may be in men's souls, in departed spirits, in celestial intelligences, or in God himself. The power of man's own mind strongly exerted may control dead matter and direct the lot aright, but lest such exertion proved too weak, the ancients were used, before the casting of the lot, by sacred performances to summon the divine intelligences to their aid.

Now the heavens cannot exercise so many influences as a mere body, but they must be animated by a living soul, and upon the soul of the world depends the vigour of

<sup>1</sup> Cap. liii. p. cxcviii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. liiii. p. cxcix.



inferior things. This doctrine has been held by the poets and philosophers<sup>1</sup>, and is confirmed by reason<sup>2</sup>. The World has a soul and, as it was said in the former book, also a spirit. For it would be absurd to assume life in parts of the world, as flies and worms, and to deny life and soul to the entire world as a most perfect and noble body; to say that heavens, stars, elements give life and soul to things below, yet themselves have not that which they give. The soul of the world and the celestial souls partake of the divine reason<sup>3</sup>. The reason of terrene things is in the earth, of watery things in the water, each part works in its place, and hurts made in each are by itself repaired. Shall we, having reason, say that souls higher than ours have it not; and when, as saith Plato, the world is made by very Goodness itself, as well as it was possible to make it, shall we deny that it is endowed with not only life, sense, reason, but also with understanding. For the perfection of the body is the soul, and that body is more perfect which hath a more perfect soul. It is necessary, then, seeing celestial bodies are most perfect, that they have also most perfect minds. They partake, therefore, of an intellect and a mind. This also the Platonists prove by the perseverance of their order and tenor; because motion is of its nature free, it may easily swerve and wander now one way, now another, unless it be ruled by an intellect and a mind, and that also by a perfect mind foreseeing from the beginning the best way and chief end. "For bodies resist not a most

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lv. p. cc.<sup>2</sup> Cap. lvi. p. cci.<sup>3</sup> Cap. lvii. p. ccii.



powerful soul, and a perfect mind doth not change its counsel." So writes the youth; and who shall scorn him if he saw a living soul bestowed by God where we see what we are too apt to forget ourselves in thinking are dead laws of divine ordinance? Thus he goes on: "The soul of the world, therefore, is a certain one thing filling all things, bestowing all things, binding and knitting together all things, that it might make one frame of the world, and that it might be, as it were, one instrument, making of many strings one music, sounding from three kinds of creatures, intellectual, celestial, and incorruptible, with one only breath and life."

Then follows a chapter on the Orphic names of the celestial spirits ruling man<sup>1</sup>—names, says Cornelius, not "of evil deceiving spirits, but of natural and divine powers, distributed to the world by the true God, for the service and profit of man, who knows how to use them." Then follows a chapter of the epithets and various names given to each of the seven governors of the world, the Planets, in magical speech<sup>2</sup>; chiefly they are those used by Latin poets. Finally, in the sixtieth and last chapter of his second book of Occult Science, Cornelius shows how, by his aspiration towards, and his invocation of, superior things, man may ascend into the intelligible world, and become like to the more sublime spirits and intelligences. He represents man, as it were, ascending Jacob's ladder, on which angels throng, striving to reach to the thoughts and to the purity of those who are above it, at the very

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lviii. p. cciii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lix. p. cciiii.



gate of heaven ; seeking to strike one end of the chord of harmony which runs through spiritual realms, each one holier and purer than the last, and which shall vibrate at length even with his thought before the throne of God. He teaches that we must aspire upward, but even upward only to the souls of things ; not to the visible glory of the sun, the king of stars, but to the soul of it, and become like to it, and comprehend the intelligible light thereof with an intellectual sight, as the sensible light with a corporeal eye. But while seeking this, his closing counsel is, that “in the first place we must implore assistance from the First Author, and pray not only with the mouth but with a religious gesture and a supplicating soul—also abundantly, incessantly, sincerely—that He would enlighten our minds, and remove the darkness gathering upon our souls by reason of our bodies.”



## CHAPTER X.

OF THE THIRD AND LAST BOOK OF OCCULT PHILOSOPHY.

EARNEST thoughts closed Cornelius Agrippa's Second Book of Magic, and an earnest theme engages him throughout the third. It is upon the secrets of religion. He begins with an exaltation of piety<sup>1</sup>, passes then to an enforcement of the rule of silence<sup>2</sup>, observed in all ages as to the most sacred mysteries, and accepts the necessity of a reticence on his own part as regards the most occult and sacred of the truths that wisdom has discovered. The student of magic must by the same rule secrete, and more than that, must dignify himself<sup>3</sup> by a forsaking of all sensual pleasures, and by seeking all means that encourage high and holy contemplation, so that he may purify and exalt his intellect, while he at the same time purifies and subdues his flesh, avoiding contact with unclean things, taking part with a true reverence and with a strong faith in all rites of the Church, and labouring in all things to become as meet as man may be for the companionship of angels. Magical operations are ruled by Religion or

<sup>1</sup> *De Occ. Phil.* Lib. iii. cap. i. (ed. cit.) p. ccix.<sup>2</sup> Cap. ii. p. ccix.<sup>3</sup> Cap. iii. p. ccxi.



by Superstition<sup>1</sup>. Religion is a steady contemplation of divine things, and the uniting of oneself with God by good works and household worship. It is obedience to the Church as a mother, and to God as a father, from whom all benefits are taken, as saith the Rabbi Henitia, by theft if not with thanks. It is obedience to the teacher of the nations, who said, "Whatsoever you shall do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to him, and to God the Father by him." Every religion has in it something good, for it is directed to our Father and Creator; and though God allows of one religion only, yet he leaves not unrewarded those who have performed the chief duty of man, if not in deed, yet in intention. Now worship that is different from true religion, or that imitates its forms but contains not its true meaning, is superstition, as in the excommunication of locusts, and the baptism of bells. And by this method, through a strong will and belief, wonders may be worked, superstition working by credulity as true religion works by faith. But in superstition there is evil, and the danger of yet more evil. If in this book superstitious practices are described, they are here set down only as records of error from which to elicit truth.

Religion has three guides<sup>2</sup>—Love, Hope, and Faith. Love is the chariot of the soul—love brings us near to God, gives power to our prayers. Belief that is faith is above science, as belief that is credulity is below science. It is the root of miracles, and there is nothing incredible

<sup>1</sup> Cap. iiii. p. ccxiii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. v. p. ccxv.



for him who believes all things to be possible with God. Therefore, our mind being pure and divine, inflamed with a religious love, adorned with hope, by faith directed, placed on the height and summit of the human soul, draws truth down from above. So we, though natural, come to perceive things that are above nature, and by religion alone a man may attain to power over spiritual things and shall work miracles<sup>1</sup>. But if he works them by the sole strength of his spiritual virtue, if he persevere in such work, he cannot live long, but is absorbed by the divine power. And whoso attempts this, being impure, brings judgment down on his own head, and is delivered over to the evil spirit to be devoured. No wonders can be worked by him who knows not that there is a supreme God<sup>2</sup>; and among the heathens Jupiter was the name of the great king who produced the soul of the world, while other gods were secondary gods, or second causes. Augustine and Porphyry testify that the Platonists recognised three persons in God<sup>3</sup>—the Father, the Son, or first mind, and the Spirit, or soul of the world. Agrippa's chapter on this subject contains a curious account of the different forms of belief concerning the divine nature, recorded as having been entertained of old time in various parts of the world, and of the references in them to the Son and Spirit. The next chapter<sup>4</sup> devoutly states, in words appointed by the Church, what is the creed of "the catholic doctors and faithful people of God."

<sup>1</sup> Cap. vi. p. ccxvi.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. vii. p. ccxix.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. viii. p. ccxxi.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. ix. p. ccxxiii.



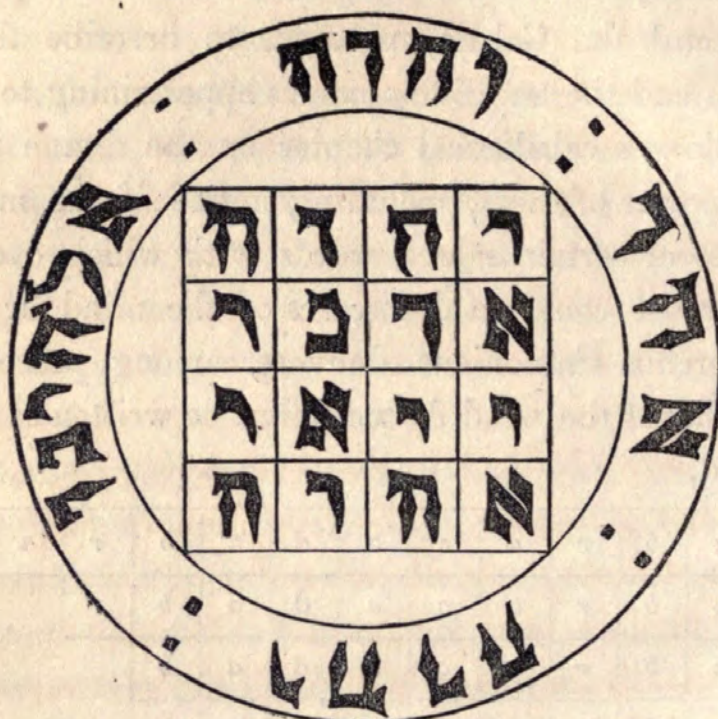
The tenth chapter of the third book having identified the heathen deities with attributes called by the Hebrews Numerations, showing analogies between the Orphic Hymns and the Cabala, proceeds to describe the ten sephiroth and the ten divine names appertaining to them. Then follows a cabalistical chapter on the divine names, and the power of them, including notice of the mystical properties of certain sacred words with which even the Pythagoreans could heal diseases of the mind or body. Also Serenus Samonicus delivers, among precepts of physic, that if the word Abracadabra be written as is here expressed,

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | r | a | c | a | d | a | b | r | a |
| a | b | r | a | c | a | d | a | b | r |   |
| a | b | r | a | c | a | d | a | b |   |   |
| a | b | r | a | c | a | d | a |   |   |   |
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paper or parchment so inscribed, and hung about the neck, will cure all kinds of fever. But Rabbi Hama, in his book on Speculation, gives a sacred seal, composed of divine names, more efficacious, since it cures all diseases



and heals all griefs whatsoever. The obverse and reverse of it are as here depicted:





But all this must be written by a most holy man on the purest gold or virgin parchment, with ink made of the smoke of incense or of consecrated waxlights mixed with holy water. It must be used with an infallible faith, a constant hope, and a mind lifted to communion with Heaven. Neither let any man marvel at this power of sacred words, through which God worked in the creation.

The influence of divine names flowing through middle causes into all inferior things<sup>1</sup> is next discussed, and it is shown how modern cabalists among the Hebrews cannot work the marvels that their fathers worked, because all things are now obedient to the one divine name, which they do not recognise. The ascription in Scripture of the names of limbs to the diverse and manifold powers that abide in God is next illustrated<sup>2</sup>. Man, it is said, is made in the divine image, with such limbs as representatives of the divine powers, as signs between which there is kept just order and proportion; whence the Mecubals of the Hebrews say, that if a man capable of the divine influence do make any member of his body clean and free from filthiness, then it becomes the *habitaculum* and proper seat of the secret limb of God and of the power thereby designated. The next chapter is on the gods of the ancients, as described by their philosophers, and details the several places and countries consecrated to them. It is then shown<sup>3</sup> that the Catholic Church believes the stars to be not themselves animated, but peopled by cer-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xii. p. ccxxxiii.<sup>2</sup> Cap. xiii. p. ccxxxiiii.<sup>3</sup> Cap. xv. p. ccxxxviii.



tain divine souls not free from the stain of sin. Upon this topic various authorities are quoted.

But of intelligences, angels, and infernal or subterranean spirits<sup>1</sup>, there are angels supercelestial, who work only near the throne; angels celestial, who rule over the spheres, and are divided as to order and nature, according to the stars over which they have rule. Finally, there is a third class of angels, who are ministers of grace below, attend invisibly upon us, protect us, help or hinder us, as they consider fit. These are divided also into four orders, according with the four elements and the four powers—mind, reason, imagination, and activity. There are angels of places, as of woods and mountains, whence the heathen drew ideas of gods; and there are angels diurnal, nocturnal, or meridional. There are as many legions of these angels, it is said, as there are stars in heaven, and in each legion as many spirits. Augustine and Gregory say that an equal number of unclean spirits correspond to them. Some other interpretations are given of their number and nature; after which the youth writes again an orthodox chapter, to correct any appearances of heresy, inscribed "Of these according to the Theologians." The next is a long chapter on the various orders of devils, which, as the subject was a dangerous one in a book on what would be denounced as the black art, is theological throughout, but shows a difference of opinion among theologians as to their origin and classification. Some think they are all fallen from light, others describe them

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xvi. p. ccxxxiii.



as all black, and arrange them in nine companies, to the third of which belongs "that devil Theutus, who taught cards and dice;" while of the six demons of the air, the chief—prince of the power of the air—is "Meririm: he is the meridian devil, a boiling spirit, a devil raging in the south." Inquest is then held upon the bodies of devils<sup>1</sup>. The next chapter is on the annoyance caused by creatures of this sort, and upon the way of obtaining by a pure and holy life the sympathy and aid of purer spirits who excel them in authority and power. It is then shown that, by paying regard to the kind of good genius we desire, whether solary or jovial, or any other, we may seek its special help, and have from it help only according to the influences in connexion with which it exists.

Every man hath a threefold demon<sup>2</sup>: one holy, which directs the soul and puts good thoughts into the mind; one of nativity—his genius—descending from the stars which ruled his birth: and some think that the soul as it comes down into the body chooses and brings with it a genius for guide: they who have a fortunate genius are, it is said, born to good luck; the third demon that attends a man is that of profession, namely, one pertaining to the profession that he makes of sect or calling secretly desired by his mind, and chosen when the mind is able to take dispositions on itself. According to the nobleness of the profession and a man's earnestness therein is the dignity and power of his demon; and should he change his profession, he must change his demon also. If a profession

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xix. p. ccxlvii.<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxii. p. cclii.



suit my nature, then its demon agrees with my genius, and my inner life is the more peaceable, my outer life more prosperous. If I undertake a profession contrary to my genius, I shall be troubled with disagreeing guides and helpers. Let me know, therefore, my good genius and what its nature is. Having found in what path it is most able to lead me forward, let me direct my thoughts chiefly to that. Jacob excelled in strength, Phineas in zeal, Solomon in knowledge, Peter in faith, John in charity, Magdalen in contemplation, Martha in officiousness. Follow not, however, the bent of thy genius if it disagree with thy profession, when that is holiest and best which the demon of nativity opposes, that mean which it seeks. Follow the better path, and thou shalt at some time perceive that it is well.

The means by which angels converse are called the tongues of angels<sup>1</sup> by Saint Paul; we know not how they speak, or how they hear, yet there is a spiritual body possessed by a demon, everywhere sensible, that can drink knowledge in at every pore, as sponges drink in water. Then follows a chapter containing the names of spirits—and their addresses; that is to say, the names of the stars, signs, elements, and corners of the heaven in which they dwell as masters.

The twenty-fifth chapter is on the cabalistical method of deducing names of angels out of Sacred Writ, and includes those tables used for the commutation of letters, whereof the use is known already to the reader. A method

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxiii. p. ccli.iii.



is then explained of finding out the names of spirits from the stars, by fitting the shape of a Hebrew letter over such of them as it will cover. Some tables are then given and explained, which show how to calculate the names of spirits written in the sky, by a strange index compounded of Hebrew characters and planetary or zodiacal signs<sup>1</sup>. There is a way of naming spirits from the stars or signs over which they are set,—as from Aries, Ariel, which is in other languages than Latin, Teletiel, Betuliel, Masniel, and so forth, all these names being used, but those formed from the most sacred languages most potent.

The next three chapters are upon sacred characters, which contain, in a form mystical to us, divine knowledge and power. They are ancient hieroglyphics, whereof the origin is figurative; characters, or letters, found by cabalists among the stars; as well as two other alphabets used by them, one of them called Malachim, and one the Passing of the River. They also divide the twenty-seven Hebrew letters into three classes and nine chambers representing mysteries, blend and again dissect them. But let it be understood that spirits are pure intellect, and cannot be marked with any figures, nor do any marks we make belong to them, or draw them, as marks only; but we take those marks to represent their spiritual power, and by strong belief and veneration, growing to ecstatical adoration of the pure intelligences we have so expressed, we give life from our own soul to our material expression, and, by undoubting hope and love, do in the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxv. p. cclvi.



spirit and in truth receive the influences we desire. Some of these characters have not been deduced by any of the means aforesaid, but communicated by direct revelation, as when the sign of the cross was shown to Constantine with the inscription, "In hoc vince."

The summoning of good spirits is easier than the dismissal of them, and it is not difficult, by certain forms and the use of herbs or music suitable, in places frequented by them, to cause the spirits that are always near the earth to appear. Such are the fairies of the fields, the naiads of the streams, the nymphs of the ponds and marshes, the dodonæ who live in acorns, and the paleæ who lurk in fodder. They are easily allured, most easily by those who are single-minded, innocent, and credulous, wherefore they are seen most commonly by children, women, and poor rustics. They are not offensive to the good, but noxious to the wicked; and all the more evil sort may be made impotent by those who meet them with a strength of right more perfect than their strength of wrong. Of adjurations, of the spirits corresponding to objects of old hero-worship, called animastical—or by the Hebrew theologians, Issim—of mortal and terrestrial gods, the next chapters speak<sup>1</sup>; and then is discussed the creation of man in the Divine image, a long chapter, to which the theologians and cabalists contribute something, Plato more—the world the image of God, and man the image of the world. The spirit of it has been expressed already in this sketch of Agrippa's doc-

<sup>1</sup> Caps. xxxiii.-xxxv. pp. cclxxx.-cclxxxiii.



trine. In what way body and soul are joined by the celestial vehicle in which the soul at first descends, and which some call the chariot of the soul, is then explained with curious minuteness. Then man's body having been formed, and the soul joined to it, we are shown<sup>1</sup> what gifts are streamed into it, through several planets, and how the temperament, whether mercurial or jovial, is determined. It is shown, also, what gifts come from the thrones, what from the dominations, what from the cherubim, or rather, what through each of these from God.

Chapter the thirty-ninth treats of the origin of evil. How can evil come from a good source? It does not, any more than blear eyes are the fault of light, display the fault of justice. Evil material receiving holy influences turns them to its hurt; but this is due not to the error of the superiors, but to the baser and corruptible material of the inferiors; and the corrupt element in a man's soul is sin. Only because of this can Saturn, with a holy ray, dispose to anguish, obstinacy, blasphemy; or Mars excite to arrogance and wrath. If the ray worked on a pure soul, not upon the sin in an impure one, nothing grievous would arise out of its operation; Saturn would make sound heads steadier, and Mars warm generous hearts.

Again, there is a divine character imprinted upon each of us<sup>2</sup>, whereby we may work marvels. Animals shrink from the bold front of man, and elephants have obeyed even children. Therefore this character is imprinted on man from the divine idea which the cabalists call Pahad.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxviii. p. ccxc.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xl. p. ccxciii.



That is the seal by which a man is feared. There is also another seal imprinted upon some, by reason of which they inspire love. That is called Hessed.

The next is the longest chapter in the whole work, upon a topic that had been overlaid by the speculations of all ages. It is entitled "What concerning man after death; diverse opinions." Perceptions of the truth probably exist in the opinions of the ancients. As he who lives by the sword, shall, it was said, die by the sword, so do the deaths of many answer to their lives, and so does the state of all men after death. Yet do the cabalists refuse the doctrine of Pythagoras, that souls which have become bestial take bestial forms; they say, on the contrary, that they return to earth in human frames, and thrice have the opportunity of life thus granted them. Sometimes the souls of the wicked reanimate their polluted corpses, as places of punishment. Such power evil spirits have. But when the body returns earth to earth, the spirit returns to God that gave it, and this spirit is the mind, the pure intelligence that was incapable of sin while in the flesh, however sinned against by passions of the soul and gross delusions of the body. Then if the soul has lived justly it accompanies the mind, and soul and mind together work in the world the righteous will of God, partaking of his power. But the souls that have done evil, parted after death from the mind, wander without intelligence, subject to all the wild distresses of unregulated passion, and by the affinity they have acquired for the grossness of corporeal matter, assimilate to them-



selves and condense, as in a fog, material particles, through which they become sensible again of bodily pain and discomfort. It is believed also that the souls of just Christians preach to the souls of the just Pagans salvation in the name of Christ. Of this tenor seems to be the belief of Cornelius; he speaks of manes, lares, and lemures, but with those Christians who revel in gross images of vindictive torture after death he shows no sympathy at all. He sees the sorest punishment to the base soul in its own baseness; and as to the literal interpretation of the fires of hell, he quotes with a marked approbation these words of Augustine: "It is better to be in doubt concerning secret things than to dispute about them as uncertain. I do not doubt, for example, that we are to believe that rich man to be in the heat of suffering, and that poor Lazarus in the cool shade of joy; but what I am to understand by that infernal fire, that bosom of Abraham, that tongue of the rich, that finger of the poor, that thirst of the tormented, that drop by which it can be cooled, will scarcely be discovered by the patience of research, never by the impatience of contention."

Souls after death remember the past, and retain according to their nature more or less of attraction towards the bodies they inhabited, or other flesh and blood. This is most true of those souls whose bodies are unburied, or were subject to violence; as in the case of malefactors, and about places of execution, or places where slain bodies lie, many such spirits collect by choice, and more are banned to them. Therefore, in evoking spirits of the



dead<sup>1</sup>, such places are to be chosen, or churchyards or other ground, to which these spirits most resort; and in the incantation flesh and blood must be used, taken from a person killed by violence, since it is with corporeal vapours, also with eggs, milk, honey, oil, and flour, that departed souls are drawn as by the renewal of a broken link. Now they who use such conjurations, because they perform wonders only by or upon corpses, are called Necromancers; and there are two kinds of necromancy—necromantia, when a corpse is animated; scyomantia, when only a shade is summoned. But for the reunion of souls with bodies occult knowledge is required, to which no man, except by the direct gift of Heaven, can attain.

The next chapter<sup>2</sup> is on the power of the soul, which consists of mind, reason, and idolum. The mind, of which the light proceeds from God, illuminates the reason, which again flows into the idolum, the power which gives life to the body, receives sensations, and procures for the thoughts bodily expression. In the idolum, again, are two powers—phantasy, before described, and diffused natural sense. Now the mind only is, by nature, divine, eternal; the reason is airy, durable; the idolum, more corporeal, left to itself, perishes. And of the divine light, which is communicated not to all men in the same degree<sup>3</sup>, by efforts of pious aspiration some men have obtained so full a ray, that it has poured through the reason into the subtle substance of the idolum, and has

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlii. p. ccciiii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xliii. p. cccvi.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xliiii. p. cccix.



become manifest in its more corporeal essence, as with a visible radiance, so that the whole body, or the nobler part of it, appears to shine. So shone the face of Moses when he came down from the mountain; so have the saints also been sometimes transfigured. Yet there are some men altogether destitute of mind, and their souls wanting the immortal part must perish, though they are to be joined to their bodies again in the resurrection. Happy is he who can increase the light of heaven in his mind, for by it he can work marvels. Cornelius dwells again on the power that grows out of holy purpose, earnest striving, and shows by an instance how the soul may rise superior to bodily concernment. Anaxarchus being thrown into a stone basin, and pounded with iron pestles by order of the tyrant of Cyprus, is said to have cried "Pound away, pound away at my dress; you have not yet bruised Anaxarchus." Thereupon the tyrant ordering his tongue to be cut out, the philosopher immediately bit it off and spat it into the tyrant's face.

Eight chapters follow<sup>1</sup> upon various forms of prophetic power. There is such power by vacation of the body when the spirit is enabled to transcend its bounds, and as a light escaped from a lantern to spread over space; and there is the descent of a divine power imparting itself to the mind. These forms of it are seen in prophetic fury, in rapture, and in prophetic dreams. The fury is a celestial illumination obtained by liberation of the mind from the restrictions of the body; and the philosophers

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlv.-lii. p. cccx.-cccxxii.



have described four forms of it. One proceeds from the muses. Each of the nine muses gives prophetic power to a certain class of objects; the muses act severally through the seven planets, the whole heaven of stars, and the *primum mobile*, or universal sphere. The last gives power to the most occult mysteries and intelligences; the lowest, which acts through the moon, gives the prophetic powers that are found sometimes even in stocks and stones. The second of these furies proceeds from Dionysos, the third from Apollo, and the fourth from Venus; each is described from the writings of the ancients. Then are described rapture and ecstasy, which represent the power of the soul by a continued yearning heavenward from a pure body, to be carried out of its house in the flesh, to stand apart from it for a certain time, pervading, as a light pervades the air, all space, and with space comprehending all time also. Of prophetic dreams there are four kinds: those which occur in the morning between sleeping and waking, those which relate to another person, those which include in the dream its own interpretation, and, lastly, those which are repeated, as said Joseph, "for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." But with prophetic dreams there is more or less of accidental and vain matter always mixed; neither is any dream prophetic except by the influence of the celestials, with whom alone is knowledge of the future; and he who would divine by dreams, must sleep on a clean bed in a pure chamber that has been



exorcised and sanctified, his body must be free from the vapours of gross food and from the distorting influence of sin. Retiring so to rest he must pray for the counsel he desires, and if his faith suffice he will obtain it. There is a prophetic power also in the casting of lots and other such observations, which the ancient fathers used, but never lightly or irreverently, since they could obtain an omen from on high, not from the dead matter used, but by the power of pure souls desiring knowledge through it.

Thus it appears that sacred oracles can be received only by those who have rightly disciplined their souls and bodies, and who make use of all sacred rites appointed for the strengthening of virtue. To show in what this discipline consists is the remaining purpose of the book. The spirit of it is that which we have seen animating the whole body of doctrine. Man is the temple of the Deity: he can attain to nothing worthy without striving step by step upon the way to purity<sup>1</sup>, subduing all those powers of the flesh that war against the soul, engaged in constant contemplation of divine perfection, constant effort to approach it. To purify himself he must become in all things clean<sup>2</sup>, most clean of all in heart and soul. He must not exceed the necessities of the body, he must be abstinent from all that overclouds the mind, temperate in all things, and dwell much apart from the animal crowd of men in contemplation of celestial things, of angels and intelligences, working out the will of God<sup>3</sup>. But the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. liii. p. cccxxii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. liiii. p. cccxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lv. p. cccxxv.



chief part of inward purification is repentance<sup>1</sup>, as even Seneca has said in *Phyeste*, that the man who repents is almost innocent. There is also abundant evidence in Scripture of the efficacy of almsgiving upon which the philosophers appear to have said little or nothing.

Upon the consideration of these means of inward purification follow a few chapters on extrinsic helps, as by the ministries of the church, baptism, exorcism, benediction; and it appears certain that material things can become active even on the soul, as with that fire in Sicily, whereof William of Paris witnesses that it doth cruelly hurt the souls, but does not affect the bodies of those who approach it.<sup>2</sup> By vows and signs of adoration<sup>3</sup> the soul may be helped if it be striving inwardly, but only when it is striving Godward and towards things that are good. Prayer will not extort from God what is unjust. Cornelius describes next many recorded forms of oblation and sacrifice<sup>4</sup>. He speaks of them as typical, as helps to prayer, because they are a second prayer, the petition urged by the beseecher first out of his heart and then in the form of an emblem which encourages his heart, and adds expression to his words. All heathen offerings have been abolished, and their whole meaning is concentrated in the emblem of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. There remain but two true sacrifices—that of our Lord on the Cross for the remission of sin, and the sacrifice of a man's own heart, pure and contrite, to the God by whom that offering is not despised.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lvi. p. cccxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lvii. p. cccxxviii.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lviii. p. cccxxix.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. lix. p. cccxxxi.



In the same spirit the youth treats of invocations and rites<sup>1</sup>; describes the modes of invocation<sup>2</sup> and of consecration, with the reason of them<sup>3</sup>; describes how places are sacred when they are of divine choice and appointment, consecrated by divine acceptance of man's pious wish; and sacred mysteries are those things to which, as is the case with sacred names and characters, the divine power has communicated occult virtue. There are sacred mysteries connected also with particular places and particular times, as with the days called black days by the Romans<sup>4</sup>. The sixty-fourth chapter of the book, which is the last, contains many observations upon rites and forms, incense, and such matters, partly drawn from the books of Moses, partly from the classics, and contains many odd stories told upon the testimony of the ancients.

We know now the spirit in which all these things are set on record by the young philosopher. He concludes his chapter with an amplification of the warning, which might be the text of his three Books of Occult Science, "In all things have God before your eyes." He adds, however, formally, upon a last page, "The conclusion of the whole work<sup>5</sup>." It is to say that he has endeavoured so to disperse his intention through it as to make it clear to the wise, though it will remain a secret to the foolish. "For you only I have written, whose souls are uncorrupted and confirmed in a right way of life; in whom a chaste and modest mind, a faith unwavering, fears God and worships Him; whose hands are removed from all wickedness and

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lx. p. cccxxxiiii.<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxi. p. cccxxxv.<sup>3</sup> Cap. lxii. p. cccxxxvi.<sup>4</sup> Cap. lxiii. p. cccxxxviii.<sup>5</sup> P. cccxli.



crime; who live with decency, sobriety, and modesty: for you only shall be able to find the doctrine set apart for you, and penetrate the Arcana hidden among many riddles." To the malevolent and foolish, he adds, it will be only a multiplication of confusion. "Let none be angry with me because I have concealed the truth of this science in a net of riddles, and dispersed it in sundry places, for it is not hidden from the wise, but from the depraved and wicked: and I have written it in language that will of necessity keep it a secret from the ignorant, but make it clearer to the cultivated intellect."

So the work ends.



## CHAPTER XI.

## TWO MONKS.

FROM the preceding sketch it has been intended that the reader should obtain, within a narrow space, nearly as true a knowledge of Cornelius Agrippa's Three Books of Occult Philosophy as would be got by reading them in detail. They alone constitute him a conjurer; upon them alone is based the popular impression fastened to his name—upon them, and upon calumnies invented by the priests. In the outline of the books here given absurdities have not been softened down, indeed they may have been put forward unduly; they mark, however, the ignorance, not of the man, but of the age in which he wrote, and of which he had compassed the false knowledge. All is put to a wise use; the science halts over the earth, but the philosophy flies heavenward. Of the three books, it may be said, generally, that the first is Platonic, the second Pythagorean, the third Cabalistical, but that the three philosophies are modified and fused into one system, under the influence of a devout



study of the Gospel. The opinions ascribed to Pythagoras were, of course, to be had only from Aristotle (who cites Pythagoras but once, and refers constantly to the Pythagoreans) and from the fragments of Philolaus, which Cornelius had probably not seen; but there were plenty of forged Pythagorean treatises, and there was much Pythagorean matter in the writings of those Alexandrian Neo-Platonics, who, as before said, were drawn upon by the founders of the Jewish Cabalism. In the writings, therefore, of the Neo-Platonics, and especially of Plotinus and Iamblichus, whom Cornelius Agrippa studied well, we find more than elsewhere of the groundwork of this treatise on Occult Philosophy. Even the aspiration Godward, by contempt of the flesh, to which Cornelius gives earnest Christian expression, was, in a heathen form, the doctrine of the Alexandrian philosophers. Plotinus would not have his picture taken to perpetuate the memory of his mere flesh, nor would he make known the time or place of such a mean event as his own birth into the world of matter. Cornelius did not adopt the doctrine in this temper; but it is, nevertheless, right to remember that it was the philosophy of Plato tempered in Egypt with some orientalism, that upon the revival of Greek studies awoke aspirations in the minds of scholars. This taught them to rise above the gross and sensual delusions of their time, and to compare the spiritual religion, which, the new Platonists said, had been in all ages the soul of true philosophy, with the degradation of all holiness by ignorant and worldly monks, or with the appeals of the



Church to base perceptions of the common people. So there was a real danger in Greek to men like Reuchlin and Agrippa; and in this sense the priests, who had an interest in the continued abasement of the human mind, found out instinctively, and rightly felt, that the Greek language was hostile to the Latin Church—that to learn Greek was to set out on the high road to heresy. In the Occult Philosophy, Cornelius Agrippa showed that he had not only taken this Greek road, but had arrived also at that point of opposition to corrupt things of the Church, whither it led infallibly the boldest and most honest minds. Therefore it was for all corrupt things of the Church to stain him and his book with their own foulness; branding the man's character with wild inventions, and holding the book up for execration, as the impious work of a practitioner of magic made over, soul and body, to the devil.

But the work is not yet published. Only the spirit of its teaching has been set forth by the young philosopher in a few lectures before the University of Dôle, on the Mirific Word of Reuchlin. They are enough to raise a monk to pitiless hostility against him; but of this hostility no sign is yet betrayed.

All prospers with Cornelius. Elected regent<sup>1</sup> by his University of Dôle—flattered and praised by learned men reverend, right reverend, and noble—heartily believed in by congenial friends—blessed with the complete sympathy of a young wife, good, clever, and beautiful—he has been

<sup>1</sup> *Defensio Propos. de Annæ Monog.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 596.



happily putting the last touches to his Books of Philosophy, and sent them off with a good heart to receive the criticism of a lettered friend.

Of his personal appearance at this time, or any time, there remains little description. His portrait shows that he had a thoughtful and large-featured German face, in which the one thing most observed seems to have been the placidity<sup>1</sup>. He was not only wise, but gentle, even to the tender cherishing of dogs. His wife he honoured as became a man who was the author of an essay upon the Pre-eminence of Woman, and the position held by her in relation to him won for her the honour of his friends. Several scraps of Latin verse, indited in her praise by different acquaintances, are bound up with her husband's writings<sup>2</sup>; and, although not as poetical as they are mythological, they do unquestionably prove that Cornelius did well, when on his way to France from Italy—by way of which country, as before said, he came from Spain—he stopped long enough at Geneva to give his heart in keeping to Louisa Tyssie. Geneva lies close upon Burgundy, and while Agrippa was at Dôle, that town was at a distance from him very inconsiderable to a youth in love, with horses at command, and well inured to travel. He had not so far to ride as Juno, for example, of whom to this effect writes one of the young Frau von Nettesheim's approving friends:

<sup>1</sup> It is mentioned both by Schellhorn in the *Amœnitates Literariæ*, and by Paul Jovius in his *Elogiæ*.

<sup>2</sup> *Hilarii Bertulphi Ledii in Generosam Dominam Janam Loysiam Tytiam Gebennensem, H. C. A. conjugem*, appended to the collected works.



When Juno called in upon Venus to borrow  
 Her girdle, containing all kindness and love,  
 Wherewith she might hope to get rid of her sorrow  
 By winning more tender attention from Jove,  
 Sighed Venus, more willing to help than to grieve,—“Ah!  
 The thing you desire from my keeping is gone;  
 It belongs now by right to a dame of Geneva  
 That's washed by the broad-flowing stream of the Rhone;  
 Go to her, Jane Louisa, the notable wife  
 Of Henry Agrippa, the peace of his life.”

In another strain another writes<sup>1</sup>:

Grave of Agrippa's cares, his rest, his bliss,  
 Jana Louisa, you his solace bright,  
 Whom as a sister all the Graces kiss,  
 And whom to crown the Muses all delight,  
 Justly did Heaven give to your caress  
 A wise, true man. Nobly you can unite  
 A zealous love with sober faithfulness.  
 Go on, and ever let him feel the might  
 Of your great faith, to guide him in his day.  
 Join kisses with him while ye see the light,  
 And share his fame when both have passed away.

The villanous monk Catilinet is quietly compounding  
 his thunder while we follow the manuscript of the Occult  
 Philosophy to the hands of the friendly scholar whose  
 opinion was asked upon it. That scholar was the Abbot  
 John of Trittenheim, known to the learned as the Abbot  
 Trithemius, many years of Spanheim, afterwards of the  
 monastery of St. James, at Wurtzburg. There was scarcely  
 a scholar, or a patron of scholars, living in his day whose  
 life could be told without naming Trithemius. Scholars  
 and mighty nobles went on pilgrimages, princes sent  
 ambassadors to the poor monastery, which he made

<sup>1</sup> *Reverendi P. Magistri Aurelii ab Aquapendente, Augustiniani Epigramma ad eandem.*



famous by his love of books and the good use he made of their contents. Cornelius had journeyed, like others, to see Trithemius, had seen him, and talked to him about magic, which the abbot studied, and of the wonders of which he was perhaps even more credulous than his young visitor. Among many pious works, Trithemius published one or two touching on magical subjects, and he was the first who told the wondrous tale of Dr. Faustus, in whose conjurations he was a devout believer. With this good man Cornelius had discoursed, immediately after his return from Spain, about occult things, and the undue discredit cast upon a study of them. Now that he had endeavoured to remove some of that discredit by showing in a book how worthy they were of attention, his old talk with Trithemius suggested to him that he could not do better than submit his treatise to the abbot's criticism.

John of Tritenheim was a man forty-eight years old at that time, and the founder of his own intellectual fortunes. He was born at the place in the electorate of Treves, from which he took his name; his father was John Eidenberg, and his mother was Elizabeth Longwi. His father dying while he was still young, his mother, after seven years of widowhood, married again. From his stepfather the boy got no help at all, and at fifteen, with a great craving for knowledge, he was scarcely able to read. In spite of his father-in-law's menaces, he stole some knowledge from a neighbour, and at last ran away to feed upon the crumbs let fall at the great schools and



universities. He went to Treves and Heidelberg, and having picked up some little knowledge in those places and elsewhere, was travelling home on foot, twenty years old, when a snowstorm drove him to seek shelter in the Benedictine monastery of Spanheim. It was on the 25th of January, 1482. There was no great temptation to go on to his father-in-law's house which he could set against the offers of the monks, who were a small set of men ignorant and poor, made poorer by recent mismanagement of affairs, and willing to have the help of a bright youth in amending their condition. He remained with them. On the second day of the next month he formally became a novice; towards the end of November professed himself one of the body of the Spanheim Benedictines; and very soon afterwards was made their abbot. It was to the gates of this poor monastery that John of Tritenheim attracted scholars, nobles, messengers from princes, not only by the fame of his own learning, but also by the famous library, consisting of two thousand books—a rare possession—with which he enriched the place. How he contrived to make so ample a collection will be best seen from this fragment of one of the sermons preached by him to the monks in their own chapel<sup>1</sup>: “There is no manual work which, in my opinion, more becomes a monk than copying books for devout reading and preparing the materials required by those who write. For it is allowable freely to interrupt with talk this sacred

<sup>1</sup> Trithemii *Exhortationes ad Monachos*. Omelia, vii. *De Labore Monachorum Manuali*. (Ed. Argent. 1516, fol. xvi. col. 2.)



labour, and to take thought at once for the refreshment of the mind and of the body. We are urged also by necessity to betake ourselves diligently to the copying of books, if we desire to have at hand matter wherewith we may mutually and usefully occupy ourselves in spiritual study. For you see the whole library of this monastery, which once was notable and large, was so scattered by the clumsy monks who came before us, sold and alienated, that there were not more than fourteen volumes found in it by me. The industry, indeed, of the printer's art, lately invented in our days at Mayence, produces to light many volumes daily, but it is by no means possible for us, who have hitherto been weighed down by the greatest poverty, to buy them all. For which reason I admonish and exhort all of you who do not go very willingly to out-door labour, that you should work as industriously as you can in copying books to the honour of God: because as indolence is at war with the soul, so moderate labour is a conservator of spiritual life." And to complete the picture of the abbot and his men, this account of their work is added from another of his writings<sup>1</sup>: "Let one correct what another has written; let another ornament with red what that person has been correcting; let this one put the stops, another one the plans and pictures; that one is to glue the sheets together, or to bind the volume between boards; you shape the boards, and he the leather; some one else shall prepare the plates to orna-

<sup>1</sup> Trithemius *De Laude Scriptorum Manualium*. (Quoted through Schelhorn's *Amœnitates Literariæ*, vol. vii. p. 285.



ment the binding; one can cut parchment, another clean it, another by ruling lines adapt it for the copyist. Another makes the ink; another takes charge of the pens."

The abbot's literary troop rebelled at last, in spite of all his exhortation. Trithemius being summoned by Philip, Count Palatine of the Rhine, to a conference at Heidelberg upon monastic business, the Spanheim monks revolted in his absence, made wild havoc in their famous library, and so behaved, that, after visiting Cologne and Spire in search of accurate intelligence and counsel, their abbot abandoned books and monastery to the rebels, and in October, 1506, received possession of the Abbey of St. James, at Wurtzburg, where he lived during the remaining ten years of his life. It was to Trithemius, then, after he had removed to Wurtzburg, that Cornelius sent, by special messenger, the manuscript of his *Occult Philosophy*, together with this letter<sup>1</sup>:

"When I had some discourse with you lately, Reverend Father, in your monastery at Wurtzburg, we conferred much together about chemical matters, magic, cabalism, and other things, which at the present time lie hidden as secret sciences and arts. And, among the rest, it was a great question with us why magic itself—though formerly by the common consent of all ancient philosophers it was regarded as the first step upward, and was held always in the highest veneration by the wise men and the priests of old—should have become, from the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. Agrippa*. Ep. 23, Lib. i. p. 702. Prefixed also to all editions of the *De Occ. Phil.*



growth of the Catholic Church, hated and suspected by the holy Fathers, at length exploded by the theologians, condemned by the sacred canons, and at last proscribed by every sort of law." He records next, at some length, his own opinion, that sects of false philosophers, abusing the title of magicians and giving the name of magic to profane and evil deeds, had caused good men to turn with anger from words thus made infamous. Then he goes on to say: "The case being so, I wondered much, and, indeed, felt indignant, that up to this time no one had arisen to vindicate so sublime and sacred a study from the accusation of impiety, for as much as those whom I have seen of the more recent writers, Roger Bacon, Robert of York, Peter of Abano, Albertus Magnus, Arnold of Villeneuve, Anselm of Parma, Picatrix of Spain, Cecco, Asculo, Florentinus<sup>1</sup>, and many other writers of obscurer name, when they have promised to treat of

<sup>1</sup> Robert of York, a Dominican, lived about 1350, and wrote *De Magia Cæremoniali*, on Alchemy, *De Mysteriis Secretorum*, and *De Mirabilibus Elementorum*. None of these works passed from MS. copies into print. Peter of Abano, or Apono, was born at that place, near Padua, in 1250. He was, at Padua, the first professor of medicine. Among his works, frequently printed, is a *Heptameron*, including *Elucidarium Necromanticum*, *Elementa Magica*, &c. George Anselm, of Parma, was, in the fifteenth century, a famous physician, mathematician, and astrologer. His Institutes of Astrology are among the MSS. in the Vatican. In the year 1256, Picatrix of Spain compiled, from two hundred and twenty-four old books, a Magical work, afterwards translated out of Arabic into Latin. It exists only in MS. Cecco d'Ascoli, a learned philosopher, was burnt for his Astrology as heretic at Florence in 1327. Nicolaus de Asculo, in the region of Ancona, flourished 1330, was a Dominican, and wrote, besides theology, comments on Aristotle, still in MS. Thaddæus Florentinus was accounted, in the thirteenth century, another Hippocrates among his patients at Bologna. He did not begin to study till the age of thirty.



Magic, have either supplied idle matter without any connecting system, or else have published superstitions not to be received by honest men. Thus my spirit was aroused within me, and through wonder and indignation I too conceived the desire to philosophise, thinking that I should produce a work not unworthy of praise—inasmuch as I have been from early years a curious and fearless explorer of wonderful effects and the full working of mysteries—if I could vindicate against the ill words of calumniators and restore that ancient Magic, studied by all the wise, purged and freed from the errors of impiety, and adorned with its own reasonable system. Although I have long pondered upon this, I never until now have ventured to descend into this battle-ground. But after we had exchanged speech at Wurtzburg on these matters, your rare experience and learning, and your ardent exhortation, gave me heart and courage. Therefore, having selected the opinions of philosophers of tried faith, and having purged of false opinions operations detailed in the dark and reprehensible books of those who have maligned the traditions of the Magi, dispelling the shadows, I have just finished composing three Books of Magic, in a compendium which I have called by a less offensive title, Books of Occult Philosophy. These I now submit to be examined by you as a censor who possess the fullest knowledge of those things, to be corrected and judged: that if anything has been written in them by me which may tend to dishonour nature, offend Heaven, or be hurtful to religion, you may condemn the



fault. But if the scandals of impiety have been purged out, and you hold any tradition of the truth to be preserved in these books, as in Magic itself, let nothing be kept hidden that can be made useful, while nothing is approved that can do harm. For so I hope that in due time these books, approved by your criticism, may be worthy to appear before the public under happy auspices, and not fear to endure the judgment of posterity. Farewell, and pardon me the boldness of this venture."

Trithemius kept the messenger till he had read the manuscript, and then returned it with this answer<sup>1</sup>:

"Your work, most accomplished Agrippa, headed, *On the More Occult Philosophy*, which you offered to me for examination by the bearer of this, was received with more pleasure than mortal tongue can tell or pen express. I am led to the most admiration of the more than common erudition which enables you, while still a youth, penetrating such secret recesses of knowledge, hidden from many even of the wisest men, not only to bring light into them fairly and truly, but even with propriety and elegance. Wherefore I thank you in the first place for your kindness to me, and if I am ever able, I will undoubtedly repay such kindness according to my strength. Your work, which the wisest of men could not sufficiently commend, I approve; next, I ask, exhort, and beseech you, as urgently as I can, that you continue as you have begun, in upward striving, and do not allow the excellent strength of your intellect to become dull through want of

<sup>1</sup> Everywhere printed after the preceding.



use; but always spend your toil on better and better things, that you may demonstrate, by the divinest illustrations, the light of true wisdom, even to the ignorant. Nor let the consideration of any clouds, about which truth has been said, withdraw you from your purpose. The weary ox treads with a heavy foot, and in the opinion of the wise no man is truly learned who is pledged to the rudiments of one study alone. But you the Divinity has gifted with an intellect both large and lofty. Do not, therefore, imitate the cattle, but the birds: nor think that you are to delay over particulars, but confidently urge your mind up towards universal rules. For every man is thought learned according to the fewness of the things of which he is ignorant. But your intellect is fully apt for all, not reasonably to be engaged upon a few things, and mean ones, but upon many and high. This one thing only we warn you to abide by the counsel of, speak of things public to the public, but of things lofty and secret only to the loftiest and the most private of your friends. Hay to an ox and sugar to a parrot: rightly interpret this, lest you, as some others have been, be trampled down by oxen. Happy farewell, my friend; and if I can serve you in anything, command me, and understand that what you wish done is done. Moreover, that our friendship may acquire strength daily, I earnestly beg that you will write often, and send me now and then some of your lucubrations. Again farewell. From our monastery at Wurtzburg, April 8, 1510."



A kind letter in the high epistolary style then common; a wise letter, too, as the reader cannot but have felt. You have done worthily, it said; ever aspire, but know that there are many heights to scale, and upon this height you must needs tread very warily. As for your present intention you must give it up. Publish these Books of Occult Science, wise as they are, and there is no dolt who will not have you down under his feet.

Cornelius was under foot already when the warning reached him. Catilinet had made his rush. The Quadregesimal Discourses were delivered, and the youth was down. Trithemius was one monk, Catilinet was another. Monks like Catilinet were unluckily the rule, monks like Trithemius the exception. The good abbot, as we have seen, had been in a minority at Spanheim, all the monks under his rule had shaken themselves free of him, scattered his books, and lapsed into their natural stupidity. Trithemius was honoured of all learned men in Europe, and he was Agrippa's friend; Catilinet was one of those men whom John of Trittenheim figured as cattle, a Franciscan monk, the chief indeed of the Franciscan monks of Burgundy, and for that reason, perhaps also for some power of lung, was chosen to preach the Lent sermons before Margaret at Ghent, but who, by no power of brain, has left a mark, though but the merest scratch, upon the annals of his time; and he was Agrippa's enemy. Many an unknown name is treasured for something in ecclesiastical records and dictionaries, but the name of this Catilinet I can find nowhere except here, as that of



the first ox who trampled on Cornelius Agrippa. I call him ox according to the abbot's parable, not as a word of abuse, but as a representative of that which treads heavily over the earth in an appointed course, and is of the earth earthy. Catilinet may have been, and I will take for granted was, an honest man, who conscientiously believed that there was heresy and danger in the Greek and Hebrew studies through which young Cornelius Agrippa won so much applause at Dôle. He was the man who defends against every hint of progress all established rule and custom—he is the ox, in fact, who cannot mount into the air. Catilinet<sup>1</sup>, at the beginning of Lent, in the year 1510, was delivering at Ghent, before the Princess Margaret, whose patronage Cornelius was seeking, certain orations called the Quadragesimal Discourses. He attacked with violence, and denounced before Margaret the lectures, impious in his eyes, that had been delivered by a forward youth in her Burgundian capital. He succeeded in exciting Margaret to wrath against the cabalist, who was supposed to have set Christianity aside, and sat at the feet of those by whom the Saviour was crucified. Precisely so did the monk Pfefferkorn, of Cologne, a year or two later, denounce Reuchlin. It was a cry of the time, which Catilinet is not to be considered morally to blame, but simply ignorant, in having loudly uttered.

Nearly together came the news of this blow struck at Ghent and the admonitory letter of Trithemius. What

<sup>1</sup> *Expostulatio contra Catilinet.*, Op. Tom. ii. p. 510, and *Defens. Prop. de Annæ Monog.*, p. 596, for what follows.



could be done? The Occult Philosophy, by which he hoped to win a recognised place among scholars, was to be put aside and shown only in secret to his nearest friends. The warning against publishing it was, seeing the issue of the far less questionable Dôle orations, clearly wise. The treatise upon the Pre-eminence of Woman, written for the eye of Margaret, must also be put aside. The hope of a scholar's life, with Margaret for friend, must also be put aside: and there remained to him only the barren honours he had won at Dôle.

I do not feel that here the difficulty was insuperable. There are men who, when an ox blocks up the path on which they travel, turn aside out of its way; and there are other men who turn the ox into the hedge and travel on. Catilinet might have been faced in Ghent itself, and beaten to one side by a conflicting energy. A more determined spirit than Cornelius possessed would not have given up what seemed to be the best hope of a life without a sturdy battle. But Cornelius was not determined. He was a brave man at arms, but as to his mind, sensitive, gentle, and averse from strife. We shall find him presently replying to the man who has disturbed painfully the course of his whole life, in a calm tone of purely Christian expostulation. Better would it have been for his fame in this world if there had really been sometimes, according to the fable of his enemies, a devil at his elbow.

Now, therefore, it is conceded by him that he can advance no further in the paths of pleasure. Farewell,



scholarship! Farewell, philosophy! Farewell, kind princess, for whose smiles he would have laboured worthily. There is a wife to support, a family position to maintain, and nothing left but the old way of life from which he had endeavoured to escape. He must resume his place among the young men of the court, and do such work as may be found for him by Maximilian.



## CHAPTER XII.

## CORNELIUS IN LONDON.

MAXIMILIAN had plenty of employment on his hands. The brave little republic of Venice, not to be crushed by the iniquitous league of Cambray, was fighting strenuously for its life against the banded forces of Pope, Emperor, and King. There were distrusting and jealousies among the allied plunderers, and there was, so far as Maximilian the Emperor was concerned, trouble and discomfort at home. His states at the diet of Worms declined to guarantee him his expenses, and were not to be brought into a love for the Italian war, though a bold orator had been obtained from Louis, who declaimed to them at length upon the infamies of Venice. He told them that the Venetians ridiculed the Germans in their theatres; charged a year's rent daily to a German for a house; governed their own citizens with cruelty, driving them, with the whips used on bullocks, to the galleys; that they were pirates, poisoners, and so forth<sup>1</sup>. Nothing of all

<sup>1</sup> Hegewisch, *Geschichte der Regierung Kaiser Maximilians des Ersten*. Hamburg and Kiel, 1782.



this would induce Germany to back its Emperor with money. Maximilian denounced the meanness of the states in an Imperial Apology, but he continued poor. Very few lines will show sufficiently what his position was when young Cornelius resumed the palace livery.

At home, the Emperor's second wife, Bianca Maria, daughter of Galeazio Sforza, who was less gentle than fair, was wasting to the grave, within a year of death, caused, some say, by her husband's very manifest dis-relish of her temper—others say, by her own too great relish for snails, which she consumed till she destroyed her powers of digestion. Abroad, the Emperor was in great trouble about the Pope, who had become a faithless member of the league, and, bent on having Italy for the Italians, was not merely seceding from the foreigners whose armies poured into Italian plains, but was becoming anxious to expel the French by actual hostilities, and to part Maximilian, if possible, from Louis. But whatever might be promised him from Rome or Venice, Maximilian felt that he could never receive from the hands of Italian statesmen trustworthy security for the accomplishment of his desire to hold Italian ground. His policy, then, was to form stricter alliance with King Louis XII., to help him to the utmost against Julius II., labouring in all this not merely to secure his own imperial share of the Italian spoil, according to the terms of the league of Cambray, namely, Verona, Roveredo, Padua, Vicenza, Trevigi, and the Friuli, but to accomplish a wild private scheme, which was no other than the transfer of his own dominion



from an empire which he meant to abdicate in favour of his grandson, to a papacy from which he meant that Julius should be ousted<sup>1</sup>.

Now in the year 1510, when Cornelius Agrippa resumed service at court, Louis of France was entering into a formal alliance (that proved very short-lived) with Henry VIII., then new to his dignity as King of England. In this treaty the Emperor of Germany was included as a friend of each of the contracting powers. For the treaty's sake alone Maximilian would, no doubt, find it necessary to send representatives to London; they went ostensibly, perhaps, on the occasion of the treaty, but they had business of far more serious import entrusted to them. For in his defection from the league of Cambray, the Pope had carried with him Ferdinand of Aragon, Henry VIII.'s father-in-law. In the very last Italian campaign the Pope and King of Aragon had secretly encouraged the Venetians to besiege Verona, the town by which Maximilian set most store, and to maintain boldly a contest in which the Emperor, without money enough to pay his men, could obtain no solid advantage. On the 21st of February, 1510, Julius II. formally made peace with Venice, showed open hostility to France, and made some effort to induce Maximilian to follow his example. The Pope, old as he was and infirm, put armour on to take part bodily in the siege of Mirandola, and at the close of it he was carried through the breach in military

<sup>1</sup> Coxe's *House of Austria* and Hegewisch supply the foundation for the few historical reminders necessary to the text.



triumph. Maximilian and Louis were thus forced into a closer brotherhood of enmity against the Roman See. To secure at least the neutrality of England was important to them both. The young king of that country, about nineteen years of age, and fresh to the throne, as husband to Katherine of Aragon, might, if his father-in-law grew a little warm over the quarrel, be induced to take part with the Pope. To watch for any tendency of this sort, and to establish quietly, as opportunity might serve, distrust of the Pope and of his cause in Henry's mind, was doubtless the "most secret purpose<sup>1</sup>," which Cornelius Agrippa speaks of in connexion with his London mission. As a young theologian not very friendly to the papacy, a courtier and a cavalier as well, Cornelius was added at once to the English embassy. Thus it was that in the late summer or autumn of the year 1510 he came to what he entitles "the renowned emporium of England<sup>2</sup>."

The London of that day was hardly larger than Cologne. Country roads branched from Charing-cross. Baynard's Castle had not long been rebuilt as a beautiful and commodious palace for the entertainment of great princes and favoured nobles by the king. There was but one bridge across the Thames. Fleet Ditch had just been scoured, and was navigable for large boats laden with fish and fuel up to Holborn Bridge. There was no pavement on the Holborn-street, which led by the Bishop

<sup>1</sup> Corn. Agrippæ *Defensio Prop. de Beatæ Annæ Monog.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 596.

<sup>2</sup> *Expost. contra Catilinet.* ad fin.



of Ely's palace and strawberry-beds, skirting the country, to the open Oxford-road, and so away, passing the hamlet of St. Giles. Chancery-lane, Fetter-lane, and Shoe-lane, were unpaved and in a scarcely passable condition. Leather-lane was such a back-lane to the fields as we see still in many market-towns. The city had its walls and gates, the cross in Westcheap was its newest ornament. Though London was more populous eastward than westward, in comparison with the metropolis of to-day, Stepney, nevertheless, was still a town by itself, remarkable for the pleasantness of its situation and the beauty of its scenery, and chosen, therefore, as a place of residence by many persons of distinction.

Cornelius Agrippa, when in London, lodged at Stepney as Dean Colet's guest<sup>1</sup>—the wise and pure-hearted John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, who was at that time engaged over the foundation of St. Paul's School. Colet, beloved of Erasmus, and decried of all who held by the abuses of the Church, was very careful in the choice of guests and house-companions. "We are all such as our conversation is," he used to say, "and practise habitually what we often hear<sup>2</sup>." We know Cornelius the better

<sup>1</sup> "In Britanniam trajiciens apud Johan Coletum Catholicæ doctrinæ eruditissimum, integerrimæque vitæ virum, in divi Pauli epist. desudavi, et quæ nescivi illo docente multa didici, quamvis apud Britannos longe aliud, et occultissimum quoddam tunc agebam negotium." *Defens. Prop. de B. A. Monog.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 596.

<sup>2</sup> This is placed by Erasmus with great honour among his adages. For what is said in this chapter of Dean Colet, Erasmus, writing his friend's life in the Epistle to Iodocus Jonas, and elsewhere referring to him, is the chief authority. But all that was said by Erasmus was brought together



when we learn that, while engaged on his court errand, he was received into the household at Stepney by John Colet and his venerable mother, and that he employed his time, as we are both pleased and amused to learn, in studying, under the influence of his host's enthusiasm, the Epistles of St. Paul. Paul of all men, wrote Colet, seems to me a vast ocean of wisdom and piety<sup>1</sup>. I laboured hard, writes Cornelius of the time when he was Colet's guest, at the Epistles of St. Paul.

The young Doctor Cornelius cares not to talk of the amusements of the court in which he was required to take some part. Henry VIII. was enjoying gala days, pleasing himself with masks and tourneys. In the dress of a yeoman of his guard he had been to the City on St. John's Eve, there to see the pompous watch of the City guard, a nocturnal procession like a lord mayor's show, which marched with nine hundred and forty blazing cressets through streets garnished with flowers, boughs, and lighted lamps. On the following St. Peter's night he took his queen in state to see the pomp repeated. He was masquing, too, now as a Turk, now as a Robin Hood's man. In October, 1510, he had a tournament in Greenwich Park, and a mock combat with battle-axes, in which he himself engaged with one Giot, a tall German. A week or two afterwards he went to Richmond, and proclaimed a

with whatever else could be discovered in the *Life of Dr. John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's*, . . . by Samuel Knight, D.D., Prebendary of Ely, 8vo, Lond., 1724, to which book, therefore, it is sufficient to refer.

<sup>1</sup> In a letter to the Abbot of Winchcomb, printed by Dr. Knight in the Appendix to his *Life of Colet*.



tournament on the 8th of November, in which he, with Master Charles Brandon and Master Compton, was to hold the ground during two days against all comers, with spear at tilt on the first day, and at tourney with swords on the second. Of course, he was royally victorious, and Cornelius Agrippa was, no doubt, a witness of his prowess among the Almaines, or Germans from the court of Maximilian, whom we find to have been more particularly entertained on this occasion. "The second night," Holinshed tells us<sup>1</sup>, "were divers strangers of Maximilian the emperor's court and ambassadors of Spain with the king at supper. When they had supped, the king willed them to go into the queen's chamber, who so did. In the mean time the king, with fifteen other, apparelled in Almaine jackets of crimson and purple satin, with long quartered sleeves and hosen of the same suit, their bonnets of white velvet, wrapped in flat gold of damask, with vizards and white plumes, came in with a mummary, and after a certain time that they had played with the queen and the strangers, they departed. Then suddenly entered six minstrels, richly apparelled, playing on their instruments; and then followed fourteen persons, gentlemen, all apparelled in yellow satin, cut like Almaines, bearing torches. After them came six disguised in white satin and green. . . . The first of these six was the king, the Earl of Essex, Charles Brandon, Sir Edward Howard, Sir Thos. Knevet, and Sir Henry Guilford. Then part of the gentlemen bearing torches departed and shortly returned,

<sup>1</sup> In the Chronicles under the year 1510.



after whom came in six ladies, apparelled in garments of crimson satin embroidered and traversed with cloth of gold, cut in pomegranates and yokes, stringed after the fashion of Spain. Then the six men danced with the six ladies; and after that they had danced a season, the ladies took off the men's visors, whereby they were known: whereof the queen and the strangers much praised the king, and ended the pastime."

Glad of its ending was, no doubt, Cornelius Agrippa, and most happy to return to a house where time was passed in wiser occupation. There was nothing in a royal mummary to be compared for beauty with the tall, well-shapen form and spiritual face of Agrippa's host, one of the handsomest as well as best men in the land. As for the dean's mother, Dame Christian, who lived with him, surely she was more royal than the king. "I knew in England the mother of John Colet," says her favourite, Erasmus<sup>1</sup>, in whose visits at Stepney she took rare delight, "a matron of singular piety; she had by the same husband eleven sons and as many daughters, all of which hopeful brood was snatched away from her, except her eldest son; and she lost her husband, far advanced in years. She herself being come to her ninetieth year, looked so smooth and was so cheerful that you would think she had never shed a tear, nor brought a child into the world; and (if I mistake not) she survived her son, Dean Colet. Now that which supplied a woman with so much fortitude was not learning, but piety to God." She

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 16, Lib. xxii.; but the above is Dr. Knight's translation.



had lived with her husband, Sir Henry Colet, wealthy City knight and twice lord mayor, in a mansion called the Great Place, surrounded by a moat, nearly adjoining Stepney Church. Afterwards she lived with her son John in a smaller mansion within sight of the church, that to which Cornelius went. It was bequeathed to St. Paul's School as a country retreat for the masters during times of pestilence, and now exists, in a half remodelled state, as two ample houses, adorned with an effigy of the dean, at one corner of White Horse-street and Salmon-lane.

In this house host and guest studied the works of the Apostle of the Gentiles. For the last four years the dean had been vexed by complaints against his orthodoxy. The Bishop of London, according to a divine of the next generation<sup>1</sup>, was wise, virtuous, and cunning; yet for all these three good qualities he would have made the old Dean Colet of Paul's a heretic for translating the Pater Noster into English, had not the dean been helped by the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was in trouble, and should have been burnt, said Latimer, if God had not turned the king's heart to the contrary.

Dean Colet was a heretic, as most of the better class of scholars in his day were heretics, not because he went beyond the pale of the Church, but because there was manifest in him the tendency of knowledge. After a seven years' training in his youth at Magdalene College, Oxford, during which period he studied logic and philosophy, and took degrees

<sup>1</sup> Tyndal. Works, fol. Lond., 1573, p. 318.



in arts, he went abroad for further information, and spent three or four years in France and Italy. At Oxford he had become familiar with Cicero, and had read, in Latin, Plato and Plotinus. Of Greek he knew nothing, because, even in England, the university cry was *Cave a Græcis, ne fias hæreticus*—Learn Greek and turn heretic. At Paris, Colet became acquainted with Budæus, and was for the first time introduced to Erasmus; in Italy he joined his countrymen, Linacre, Grocyn, Lilly, and Latimer, who were at work on the heretical tongue, and acquired such knowledge as to read the ancient fathers, Origen, Cyprian, Ambrose, and Jerome; also St. Augustine, of whom he had but a mean opinion. He looked into Duns Scotus and Thomas Aquinas, studied civil and canon law, and did not neglect what English poetry there was. He had early received rectories through family interest, and, while away from home, was made Prebendary of York and Canon of St. Martin's-le-Grand. On his return, after a short stay with his parents at Stepney, he went to Oxford, and there read, without stipend or reward, lectures on his favourite subject, the Epistles of St. Paul, to a great concourse. These lectures were continued during three successive years, in one of which Erasmus came to Oxford and renewed his friendship with John Colet. After receiving more preferment on account of his connexions, in 1504 Colet commenced D.D., and was made in the next year, without any application made by him or on his behalf, Dean of St. Paul's. He at once began to reform the cathedral discipline. For the Latin lectures read to



the clergy only, on scholastic theology, he substituted the new practice of giving to all comers divinity lectures on Sundays and festivals, preaching commonly himself—in Latin, indeed—but with a grace and earnestness that, from a man comely as he was, served as mute appeal even to the hearts of the most ignorant. For the piety and acuteness of these lectures, he was renowned as one of the best orators of his time. His beauty, his serenity, the veneration inspired by his every word and gesture, increased their effect<sup>1</sup>. By such means inquiry into Holy Scripture was substituted at St. Paul's Cathedral for an idle school divinity. When Colet preached, he commonly was to be found expounding the Epistles of St. Paul, "which contain the fundamental doctrines of salvation, and with which, we are told, he was to that degree enamoured that he seemed to be wholly wrapped up in them." Colet expressed great contempt for religious houses and the lives commonly led by monks; he set forth the danger of an unmarried clergy, spoke angrily of immorality and covetousness in priests, spoke against auricular confession, warned against image worship, and called irreverent the thoughtless, hurried repetition of a stated quantity of psalm or prayer. He also collected many passages from the Fathers which displayed modern corruptions in the Church. He did not believe in purgatory. Such opinions, and his free way of expressing them, made the good dean obnoxious to the clergy. But

<sup>1</sup> Pauli Jovii. *Descriptio Britanniae, Scotiae, Hiberniae et Orcadum*, ed. Venet., 1548, p. 45. Erasmus says of his friend "Accesserat his fortunæ commodis corpus elegans ac procerum."



for the good sense of Archbishop Warham evil consequences might have followed. As it was, when Agrippa lodged with him, Colet was preparing to bestow his ample fortune upon the foundation of a grammar school—the first in which the dreaded Greek was systematically taught to English boys. He chose a friend who was a good Greek scholar, William Lilly, for the first head master, and MDX. was the date of foundation upon the inscription on the school wall facing the cathedral.

We see, then, sympathy enough between Cornelius and his host the dean. There was one aspiration common to them both. Colet, we are told by Erasmus, had naturally a spirit exceeding high and impatient of the least injury and affront. He was also, by the same bent of nature, too much addicted to love, and luxury, and sleep, and mightily disposed to an air of freedom and jocoseness; nor was he wholly free from a delight in money. In company or with ladies his joyous nature would break loose, therefore he preferred talking Latin with a friend, so that he might avoid idle discourse at table. He ate only one meal daily, and then but of one dish, taking a draught or two of beer, and refraining commonly from wine, for which he had, when it was very good, great relish. He had always guests at table, few and fit, and though his provision for them was frugal, yet was it in all its appointments very agreeable and neat. He did not sit long over meat. His custom was that, after the first grace, a boy with a good voice should read aloud a chapter out of an epistle of St. Paul, or from the Proverbs. Then he would



begin a pleasant conversation on some point in it, and if the talk grew dull would change the theme. There never was a man with a more flowing wit, and therefore he delighted in companionship with lively people, but he turned his light and cheerful stories always to a serious and philosophic use. With a congenial friend he gladly would prolong discourse until late in the evening. He loved neatness and cleanliness in books, furniture, entertainments, apparel, and goods, but he despised state, and, for himself, wore only black clothes, though others of the higher clergy walked in purple raiment. His upper garment was made of plain woollen, and in cold weather he had it lined with fur. His ecclesiastical income he spent on the wants of his family and hospitality; his private estate, which was large, he put only to charitable uses, finally devoting it, as before said, to the foundation of a school. This school he did not, in the narrow spirit of so many founders, open only to a certain section of the people, but to the whole country, and he took thought to provide in its first rules for the necessities of extension and improvements, and for whatever changes of plan might, by the progress of society, be made to appear proper to its future rulers. Colet was a great lover of little children, admiring the pretty innocence and simplicity in them, and he would often observe how they had been set before us by the Saviour for an example. Nevertheless, he shared the common notion of his time upon the propriety of not sparing the rod on schoolboys, and



even suffered boys in his school, who were new comers, to be flogged severely upon little provocation, for the mere purpose of laying in their minds the foundation of what was supposed to be a wholesome awe.

Such being Dean Colet's character, it will be seen that he was able very perfectly to sympathise with the high aspirations of Cornelius, and that he did what he could to direct and purify them in accordance with his own sense of all that was great and good, by setting the young man to work on the Epistles of St. Paul. In a contempt of all that was most clearly corrupt and unreasonable in Church discipline, and a resolve to exercise freely the right of independent study, whether at Greek or any other branch of knowledge that was scouted by the ignorant, the young German doctor could only have been strengthened by his English host. Let us not omit here to remark how insensibly, and as it were without volition of his own, the life of Agrippa has begun to run in a strong current against priestcraft. He has not merely roused against himself as a student the bad spirit of monkery as represented in the person of Catilinet, but no sooner has he been turned back by Catilinet from the career of his choice, and forced on a career of action, than he is put on the high road to excommunication by the Emperor, who happens to be struggling with the Pope. As one of the Pope's antagonists, he is despatched to England, and when there the friendship he wins is indeed that of one of the best men of his time, but one against



whom, nevertheless, suit had been opened by his bishop on account of heresy, and who had been running great risk of a martyrdom.

From Dean Colet's house Cornelius wrote a letter of Expostulation on the subject of his condemned Exposition of the Book on the Mirific Word, to John Catilinet, Doctor of Theology, Provincial of the Franciscan Brothers throughout Burgundy<sup>1</sup>. It is full of character, and won for the writer, no doubt, Colet's respect, as it will that of any reader. Considering the provocation and the disappointment suffered, it is, though just a little caustic, marvellously gentle. Thus it runs:

"It is the part of a Christian to do deeds of charity, and to speak truth, which he who fails to do, wanders so far from Christ as to become altogether undeserving of the Christian name. I write this to you, good Father, moved by that very charity and truth (in which we ought all to be joined, as members of the same body, whose head is Christ), not out of any false opinion, envy, or hatred, which should be put far away from Christian men. I will say, however, with your leave, that you, by many falsehoods poured out before public assemblies, have not feared, indeed have striven your utmost, to excite envy and hatred against me upon a matter wherein I deserved no blame.

<sup>1</sup> First published appended to the first edition of Agrippa's "*De Nobilitate et Præcellentia Fæminei Sexus* (Mense Maio, 1532), as Henrici Cornelii Agrippæ Expostulatio super Expositione sua in librum de Verbo Mirifico cum Joanne Catilineti fratrum Franciscanorum per Burgundiam provinciali ministro sacre Theologiæ doctori." From this edition, fol. sig. D-D iiiii., it is here translated.



I wonder, therefore, by what right, while I was far away there in Burgundy, an unknown wayfarer, always harmless towards all, seeking of no one more than honour for desert, you were moved to calumniate me, you who for your calling's sake should, as Paul teaches the Romans<sup>1</sup>, hate evil and cleave to good, be kindly affectioned towards others, blessing and cursing not, overcome evil with good, and as much as lieth in you live peaceably with all men. Truly you have not done what is worthy of your calling, or of a Christian teacher, who should exhort the people in the name of Christ to those things that are Christ's, to the works of the spirit—charity and peace, and the other things which Paul recounts to the Galatians<sup>2</sup>. For he who persuades to hatred, wrath, strife, rivalry, enmity, does not persuade to things of the spirit but things of the flesh, than which nothing should be more strange to the Christian, and nothing more incongruous than for a Christian doctor to teach and incite to them. For Christ, the author of our religion, and the apostles, and the whole sacred writings, as you must know better than I, call us to peace and quietness. Therefore John the Evangelist<sup>3</sup> reports Christ to have said to his disciples, Peace I give unto you, my peace I leave with you. And Paul says to the Hebrews<sup>4</sup>, Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Not only to exhort men to this peace, but even to entreat

<sup>1</sup> Romans, ch. 12. I cite the texts as they are cited by Agrippa in his margin.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians, ch. 5.

<sup>3</sup> John, ch. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Hebrews, ch. 12.



them, ought to be your duty and also mine. Does not the apostle say to the Ephesians<sup>1</sup>, Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; and a little after, Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking be put away from you? And in his epistle to the Corinthians<sup>2</sup>, he so detests a railer, that he judges it improper to sit at meat with him. In the same epistle, not long afterwards<sup>3</sup>, he puts revilers among those who shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. And he teaches the same to the Colossians, saying, Put away anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Peter also<sup>4</sup> teaches, that he who would love life and see good days, let him restrain his tongue from evil. And James<sup>5</sup> says, Speak not evil one of another, brethren. Thus we are taught everywhere by the apostles to abstain from maledictions and offences, which are seeds of ill-will and discord of such kind as you have very recently been scattering against me before a people and a prince, when, a little before this last past festival of Easter, in Ghent, of Flanders, before our most illustrious princess and all the nobles of the court, called to deliver gravely and wisely Quadragesimal discourses, you broke out, forgetful of Christian modesty, and in full assembly interrupting the Gospel of Christ, into open abuse and false calumny of me, until you led many to hate me and wish me ill, through false opinion. It is thus that even some who were before friends of my name, now have their minds averted

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians, ch. 4.    <sup>2</sup> I. Corinthians, ch. 5.    <sup>3</sup> I. Corinthians, ch. 6.

<sup>4</sup> I. Peter, ch. 3.

<sup>5</sup> James, ch. 4.



from me, so taught by your most false fancies and truculent lies, uttered in those much-talked-of assemblies, in the which you employed against me maledictions and opprobrious words of shame. For among other things you called me before that numerous audience once and again a Judaising heretic, who introduced into Christian schools the most wicked, damnable, and prohibited art of the Cabala, who, in contempt of the holy fathers and the doctors of the Church preferred the rabbis of the Jews, and twisted sacred letters to the arts of heresy and of the Talmud. But I am a Christian; neither death nor life shall separate me from the faith of Christ, and I prefer to all others Christian teachers, although I do not despise the rabbis of the Jews, and if, as it may be, I shall prove to have erred, yet I desire not to be a heretic, nor do I intend to Judaize, and it is so far from me to teach arts damnable and prohibited, that I would not so much as learn them. The sacred scriptures I nowhere distort, but according to the divers expositions of divers doctors, take them in divers ways for witness. I have not taught heretical arts and errors of the Jews, but I have expounded, by long toil and vigils, the Christian and Catholic book entitled, *On the Mirific Word*, of the Christian Doctor John Reuchlin of Pfortzheim, not secretly in closets, but in the public schools, before a public audience, in public prelections which I held gratuitously in honour of the most illustrious Princess Margaret, and of all that was studious in Dôle; nor were there wanting in my audiences men who were most grave and learned, as well



the parliament of Dôle, the venerable fathers of the senatorial rank, as also the masters in that University, the most learned doctors, and the ordinary readers, among whom the reverend Vice-Chancellor Verner, conservator of the church at Dôle, dean, doctor in each faculty, did not omit attendance at a single lecture. But you to whom I was utterly unknown, who were never present at one lecture, and never heard me elsewhere speaking privately about these things—who never, so far as I know, have seen me—yet have dared to utter against me an unjust opinion, that had better been omitted, and might have been, and ought to have been, not only because it is most false, but also because it is not fit that a religious man should disseminate among most serious and sacred Christian congregations such calumnies and contumelies, and they altogether misbecome the divine office of the preacher. For to disperse contempt, cursing and hatred is not the work of sincerity and speaking in the place of Christ, but in a manner (I employ the words of Paul<sup>1</sup>) to handle the word of God deceitfully, which that great Apostle, set apart for the Gentiles, says that he had never done, and which certainly ought never to be done by any one who seeks to be a Christian teacher. You nevertheless have done this without cause and without fault on my part, you have contrived evil against me, robbed me of my good reputation, blotted my good name with the impurity of your hypocrisy, and out of the rancour of your mind have borne false witness against me. For Christ says, in Mat-

<sup>1</sup> II. Corinthians, ch. 4.



thew<sup>1</sup>: Whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. But you have marked me not with an uncertain reproach, or the name of folly, but, suspicious beyond measure, on account of your ignorance of the word Cabalism, and want of information about Hebrew dogmata, have called me heretic and Judaiser, and have moreover adjudged me to the fire. But I rejoice that I bear this burden for the sake of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and am esteemed as a sheep to the slaughter, or held worthy to suffer rebuke for that mirific word, the name, I say, of Jesus. By that pentagram in Matthew<sup>2</sup>, happiness is promised to those of whom all manner of evil is said falsely, and who are persecuted for His name's sake. And Peter calls those happy who are reproached for the name of Christ.

“What part with the Jews have I who confess Christ Jesus the son of God<sup>3</sup>, and most devoutly worship Him? What part with heretics have I who observe with my best strength and teach the unity of the Church and its most salutary precepts, and the rites of sacred councils and canons by which faith is assured and cleansed from heretical iniquity? Those by whom I was heard can know—those, I say, most upright and learned men can judge and bear witness if ever anything was said by me offensive to the Christian faith and Church, unless perchance you mean to say that they shared with me my Judaising and my heresy. For it would have been neither decorous nor

<sup>1</sup> Matthew, ch. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew, ch. 3.

<sup>3</sup> I. Peter, ch. 4.



Christian in them, hearing publicly, to have tolerated by silence, to have consented with by not contradicting, and, what is more, to have approved by rewarding, what it was base, Judaical, and heretical in me to have read; for this reading was the reason of their receiving me into the college, and giving me an ordinary lectureship, the position of regent, and a salary. This evil speaking is not then against me only, but against the whole senate of the parliament, and against the whole University of Dôle. See into what pit you have cast yourself, who while you wished to cut me up with calumny have cheated with false stories a princess, her nobles, and all her court—have exposed to ridicule a senate and an university—have profaned also the word of God. Was this preaching the gospel of Christ before so illustrious a princess and court? Was this the office of a pious and religious brother? Is it thus a brother is corrected? Grant now that I, still a youth, not yet twenty-three years of age, had brought forward in my lectures some matter imprudently, and was to be reprehended for it (though James says<sup>1</sup>, that if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man), yet this ought to have been done far otherwise, and in a more pious and Christian way than you adopted; for while you lived in the town of Gray, and journeyed frequently to Dôle, if I seemed to you to have spoken ill, or to have interpreted childishly, why did you not come to me, why did you not rebuke me, why did you not reason with me of my error? For heresy, for Judaism, you did

<sup>1</sup> James, ch. 3.



not check me to my face, but you wished at Ghent, in Flanders, to deliver me over, lecturing at Dôle, in Burgundy, two hundred miles away, to the ill-will of all, before the princess and her court, that by so exciting against me the hate of the princess and her courtiers you might indirectly (as it is said) cause my expulsion from the whole of Burgundy. Who does not see here a treachery laid open, calumny manifest, a spite detected? Had I sinned, it would have become you to rebuke me in another manner, and as Paul instructs in the Epistle to the Galatians<sup>1</sup>, with these words : Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness. And he says also to the Thessalonians<sup>2</sup>, Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother. This fraternal and evangelical manner of admonition would have become you, a religious man bearing the name of Brother, as having professed the rule of the Franciscan brethren, and it would have been of much advantage to me, while it would have preserved for me the grace and favour of the princess and of others. Spare me then, henceforward, I entreat; let there be an end of reproaches and detraction; let there be an end of the discourses that provoke to hate and cripple charity; exhort to mutual benevolence and concord those whom you have made unfriendly to me; restore to me the wholeness of my reputation; restore to me my good and innocent name; restore publicly what you have publicly destroyed; restore to me those things which you have

<sup>1</sup> Galatians, ch. 6.<sup>2</sup> Thessalonians, ch. 3.



snatched away by cruel fraud and wicked injustice. Go not before you are reconciled with me, your brother in Jesus Christ, with a stubborn heart resisting the divine spirit, to celebrate the divine mysteries of the mass, and eat the body of Christ to your own damnation. By that holy sacrament I conjure you to restore, for we are both Christians and members of Christ, as Paul says to the Romans, one body in Christ; to separate us and to make dissension what is it but to divide Christ's body, and in this body you are a noble and a chief member, who are doctor of theology, and have made profession of the rule of St. Francis. I also work in the same body, and though I am but a mean member, yet I am a Christian, and learn daily with pleasure from great masters, of whom you are one, the things that belong to our religion, wherein undoubtedly I delight much; let us, therefore, love one another. In this, as the apostle says<sup>1</sup>, is the fulfilling of the law; nothing is more excellent than truth and charity. For the apostle writes to the Galatians<sup>2</sup>, If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.

“These few words I write to you, good father, not moved by hatred, ill-will, or anger, but conscious of my own innocence, in a good and pious temper, studious of love; and the charity that I am asking you to show, the same I offer; which to refuse—or to spurn this that I have written—can neither be a part of your profession or your dignity; for he who refuses charity refuses God.

<sup>1</sup> Romans, ch. 13.

<sup>2</sup> Galatians, ch. 5.



For God, the evangelist witnesses<sup>1</sup>, is love. But if for talmudical and cabalistical studies which you distrust, or for any other things which may have been erroneously reported to you by small, unskilful persons, or by persons little friendly to me, you have conceived any suspicion of me, I will both clear and justify myself to you most amply. Farewell. From London, the famous emporium of England. In the year 1510."

Excellent preaching to a rock. A letter running over with the recent study of St. Paul, and in which there is the Christian spirit scarcely less to be admired for the drop or two of human bitterness infused into it. Still there is the generous aspiration, the fond yearning upward of a contemplative German youth, who knows that there is vigour in his striving. With the vigour, weakness. Every one must feel that with such letters as this which we have just read it is vain for any man to hope to grapple with the Catilines of the world. Agrippa began life upon enchanted ground, the disenchantment is at hand. Against established form and rule his aspirations, noble as they are and true in essence, certain as it is that they and many others like them helped society to better days, seem to be powerless. Everywhere he finds men treating accepted opinions as if they were the height and depth of knowledge, using them in a thousand forms as arguments against every far-reaching speculation. The day will come when we shall find him, stung to the quick, hurriedly and angrily turning the tables upon the entire con-

<sup>1</sup> I. John, ch. 4.



ference of near-sighted pundits, and hunting them all down with their own cry of Vanity, in the last years of his vexation. The days of a simple aspiration are already numbered, and the days of provocation are begun.

Having finished his appointed work in England, Agrippa returned to Germany, and—probably entitled to a month or two of holiday—joined his domestic circle in Cologne. Maximilian would soon find for him fresh employment, since the Emperor was busy, and had need of all heads and all hands that could be made available. Cologne was to the young Agrippa but a place of rest for a few months, where he could gossip at ease with his wife, his father, and his mother. His parents, having given him his taste for astronomy, could sympathise with at least some part of his studies<sup>1</sup>. He was happy as a son and as a husband, and found rest at home.

But inasmuch as an entire idleness is a great spoiler of rest, Cornelius undertook also to amuse his more learned fellow-townsmen by delivering the lectures called Quodlibetal (or What-you-Will), on questions of Divinity<sup>2</sup>. I do not know anything more than can be guessed about these Quodlibetal divinity lectures at the Cologne University. It is reasonable, however, to suppose that they were like the Quodlibet books—miscellanies

<sup>1</sup> *De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum*, cap. xxx. *De Astronomia* (ed. Septemb. 1532, p. 79): "Ego quoque hanc artem a parentibus puer imbibi."

<sup>2</sup> *Ex Britannia autem recedens, apud Colonienses meos coram universo studio, totoque Theologico cœtu, Theologica placita (quæ vos vocabulo non admodum Latino Quodlibeta dicitis) haud non Theologice declamavi.* *Def. Prop. de Monog. B. Annæ.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 597.



meant to show, by the variety of topics treated and the random way of treatment, a great range of agreeable or useful reading. Whatever they may have been, the Doctor of Dôle delivered the Quodlibetal lectures while upon this visit to his family, and he must have heard much talk, too, upon interesting matters, for the pronunciation against Reuchlin, on the part of the Cologne theologians, was just then (1511) growing to a head, and rabbinical books were the main topic of discussion in the University. Thus the case stood. One Pfefferkorn, a Cologne Jew, turned orthodox priest, and bitter, as most converts are, against the brotherhood he had deserted, had, in the year 1507, exhorted Jews to become Christians in a book, published at Cologne, called a *Speculum*. In 1509 another Jew, turned orthodox priest, Victor von Carben, published, with the same object, also at Cologne, a golden work, an *Opus Aureum*. In the same year he held public disputations with the Jews (of course discomfiting them) in the house of Hermann Hass of Cologne, at Poppelsdorf. Pfefferkorn and his ally were for the destruction of all Jewish literature as so much blasphemy, and they attacked Reuchlin, of course, as the chief upholder of the learning they contemned. Pfefferkorn and Reuchlin became chiefs in a great tilt before the eyes of Europe. The matter in dispute was put thus at the time in the form of what was called a double *Crinomenon*:

I. Whether all Hebrew books, except the Bible, are to be abolished, burnt?



Reuchlin denies. Pfefferkorn affirms.

II. Whether the Cabala propounded by Reuchlin be contrary to the word of God?

Pfefferkorn affirms. Reuchlin denies<sup>1</sup>.

In 1509 an order was extracted from Maximilian, then in camp at Padua, to John Pfefferkorn of Cologne, commanding him to search out Jewish books and extirpate them. In 1510 a like order was sent to Uriel, Archbishop of Mayence, who forwarded to Pfefferkorn, from Aschaffenburg, a list of the books he had seized, and also, sensible man, wrote to ask Reuchlin which he might properly destroy after he had seized them. A month or two afterwards instructions were obtained from Maximilian to Jacob Hochstraten, inquisitor of Cologne, Victor von Carben, priest, and John Reuchlin, doctor of laws, informing them of the powers conferred on Uriel, Archbishop of Mayence<sup>2</sup>, and ordering them all to furnish him with counsel. In 1509 Pfefferkorn had attacked Reuchlin as a Cabalist and promoter of blasphemy in his *Handspiegel*, to whom, on the 6th of October, Reuchlin replied by the publication of his *Augenspiegel*. About this famous book, which they eventually condemned and burnt, and about Reuchlin's letters, on the same topic, to Conrad Koellin, then just published, the theologians of his native town were mainly

<sup>1</sup> This and the other notes on the controversy as it stood at this time in Cologne I take from the *Prodromus Historiæ Universitatis Coloniensis, quo exhibetur Synopsis actorum et scriptorum a Facultate Theologica pro Eccl. Cath. et Republ.* of Joseph Harzheim (4to, Cologne, 1759).

<sup>2</sup> This Uriel is said afterwards to have died of regret, because when he once by chance caught the cellarer at Aschaffenburg stealing his wine, he gave him a blow on the head with the cooper's adze that killed him.



occupied when young Agrippa, fresh from the stripes of Catilinet, spent his holiday among them. There was no escaping from the quarrel. If the young doctor turned from priests to citizens he found among them other matter for anxiety. The discontent of the townspeople with their chief men was ripening towards rebellion, and only two years afterwards the heads of senators were rolling in the Grass-market<sup>1</sup>.

There was no rest for Cornelius—he is now aged twenty-five—except in his own quiet communion with wife and parents; and from that he was soon taken by the summons to lay by his doctor's cap and, taking up his sword, join instantly the army of the Emperor in Italy.

<sup>1</sup> *Mutius de Germanorum Prima Origine . . . . ad mensem Augustum anni 1530. Lib. xxx. p. 356.*



## CHAPTER XIII.

## SERVICE IN THE FIELD—WITH THE COUNCIL AT PISA.

SHINING in mail, Cornelius Agrippa is at Trent in the spring or early summer of the year 1511, preparing to escort some thousand of gold pieces to the camp of Maximilian at Verona<sup>1</sup>. Doctor of divinity, he has resumed field service; and certainly a young doctor in arms is not to be marvelled at in 1511, when the year preceding saw an aged pope with harness on his back. The tastes of Cornelius are not military. His friend at Trent is George Neideck, the bishop, and from Trent he writes to his early friend Landulph in the old patronising tone. Landulph has by this time acquired a wife, to whom he refers by the—perhaps pet—name of Pentheseilea; also a little boy, Camille, and a girl-baby, Prudence<sup>2</sup>. Landulph, friend of Agrippa's youth, must really be helped, since he is still waiting for a favourable opening in life, living, apparently in no very satisfactory manner, on his private means. The Eagles have crossed

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. i. p. 705.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 34, Lib. i. p. 709.



the Alps. Agrippa joins them, and Landulph must join them too. The ingenious soldier-scholar has again a scheme by which he and his friend are both to compass glory, praise, and profit. If Landulph, hastening by sail and oar, will only meet Cornelius at the lodging of the Bishop of Trent, in Verona, he will know the plan<sup>1</sup>. What is the mystery? No more than that the learned captain sees how he shall compass for himself and for his friend a couple of Italian professorships<sup>2</sup>.

With a scheme; then, like this in his head, Cornelius accompanied the chest of gold to Maximilian's Italian head-quarters at Verona. Verona was one of the towns promised him by the league of Cambray, and the one upon the possession of which he laid most stress in all public or underhand negotiations. The gold crowns were, I suspect, French coin. On the 17th of November in the preceding year, the exigencies of their relative positions had caused Maximilian and Louis to execute, at Blois, a treaty of strict mutual assistance. It was agreed then that Maximilian should receive from France a hundred thousand ducats in the spring for military use in Italy, and was to cross the Alps in person with three thousand riders and ten thousand foot, which were to join twelve hundred lances and eight thousand foot supplied by Louis. Maximilian, however, was a very much embarrassed prince. He could not raise the necessary men,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. i.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 30, Lib. i. p. 707. It is distinctly implied in the second sentence, which should be compared with language used in the preceding letters.



and did not cross the Alps himself, but sent the money to Verona, and despatched the Duke of Brunswick, late in spring, with a small corps to overrun the Friuli. Wretchedly supported by the Emperor, the little army at Verona—which sometimes had to exist a whole week without bread or wine—must have delighted in the rumble of the wheels of the money-cart. It had—and Cornelius, who joined it, had—nothing to do with the Duke of Brunswick, who re-crossed the Alps again at the approach of winter, and left to these permanent troops, co-operating with the French, the burden of incessant toil. Famine would now and then breed plagues among them, which then spread beyond the German camp among the Frenchmen. The cruel incidents of war were perpetually present to men holding what was scarcely to be called their own on hostile ground, and at all seasons harassed by a busy enemy. When history may tell us only now and then of an important battle during any period of this long and murderous Italian struggle, which began with nothing higher than a royal lust of plunder, the contemporary chronicles are full of petty details frightful to contemplate<sup>1</sup>. Because Cornelius was contemplative, he was quite unfit to fight in such a cause at such a time. He owed service to Cæsar, and he paid it; required to fight, he showed that he possessed the physical courage in which few men who are young and noble ever

<sup>1</sup> Of the same period Anquetil writes, "Pendant ces arrangements la guerre se faisait à outrance en Italie par petites actions, souvent plus meurtrières que les grandes batailles." A few points in this part of the narrative rest upon the *Chronique de Bayart par le Loyal Serviteur*, ch. xlv.-xlix.



have been found deficient. He won in this year, 1811, or the year following—most likely the year following—a knighthood in the field. Nevertheless, he felt that he was not in his own true position<sup>1</sup>. The salary paid to him (or owing to him) for seven years from the Imperial government was that of a soldier. “I was for several years,” he afterwards wrote, “by the Emperor’s command, and by my calling, a soldier. I followed the camp of the Emperor and the King” (of France): “in many conflicts gave no sluggish help: before my face went death, and I followed, the minister of death, my right hand soaked in blood, my left dividing spoil: my belly was filled with the prey, and the way of my feet was over corpses of the slain: so I was made forgetful of my inmost honour, and wrapped round fifteenfold in Tartarean shade<sup>2</sup>.” So wrote the man of his Italian war service, who rode out to it dreaming of glory in the shape of a professor’s chair at Pavia, and who, no doubt, thanked heartily the Cardinal of Santa Croce, when, towards the end of the first summer’s campaign in arms, he invited the young doctor Cornelius Agrippa to a campaign, which proved but a very brief one, of a more congenial sort, as member of the Council then about to meet at Pisa<sup>3</sup>. The acceptance of this invitation was the climax of Agrippa’s opposition to the Pope.

<sup>1</sup> See next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. ii. p. 736.

<sup>3</sup> *Def. Prop. de B. Ann. Monog.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 596. “Exinde a Maximiliano Cæsare contra Venetos destinatus, in ipsis castris, hostiles inter turbas, plebemque cruentam, a sacris lectionibus non destiti, donec per Reverendissimum Cardinalem Sanctæ Crucis, in Pisanum Concilium receptus, nactusque si concilium illud prosperasset, egregiam illustrandorum studiorum meorum occasionem.”



The Council of Pisa was begotten at Tours of an ecclesiastical assembly summoned by King Louis XII. and attended by the Bishop of Gurk on the part of Maximilian, to consider whether it was lawful in an Emperor and King to resist Papal aggression. An affirmative answer led to a revival in France of the pragmatic sanction of Charles VII., diminishing Church patronage, and induced a request on the part of the assembly that a general Council might be summoned to meet at Pisa for the ostensible purpose of reforming ecclesiastical abuses. Maximilian seconded warmly these proceedings, proposed for Germany a similar pragmatic sanction, and in a manifesto from his own hand said, "As there is evident necessity for the establishment of due order and decency both in the ecclesiastical and temporal state, I have resolved to call a general council, without which nothing permanent can be effected." A general council of German bishops met, therefore, at Augsburg, but it refused in any way to co-operate for the production of divisions in the Church. It was but by a certain number of Italian and French ecclesiastics, backed with the authority of Maximilian and Louis, that the Council of Pisa was appointed "to reform the churches in their head and in their limbs, also to punish the openly guilty who had left no hope of amendment and had long given great annoyance to the Catholic Church." The formal summons of the Council was signed by nine cardinals, of whom Bernardine Carvajal, the Cardinal of Santa Croce, was the first. They grounded their right to issue such a summons partly on



their rank as head, limbs, and defenders of the Church, partly on the necessity of such assemblies being held from time to time and on the absence of all hope of right ecclesiastical assistance from the Pope. They chose for the place of meeting, Pisa, because it was a neutral spot, against which, as a locality, the Pope could not justly complain, and before their appointed council they required Pope Julius himself to appear by the first day of September; but as nobody liked to serve the summons on his Holiness, copies of it were affixed to the church doors in Rimini and other great Italian towns.

To this schismatic council Julius appointed an opponent, in a council summoned by himself to meet at Rome in the church of the Lateran. Of the five Italian cardinals who had publicly insulted him he named three as the most obdurate, the Cardinal of Santa Croce, spiritual head of the opposing movement, being of course one, and summoned them on pain of being stripped of all ecclesiastical preferment. The other two he simply warned and summoned to the council in the Lateran.

Thus we see that Cornelius, in accepting the post of Theologist to the Council of Pisa, was again fingering the pitch of heresy with orthodox intentions. Bernardine Carvajal, his patron, chose him not only because he was an able, bold, young doctor, known to many of the learned, though he had not yet published any writings, as a person of great power and promise, but no doubt, also, because he was a German. Not one German bishop would consent to go to Pisa; it was well as far as possible



to cover this deficiency, and in Cornelius he found a doctor who would represent the German party.

Carvajal was a Spanish priest, and very active. His brother had been ambassador, in Portugal, of Ferdinand the Catholic. He had himself studied for the Church, partly in Spain, partly in Italy, and being at the Papal court, in Italy he had been made nuncio to Spain by Innocent VIII. Ferdinand and Isabella then sent him as ambassador to Rome. In 1493, Alexander VI. made him Cardinal di Santa Croce, he being then Bishop of Carthage. He had before held the sees of Astorgas and Badajoz, afterwards he held those of Siguenzia and Placentia. Julius II. sent him to Germany as legate on Italian business, and being at the court of Maximilian,—where he perhaps saw Agrippa, then being despatched to England,—Carvajal was led to forsake the Pope, and to take the active part in subsequent affairs which placed him at the head of the Church party, summoning its chiefs to Pisa. He then held the see of Sabina, one of the chief Italian bishoprics, having a cardinal's hat connected with its mitre, and he was by this office the third in rank of the Pope's six assistant bishops.

Consenting, then, to the offers of this chief, Cornelius repaired to Pisa towards the close of summer, and in so doing braved the terror of the Pope's excommunication. For on the twenty-sixth of July, 1511, Pope Julius had summoned to submission the three cardinals, Carvajal, Cardinal of Santa Croce, William of Narbonne, and Francis Cusentinus, their adherents, entertainers, and all



helpers whatsoever, on pain of anathema, as guilty of heresy, schism, and *lèse majesté*. Nevertheless the Council was formed, and Cornelius Agrippa joined it.

Little was done. On the first of September the Council opened, but was, as a Church assembly, overmatched completely by the Papal power. The councillors were mobbed by the rabble of the town, and, after meeting twice in conclave, found it necessary to adjourn to Milan, every man getting to Milan as he could, across a hostile province. They made some faint attempts to resume sittings in Milan, and did in the following year—but with that we have nothing here to do—settle for a while in France. Cornelius seems to have earned some credit by displaying his ability of many kinds at Pisa. He taught Plato in the University. He delivered also a public Oration introductory to lectures upon Plato's Banquet; the topic of the Oration being Love, divine and human. His office, which is said to have been that of Theologian to the Council<sup>1</sup>, ceased when Pisa was abandoned. On the twenty-fourth of October, Carvajal was deprived of his cardinalate and his see<sup>2</sup>. He was not fully reinstated in his offices until the accession of the next Pope, Leo X., under whose rule he prospered during the remainder of his days. Cornelius returned to military work from his brief theological excursion, with the formal excommunication of the Pope declared against himself and his discomfited associates.

<sup>1</sup> In *Bayle's Dict.*; but it is a guess of Bayle's.

<sup>2</sup> *Annales Eccles. Od. Raynaldi*. Tom. xi. p. 572, et seq.



Nevertheless he is not much distressed. We find him not forsaken by his kind, for we next hear of him flattered by a courtly friend, who finding from the barber that he is still in Gravellona, lays at his feet, with a magnificent humility, two bundles of home-grown asparagus<sup>1</sup>. We also read a letter of thanks and encouragement to an ingenious poet, who has forwarded to him for perusal some extremely stinging satires on his Holiness<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 26 and 27, Lib. i.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 28, Lib. i.



## CHAPTER XIV.

## DOCTOR AND KNIGHT-AT-ARMS.

THE war in Italy continued. Bologna had been taken for the French. Towards Christmas, 1511, a torrent of Swiss, carrying the great standard inscribed "Defenders of the Church, and subduers of Princes," had been poured by the Pope into the Milanese territory, had swept the French and German troops before them, and had marched upon the capital, from which they were diverted by the wit rather than the arms of the new governor of Milan, the gallant young Gaston de Foix, nephew to Louis. The Pope had been industrious. Recovering from a most dangerous illness, which prostrated him when his opponents were first opening their Pisan Council, he obtained the help not only of Ferdinand of Aragon, but also of the son-in-law of Ferdinand, Henry VIII. of England. What Maximilian had feared then came to pass. With these princes were joined the Venetians and some other Italian leaders, anxious to expel the French. Spanish troops were approaching on the side of Naples. Henry VIII., flattered by



the title of Defender of the Faith, was preparing to make a serious diversion by invading France. Maximilian paused; and, while he paused, the Pope plied him with promises. The Emperor became cold in the quarrel of the French. Nevertheless there were still his German bands in Italy, and with them there was Cornelius Agrippa. With Jacob von Empser for their leader, they were at the command of the chivalrous young general Gaston de Foix, who, hurrying to Bologna, took there the Pope's forces by surprise, and raised the siege of the town; then hastened to Brescia, and, after a fierce struggle, wrested Brescia from the Venetians; marched then to Ravenna, and on Easter-day, in the year 1511, overthrew the army of the Pope: but, when the battle was won, perished in a hasty charge. With him—though he was but a youth of one or two and twenty—fell for a time the cause of France in Italy. Had he lived, he would assuredly have taken Rome. He fell, and his successor in command, when he had made himself safe in Ravenna, waited for instructions to be sent from Paris. Maximilian had deserted his ally. Before the battle of Ravenna, orders had been issued for the departure of the German troops out of the French army, but von Empser, their leader, generously urged upon Gaston that France should give battle, and use his services while he was still there to offer them. From that date the defection of the Germans went on rapidly. Maximilian was about to pass from alliance with France into enmity, and to participate with the King of England in the imminent invasion of the



territories of King Louis. Such changes of side, founded upon motives rarely honourable, form throughout a noticeable feature in the history of these Italian struggles. In what way did they affect the fortunes of Cornelius Agrippa?

He seems to have released himself as much as possible out of the whole web of state policy. Not only did he remain in Italy, where he had found several learned friends, many of them being persons of high social importance, and where he had also obtained a patron in the Marquis of Monferrat, but he seems also to have abided, if he still served as a soldier, by the cause he had gone thither to maintain, as long as he could do so without formal disloyalty. In the summer of the year 1512, Maximilian allowed passage through the Tyrol to a body of eighteen thousand Swiss, who were main instruments in the expulsion of the French from Italy. Jacob von Empser was still holding by the cause of France as if it were his master's, and when news came of the descent meditated by the Swiss and the Venetians, he was stationed with a little garrison in Pavia. Cornelius was in Pavia too. The Swiss, Venetians, and troops of the Pope advanced, numerous and powerful, against the wreck of the French army, which was soon compelled to betake itself also to Pavia for refuge. There it made speed to add a bridge of boats to the stone bridge already existing, with the intention of so opening for themselves a way of flight, should further flight be necessary. All was done that could be done in two days for defence of the town-



walls and gates; but in two days the Swiss were at the gates, and not long afterwards, by unknown means obtained an entrance through the castle, and were in the market-place. A deadly struggle then ensued; many united with the Chevalier Bayard to keep the enemy in check while the retreat of the French army was commenced across the bridge of boats. Presently word came that in small boats the Swiss were crossing, that escape would soon be made impossible;—and the retreat over the bridge was hurried, under the protection of a body of three hundred German soldiers, who defended the approaches. The cavalry had already crossed, when a misfortune happened. A long culverin, named Madame de Fourly, taken as a trophy from the Spaniards at Ravenna, was being dragged across,—the bridge broke under it, and the three hundred Germans were left in the power of the enemy. Many plunged into the water and were drowned, others were killed, some were made prisoners<sup>1</sup>. Cornelius Agrippa was made prisoner<sup>2</sup>.

Reading Agrippa's correspondence by the light of these events, we come to the conclusion that, diverted by his patron, William Palæologus, Marquis of Monferrat, from active military duty, he was still keeping his mind on the professorship, and labouring to push his fortunes as a scholar, when the war had reached its crisis. Certainly he was not at the battle of Ravenna, for that was fought

<sup>1</sup> *Chronique de Bayart, par le Loyal Serviteur*, ch. 55. *Memoires de Fleurange*, cap. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 33, Lib. i. p. 708.



on the eleventh of April, and upon the sixth we find Agrippa writing to Landulph<sup>1</sup> from the castle of a learned friend, Bartholomew Rosati, at a little place called Lavizaro, five miles from Novara, on the way to Mortara. He was staying at Lavizaro when the present of asparagus was sent by the friend in the adjoining little town of Gravellona, who had learnt from the barber of the district that he had postponed his intention of returning instantly to Milan. He was still at Lavizaro, meditating, not a hurried journey to Ravenna, but a leisurely return to Milan, when writing to Landulph six days before the battle: "Mind what I told you when I quitted Milan; do not give up a certainty for an uncertainty; nothing is more perilous than to rush without a skilful leader into the house of Dædalus. Heed my advice, for our friendship compels me to be solicitous for the safety and comfort of us both. Wait but a little while, till I come back to Milan, and then I will show you the true way to glory, long, long contemplated. Either yield to my wish, or do nothing without telling me quietly what you mean to do." The house of Dædalus, the maker of the Labyrinth, was, possibly, the maze of European politics, then, as we have seen, in a dangerously complicated state, and Agrippa seems to have been afraid lest his friend might commit himself to a search after fortune in the midst of it. The answer of Landulph reported him at Pavia, and thereupon, on the nineteenth of April<sup>2</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 29, Lib. i. pp. 706-7.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 30, Lib. i. p. 707.



a week after the battle of Ravenna, Cornelius, who is still at Lavizaro, expresses his great satisfaction, and adds, "You have gone there as my precursor, for to betake myself thither has been now for a long course of days my secret meditation; I will now carry out my thoughts and soon be with you. When I am come you may set care aside, for I will not cheat you with promises, but give you a real help over your doubts where it is needed; and so, having put your affairs in prosperous condition, we will take counsel as to what next shall be done."

The patron by whose help all difficulties in the way of a convenient settlement at Pavia were to be conquered, was William Palæologus, Marquis of Monferrat. Monferrat, which sixty years afterwards became a duchy, was then an ancient Lombard marquisate, close upon Pavia, having not quite three hundred square miles of domain. It was made a marquisate by Otho I. in the year 967, and in 1305 the original main line died out, John the Just leaving no nearer heir than the son of his sister Violante by the Greek emperor Andronicus II. Thus the imperial name of Palæologus came to be that of the Marquises of Monferrat, the William who was Agrippa's patron being descended from the son of Violante, Theodore Comnenus Palæologus. William was the last of the race but one. John George, his successor, who had been Bishop of Casale, died in 1533 while making arrangements for his marriage, and so the succession was thrown open to dispute. It was generally at Casale, the most important of his towns, that the Marquis of Monferrat had Agrippa's



company, but when Agrippa was at Lavizaro he was not at a great distance from him.

Having written to Landulph that he intended joining him at Pavia, Cornelius very soon followed his letter. Before the close of the same month he is with his friend, and sends a cabalistical book, with a little note, from Pavia to a learned priest who had desired to borrow it. The note is of a kind to prove that his mind has not been changed by the attacks of Catilinet, or his experiences of the theological discussions at Cologne.

“I send you,” he says in it<sup>1</sup>, “venerable Father Chrysostom, that little cabalistical book you wished for: concerning which I would not have you ignorant that this is the divine science sublime beyond all human tracing, which, if it become intelligible to you by continual reflection, will fill your entire mind abundantly with all good things. The whole art is indeed sacred and divine, and, without doubt, of efficacy: therefore, my Chrysostom, while you are so eager to exercise yourself therein, cover with silence the great mystery within the secret depths of your religious heart, conceal it with a constant taciturnity; for it would be an irreligious act to publish to the knowledge of the multitude a language so full of the majesty of Heaven. Farewell. Pavia, April 30, 1512.”

Not very long afterwards, Agrippa being still at Pavia, and Landulph having gone or been sent to Lavizaro, very possibly to make some application to the Marquis of Monferrat, the storm flies towards the University town. The

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 31, Lib. i. p. 707.



German garrison is first put in, and then the whole camp hurries to take shelter behind its walls. Affairs being in this state, Landulph, writing from Lavizaro<sup>1</sup>, says:

“Greatest Agrippa, other self, anxious about your position, where you may be, what you may be doing, and how you prosper among these tumults of war, unable to reach you myself safely—I write this letter that you may know what I do and where I am, for I am here to watch in person over my own welfare, which would perish were I absent.” (The welfare over which he watches, as his own, includes that of his wife and his two little ones.) “Ascertain whether Francis, the son of George Supersax, is in the camp” (George auf der Flüe, called Suprasaxus, was a Wallachian chief, who obtained great fame for his prowess in those wars, and, I think, at this time was in the castle of St. Angelo, imprisoned by the Pope for worrying a bishop. As soon as he was released, he fastened on the same bishop again with a fresh relish. He had twelve sons and eleven daughters. Of one of the sons, then, Francis, wrote Landulph, Find out whether he is in the camp at Pavia), “for he is my intimate friend. If there be any other friends of yours there, tell me; for this is a time when friends are needed. I heard much of the tumult at Pavia” (namely, the rush of the French troops to the cover of its walls); “but however it may be, if you are well, I am glad. Commend me to our common acquaintance. I suspect that Pavia will not be the pleasantest of dwelling-places, yet I would not have run away

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 32, Lib. i. p. 708.



from you so soon, but would have postponed everything on your behalf, as I have done before, if you were not relying on the friendship of the magnificent Lancelot Lunate, who loves you before everything. As soon as the road is safe I will make haste to come to you. Lavizaro, June 24, 1512."

Before Landulph wrote next, his friend had been made prisoner in the last struggle at Pavia. "Most excellent Agrippa," runs the letter<sup>1</sup>, "Domitius brought me word to-day that you had been captured by the Swiss, but had regained your freedom without much difficulty, and returned to Milan with the magnificent Lancelot: most welcome news to me. He also bade me, in your name, having heard that the Swiss are gone, make speed to join you. Therefore, I wish to know what you propose doing: Do you mean to be at Pavia, or with the Marquis of Monferrat? I will not be wanting to you; only tell me what I am to do. Lavizaro, July 13, 1512."

The family of Lunate, which at this critical time yielded a friend to Cornelius, belonged to Pavia, and was one of considerable importance. Its last chief had been Bernardine, successively apostolical protonotary and cardinal deacon, who had been employed by Alexander VI. as a legate in the struggles with his enemies at Rome. He had died fifteen years before this time, aged only forty-five. Of his successor, Lancelot, I know only that in Agrippa's correspondence he is, whenever named, entitled, as a noble, the Magnificent.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 33, Lib. i. p. 708.



The dangers of travel, dreaded by Landulph, were at that time serious, for they depended not only on the presence of so many hostile bands, but they were aggravated by the fury of the Lombard people. Having suffered from the licence of the French camp grievous wrongs, the native peasantry fell savagely at last upon every Frenchman not protected by the presence of an army. In this year, 1512, fifteen hundred French soldiers and merchants are said to have been massacred in detail, their goods being also plundered, after the departure of the French general, Trivulzio, from Milan. Houses and shops that belonged to persons friendly to the French were broken into and destroyed<sup>1</sup>. In a little house at Milan, Landulph had established his small family. Thither he journeyed one October day, accompanied by his brother Gian Angelo, who had but lately joined him, and he reached Milan in time to find his home invaded by six Swiss foot-soldiers, to whom it had been pointed out by a spy as the house of a man favourable to the French. But for his brother's help, he says, there would have been an end of everything<sup>2</sup>. Landulph's family, however, was in safe shelter within the castle of his friend at Lavizaro, which contained a garrison of forty fugitives from Pavia. In that town it may here be said that Galbianus, who had been so active a promoter of the Catalonian enterprise narrated at the outset of this history, was killed when Cornelius was taken prisoner<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> *Muratori*, sub anno MDXII.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 35, Lib. i. p. 709.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 34, Lib. i. p. 708; and for the next citation.



"Nothing," Landulph writes to Agrippa, "can be done in the midst of this confusion. If you were here, the time would suit for doing something with the Marquis of Monferrat." Now, Monferrat was in arms at the head of his own vassals, waging, like other native princes, independent war<sup>1</sup>; on behalf of himself in the first instance, and—as far as Milan was concerned—of Maximilian Sforza. The cause of Sforza was that of the Emperor in a great measure, but in no degree that of the King of France. "We are all well," writes Landulph<sup>2</sup>, "except my brother Francis, sick of fever. My son Camille, who lives in you" (Cornelius had won the heart of his friend's child), "our little daughter Prudence, and my wife Penthesilea are well. Should Pavia prove unsafe, we must find a better place. Take care of your health; nothing is fitter at a time like this than to rest under the trees in this rich country, and care only about being well." Thus he wrote to his friend in the ripe August weather. But Agrippa was no man to sleep through the hot noon of trial. He could live only by following his calling as a soldier, and though his camp study was divine philosophy, though all his hopes and efforts were bent on an escape into a pure scholastic life, he yet knew that he had bread to earn for wife and child<sup>3</sup>, and in the midst of tumult and confusion he must strive to earn it. His dependence now must be upon Monferrat and Milan.

There was an end for the present of the French in Milan. By the close of the year, except here and there a

<sup>1</sup> Muratori.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 34, Lib. i.<sup>3</sup> Ep. 49, Lib. i. p. 715.



little garrison, not a French soldier maintained ground in the duchy. The French being expelled, contest arose for the possession of the soil. Emperor Maximilian desired it, but the Pope was unwilling to favour his desire. At the same time, nearly all the smaller chiefs of Italy chose rather to have a man of their own standing than a lofty monarch in the midst of them. By promises and bribes, therefore, the negotiation ended in the Emperor's consent that the duchy should be granted to its proper ruling family; and, accordingly, on the twenty-ninth of December, 1512, Maximilian Sforza, who had been an exile from his ninth year to his twenty-first, re-entered Milan as its duke. He was escorted by a troop of Swiss, and their great orator, the Cardinal of the Swiss town of Sion, Matthew Scheiner, a man of the people, in succession street-singer, school-master, curate, canon of the little town of Sion, who poured the violence and obstinacy of his hatred to the French into fierce words, and also was a man at all times ready with the sword. He was, indeed, said to have obtained his bishopric by threatening the chapter sword in hand. This chief of the Swiss finally was made Cardinal of Sion, in the Valais, to please his countrymen, over whom he of all men had the greatest influence. The new duke, entering his capital so attended, was met as he rode under the Pisan Gate by more than a hundred gentlemen of Milan, attired in the colours of his livery; and preceded by this escort, he rode under numerous triumphal arches to the ducal court—there was a French garrison still holding the castle—and with the glad consent of the



people was then formally hailed as Maximilian Sforza, Duke of Milan, the authority being bestowed upon him in distinct terms as the gift of the Swiss<sup>1</sup>.

While these changes were in progress, Cornelius Agrippa was attaching himself formally as a retainer to the Marquis of Monferrat, whose cause having become that of the Emperor could be espoused without disloyalty. Towards the close of November (1512), he was settled at Monferrat's chief town of Casale<sup>2</sup>.

In the February following, Pope Julius II. died, and the cardinals making haste to avoid overt signs of the Emperor's ambition, chose their Pope from the house of the Medici, Leo X. Louis of France, having made peace in Italy by a treaty with Venice, sought to be reconciled with the new Pope, and offered both to abandon the Council of Pisa—still sitting in France—and to become a good, devout, and obedient son to the Holy See, if only his Holiness would revoke the censures of his predecessors. With the king, Leo temporised, but what the king did not obtain readily, was graciously accorded to the humble scholar. On behalf of Cornelius Agrippa, friendly representations had been made by Ennius Filonardus, bishop of a little town in the Campagna, called Veroli, and in the first year of the new pontificate, a kind letter was sent to Cornelius Agrippa, from the hand of Leo's secretary, Peter Bembo, himself a good scholar, not then known as cardinal, but as the author of a book of love

<sup>1</sup> *Storia di Milano* ; del Conte Pietro Verri, cap. xxi.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 37, Lib. i. p. 710.



dialogues, the Azolani, well studied by thousands of his countrymen. Four months after his elevation to St. Peter's Chair thus Leo revokes, by the hand of his secretary, the anathemas of Julius<sup>1</sup>:

“Beloved son, health to you and the apostolic benediction. From letters of our venerable brother and nuncio, Ennius, Bishop of Veroli, and from the speech of others, we have learnt your devotion to the holy apostolic seat, and your diligent care to maintain its safety and its freedom; which information has been very welcome to us. Wherefore we commend you greatly in the Lord, praising that temper and courage; we also exhort you to remain in the same mind and obedience both towards the seat itself and towards ourselves, ready to show, as occasion offers, in all things your good desert, and that you are received into the bosom of our paternal charity. Of these things our before-named nuncio will speak to you more fully. Given at St. Peter's at Rome, under the seal of the Fisherman, on the eleventh of July, 1513. In the first year of our Pontificate.”

Reconciled formally to the head of the Church, Cornelius was now free to pursue his design of winning way as a philosopher at Pavia. He wore no scholar's dress, for he was captain of a troop of soldiers, owning Maximilian Sforza for their master<sup>2</sup>. The new duke was a young spendthrift, who was not only at great charge to maintain troops—paying a hundred thousand ducats

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 38, Lib. i. p. 710.

<sup>2</sup> *H. C. Agrippæ Orationes*, No. II. Op. Tom. ii. p. 1075.



yearly to the Swiss, seventy-four thousand to other men-at-arms, as much among garrisons of castles, and so forth—but he also lavished costly favours on his table-companions, among whom there was one who amused himself especially, and no doubt paid to be entertained, with the researches of Cornelius, Oldrado Lampugnano, who was made by the duke Count of Rivolta<sup>1</sup>. Casale, Milan, and Rivolta became, therefore, places at which it was profitable for Agrippa to employ himself. Louis of France, while engaged in meeting the invasion of his territory by Henry VIII. and the Emperor, who had combined by treaty at Malines under the Princess Margaret's good auspices, [to fight the French,—Louis, thus occupied at home, had sent an army to the Milanese when he heard how ill the new duke sped in winning the affections of his people. But if the Italians were learning to despise their own prince, they had learnt to hate the foreigner; and the French army, beaten at Novara, was chased speedily over the border. Except only this burst of war, in the year 1513, there was little to demand Agrippa's service as a soldier, either in that year or the next, which was a year of general accommodation and pacification. Such leisure, therefore, as the times afforded, was spent in the cultivation of congenial friendships: that of Augustine Ritius<sup>2</sup>, the astronomer; that of the more enlightened bishops and priests living (as far too many did, away from

<sup>1</sup> Verri, *Storia di Milano*. Cornelius is said to be living at Rivolta. Ep. 41, Lib. i. p. 711.

<sup>2</sup> Agrippa, *De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum*, cap. xxx.



their own sees) in Milan; finally, that of the great lords, who chose to derive intellectual amusement from his knowledge. Upon some of that political business of the duchy with which the Swiss were from the beginning so inextricably bound, towards the end of the year 1513, or at the beginning of the year 1514, Agrippa was sent to Switzerland<sup>1</sup>, and there he became associated in the public trust with Alexander Landi<sup>2</sup>, a man of good

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. i. p. 711.

<sup>2</sup> It is right to state here that this part of the narrative, so far as concerns Alexander Landi and the Count of Rivolta, is not perfectly reliable. Agrippa's letters tally, as the reader may perceive, most perfectly with the other trustworthy records of the time, but I find in the forty-second letter of the first book a sentence which would make Alexander Landi the Count of Rivolta, and give the letters I ascribe to Landi to an unknown friend. (Many of them, including nearly all Landulph's, are headed only *Amicus ad Agrippam*, but in most cases the writer of each is obvious from internal evidence.) Now against Alexander Landi's countship of Rivolta have to be set these facts: that Count Verri, in his *Storia di Milano*, gives Rivolta at this time to Oldrado Lampugnano;—that in Agrippa's correspondence the Count of Rivolta is complained of as a man "qui nostras vigilias in suam trahere debeat lasciviam," a notion of him very well according with Verri's mention of Lampugnano as a creature of Sforza, and not at all according with Agrippa's mention of Alexander Landi in his *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Dei*, as one to whom the depths of his heart were laid open in spiritual converse;—again, that I can find no note elsewhere of a Landi of Placentia having been Count of Rivolta. There are other arguments drawn from internal evidence upon which it would be tedious to dwell. Considerations of this kind appear to justify the clearing up of every difficulty by changing in the text of one of Agrippa's letters an accusative into a dative in the case of a proper name, which may have been written in a contracted form and developed incorrectly, as indeed it is also misspelt (Laudum for Landum) by the printer. In Letter 42 (Book I.), instead of "Nuperrime mihi relatum fuit, Alexandrum Laudum comitem Ripaltæ te Placentiæ convenisse," &c., I read, "Nuperrime mihi relatum fuit, Alexandro Lando, comitem Ripaltæ," &c. The comic formality of the "to me, Alexander Landi" would be quite in place here, for the letter, which is not a long one, opens with a joke, and in this part the writer might be



family from Placentia, a friend, having like tastes with his own. The Landis of Placentia yielded in the next generation a professor of medicine to Pavia, Bassiano Landi; and another of the house was Marquis of Casale, and a writer upon jurisprudence. Alexander complained afterwards of a betrayal by Cornelius of his learned secrets to the Count of Rivolta. They were at the service of any other of Agrippa's friends, but the Count of Rivolta, said this new acquaintance, is a libertine unworthy to profit by the scholar's vigils. As an associate of the young Duke of Milan, he most probably deserved this character.

Complaint of this kind was no source of serious dispute. Cornelius is busy in the house of Landi, at Placentia, in August of the year 1514; he has some work to do, and his friend writes to urge that he will get it done with all speed, and then repairing to Milan, do what has to be done there—make, perhaps, the due report—and get his travelling expenses for an expedition to the Papal court. Such an expedition is designed, and there is no reason why they should not make it together. There had also been an embassy from the Duke of Milan to the German court, in which a friend of Agrippa's shared, who would have been glad if the young scholar had been associated with the party.

In the house at Placentia, Cornelius, as busy over his own private study of the Cabalists and of Mercurius Tris-

glad to cover with half-joking phrase a word of complaint which is complaint, but yet on which he does not wish to dwell unkindly. The change here made may be wrong.



megistus as over any public matters, had amused himself by sketching a large Mercury with charcoal upon one of Landi's walls. Upon this freak followed some grim jesting in his friend's next letter.—Mercury is a flying god, take heed that the black charcoal in your picture of him be not ominous<sup>1</sup>. Your philosophy is under a mutable and often unfriendly patron, and there does, indeed, go fire and fagot to the tracing of it. May there come nothing worse of the kind near your skin than a morsel of cold charcoal between the fingers.—Such was the purport of the joke, that played with a real terror. But Cornelius was very fearless. Cabalism, at any rate, was likely to be received better at Pavia than at Cologne; and by the help of Mercury he was then hoping very quickly to achieve the object kept so steadfastly in view since the first day that he set out from Trent for the Italian wars.

And truly, when the summer of the next year came, the year 1515, Cornelius, then twenty-nine years old, seemed to have entered on the summer of his life. Landulph had gone before him to secure new friends<sup>2</sup>, and Monferrat probably had influenced his brother-Marquis, John Gonzaga, who was then at the head of the University of Pavia. Such influence had probably been sought, and could not have been slight, inasmuch as the two houses, Monferrat and Gonzaga, intermarried soon after this time, and for want of nearer heirs the domain, together with the title of Monferrat, passed within twenty years into the hands of the Gonzagas of Mantua.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 42, Lib. i.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 45, Lib. i.



At last, therefore, before the most illustrious Marquis and the most excellent Fathers in the town and University of Pavia, Cornelius stands forward as a scholar, and within the precincts of the University displays his learning and his deep research into occult science, especially as an exponent of the Pimander of Hermes Trismegistus. His introductory oration is among the printed works that have come down to us<sup>1</sup>. He tells how, beset by cares and heavy duties during the past three years of miserable war, he has desired to find safe passage to some happy shore across the sea of blood. To do this it was requisite to find some duty, and a worthy one, but he could see none better or less inconsistent with his profession of arms than to interpret the mystery of a divine philosophy in that most flourishing gymnasium. His natural bent had been from early youth to a consideration of divine mysteries, and he had never known a more delightful spectacle for contemplation than the wise ordering of nature. To learn these mysteries and teach them to others had been at all times his chief ambition, as he had already taught them to some students in the University of Pisa. Nevertheless, he feared lest the consummate scholars before whom he ventured to ascend the chair he then was occupying might resent as insolent presumption or temerity the attempt of a barbarian, a soldier in the dress of strangers, still in the crude immaturity of life, to teach matters so grave, that belonged rather to the practised skill of the maturest doctors.

<sup>1</sup> *Oratio. II. habita Papiæ, &c.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 1073.



Then he speaks confidently of his power to do that which he has undertaken. For his youth he says, that the young can sometimes discriminate as well as, or even better than more aged persons; that good wit comes by intelligence, not lapse of time. He refers to the youth of Samuel, Solomon, and Daniel. Neither must the illustrious Marquis John Gonzaga, that brave general, wonder at seeing in the pulpit, as professor of sacred letters, one whom he had known of late years as a captain over soldiers in the most fortunate Imperial camp, nor must that pure audience reject as profane a man whose hands have been imbrued in human blood. Among the old poets and prophets, Pallas and Bellona were a single deity, and there are many examples of men eminent alike in arts and arms. To say nothing of Demosthenes, strenuous orator, who in war cast his shield away and fled before the enemy, there were unconquered Scipios and Catos, innumerable Roman and Greek chiefs, above all there was Julius Cæsar, and there was Charlemagne. It was of a centurion also that our Master said he had not found faith equal to his in Israel. He adds, according to the way of the time, more illustrations, and ends with the golden sword which Jeremiah the prophet was seen to present to Judas Maccabæus, saying, Receive the holy sword, a gift from God, wherewith to smite the adversaries of my people. "With which words," says Agrippa, "my unconquered Emperor did consecrate me also when, having almost as a boy received the sword from his hands, I became known as a not unsuccessful soldier." But is he



a barbarian? Barbarians, he urges, are rational beings, who breathe God's air and receive His gifts; as for his foreign dress, the beard and tattered cloak do not make the philosopher, and the cowl does not make the monk. Wisdom resides not in the clothes. He has been urged, he says, to prosecute the studies of his choice by many hearers with most cogent reasons, counselled and helped by friends who, with innumerable helpful kindnesses have stimulated him to continue what he had begun. "The Gospel, too," he adds, "compels me, lest I be convicted of ingratitude towards both God and man, by burying the talent that has been entrusted to me, or hiding my light under a bushel, and at last fall under one curse with the fig-tree that yielded not its fruit in the due season." It is just to the young orator to remember that in his days a proper—or more than proper—self-consciousness passed commonly in the public addresses of the learned into what we should now consider an improper self-assertion. It was rare for a great scholar to be at once self-conscious and self-contained. The purer aspirations of Cornelius are mingled with a great deal of man's commoner ambition. For both his aspiration's and ambition's sake, and for his wife's sake, he desired to achieve at Pavia the object of his wishes; he has been once turned aside by a harsh opposition to his effort to forsake the military road to fame, and follow happily the peaceful bent of his true genius. Now he is twenty-nine years old, and, whatever he may have written, he has published nothing; he is bound still to the camp, and his heart,



young still, but conscious of the rapid flight of life, is in its own depths pleading nervously and piteously through the words of this oration.—May no Catilinet arise to cross me here. Soldier and stranger as I am, my soul is that of a true scholar; I can learn and teach, and to do both unhindered, living happily with wife and family, a scholar among scholars, is the dear wish of my heart. Grave doctors of Pavia, do not quench the fire upon the little hearth that I have lighted among you.

Having endeavoured to remove objections likely to be urged against himself, Cornelius briefly refers to the fitness of the time for his discussions now that peace has followed upon war, and days of liberty have been secured to them by the courage and wisdom of that most unconquered triumpher over his enemies, Hercules Maximilian Sforza, eighth Duke of Milan. A passing compliment is paid to John Gonzaga, and the subject of the lectures is at last approached. They are upon Mercury or Hermes Trismegistus, and will give the spirit of his dialogues on the Divine Power and Wisdom. Cornelius explains first who Hermes is, and, according to the teaching of the Rabbi Abraham of Avenazre, identifies him with Enoch. He gave laws to Egypt, was the first observer of the stars, the author and inventor of Theology; the author, too, in a material sense, of twenty-six thousand five hundred and twenty-five volumes of books, wherein were contained stupendous mysteries. "When dying," adds Agrippa, "it is said that he thus addressed those standing round about him: 'Thus far, my children, driven from my own



country I have lived a pilgrim and an exile, now, however, I return in safety to my home. When after a little time, the chains of the body being loosened, I shall have departed from you, never weep for me as dead, for I re-enter that best and happy city to which its citizens all come through the corruption of death. For there God only is the great Prince, who fills His citizens with wonder-working sweetness.' But enough of the author. We will now speak only of his book. Its title is, *Pimander*; or, *Upon the Wisdom and Power of God*. It is a book most choice for the elegance of its language, most weighty for the abundance of its information, full of grace and propriety, full of wisdom and mysteries. For it contains the profoundest mysteries of the most ancient theology, and the arcana of all philosophy, which things it may not be so much said to contain as to explain. For it teaches us, what God is, what the world, what a mind, what each sort of demon, what the soul, what the ordering of Providence, what and whence the necessity of Fate, what the law of nature, what human justice, what religion, what sacred ceremonies, rites, temples, observances, and holy mysteries; it instructs us besides in the knowledge of ourselves, on the soaring of the intellect, on secret prayers, marriage with Heaven, and the sacrament of regeneration." This sort of book Agrippa proposes to explain and illustrate, partly theologically, partly philosophically, partly dialectically and rhetorically, enumerating pertinent texts, authorities, examples, and experiences, and confirming the doctrine of the book, as occasion offers, by



the sanction of ecclesiastical and civil law. With the unpublished books of Occult Philosophy among his papers, and with the knowledge of the fact that in these lectures he desires to prove his own accomplishments as a physician, a lawyer, and a theologian, we can conceive very well what these lectures upon Hermes Trismegistus were. He formally and carefully disclaimed the heresy of any word that he might say contrary to the opinion of the holy Church, and, with that reserve upon all points of philosophy and doctrine that might happen to be touched upon in the course of his demonstrations, he declared himself ready at the commencement of each lecture to reply to every question that had been asked verbally or in writing, and answer every objection that had been made at the conclusion of the last. But the questions and objections must be put upon substantial grounds, and in good faith be meant to correct error or increase knowledge. For at the same time he declared that of the vain syllogisms of the dialecticians, who care not for the matter discussed, but only for the disputation, who grind truth to powder with their altercations, and, thereafter, care not by how light a wind it may be blown away, of any idle puzzles contrived for him by persons of this class he should take no notice whatever.

In this mood, then, Cornelius proceeded, and with much applause, to sketch a Mercury before the University of Pavia. His Mercury has lost, through later criticism, the divine proportions he ascribed to it. The man himself is now regarded as a myth; indeed there are reckoned



among the myths of Egypt generally two, and sometimes three, fabulous persons of the name; the oldest, known in his own land as Thoyt or Thoth, being the first form of the Hermes and Mercury of Greece and Rome. He was, in brief, the inventor of all human knowledge, and the source of the Hermetic Art of alchemists. The Hermes Trismegistus, so much honoured in the sixteenth century, came, according to Ælian, one thousand years later, in the time of Sesostris, restored lost arts, taught observation of the stars, and, having invented hieroglyphics, wrote his wisdom upon pillars. Others bring even a third Mercury upon the scene, and consider him to be but a third manifestation of one deity, calling him Trismegistus, not as thrice great, but thrice born to sinless life. There was one Hermes only commonly referred to in the writings of the Cabalist, and he was not the most ancient,—old myth as he was. For many of the books ascribed to him, and certainly for the Pimander, we are indebted to the Alexandrian philosophers, who combined Jewish, Greek, and Christian opinions with fragments of Egyptian tradition, and produced in that way, by the manufacture of a prophet, evidence apparently almost as old as man, in favour of their tenets. Also because the name of Hermes would give currency to any book, books written in that name were very numerous.

The Mercury sketched by Agrippa proved auspicious, leading him, not to martyrdom, but to the best fulfilment of his hope. He was admitted by the University of Pavia to its degree of doctor in each faculty. Doctor of Divinity



before, he became then Doctor of Medicine and Law<sup>1</sup>. Soon afterwards, in welcoming as orator for the University an after-comer to the doctorate of law, we find him expatiating upon jurisprudence, quoting Ulpian, and speaking throughout the language of the lawyers<sup>2</sup>. Ere long, too, we shall see him a practitioner of medicine. Doctor of law, physic, and divinity, he has also before this time earned a knighthood on the battle-field.

In what battle he won that distinction we are not informed. He himself says, after telling of his acquisition of the dignity of Doctor "*utriusque juris*" and of Medicine, as if by after-thought: "Before that time I was a knight, which rank I did not beg for, borrow in foreign travels, or secure by impudence and insolence at the inthronisation of a king, but earned it by valour in war, among the troops in open battle<sup>3</sup>."

He has secured, therefore, the best honours attainable in arts and arms. He is acquainted at this time with eight languages, master of six. He is distinguished among the learned for his cultivation of occult philosophy, upon which he has a complete work in manuscript, and though he has not yet committed anything to press, much has been written by him upon which he hopes to rest a title to fair fame. He is not now unprosperous. There is a lull in war, during which he receives the pay to which he is entitled for his military services, and can earn money also as a teacher in the University. He has a wife

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. vii. p. 1021.

<sup>2</sup> *Oratio. III. Pro Quodam Doctorando.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 1084.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. vii. p. 1021; and for what follows until the next reference.



whom he loves dearly, and more than a single child. With these he has settled in the town of Pavia. His wife's father and her brother are there also. The father seems to have been with the army, and to have shared some of his son-in-law's responsibility in the matter of the Council of Pisa, for a Franciscus of his name was sent to the Pope on a mission from the Cardinal of Santa Croce<sup>1</sup>. Cornelius thinks of his wife with the utmost tenderness. "I give," he writes to a friend<sup>2</sup>, "innumerable thanks to the omnipotent God, who has joined me to a wife after my own heart; a maiden noble and well-mannered, young, beautiful, who lives so much in harmony with all my habits, that never has a word of scolding dropped between us, and wherein I count myself happiest of all, however our affairs change, in prosperity and adversity always alike kind to me, alike affable, constant; most just in mind and sound in counsel, always self-possessed." When he said that, it was after three years more of life than have been yet accounted for,—three years of severe trial, among which the sorest, at the period of which we now speak, was at hand. His Mercury proved truly a winged god. The ripe fruit of his ambition, which Agrippa counted himself happy to have plucked, crumbled to ashes in his mouth. In a few months the fire was quenched upon the little hearth at Pavia, and he who had been at so much pains to kindle it went forth a beggar, with no prospect of advancement in the world.

<sup>1</sup> *Annales Ecclesiast.* Odoric Rinaldi. Tom. xi. p. 581.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. ii. p. 736.



## CHAPTER XV.

## BEGGARY.

FORTUNE of war changed very suddenly the tenor of Agrippa's life. The year 1515 opened with the death of Louis XII. of France. Francis I., who succeeded him, a youth of twenty-one, directed his attention promptly to the Milanese. He raised a considerable army, which he proposed to accompany, and did accompany, in person into Italy. The hope of the duchy was entirely in the Swiss, and the fomenter of their zeal, the Cardinal of Sion, moving about the town in the brown dress of a civilian<sup>1</sup>, was so much master there, that he could even venture to put to the torture the duke's cousin, Ottaviano Sforza, Bishop of Lodi, upon the most vague suspicion of communication with the enemy. The Swiss attempted to defend the passes of the Alps, but the French army eluded them, and crossed in safety by a perilous way, over which the enemy had set no watch. The Swiss retired to defend Milan.

Francis had leagued himself with the Venetians. Empe-

<sup>1</sup> The narrative in this chapter is generally made out by collation of Agrippa's writings with Count Verri's *Storia di Milano*.



ror Maximilian united with the Pope and King of Naples to maintain Maximilian Sforza in his duchy, and the smaller Italian chiefs opposed the prospect of a powerful and active king for neighbour. When the French army approached Milan, all the force available was mustered. On the tenth of September, the Cardinal of Sion brought a large body of Swiss into the town. The Duke of Savoy, the Marquis of Monferrat, the Marquis of Saluzzo, and others, prepared also for battle, and the ill-starred Cornelius Agrippa was called to the field again. King Francis had in succession occupied various towns, marched to Binasco; had marched thence to Pavia. There was an end of study. The new doctor took the written produce of his labours with him into Milan, and, on the fourteenth of September, met the French in arms at Marignano. The battle, as the world knows, was as desperate as it was, for the time, decisive in its issue. The Swiss, fighting for Maximilian under the promise of eight hundred thousand gold ducats if they won the day, fought the day through; when night closed the two armies lay down on the battle-field to rise and end the struggle as the light should serve them. On the following morning the arrival of Venetian reinforcements secured victory to the French; the Swiss and the Italians were routed, and Cornelius lost in the rout a pocket-full of manuscripts. Among smaller writings and detached notes there were thus lost his commentaries on the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, completed as far as the sixth chapter, besides a small bundle of commentaries, as yet only roughly noted,



on his own Books of Occult Philosophy. There was a pupil of his among the combatants, Christopher Schilling, of Lucerne, who saw the sheets departing from their owner, and, in the heat of battle, mindful of the cause of scholarship, plunged forward to rescue them. Cornelius heard afterwards of this, and that some papers had so been saved; perhaps, therefore, his loss was not irreparable<sup>1</sup>.

His position otherwise was, by the victory of the French at Marignano, rendered desperate. King Francis fixed his military residence at Pavia, while Maximilian Sforza made what terms he could, still holding the citadel of Milan. Constable Bourbon was governor for Francis in the town. On the eighth of October the citadel was ceded to the French—two years had not elapsed since they last quitted it—and Maximilian Sforza withdrew to French soil upon a pension, glad, he said, to be quit of slavery and the Swiss, the Emperor's caprices, and the thieves of Spain. Sforza might so retire, the neighbouring Italian princes might accept the stern arbitrement of war, and ride, as they did on the eleventh of October, with the Marquis of Monferrat among them, as the friendly escort of King Francis, into his new capital of Milan. Cornelius Agrippa was a German noble, owing strict allegiance to the Emperor. He could make no submission to King Francis. His vocation was gone, therefore, as a soldier; hostile to the new rule, he could no longer teach at Pavia; his military pension ceased, and there was an abrupt end of his lectures.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 14, Lib. ii. pp. 732, 733, for the preceding.



King Francis proceeded next to make his new position the more sure by coming to an understanding with the Pope. Arrangements were signed at Viterbo on the thirteenth of October, tending very much to the propitiation of his Holiness; before the year was out the Concordat was signed at Bologna, which obtained the friendship of the Pope for Francis at the price of rights belonging to the Church in France. The more complete success of Francis was but the more complete ruin to Cornelius Agrippa. Doubtless there was a seed of war sown by this seizure of Milan. Germany must resist, and Italy become again a scene of military tumult. Here, however, would be occupation for the future which the scholar had no wish to share; and in the present there was absolutely nothing to be earned or done.

Immediately after the entry of King Francis into Milan, Cornelius Agrippa made several applications to a friend whom he had known at Pavia. The last only was delivered duly, and was thus attended to<sup>1</sup>: "I see clearly enough how you are perplexed by fortune; but you must bear this, like a brave man, bravely. I have assured your safety with our prince" (Monferrat). "The rest is, that you must go to him, say you are leaving for Casale, and ask his excellency to give orders to Galeotti and Antonio of Altavilla, the masters of his household, that they should write to Casale to have you received, when you get there, among the pensioners. I must remain here for two days, detained by some business: shall find you afterwards at

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 47, Lib. i. pp. 714, 715.



Pavia. Farewell. Commend me to your wife and other friends. Milan, Oct. 16, 1515."

Help had from Monferrat, Cornelius, as we shall see, strove to repay promptly with the scholar's coin. A month afterwards he has been wandering up and down the land in search of bread that may be eaten honestly, has struck a little spark of hope, and hears thus from a friend in Pavia of his wife's brave bearing and unconquered love: "I went to your wife," the friend says<sup>1</sup>, "and told her everything according to your order; she replied that she was well treated by her parents and her brother. When I offered any help she needed from my service or my means, she made no other reply. I will visit her again, and should she want anything within my resources, and will tell me, I will succour her for you as if she were my sister. Contrive that you come back soon, very soon, for so asks, beseeches, and requires, your sweetest wife, and I not less. From Pavia, Nov. 24, 1515."

At the same time Cornelius was writing thus to a "most learned Augustine<sup>2</sup>:" "Either for our impiety, or through the usual influence of the celestial bodies, or by the providence of God, who governs all, so great a plague of arms, or pestilence of soldiers, is everywhere raging, that one can scarcely live secure even in hollows of the mountains. Whither, I ask, in these suspected times, shall I betake myself with my wife and son and family, when home and household goods are gone from us at Pavia, and we have been despoiled of nearly all that we

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 48, Lib. i. p. 715.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 49, Lib. i. pp. 715, 716.



possess, except a few things that were rescued. My spirit is sore, and my heart is disturbed within me, because the enemy has persecuted my soul, and humbled my life to the dust. I have thought over my lost substance, the money spent, the stipend lost, our no income, the dearness of everything, and the future threatening worse evils than the present; and I have praised the dead rather than the living, nor have I found one to console me. But turning back upon myself I have reflected that wisdom is stronger than all, and have said, Lord what am I that thou shouldst be mindful of me, or that thou shouldst visit me with mercy? And I have thought much concerning Man in this unwelcome idleness, and in the sadness of absence from my children, and have discussed with myself as I used with Landi of Placentia." Mindful of old talk with Landi, he had, in fact, written a dialogue on Man, and asked his friend Augustine to revise it, that it might be fit for presentation to the Marquis of Monferrat. He was paying for the charity accepted. Augustine, in reply<sup>1</sup>, bade him not grieve at a reverse of fortune that had tried and purified his soul. He admired greatly the sublime thoughts in his dialogue, "But this," he added, "I would have counselled you, if you desire this work to be safe from the strokes of those who strive to make a stagnant and immovable Theology obnoxious to every sign of stir or change, you should have thrown the onus of it on a man more learned than I am, and of weightier authority." The dialogue on Man was then sent by

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 50, Lib. i. p. 716.



Agrippa to the marquis, with a letter of dedication, carefully saving the credit of his orthodoxy in one special clause<sup>1</sup>. What argument was deficient in it, he said, would be supplied in his forthcoming notes on the *Pimander*. That Agrippa was at this time protected and helped by the marquis is sufficiently clear from the last words of the dedicatory letter, which entitle him "sole refuge of the studious."

But Agrippa's effort to repay his patron's kindness was not at an end. His spirit was disturbed, his heart was overcharged, and he must find relief in earnest utterances. After the dialogue on *Man*, he wrote at the same period, and also for Monferrat<sup>2</sup>, a little treatise on "The Triple way of Knowing God." The dialogue on *Man* was not preserved, the other treatise has come down to us among his works, and, short as it is, contains the essence of its author's mind. It was a longing Godward from the depths of suffering, full of an earnest aspiration, with which, however, there had at last come to be joined a bitter scorn of those who, never rising heavenward, pull heaven down to their own sphere, and standing in the churches and the monasteries bar the upward way.

"The voice of God cries out of heaven, from his sacred mount: Contemplate my creatures, hear the angels, listen to my Son, that ye may become just and pious." This, says Agrippa, is the triple way of knowing God<sup>3</sup>. He

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 51, Lib. i. pp. 717, 718.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 52, Lib. i. pp. 718, 719.

<sup>3</sup> *De Triplici Ratione Cognoscendi Deum*. Illustrissimo Excellentissimoque Sacri Romani Imperii Principi, ac vicario, Gulielmo Palæologo,



divides his treatise into six chapters. In the first he treats of the necessity of seeking to know God. In the second, he states this triple way of knowing him. In the third, fourth, and fifth, he treats successively of each of the three ways, and in the last he sums up formally with the creed of the Church, whereby to save himself from risk of being taken for a heretic.

One passage will show the spirit of the chapter, which points out the way of learning to know God through contemplation of His works—study of nature. “The human soul (as Hermes says) seizes and penetrates all things; it mingles by swiftmess with the elements, penetrates the depths of the great sea; to it all things yield light, the heavens do not overtop it, no dense mists of the air can shroud its purposes in darkness, no density of earth impede its action; from the depths it can look up to no tall wave by which it shall be overwhelmed. And elsewhere, Cast your soul forth (he says), it will fly faster than you can urge it. Command it to pass into the ocean, it is there before your bidding, although all the while never departing from its home. Bid it fly up into the heavens, and it needs no wings to mount, nothing shall stay its course; the sun’s hot ray, the ample space, the giddy height, the influencing stars, shall not delay it; it shall penetrate to the last region, visit all the heavenly globes, and to what there is beyond them nothing hinders it from

Marchioni Montisferrati, Domino Suo Beneficentissimo, Henricus Cornelius Agrippa beatitudinem perpetuam exoptat. (*Opuscula: De Nob. et Præc. Fæm. Sex., &c. &c.*, ed. 1532, Mense Maio, sig. fol. E vii.-G vii.)



passing on. Think only of the power of the soul, its courage and its swiftness. Therefore the man is inexcusable who knows not God. More inexcusable is he who knowing God in any way, gives Him no worship and no reverence." The second way of knowing God is by the hearing of his angels, and the chapter which explains this is entirely cabalistical. It explains with an undoubting faith the principle of that Cabala, which gave to the Jews "as it were a shadow of the true knowledge of God; the true and perfect knowledge (as the whole school of the Cabalists bears witness) was reserved for the advent of the Messiah, in whom all things are perfected." He says, as a Cabalist, "If you apprehend no more than the literal sense of the Law, apart from the spirit of the future light, truth and perfection, nothing is more ridiculous than the Law, or more like old women's fables and mere wanton talk. Afterwards came Christ, the sun of righteousness, the true light, shining truth, the true perfection of the life of all men who are believers in His name. By Him the law was fulfilled, so that in a manner we need not the mists of creation, or the shadows of the Jewish law through which to perceive God, but have true knowledge of Him by the light of faith in Jesus Christ."

We come thus to the final way of knowing God, that through the Gospel. This chapter is the longest and the best. It is bold, too; all (except the last) are bold, but this is boldest. "If you would be borne up," writes Agrippa, "to the perfect doctrine of Christ, you must pass over the doctrine of initiation, in which, namely, are



discussed the principles and grounds of divine wisdom, the repentance from dead works, baptism, the sacraments, imposition of hands, authority of absolution, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment, and the like, which all lie in the bark of the tree of life, and are discussed in the schools by scholastic Theologians, and are brought down for disputation and discussion to the form of problems. But those things which belong to better wisdom and more perfect doctrine, namely, what is the gift of heaven, the secret manna known to him only by whom it is received, and what is the good word of God better than that which is in parables delivered to the people, and what is the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, all this is given to be known only by those studying in secret. And what are the powers of the future, what the origin and end of the soul, and the ministration of angelic spirits, what the condition and nature of that immense glory and happiness which we expect, which neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, all these things are contained in the marrow and core of the Gospel, and known only to the more perfect to whom is given the knowledge of powers and virtues, of miracles and prophecy, and other things upon the trace of which men cannot come by their own strength, but only they who are subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore such persons are chosen and deputed to bear rule in the Church, that they being illuminated by Faith, acquainted with the will of God, instructed by the Gospel, according to the words of Paul may be leaders of the



blind, a light to those sitting in darkness, teachers of the ignorant, masters of infant minds, having the form of knowledge and truth in the Gospel, of which sort are in the Church, pontiffs, bishops, prelates, doctors, and those to whom is committed the cure of souls. . . . Wherefore, if pontiffs, prelates, doctors, have not in them the prophetic spirit of our divine wisdom, and have not proved by its effect displayed in them their profession of a divine power in the Church, certainly the spirit of such men has not the light of the mind, its faith in Christ is weak, and languishes because over the spirit the flesh dominates too much. For which cause all they, as barren souls, shall be judged and condemned as impious and unjust. He who desires to know God, and merit truly the name of a Theologian, must seek to hold communion with God, and meditate upon His law by day and night. But there are some who speak with tongues inflated with human knowledge, who do not blush to belie God in their life and language, who by their own spirit impudently distort all the Scripture into their own falsity, and narrow divine mysteries to the method of human argument; who having arranged the Divine Word, adulterated with their glosses, under heads of their own invention, establish their own monstrous fancies, and by theft and rapine dare to usurp the sacred name of Theology, wherein they give room only for contentions and brawling disputations, of which Paul writes to the Philippians: Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will. . . . Carnal and earthly is the entire doctrine of that ambitious



race, arrogantly trusting in its own wit, thinking to know God by its own strength, and to find the truth in everything; these are men before whom nothing can be said upon which they are not ready to make choice dispute, it matters not whether on one side or another, and put forward a provable opinion; an astute race rich in the literature of other people, and at the same time relying insolently on a certain artificial dialectic; though they of themselves know nothing whatever, they wish to be thought learned, therefore they dispute openly in the schools, strong over little shifts with sophisms, calling and thinking themselves wise. Miserably deceived! That which they take to be their help is their impediment. . . . True wisdom does not consist in clamorous disputes, but is hidden in silence and religion through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, whereof the fruit is life eternal. Urban, the Pope, writing to Charles, says: Not by dialectics has it pleased God that His people should be saved; the kingdom of heaven is with simplicity of faith, not wordy contention. The inventor of this pestilent art is the devil; he was the first cunning, pernicious sophist, who proposed his little questions, invented disputations, and, as it were, founded a school. Not content with having lost himself, he discovered an art wherein others might be lost, to the increase and propagation of hurt like his own. Therefore, not suffering man to abide in simple faith, he chose to propose a question upon the divine commands, judging this to be the cleverest contrivance for the overthrow of man. So he first approached Eve like a sophist,



and invited her to a contest of argument by asking, Why hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? . . . . In imitation of that old sophist, the serpent, some of the more recent Theosophists arose, the chiefs, authors, and propagators of so much that is infamous in this our age, whom innumerable other men of the same sort daily follow to their misery. Hence has arisen that horrid and entangled wood, that dark forest of disputation, in which with sordid, weary labour, damnable work is done for little fruit; in which nothing is done by faith, hope, charity, in imitation of Christ, neither by prayers and fastings, watching, seeking, knocking that the gate of the armoury of divine knowledge may be opened, but like the Titans these men warring against Heaven think that by the intricate machines of sophistry the gate of sacred letters may be burst for them." Cornelius goes on to reprove, with equal emphasis, the habit of citing endless authorities, from authors alike ancient and modern, for the purpose of parade, by men whose only wit it is to produce the wit of others. "Not so," he says, "did those early theologians, men solid in wisdom, venerable in authority, holy in their lives, in whose writings citations are simple and infrequent, occurring only when they are required, and then chiefly from the Old Testament, the Gospels, the apostles, or remote antiquity; they were not boastful, though truly having trust in divine grace, conscious of their own wisdom, and the best of teachers, who feared no man's criticism. They spoke truth, not flinch-



ing before the face of man, and have bestowed upon us largess from their own resources, imitating Christ, who like a good master of the house produces what is good and needful out of his own treasury, in all things ripening for us the fruits of true religion and a saving faith." Returning then to his deprecation of the new form of Theology, he bewails the loss of a pristine simplicity. "Nobody," he says, "with pious mind asks knowledge of God; we are all professors of ignorance; we have a new theology, new doctors, new doctrine, nothing ancient, nothing holy, nothing truly religious, and, what is worse, if there be any who devote themselves to this pristine theology and religion, they are called mad, ignorant, irreligious, sometimes even heretics, and (as Hermes says) held to be hateful; there is even peril of their lives decreed against them, they are marked with contumely, often put to death."

Bold speaking to the doctors of the Church, and yet Cornelius takes heed never to break loose from their company. The last chapter of the treatise declares God to be known according to the most ecclesiastical of the creeds used by the orthodox, and declares formally by copious citation that in this creed believes Cornelius Agrippa. His position with regard to the orthodox Church, resembles that taken by Dean Colet in London; and, indeed, so great is in many respects the resemblance between some of the language of this tract and the preaching of Colet, that when we add a consideration of the fact that up to this time Cornelius had of late been writing



commentaries on St. Paul; and that in this work, as in the appeal to Catilinet, written in London, St. Paul is cited with unusual frequency and earnestness, we may fairly conclude that John Colet's influence was great over Agrippa's mind, and the impression made on the young scholar by residence within the Stepney household still abides<sup>1</sup>. The complaints of heresy made against Colet may have been in his mind when speaking of the shame and peril to which they were exposed who sought the restoration of a pristine theology.

Of this dissertation, written at Casale for the Marquis of Monferrat, copies went to other learned friends, and there were not wanting influential persons ready to admire the work and honour the fine spirit of the man who could apply himself to such writing for solace in the day of trial. In the mean time, Cornelius was seeking a way out of want, and the best hope of finding it depended on the friendship of Monferrat. The marquis had great influence; his good will was sincere; he was a patron worthy of respect. There was just reason for hope, then, that by his assistance some new means of subsistence might be found for a man well born and nobly bred, who, having obtained his knighthood in the field and earned his doctorate in every faculty, was now, at the age of thirty, ruined by the chance of war.

<sup>1</sup> Compare p. 236.

END OF VOL. I.

C. WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.



CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.

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THE LIFE

OF

HENRY CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

VON NETTESHEIM,

DOCTOR AND KNIGHT,  
Commonly known as a Magician.

BY HENRY MORLEY,  
AUTHOR OF "PALISSY THE POTTER," "JEROME CARDAN," &c.



IN TWO VOLUMES.  
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# CORNELIUS AGRIPPA.

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## CHAPTER I.

### UP THE HILL OF LIFE.

THE scene of the labours of Cornelius Agrippa for two or three years before and after the date (1516) which we have now reached, varies only within the limits of Geneva, Burgundy, Piedmont, Savoy, and Lorraine—a region intersected by the Alps—everywhere, either within or about the borders of the German Empire, Italy and France. Friends made at Dôle, at Geneva, and while he was attached to the Italian camp, furnished him with new friends from among their own connexions; thus, therefore, it happened that the district above specified had come to be the ground on which Agrippa had the greatest chance of prospering.

The Marquises of Monferrat were bound by various relations, all of them friendly with the neighbouring ducal house of Savoy. The two families intermarried more than once. The Monferrats owned Turin before



the Dukes of Savoy had it for their capital, and when the line of Palæologus failed, not very long after this date, the Duke of Savoy was among the candidates for a succession to the Marquisate.

To the Duke of Savoy, Cornelius Agrippa seems to have been successfully commended by his patron when, prompt to hope, he wrote a few lines to his friend Rosati<sup>1</sup>, saying that, "Never man could have been rescued for better fortune from the utmost peril." There were friends in sundry places, knowing both his merit and his need, who were exerting themselves to procure for him another start in life, but the first offer was that from Savoy. It had a double promise in it. Not only was there the ducal favour, but there was a proposal made by a reverend dignity of the Church at Vercelli, not Augustine Ferrerius the bishop, but a most illustrious Hannibal, who must have held high rank in the town, to take Cornelius into his service, giving him a pension of two hundred ducats and a house of his own choosing<sup>2</sup>. He made this offer, after having seen the little treatise upon "Knowledge of God," and made many inquiries about its author. He desired also that the fact of his having proposed anything should be kept as secret as possible, and Agrippa's friend at Vercelli, when writing to state his offer, was to add that any arrangement consequent upon acceptance of it could not take effect immediately. He would say in a few days when Agrippa was to come. Agrippa's friend, however, told him that if he found it most convenient to come at

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 53, Lib. i. p. 719.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 54, Lib. i. pp. 719, 720.



once, he had much better do so and leave him to procure a due arrangement with the reverend lord. The proposed patron saying nothing more upon the subject for a week, the friendly scholar who took charge of Agrippa's interests considered it imprudent to be troublesome; but in the mean time he advised Cornelius to come, himself offering a home until every arrangement was perfected and a house was ready. There was also Lodovico Cernole<sup>1</sup>, a nobleman in Vercelli, offering to place his palace at the disposal of Cornelius Agrippa and his family. So stood the matter on the 4th of March, 1516. On the 8th of March, Agrippa's friend, bound to Vercelli by his duties as a preacher, was glad at the prospect of a visit from Casale<sup>2</sup>. From Casale to Vercelli is a distance of not more than about thirteen miles. Vercelli is a populous town which belonged sometimes to Savoy, sometimes to Milan, and was used by the Dukes of Savoy when they had it—as they had at this time—as a place of occasional residence.

Cornelius spent a few days with his friend, who thereafter urged his prompt return; he had promised to be in Vercelli again before the end of the month, as Father Chrysostom was witness<sup>3</sup>, and they were desiring him as harts desire the water brooks. In every one of these letters Agrippa's wife is mentioned with the kindest remembrance, as indeed she was by nearly all his correspondents.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 55, Lib. i. p. 720.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 56, Lib. i. p. 720.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 57, Lib. i. pp. 720, 721.



In the mean time the Lord Hannibal had made up his mind; he had been showing the treatises on Man and on the Three Ways of Knowing God to a great Theologian of the Dominicans, and the Theologian had spoken with such extreme praise of these works, that the illustrious and reverend Lord Hannibal desired to have Cornelius for client a hundred times more than before<sup>1</sup>. Agrippa's friends were looking out a house for him in Vercelli, but had not found anything suitable, therefore it was urged that he should accept Lodovico Cernole's liberal offer of his palace till the house was found, unless he preferred profiting by the hospitality of a noble widow, friend of Agrippa's correspondent, who would be glad to spare, for a few days, part of her house to the philosopher, his wife, and children. This was on the twenty-second of March.

But the illustrious and reverend Lord Hannibal was lukewarm in the business. He might be stimulated now and then to energy, but he does not seem to have carried out his offer in the spirit that alone could make it acceptable. On the second of June<sup>2</sup>, Agrippa's friend, the monk at Vercelli, hindered by his preachings, and the patron's not having come to the city, had not quite arrived at a right understanding with the magnate, but intended speaking to him when he saw him next. The end of the matter was, that for that year, Cornelius, who had brought his family about him at Casale, stayed there under shelter of Monferrat's friendship. He had made

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 58, Lib. i. p. 721.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 59, Lib. i. p. 722.



also a warm friend at Rivolta in the senior preceptor of St. Antony's Monastery, John Laurentin, native of Lyons<sup>1</sup>. In September, too, there was Landulph, after a vain ramble in search of better fortune, bringing his wife Penthesilea back to Rosati's house at Lavizaro, and thence writing to tell his friend that there he was, and that he was there waiting to see what he could do for him with Monferrat<sup>2</sup>.

There is something pleasant to consider in the friendship of these two men, tossing helplessly with wives and families about an adverse world, and looking faithfully for help to one another. If the one who has the stronger mind, takes, as is usual in such cases, the leader's tone, we do not see that practically Landulph either seeks or gets help that he does not give. At Dôle, he loyally prepared the way before his friend, and we throughout find him not less prompt to be helpful than be helped. So it is pleasant to consider such a friendship formed in early years, acquiring strength through trouble; to read letters from the man to the man not less affectionate than those which the youth wrote to the youth. Landulph begins his note, just mentioned as having been sent from Lavizaro to Casale, with the words, "My Agrippa, who art as a dearest brother," and it ends, "Farewell, with your beloved wife." Let us add this, too, to the incidents of life most surely testifying to the true worth of Cornelius: he

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 3, Lib. ii. p. 723. *Oratio* iv. p. 2092. In *Art. Brev. Lullii Commentarii*.—The Dedication.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 60, the last in the first Book.



maintained, through good and ill report, not only the complete love of his wife, but also the unbroken attachment of a faithful friend.

Early in the next year (1517), the unlucky philosopher was still labouring to find a new position by help of Monferrat, and was labouring to help, not himself only, but several of his associates and friends. Succeeding letters in his correspondence<sup>1</sup> represent the fate of scholars broken in their fortunes by the war, labouring on behalf of themselves and of each other, looking up to Monferrat, and expecting some aid through Agrippa, who enjoyed the best share of the great man's favour. There is nothing, in such letters, of abject beseeching. Each writes as if mutual assistance were a duty recognised among them, either as common members of the republic of letters, or as equal friends.

One of these friends dates from Turin, the Duke of Savoy's capital. Landulph, who settled down eventually as a professor at Pavia, joined the soldiers for a little while, and wrote to his "Dearest Henry" on the fourth of May, from the camp at La Rochette<sup>2</sup>, a small town of Savoy, near the banks of the Isère. By the third of August in the same year, the position of the two friends was much altered. Cornelius Agrippa had joined formally the Ducal Court, and was, probably as a physician, in the pay of Charles III. of Savoy, called the Gentle, half-brother and successor to that Philibert whose death had left Margaret of Austria in truth a widow. He was still, therefore, mo-

Ep. 1, 2, 3, 4, Lib. ii. pp. 722, 723.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 5, Lib. ii. p. 724.



rally within the strictest limits of his old allegiance. Landulph, on the other hand, was by that date at Lyons<sup>1</sup>, where he had revived old friendships, found patronage, and whence he was summoned to the court of Francis. An Italian by birth, it would have been hard for him to name the prince to whom he owed a natural allegiance. He was as ready to be helped in France as he would have been willing to take help in Germany; and he would go to Paris, he said to Cornelius, as his precursor. There was peace then between France and Germany. Maximilian had, in the preceding year, made an abortive effort to avenge the capture of Milan; had brought an army into Italy, lost time in taking little towns, and finally retreated from before Milan itself, distrustful of the Swiss in his own ranks. He had deserted his army and gone home to Germany, leaving the troops to become disorganised, and to disband themselves at their discretion. King Ferdinand died; and among subsequent arrangements was a pacification, of which one of the terms was Maximilian's abandonment of his claim to Verona. The Venetians were left as they had been before the league of Cambray was devised to crush and plunder them. During the years 1517 and 1518, there was a cessation of hostilities; Agrippa might, therefore, have gone to Paris. Of his situation at the ducal court, Landulph spoke slightly: "I do not praise it," he said; "you will be offered little pay, and get it at the day of judgment. I have sent repeated letters to the governor of Grenoble, by

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 6, Lib. ii. p. 724, 725.



the hands of his own nephew, and am hoping soon to get an answer; after which, if you permit me, I will arrange and settle everything. In the mean time, so manage with the Duke of Savoy as not to close your way to richer fortune."

While Landulph was expecting to find for his friend an opening at Grenoble, on the Isère (distant about a hundred miles from Turin), Cornelius prepared to act as doctor of medicine, lawyer, or divine, and really acting perhaps as a physician, had been inquiring of a friend the composition of a plaister<sup>1</sup>. Either by physic or by law, he was, and had been since the overthrow of his fortunes by the entry of the French into Pavia, winning a slender income upon which he and his family contrived to live. By labour in either faculty, and sometimes by repaying with work of the brain the liberality of any patron, he could earn all that he ate<sup>2</sup>. At Cologne, it had been long settled that he was killed in the Italian wars<sup>3</sup>. He sent home for no money; he made himself chargeable on no one; and was even ambitious to enjoy the more completely his domestic happiness, by living as a private man, no longer at the beck of any prince. Nevertheless, his friends seek for him anything that they can find.

In three weeks Landulph wants him at Lyons<sup>4</sup>; he is still only expecting a reply from Grenoble; but is, personally, on such good terms with the governor that he has no misgivings. He commends himself warmly to the dear wife

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 7, Lib. ii. p. 725.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 18, Lib. ii. p. 734.

<sup>3</sup> *Orationes*, iv. pp. 2091, 2092.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 8, Lib. ii. p. 725.



of Cornelius, and his only son: "I will bring you good fortune," he adds; "I cannot rest till I have paid you the service I so much desire." This design, however, led to no results. The reverend preceptor of St. Antony's, at Rivolta, through the influence of a brother-in-law<sup>1</sup> residing there, had, in the mean time, opened a new prospect of official employment in the town of Metz; and, two months afterwards, Landulph wrote<sup>2</sup>, "Most renowned Agrippa, your fame, I am told, has reached even to Avignon:" for he had to tell him of an offer from the Pope's legate at Avignon, to receive him into service, and allow an ample stipend. There were some clerical friends from Italy at Lyons, who agreed with Landulph that this opening was to be preferred to that concerning which negotiations were in progress with the magistrates of Metz: "Do you, therefore, follow our advice. Having considered everything, write back to me all you desire, and I will not be wanting, whom you shall find always a faithful man and special friend. Commend me to your dear wife and son. Lyons, October 20."

By the sixteenth of November<sup>3</sup>, a question of settlement in Geneva has been added to all these discussions; and the necessity of coming to some final decision has been made apparent. The Duke of Savoy has made an offer of pay, by which the poor scholar has felt humiliated. With the pride of a gentleman, he has refused, therefore, to receive a single ducat at the great man's hands. A friend at

<sup>1</sup> *Orationes*, iv. p. 2092.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. ii. p. 725.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 10, Lib. ii. pp. 726, 727.



Geneva writes to him in a consolatory strain, and “does not think that he did quite wisely in refusing to accept the pay offered him by that ungrateful man, especially considering his own very straitened fortunes. It seemed to him an absurd revenge which gave reward to the committer of a wrong, and inflicted damage upon the laborious and deserving. It would have been more prudent, laying aside pride, to have claimed that money, little as it was, which the hand of injustice at last offered.” Such wise friends have we all to help us keep our souls in due subjection. But the concern on behalf of Agrippa and his family was laudable, and this Geneva correspondent was most honestly rejoiced at the chance of having as a townsman and a neighbour one so noble and so learned as Agrippa. He was ready to assist Eustochius Chappuys, the chief friend of Cornelius in the town, in looking for a house, and making other preparations, if that able doctor should adhere to his proposal of a settlement in his wife’s native city.

Probably the disrespect suffered at the hands of the Duke of Savoy had caused Cornelius in his resentment to regard even the slenderest tie between patron and client as a state of bondage. He and his little family had already been for some time living on the insufficient produce of his industry and talent. Instead of depending again upon service to one man for a more ample subsistence, might he not find it more consistent with the liberty he cherished to obtain a wider field for private practice, whether of law or medicine, in a community



that would respect his independence. His wife Louisa may have had faith in her own town of Geneva, fancied an opening there, and pleased herself with the idea of revisiting the old familiar ground after so many turmoils and sharp trials upon foreign soil, loyally borne. Agrippa would be influenced directly by a wish of hers, as she was prompt to second any wish of his.

“Where there is a true and whole love,” the young husband had preached, on the excuse of Plato, to the learned men of Pisa<sup>1</sup>, “there is all modesty, all justice; there is no scorn, there is perpetual peace. The love of peace is God; peace is by lovers venerated. Where there is true love, there is security, there is concord, there is happiness, and there are all things common. Against it there is no force in danger, wiles, dissension, misery; in strife, theft, homicide, or battle. Moreover, what laws almost numberless and the whole scope of moral philosophy are striving to effect, and scarcely compass after all, love alone, in the shortest time, secures. Love is enough to turn you from the evil and the base, to set you on the track of what is good and just. Without love, justice is a cause of war, fortitude is not free from anger, prudence from malice, temperance from impatience. Where love is present, all the virtues are brought into concord. . . . Love<sup>2</sup> itself is the moderator of celestial movements and influxes, the ruler of the elements, and the preserver of all creatures. This is the root of life, the promoter of

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. in Prælectionem Convivii Platonis, Amoris laudem continens. Orationes, i. Op. Tom. i. p. 1066.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid. p. 1068.*



safety; it extinguishes indolence, revives the perishing, illuminates the wise, instructs the ignorant, leads back the wanderers, soothes the angry, humbles the proud, consoles the oppressed, helps forward the destitute. . . . . Let us all love, therefore<sup>1</sup>; let us love, first, God; next to God, let the love of a wife stand before all things. Let us love our country, for which always the wisest and holiest men have willingly and with alacrity met death itself. Let us love the prince who is the author of justice; let us love parents, relations, benefactors. Let us love each other, for before all things this Christ teaches in the Gospel, saying, This is my commandment, that ye love one another. Let us love, all of us, the most noble female sex. . . . . But of the pre-eminence and nobility of woman I am unwilling to speak largely, as I am about to issue a small book upon this special theme." (Some years have elapsed, however, and it still remains unpublished.) "The woman's lover labours to do well that he may please her. One man is trained in arms by love, another trained in letters; every one labours to act that he may be praised before the face of her who loves him."

In this spirit Cornelius is just now toiling up a very steep bit of the hill of life, and very naturally, when he seems to have the world before him, turns his eyes, for his wife's sake, in the direction of Geneva. A more certain prospect of a livelihood, that promised not less independence, being elsewhere offered, we find, on the sixteenth of January, that Agrippa's friend at Geneva writes in some-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 1071.



what ludicrous despair, because that man whose wisdom and whose "inborn goodness<sup>1</sup>," and whose oratory are so precious to him, has announced his acceptance of the post of advocate and orator to the free town of Metz.

Metz, in the duchy of Lorraine, claimed in those days to be free, and knew how to maintain its freedom. In as far as it paid any allegiance at all, it paid it to the Emperor of Germany, but it would have nothing to do with the German Diets, and not long before the arrival of Cornelius, its magistrates had sent after a citizen who had set out for Worms to get some private litigation settled, brought him back, and fined him for proposing to acknowledge a strange jurisdiction. As for the Dukes of Lorraine, they were obliged to live at peace with the town that could afford to hold its own upon their soil<sup>2</sup>. Some five-and-twenty years before Agrippa went there, René, Duke of Lorraine, had declared war against it. The townspeople gave to the Duke's herald half a dozen florins out of their own mint, as tokens of their independence, and waged war for three years so stoutly, that when peace was made they had in the town sixteen or seventeen thousand of the Duke's people as prisoners.

In Metz, Cornelius Agrippa found a town that was in several main respects not very much unlike his own Cologne. There was in spirit, though not quite in form,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 11, Lib. ii. p. 728.

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire Générale de Metz, par des Religieux Bénédictins de la Congrégation de St. Vannas*. Metz, 1775. This history, in six thick quartos, provides ample store from which I draw what little minute knowledge is necessary to the narrative.



the same municipal supremacy, the same sort of social history, the same mastery of the religious power by the civil, and withal the same glut of monks, making intolerant use of what authority they had.

Before assuming his new office, Cornelius went to his parents in Cologne. They had been told of his death among the Swiss in Pavia; all his friends in Cologne also believed that he had fallen. In his actual presence they received the first assurance of his safety<sup>1</sup>. Of their mourning for his supposed loss he had not known. Having no pleasant news to send, he had despatched to Cologne no messenger. In the days of his poverty he had refrained from pressing upon the resources of his parents; but as soon as the way of life seemed clear again, and he could tell them good news of himself, he did not write, but went himself to them, and turned their mourning into joy.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 15, 18, and 19, Lib. ii.



## CHAPTER II.

## ADVOCATE AND ORATOR AT METZ.

METZ is a very old town, standing between streams where the Seille flows into the Moselle. It was entered in Agrippa's time by many bridges, one to each of the old gates. Within the walls it was overfilled with monasteries and churches. As you entered by St. Thibault's gate on the side furthest from that bordering the Moselle, you soon came to the monastery of the Celestines, facing the market space, which was adorned by the public gallows and a scaffold<sup>1</sup>. Many a barbarous execution the Celestines saw. Beyond the Celestines, other monks were predominant in every quarter. The large monastery of the Dominicans was on the other side of the town, near the Moselle, and not very far from the fine cathedral at which, when Cornelius Agrippa went to Metz, the building works were coming to an end. I mention only the religious houses of the Celestines and Dominicans, because they

<sup>1</sup> The pictorial plan of Metz, sketched not long after this time in Braun's *Urbes Mundi*, shows a man hanging on the gallows as a public ornament.



only concern us. One yielded to Cornelius a friend, and one a foe.

Metz was a town, the capital of a district, even in the old days of the Gauls, and a town, as I have said, able to assert its independence. The Romans preserved its Gallic constitution, giving to its magistrates, elected on the ancient system, the name of Decurion, and the name of Decurion having been translated into Deacon, in Agrippa's time the ancient form of independent government existed still. Its Master Deacon was its mayor, or chief magistrate. In the thirteenth century the Bishops of Metz had endeavoured to assert civil supremacy, but they had, as at Cologne, been resisted violently, and there had been a season of internal strife, resulting finally in the complete restriction of the Church authority to matters of religious discipline. The town would obey none but townsmen of its own appointment, and had for its first article of customary law that "All are free; there is not one of servile condition."

The town was governed by a master deacon and a council of the other deacons, aided by a body called the Sworn Thirteen<sup>1</sup>. Soon after Agrippa's time there existed a parliament formed of a body of ecclesiastics, nobles, and deputies of the commons, called "People of the Three Estates of the city." When it met it was not the bishop but the master deacon who convoked it, and the master deacon who presided over its discussions.

<sup>1</sup> The constitution of the government of the town is fully detailed in the *Histoire Générale de Metz, par des Religieux Bénédictins*. Tom. ii. pp. 318-393.



The Master Deacon was elected annually by six persons, namely, those who happened to be masters of the cathedral and five specified abbeys. In order to maintain the dignity of the town, it was incumbent upon its chief magistrate to obtain a knighthood before Whitsuntide, during his year of office. It was his function to treat with the council of twelve ordinary deacons, and with the Thirteen; he was to provide for vacant offices and so forth. The twelve other deacons were all chosen on the nomination of the master deacon until the year 1600, and the Deacons, with their Master, formed a sovereign court of appeal from the sentences of the Sworn Thirteen, in civil matters.

The Thirteen were said to be sworn because, having tried offences, they made report on oath concerning the offenders, and, when they did so, were believed against all contradiction, their sentences of fine or other punishment being considered final. In doubtful cases, however, they reported their opinion only, not confirming it by oath, and it was then liable to be outweighed by sworn testimony on the part of witnesses for the accused. The Thirteen were changed by a general election once in eight years, conducted upon a peculiar system, which, however, excluded no citizen from participation in the suffrage. Such details of municipal government as now fall commonly to the lot of a town council were attended to by the Thirteen; and as the municipal government was also imperial, they might be said also to resemble ministers in various departments of the state. Three formed a



committee in charge of the gates; three others were the ministry of war; one took the oversight of hospitals; another was lord of the treasury; one presided over the cleansing of the highways, and so forth. Then again six of them formed also a court of arbitration for the hearing of incipient causes, and the amicable settlement of matters in dispute. The Thirteen assembled in chamber every Tuesday and Wednesday in the morning, all the year through, meeting at seven in the morning between Easter and the first of October, and at eight between the first of October and Easter, liable to fines against each member who was late or absent.

It was by the Master Deacon that Cornelius Agrippa was invited to accept the post of Town Advocate and Orator at Metz<sup>1</sup>; having accepted that office, he became subject to the order of the Council of Deacons and the Thirteen, but of no one else. He became also a citizen, and free among the free.

But if Agrippa served only the civil government, his way of life and thought concerned the ecclesiastical. We must needs know also how that was constituted.

In the year 1484, successor to a bishop who was good and zealous, and worked holy miracles, Henry II. of Lorraine became bishop of Metz. He lived and died at a country seat in Champagne, belonging to his brother Duke René, and all that he did for his see was to govern it in the interests of the house of Lorraine. This state of things led to intrusions on the part of René, which the citizens of

<sup>1</sup> *Oratio* iv. p. 2092.



Metz put down by force of arms; it was then—eight-and-twenty years before Agrippa went to live among them—that they made the Duke's herald a present of some florins out of their own mint. Not very long after the war ended, in 1494, Henry of Lorraine proposed the appointment of a coadjutor in his bishopric, and he thought at that time of an able man, Raymond, cardinal of St. Agatha, legate in Trèves. His brother René approved of the choice, but when afterwards a second son was born to himself he changed his mind, and thought it well that if one son inherited the dukedom, the other should possess the wealthy bishopric of Metz. Therefore, although much had been formally done to assure the coadjutorship of Raymond, on the third of November, 1500, the chapter of Metz agreed to accept a sucking bishop in the person of the Duke's infant, Jean de Lorraine, though he was then little more than two years old, and in those days it was common not so much as to wean a child before the age of three. The Pope limited Jean's privileges by a bull. He was not to enter actively upon the administration of affairs until he reached the age of twenty, and he was to take full episcopal rank at the age of twenty-seven. While Bishop Henry lived he was to do the necessary work; and if he died during the minority of his coadjutor, the episcopal administration was to pass into the hands of the chapter. The chapter, governing for the bishop, was to divide the revenue into three parts, of which one only was to be the portion of Prince Jean. Now Bishop Henry of Lorraine died in 1505, when the coadjutor was but seven and a



half years old. The chapter, therefore, occupied the bishop's palace, and managed the ecclesiastical affairs of Metz up to the time of Cornelius Agrippa's first arrival in the city.

The chapter had been working very hard at the cathedral. In the last years of Bishop Henry's life, after a year of plague (and plague-years in Metz were frequent), labour upon it had been actively resumed. The ancient choir and chapel of St. Nicholas had been pulled down, and to expedite the reconstruction, Henry, not many months before his death, had granted remission of all sins by excess, rapine, and usury, to those who gave subscriptions to the building-fund. After the bishop's death, when a large part of the ecclesiastical revenues became, for a series of years, available for pious works, one of the two thirds of his income withheld from the bishop was devoted annually to the payment of costs on account of the cathedral, which was finished very soon. At the time when Cornelius first went to Metz, the young Bishop Jean had just arrived at his majority, and the last touches were being put to the cathedral, which, however, was not open for public worship until 1522. The chapter had also established a strict rule in matters of religion, even to the appointment of a cruel Dominican as Chief Inquisitor, though there had by no means been at all times inquisitors in Metz,—nor had there been at all times public orators. It so happened, however, that not very long before the civil power gave to a fit man, Cornelius Agrippa, the post of town advocate and orator, the ecclesiastical power had



entrusted to a fit man, Nicolas Savin, the office of inquisitor<sup>1</sup>. No place was made so intolerable as Metz to the Jews, and how heresies of the Christians fared there, we ere long shall see.

Bidding farewell then once more to his parents at Cologne, one of them never to be seen again in this world, Cornelius, in the year 1518, his age being thirty-two, travelled to Metz with wife and son, and having arrived there, founded what he hoped might prove a quiet and a settled home. As soon as possible after his coming he presented himself before the assembled magistrates to report his arrival, thank them for the honour they had paid him, and submit himself to their commands. His speech<sup>2</sup> was brief, the first half an eulogium of the free town of Metz, the last an explanation of his own position. He should not waste their time with ornamented sentences. His presence was a witness of his honesty, and if they needed more assurances, his birthplace was not obscure, his race was not ignoble, his family none to be ashamed of, his home not sordid; no man had blamed his morals, and his life was free from crime, his reputation was without spot among the justest men, and he had aforesaid not been held unworthy to receive words of confidence and thanks from the Supreme Pope, the Emperor, and many prelates and religious men, who called him son and friend, who had received him at their tables, who had honoured him

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire de Metz*, Tom. ii. p. 720. *Corn. Agr. Ep.* 59, Lib. ii. p. 776.

<sup>2</sup> *H. C. A. ad Metensium Dominos, dum in illorum advocatum, syndicum et oratorem acceptaretur.* Op. Tom. ii. pp. 1090-1092.



in private and in public letters, and whose witness to his praise was dearer to his heart than money, of which he never was an eager seeker, or an avaricious owner. But after he had taken a wife, he went on to tell them, he had proposed to abstain from a familiarity with princes who were above his humble state, and in the seeking of whose friendship there was more ambition than tranquillity, and thereafter, he adds, "I lived by my own industry, and remaining content with my lot, and with but narrow means, I bore with an unbroken mind various twists of fortune, burdensome on no man. But after your highness" (he speaks to the master deacon as chief of the council) "had by sundry letters, and at last by the sending of your secretary, required me for your Orator, and the Lord Preceptor of Rivolta himself, and his brother the Preceptor at Metz, together with the great baron their father, to all of whom I owe much, had urged my consent with many prayers, I thought it amiss to refuse the prayers of so many men to whom I was indebted, and to contemn your favour. Therefore, neglecting all other prospects, and the great titles, of which some were at that time offered me in Piedmont and Savoy, with fixed deliberation I have devoted myself to you, trusting that I shall so manage as not wholly to destroy the most excellent opinion of me you now hold. But that I may not weary you by a too long discourse, and occupy the time proper for business of more moment, nothing remains except that with all possible respect, devotion, and religious earnestness, I promise and give you my assurance that I will fail



you in no matter, whether of counsel, fidelity, or secrecy, or in the other debts and duties of this office, whatever chance may hap. I will do now, therefore, what I ought: accept what is your due. You have me here whom you have for some time sought. I take the title of your Advocate and Orator. I acknowledge you to be my certain and indubitable lords, I pay to you all reverence, obedience, and faithful duty that an orator, admitted to participation in the counsels of your republic is expected to pay, and whatever course you instruct me to take on the republic's behalf, I will with all pains pursue, examine, labour in, affect, and perfect, nor will I ever be wanting in faith, industry, or diligence. Behold I am in your hands, knowledge, mind, and body. I have said these things briefly, trusting that your prudence will perceive much within the little, and entreat your pardon if I have spoken thus extemporaneously not in a way suited to your worth, but to my weakness and the worth of time."

We know enough, by this time, of Cornelius, to be assured that in his promise of fidelity and diligence, he spoke with a true heart to the Deacons of Metz and the Thirteen, and that after having thus plighted his faith he returned to his wife in their new home, determined to do all that an honest man could do for the assurance of prosperity and peace to the small household of which he was the head. Metz had its social troubles. It was at that time besieged by banditti under a Captain Francisco, who made all the approaches insecure, ravaged outlying fields and villages, and proved themselves a plague so fierce



and so indomitable, that the town was obliged to buy them off<sup>1</sup>.

Of the kind of work done by Cornelius Agrippa for the town of Metz, we have a trace in these orations that survive, clear, brief, and closely keeping to the point in hand. One is a speech before the neighbouring Senate of Luxembourg<sup>2</sup>, upon the subject of some new claims made against the citizens of Metz by the farmers of the Luxembourg tolls. The Senate of Luxembourg had, in consequence of repeated representations by the aggrieved parties, given counsel or command at various times to their farmers of tolls which those persons resisted, and asserting the legality of their proceedings, they had opposed an action brought against them by the deacons of Metz in the courts of their own town. The suit had been more than a year in existence, and was undecided still, when Cornelius Agrippa was sent to apologise to the Senate of Luxembourg for troubling them so often on the matter, and to tell that body with all courtesy and high consideration, that it would do well to expedite the movements of its court of law, and bring the question of tolls to a settlement, because, although the town of Metz had abstained carefully from any retaliation, if the unusual demands made against citizens of Metz were much longer persisted in, Metz would begin to act in a corresponding spirit of exaction towards citizens of Luxembourg. The other

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire Générale de Metz, par des Religieux Bénédictins.*

<sup>2</sup> *H. C. A. Oratio ad Senatum Lucenburgiorum pro Dominis suis Metensibus habita.* Op. Tom. ii. pp. 1092-1094.



two orations are the formal greetings which the town then offered, accompanying them with some substantial gift, to every visitor of note who came within its gates. One of these speeches is to a prince bishop<sup>1</sup>, and the other, to some great lord<sup>2</sup>; both are of commendable brevity, Cornelius explaining in one of them that many words belong rather to an insincere greeting, than an honest, independent welcome; that many words are only good to cause more weariness to travellers, or worry to the man of business. His compliments, it may be said, are not the less well turned, as they must assuredly have been the pleasanter, for being brief.

During the first quiet months of residence at Metz, Agrippa found amusement in the writing of an uncertain opinion on a disputable problem in Theology—the nature of Original Sin<sup>3</sup>. In the treatise on Man written for Monferrat before that on the Triple Way of Knowing God, he had argued that the race of man in a state of innocence would have been maintained by immaculate conception<sup>4</sup>. The whole theory is worked out in the essay on Original Sin, of which he suggests, by many curious and most ingenious arguments, his opinion that it came by the fall, in this respect, from the quickening of the spirit

<sup>1</sup> *Oratio in salutatione cujusdam Principis et Episcopi, pro Metensibus scripta*, p. 1094.

<sup>2</sup> *Oratio in salutatione cujusdam magnifici viri, pro Dominis Metensibus scripta*, p. 1095.

<sup>3</sup> *Henrici Cornelii Agrippæ de Originali Peccato, disputabilis Opinionis Declamatio*. Opuscula (ed. 1532, Mense Maio—no pagination), fol. sig. H vii.—I vii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid. ad fin.*



to the quickening of the flesh. "It is opinion," he says, "not belief, not knowledge; so that if my opinion be wrong, I am not parted by it from true belief and uncontaminated Christian wisdom. Upon such conditions I may express opinion freely, and if (as I am a man of immature age, and of small wit or learning) I do not justify the sense I give by as many witnesses of Scripture as the thing requires, some doctors may follow, not displeased with this opinion of mine, and able to give vigour to it with more valid reasoning." A copy of his "short and compendious declamation" Agrippa sends to the old friend of his family, Theodoric, Bishop of Cyrene<sup>1</sup>, who replies from Bedbar<sup>2</sup> that he is glad to find his Cornelius alive, contrary to the reports current for some years in Cologne, glad that he has a good wife and children who may inherit his own virtue and learning, glad that he has succeeded in escaping to so large an extent from subjection to secular duties, and won time to devote to sacred letters. As for the question of Original Sin, it is an old puzzle. He will only say that all have been agreed that it cannot exist were there is no rational soul. "But enough," he adds, "of this. I wish we could be together who are now parted by distance, and the fierce raging of perils (I speak of epidemics) in which I wonder vehemently that you offer,—as you write,—yourself, your wife, and your whole family, to the help of your neighbours. You will reply, perhaps, that you are not timid about this disease, and perhaps some Apollo guards you with a special antidote,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 17, Lib. ii. p. 734.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 18, Lib. ii. pp. 734, 735.



or preservative. If you have any such thing, I beg you not to hide it from your friend: or if any one has told you of a prescription against plague, discovered by any thinker, send it written to the physician in my house, that it may reach my hands, so you will bind the tie of love between us with a tenfold strength." The bishop ends with a pleasant doubt lest a correspondent whom he knows to be so pure in thought should find corruption in his letter, and begs that, if so, it may be covered by his age, his fatherly relation to his friend, and his capacity of bishop. This letter was addressed to the noble and strenuous Knight, Doctor of each Faculty and of Medicine, Henry Cornelius Agrippa, Chief Counsel to the Senate of the town of Metz, his most beloved son in Christ, by the reverend Father in Christ, and Doctor in sacred Theology, Theodoric, Bishop of Cyrene, Rural Dean at Cologne, and elected President of the Chapter<sup>1</sup>.

Cornelius, when he replied to this letter, sent with his reply, for the use of his venerable friend, a paper of instructions, detailing both the preventives and the remedies against the plague, which he had compiled for his own use, and that of others, from the best authorities. There can be little doubt that his exposure of himself and family to the infection for the benefit of his neighbours at Metz arose out of the skill as a physician which it became him in the time of need to exercise. He told Theodoric that the best remedy was flight, and a return, not too speedy,

<sup>1</sup> See letters prefixed to the paper *Contra Pestem*, Opuscula (ed. May, 1532), sig. fol. I vii. K.



after the cessation of the pestilence. For himself to leave Metz was impossible, and as for the Securest Antidotes against the Plague, he forwarded an account of them in a little medical paper, so headed, which is to be found among his published works<sup>1</sup>.

First, as to general regimen in time of pestilence, his rules are to avoid as much as possible heat and heating things, external or internal; to avoid violent exercises, violent passions; to avoid eating or drinking to repletion, but to avoid also hunger and thirst; not to sleep too much, especially by day. With food, and especially with fresh fish, such condiments as tormentilla, gentian, sandal-wood, and roses should be taken; also vinegar should be used, especially vinegar of roses; and citron, orange, or lemon-juice, sorrel-juice, and all vegetable things of that kind which resist the poison of the plague. They may be tempered with sugar, if too sharp taken alone. Pepper may be eaten, coarsely pounded, and it is good also to take such herbs as onion and chicory. The place of residence and clothes should be purified with a blazing fire, of say juniper or pine-wood; they should also be sprinkled with rose-water and vinegar; sweet herbs and flowers should also be scattered about, and used in fumigation. With rose-water and vinegar, also, it is well to wash often during the day both face and hands. When walking abroad, have

<sup>1</sup> Opuscula (I give this title to the collection of small works beginning with the *De Nob. et Præcell. Fæm. Sex.* and all named on the title-page of the first edition of them published at Cologne, in May, 1532), fol. K iii.-K vi. *Henrici Cornelii Agrippæ contra Pestem Antidota securissima.*



a little ditany root or aromatic confection in the mouth, and a sweet apple in the hand at which to smell. It is best, also, before leaving home, to burn rue, beaten in vinegar, upon hot iron plates, and inhale the vapour, as well as allow it to pass over the whole body and clothes. This is the household regimen which, in seasons of pestilence, Cornelius Agrippa enforced in his own family, and used his influence to recommend.

Of preservative antidotes, the best, in his opinion, and those which he himself used, were a draught in the morning, and at times during the day, chiefly composed of vinegar of roses and white wine, or old malvoisie, with citron-peel, bole armenian, and zodoary-root infused, and a little saffron added, with perhaps some sugar and conserve of roses. There was a pill in common use, and called a Pestilence Pill, which Agrippa would have to be taken digested in honey-water. A medicine not less sublime is this: Take of treacle two ounces, myrrh three drachms, camphor two drachms, over which pour a pint of rose-water. In two or three days distil in well-sealed glass vessels, and take some of the distilled water every morning. The ancients prescribed also an electuary of walnuts, rue, and salt, with other things, and there is an egg electuary made of saffron roasted within a blown egg-shell, and pounded afterwards with mustard. Many subsequent additions to the egg electuary were made, and are described to Theodoric. When used as a medicine, it must be given within the first twelve hours of the disease. By way of precaution, Pestilence Pills should be taken once or



twice a week, the aloes and myrrh in them being omitted, and a little camphor substituted in hot weather; but in cold weather they are to be taken as usual. There are other directions given for varying, according to season and constitution, their aperient quality.

Whoever feels himself to be smitten with the plague, if age and strength permit, should promptly be bled. Then also within the first six hours, and while help and advice is being sought, let there be prepared for him as a remedy six white onions, with their hearts scooped out, and filled with old treacle, in which has been put powder of ditany and tormentilla-root; cook them wrapped in moist paper under ashes, and, when cooked to softness, use a part pounded as poultice to the sores; nothing is so able to draw out the poison: mix the rest with an ounce of citron-juice and a little vinegar, squeeze and strain. Let the sick person have three ounces of the expressed juice, cover him up warmly in bed, and let him remain to perspire for six hours without food and drink. There may advantageously be mixed with such a dose a little of the egg electuary. A patient unable to bear bleeding should be purged according to his strength. But of all remedies, the best is Adam's earth, or the first matter of creation, whereof Agrippa promises elsewhere to speak.

Such was considered the best treatment of plague in days when plague was rife, and such was the advice sent by his friend at Metz during a plague year to the Bishop of Cyrene. At the same time (1518), a correspondence



arose between Cornelius and a young lawyer at Basle<sup>1</sup>, who had heard of his rare powers, and wrote to him for counsel. He gave the counsel that he had himself obtained from Abbot John of Trittenheim, to embrace the widest field of study, and to pay especial heed to the divine writings. "He who studies law," said Agrippa, "will build up his neighbour in the state, and he who studies sacred letters will build up himself in God." He repeated the proverb he had himself received from Trithemius, about the heavy footfall of the wearied ox, and improved to his own use a pleasant interchange of letters, by requesting his new friend to make inquiry about the Commentaries on Paul to the Romans, and the other papers said to have been saved in battle for him by one of the pupils he had taught at Pavia, Christopher Schilling, of Lucerne. Recurring to this time, he expresses his old admiration of the polished life of the Italians, who were acknowledged chiefs of civilisation. "I exhort you, when you have seen Germany and France, and all the rabble of our barbarians, to go at last to Italy, which, if any one regards with open eyes, he will see that any other fatherland is base and vile compared with it. But all this, and what else I have above written, take in good part." All his Italian misfortunes have not changed his taste; still he feels that he should have thought no business in life so welcome as that of a professorship at Pavia. As for Schilling, he is at Tübingen now, studying under Reuchlin;

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 12-16, Lib. ii. pp. 728-734.



and Agrippa, reading Reuchlin's book on Accents, meets with Schilling's name, and is rejoiced that so worthy a disciple has found a preceptor of an excellence so rare.

A sudden journey from Metz to Cologne interrupts the course of the town advocate's every-day life<sup>1</sup>. He has not long returned before a despatch from Theodoric encloses for him a letter from his mother, to inform him of his father's death<sup>2</sup>. His father's illness was most likely the occasion of his journey. Either there was a limit to his leave of absence, or there was sufficient hope of the sick man's recovery; Cornelius did not remain to see his father die. "I grieve," he says, "most vehemently, and find but a single solace for this grief, that we must yield to the divine ordinance; for I know that God bestows upon men gifts, not indeed always pleasant, very often even of adversity, yet always useful to assist us here, or in the heavenly fatherland. For God acts in accordance with His own nature, His own essence, which is wholly goodness; therefore He ordains nothing but what is good and salutary. Nevertheless, such is my human nature, that I vehemently grieve, and the depths are stirred within me."

They are his first tears for the dead. He is thirty-two years old, and has seen many troubles, but this trouble never until now, in a year of pestilence. He writes to the Bishop Theodoric as to a loving father, whose kind

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 15 and 16, Lib. ii. p. 733.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. ii. p. 736, in which the letters are referred to, but they are not themselves published.



words temper his grief. What words, in the honest mother tongue, Agrippa's mother wrote to her pure-hearted son, how he replied to her, these were the secrets of his inmost life, and they form no part of the revelations of the scholar.

In another part of the long letter to Theodoric, in which he pours out many thoughts of his heart to a venerable and well-trusted friend, Cornelius speaks of his new and more complete devotion to a study of Theology. He had aforetime especially delighted in researches into nature, which Theodoric seems to have stigmatised as seductive and diabolical; taught by the *Speculum* of Albertus Magnus, he had made instruments and had experimented upon nature, at much cost to himself, and with no gain but the discredit of his sin. But after he had taken in the usual way the cap and rings, as Doctor of each Faculty and of Medicine (to satisfy the wish of his own family, who thought more of the cap than of the brains<sup>1</sup>), he had devoted himself, though late in life, wholly to the pursuit of sacred letters. In so doing, he was no doubt, by the energy of youth, likely to be led astray into erroneous theories, and he desired nothing better than that the good and wise Theodoric should be his censor and adviser, who would show him when he erred, fulfilling in that way a bishop's office, and so keep him safe within the Church's fold. At the close of this letter, though he has not been a year at Metz, Agrippa looks forward with some longing to a possible time when, in the home of his forefathers, he may

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. ii. p. 737—"qui me doctorem malunt quam doctum."



pursue, Theodoric for helper, the studies that are worthiest; and he commends himself affectionately to a liberal and learned friend, of whom we shall hear more hereafter, Hermann Count of Neuwied.

This Hermann was the son of William II. of Neuwied and Walburgis Manderscheid. He was a canon of Cologne, and afterwards in higher dignity, had charge of the cathedral, was in a later year archdeacon, and at last chancellor of the University. Hermann V. of Wied, whose sister was this Hermann's sister-in-law, had become, only in 1517, Archbishop of Cologne. The Hermann to whom Agrippa sent affectionate remembrance was a priest but twenty-seven years of age, a scholar, an author, and a little prince. He was a man sought by all the learned in his neighbourhood, who kept an open house and table to all poets, historians, critics, and sophists<sup>1</sup>. Cornelius, when at Cologne, enjoyed his hospitality and won his friendship; to him, therefore, he sends affectionate remembrance. It may be said here that this Hermann died at the early age of thirty-nine, having written eleven books of poetry, history, and medicine.

There was nobody at Metz with poets' tastes and a true love for the society of learned men to exercise a splendid hospitality. With a physician and counsellor of the town, who wrote afterwards part of a treatise "Upon English Sweat," John of Niederbrück—Nidepontanus<sup>2</sup>—and with

<sup>1</sup> *Bibliotheca Coloniensis*, Hartzheim (4to, Colon. 1747), p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> See dedication to *Def. Prop. de Monog. B. Annæ*.



a pious Celestine friar, Claudius Deodatus<sup>1</sup>, with a few more also like these, there were friendships formed; but otherwise outside the walls of his own home Cornelius looked vainly for sympathy among his fellow-citizens. Ere long, indeed, he was engaged in battle with a powerful and bitter enemy among them. War was declared between Cornelius Agrippa, Public Orator and Advocate of Metz, and Nicolas Savin, the Chief Inquisitor.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 20-25, 27-31, Lib. ii.



## CHAPTER III.

RELATES A GREAT DISPUTE WITH THE DOMINICANS OF METZ: TELLS ALSO HOW AGRIPPA SAVED A VILLAGE GIRL ACCUSED OF WITCHCRAFT FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE CHIEF INQUISITOR, AND LOST HIS OFFICE OF TOWN ADVOCATE AND ORATOR.

DURING sometimes, in the year 1519, with his friend Father Claudius Deodatus at the religious house of the Celestines in the market-place, Cornelius Agrippa used to discourse much at table on the state of man before the fall, the fall of the angels, and other matters<sup>1</sup>. Except Father Claudius and the prior and one studious youth, none of the monks diverted their attention from their dinners to take more heed of the earnest scholar than to note that he often spoke with respect of theological inquirers who were not considered to be sound by the stationary party in the Church<sup>2</sup>. They were critical times in which Cornelius Agrippa had devoted himself to the study of Theology. Luther's stand against corruption was then in the first years of its strength, and many writers who abided by the Church were labouring to clear

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 20, 21, Lib. ii. p. 740.

<sup>2</sup> The same; also Ep. 24, p. 742.



it of its grosser errors. Cornelius was of one mind with these. He had as yet read nothing of Luther's; no writing of his had found its way to the strict town of Metz; but what the spiritual scholar heard about the undaunted Reformer pleased him, and he was not afraid to say so openly<sup>1</sup>, and to speak with contempt of the priests known as Luther's foremost enemies. Cornelius had read also and enjoyed all that he had met with of the writings of Erasmus. He quoted Erasmus freely, and was also just at this time seized with admiration of a venerable and gentle theologian whose reforming tendencies had made him hateful to his brethren of the Sorbonne, Jacques Faber d'Etaples, better known as Faber Stapulensis.

Now Cornelius Agrippa, whatever dignity he had received at Dôle, never became, in the eye of the world, a scholastic theologian. He was a layman and a husband. At Metz he was an advocate and a physician. Father Claudius was half won to love him, because he had consulted the wise doctor, who helped souls and bodies equally, upon his own physical infirmities. Claudius was troubled with delusions of the sense and great failing of memory, from which infirmities he was, to a very great extent, released by following the counsels of Agrippa. Such being the public life of the Town Orator and Advocate, his devotion of himself in particular to the study of Theology was in itself a matter of suspicion. It implied a dangerous tendency to the use of independent judgment. He spoke with honour, when at dinner with the monks, about sus-

<sup>1</sup> *Def. Prop. de Monog. B. Annæ*, ad fin.



pected men,—maintaining the opinions by which they had been brought into suspicion. Matters appeared worse in the eyes of the Celestines when the friendship between Claudius and Cornelius strengthened, and it was a common thing for Claudius to spend hours in Agrippa's house, his guest and his disciple. It was to be feared that they were studying heresies together; and after Father Claudius had paid one day his usual visit, taking the youth with him who had listened to Agrippa's talk with earnest eyes, they forbade repetition of his visits. Cornelius wrote to inquire the cause of his unwonted absence, fearing that he had been affected by the malicious scandal of those who had so loudly murmured against their frequent intercourse together. Father Claudius returned a kind reply, enclosing in his parcel certain works of Erasmus and of Faber Stapulensis that Cornelius had lent him. "These teachers," he said<sup>1</sup>, "together with yourself, I have resolved to accept and follow, for I see them to be walking in the sincere truth of Sacred Writ. Your conclusions I have copied with my own hand in stolen hours (for I am too much occupied, and get almost no leisure), nor have I ventured to depute this task to anybody, because our brothers are loutish and idiotic, persecuting enviously all who love good literature. They decry not a little Master Jacques Faber, also you and me; so that some of them have attacked me with no trifling insults. Therefore I have thought best to hide your conclusions, lest their hatred become wilder. Only the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. ii. p. 742.



father prior and that youth who was with me when last at your house, congratulate you in the matter. The madness of the other ignorant men condemns unread, even unseen, that book of Master Faber, and all those who believe in it or follow it. There is another reason why many who are harsh and unlettered rise up against you, because you have been sharply and firmly defending a woman accused of heresy and witchcraft, and have taken this prey away from the Inquisitor. But be you constant still in the defence of what is true, and of strong heart against the insane hate of the unlearned, that the truth may shine."

Here are two battles, both of them perilous, fought at one time, and in each case the man with whom our brave Agrippa grapples is a dangerous Dominican. In one case the antagonist is Claudius Salini<sup>1</sup>, prior of their monastery at Metz; in the other case, it is Nicolas Savin<sup>2</sup>, their master, a bloodthirsty man, who wields the powers of the Inquisition as a scourge of heretics. Bitter experience has changed Agrippa's tone in dealing with this sort of men. He thunders human wrath against them now; they are to him as Pharisees.

The battle first commenced was that over the book of Faber d'Etapes upon Three and One, in deprecation and refutation of the common legend about St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary, which declared her to have had three husbands in succession, and by each husband a daughter, and each daughter a Mary. This legend

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. ii. p. 743.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. ii. p. 755.



Faber declared to be founded upon no proper authority, and to be one of the corruptions that had in course of time been suffered to obscure the true beauty and purity of the lives of the Saints. Agrippa thought the legend an exceedingly unclean one, and adopted gladly Faber's reasoning upon it<sup>1</sup>.

The venerable Jacques Faber, born at Etaples, in Picardy, was a man of the gentlest disposition, and at that time eighty-three years old. He was very small in stature, but endowed with a great wit. When in early life he commenced studying in Paris, the example of his industry, together with his kindliness, caused more than a slight improvement in the habits of the other scholars; after studying successfully Philosophy and Mathematics, he had devoted himself to Theology, and became a doctor of the Sorbonne, but very soon fell into disfavour with the Sorbonne for his free criticism of the theological writings issued under its authority. In the year 1519 he was known to be watching with a favourable interest the efforts made by Luther. The character of his life cannot be better expressed than by a glance forward toward its end. Old as he was, he survived by two years the young Cornelius Agrippa. For his well-speaking of Luther he was ejected from Paris, and formally deprived of his doctorate by the Sorbonne. He found shelter at Nerac, and lived a quiet life, cherishing privately his own opinions. At the age of a hundred he went to Strasburg to talk with Bucer on religion, and he is said to have died

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. De B. Annæ Monog. Propositiones.*



at the age of one hundred and one, in the manner following: When dining one day at the table of his friend and protectress, Margaret of Navarre, it was observed that he was weeping. He was asked the reason of his tears, and replied that he was afraid to meet God at the judgment-seat, because of his faint advocacy of the Gospel. He had lived at ease instead of bearing witness to the persecuted truth. Then he asked that, except his books, whatever he possessed should, when he was dead, be given to the poor, and presently retired. He went unnoticed to his chamber, and to bed. There, turning his face to the wall, God only being near, he yielded up his spirit. Against this good man now no Christian will be disposed to echo his last words of self-reproach. Faber d'Etaples bore such witness as became his nature. He was averse from strife. Enough for him that he did not flinch from following the light he saw; that when tried, he was found true to his convictions. Actively to assert them against error scarcely was in his nature as a young man, and was hardly to be asked of him in his old age, for it was in his old age only that there came for Europe the necessity of a religious struggle. Moreover, his books were not inoperative. Here, for example, we find that, through them, he has helped a worthy student, and has won the reverence of the pure-hearted Agrippa.

Upon the subject of the monogamy of Anne, the mother of the Virgin, Cornelius was led to dispute chiefly by the violence of those who maintained an opposite opinion. He had been expressing Faber's views upon the subject



to one of the Deacons of the town, Nicolas Roscius, in the course of private conversation<sup>1</sup>. Roscius maintained the popular opinion, and the two friendly controversialists agreed to submit their argument to umpires. At about the same time Agrippa's business carried him for a few days away from Metz; he may have been sent on a mission by his chiefs, or have gone to Cologne to assist at the family arrangements consequent upon his father's death. When he returned, he found that at least three priests had constituted themselves umpires in the discussion between the Town Advocate and Deacon Roscius, that they had denounced their fellow-townsmen violently from their pulpits, and had attacked also the venerable and most gentle Faber with a fierce invective. First there was<sup>2</sup> a brother of the convent of St. Francis of Observance, named Dominic Delphinus, second to none in virulence and insolence of speech, who had reviled the modest Faber Stapulensis as a fool, an insane blockhead, without faith and ignorant of sacred letters, and had spoken of his books as reprobated and condemned, erroneous in doctrine, hostile to faith and the Church, writings to be read at peril of the soul, and proper only for the flames. Nicolas Orici, of the convent of the Minorite Friars or Cordeliers, was almost as vehement; but the most prominent denouncer was Claudius Salini, prior of the Dominicans,

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. De Beatissime Annæ Monogamia ac unico Puerperio, propositiones abbreviatæ et articulatæ, juxta disceptationem Jacobi Fabri Stapulensis in libro de Tribus et Una.* Op. Tom. ii. p. 588.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. ii. p. 743, for the following.



who had lately been invested with the doctorate at Paris. Few dared, few cared to resist the authority of these reverend fathers; thus it was then that when Cornelius returned to Metz he found himself regarded almost as a public criminal. He wished, he said, he could have been upon the spot to rebuke these arrogant men to their faces. As it was, however, he did what he could; that is to say, he drew up and promulgated a set of propositions<sup>1</sup>, flatly contradicting all that had been said and done, and to these he invited answer, promising a full reply upon the argument against him.

There is no gentle spirit of expostulation here: it is all hot denunciation with a quickened pulse and a flushed cheek. These monks appear now to Agrippa the rude clog upon all progress and the soil upon all purity. They darken heaven for him with their sensual legends, and they preach a gospel of foul passions. He glows with a just anger against the wrong done to a virtuous old man, whose worst fault is his love of peace; he resents, also, what seems to him the lewdness put into the story of a saint whom in that time many pious scholars honoured for her purity, and in whose honour his old friend Trithemius, among others, had written a special book<sup>2</sup>; nor was the private grief the least that stung him to a passionate retaliation; he had been a second time made by this class of men the object of denunciation in the house of God.

<sup>1</sup> Their title is cited in the last note but one; they are on pages 588-593.

<sup>2</sup> *De Laudibus Sanctissimæ Matris Annæ.* Moguntini, 1494.



I do not mean by this class of men the monks, but a certain section of the monks. Everywhere in the monasteries there were pious people, and there were many learned, a few wise. If Agrippa found his enemies among the monks, out of the same community he chose also the greater number of his friends. His views upon monastic life were not contemptuous; he honoured it above all others, in ideal, and for that reason was the more incensed at those by whom it was dishonoured. His opinions upon this subject are fully stated in a declamation written by him for an abbot<sup>1</sup> who was to address his brotherhood. They are summed up in a contrast between an active and a contemplative life, typified respectively by Martha and Mary, Martha troubled about many things, but Mary chooser of that better part. The true monk's life Cornelius regarded as a life of spiritual aspiration. His whole training as a scholar led him to admire and reverence it; but the true monk, according to his theory, was bound to make it his whole business to become like-minded with his heavenly Master, and there would be no true monk, he said, who was not poor, and chaste, and humble. Men who fed daily on rich meat, were lewd and arrogant, who preached a gospel not of peace and mercy, seemed to him, therefore, only the more hateful for the profession they had made, as brethren vowed especially to Christ. How widely the monastic system was corrupted in the days of Luther I need not describe; it was not the system, it was

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. Sermo de Vita Monastica, per venerabilem Abbatem in Brouuiller habitus.* Opuscula (ed. 1583), sig. fol. K vii.-L v.



only the corruption in it, that Cornelius denounced. It did not enter into his philosophy to see how naturally one had bred the other.

How the Dominicans or Preaching Friars by wild antics worked upon the people, we have read elsewhere, and need suspect little exaggeration when Cornelius relates<sup>1</sup> that the Prior Claudius Salini had worried him from the pulpit "with mad barkings and marvellous gesticulations, with outstretched fingers, with hands cast forward and suddenly snatched back again, with grinding of the teeth, foaming, spitting, stamping, leaping, cuffing up and down, with tearing at the scalp and gnawing at the nails." You can only, he said, quell such men with invective; and apologising for his own rude tone in a dedication of what he had written in the controversy to his friend John Nidepontanus, he cites the old proverb, that you can only match a mad dog with a wolf. To the reader he says, that the recent martyrologies and professed legends of the Saints are full of such prodigious lies, that they make Christianity a laughing-stock in the eyes of the Jews, Turks, and Infidels. The story of the Blessed Anne's three husbands and three daughters Mary, is one of them. It is false, says his first proposition. "Jacques Faber d'Etaples, gymnosophist of Paris," says his second, "has written a book called *On the Three and the One*, upon the single marriage and the single childbirth of St. Anne. Whoever," adds the proposition following, "tells the people in public assembly that this book ought to be burnt, and

<sup>1</sup> In the prefatory letter to the *Propositiones de B. Annæ Monog.*



wishes every copy of it in the fire, is a presumptuous man, judging falsely, and an evil-spoken detractor, doing atrocious wrong to that book and its author, and all literature. He who is offended by the book is unlearned and obstinate in ignorance, because the book itself is lustrous with the authority of Scripture and of reason. He who is scandalised by the author, is a wicked hypocrite, because that author is gentle and of humble heart. But if any one ventures to come into the lists against that book armed with Scripture and with reason, him I will judge to be a brave and a strong man, worthy to be met in conflict (for the sake of truth, not of vainglory) by some learned champion. Whoever speaks against that book in other fashion, is a slanderer and foe to truth."

Lies in his throat, in fact; for here we have a doughty soldier challenging to argument in the true tournament style, and his intention is to deal rough blows at his opponent. The precise opinion which he proclaims "scandalous and impious," is that St. Anne first married Joachim and gave birth—though by immaculate conception—to the Virgin Mary. Then she married Cleophas and gave birth to another Mary, that Mary marrying Alphæus and becoming mother to James the Less, Joseph the Just, and Simon Judas. Thirdly, St. Anne married Salome and gave birth to another Mary, that Mary marrying Zebedee and becoming mother to James and John the Evangelist.

This opinion, he asserts, is contrary to evidence of Scripture,—of the types, the prophecies, the Gospels—contrary to ancient Eastern custom, contrary to the pos-



sibility of nature, contrary to all probability, and calculated to bring into contempt the purity of her who was the mother of the Virgin. It is unscriptural, unspiritual, and tends to the debasement of believers, not to edifying. The true doctrine is that St. Anne being past the age of child-bearing, she was married to one man, and became the immaculate mother of one daughter, the Virgin Mary.

Upon the statement of this case in eighteen Propositions, Salini the Dominican replied, and against his reply Cornelius issued a not very short Defence of his Propositions<sup>1</sup>, arguing each of the eighteen points in detail, and attacking in detail Salini's efforts to refute them. The tone in which Agrippa carries through his refutation of Salini, is precisely that which Milton used against Salmasius. He attacks him scornfully for everything,—for his spelling, and his grammar, and his Latin style, as well as upon all points of his reasoning, and of course always for his insolence. He attacks him as a Thomist, treats him as a dog, and calls him dog. The Dominicans nearly all of them belonged to the school of theology called Thomist, after Thomas Aquinas, hotly opposed by the Scotists, and afterwards by the Franciscans and Jesuits. The word is much used as a reproach by Agrippa in this argument, because it was one part of Thomist doctrine that the Virgin Mary was conceived and born in sin.

Of Salini's argument we may content ourselves with

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. Defensio Propositionum prænaratarum contra quendam Dominicastrum, illarum Impugnatorem, qui sanctissimam Deiparæ Virginis matrem Annam conatur ostendere polygamam.* Op. Tom. ii. pp. 594-668.



two short glimpses. He argues against the book of Jacques Faber, and has lately been to Paris, yet he does not rightly know the name of the Parisian doctor, and alludes to him only as Peter Faber<sup>1</sup>. He counts up the advantages supposed to be derived from St. Anne's two supernumerary husbands, and says, "surely it is better for the Church to have had John, the two Jameses, the Apostles Simon and Jude, than the widowhood of Anne<sup>2</sup>." In Agrippa's argument there occur two declamatory passages which show distinctly the views taken by him of the strife arising in the Church. In this one of his works there occurs also a brief narrative of his career, given in reply to Salini's assertion that he is unlettered—one of those useful little autobiographic fragments common in the works of writers who belonged to that free-spoken time<sup>3</sup>. And now, here is free speech to the Dominicans<sup>4</sup>: "I am not ignorant that in the Gospel and in the administration of the Church you are not set apart, but that you occupy yourselves for the sake of lucre with the Pope's indulgences, the business of preaching, the confessional, burial rites, and other offices of the Church. If these assemblies and these ministrations brought you poverty instead of property, I know you would not thunder your hyperboles in church, you would not bind the people with your power over purgatory by so many prodigious fables, so many ghostly portents, so many markets for indulgences, so many monopolies of alms, and financial laws. You would not scent like vultures the corpses of the rich, and come so craftily

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 662.    <sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 626.    <sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 596.    <sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 600.



about them; you would not, through the secrets of those who are admitted to the confessional, fleece a rude population more than by the tyranny of Phalaris." Agrippa dwells upon more extortions, and upon their playing upon women's fears. "I speak," he says, "from knowledge and experience, speaking not of all, but many who being vowed to poverty are overcome by avarice and greed, and convert alms into taxes, and seem to have given up their own goods only that they may impudently beg the goods of others. I may say this, too, that I can think of no easier way, no more deceitful, cunning, secret way of collecting cash, goods, worldly wealth, than by abuse of these indulgences, joined to luxurious beggary."

Elsewhere he writes in the same work yet more emphatically as a man whose sympathy is with the Reformers. He writes of those, who like Salini, "towards God false<sup>1</sup>, and towards man unjust, have slandered the truth, and desired to bring hatred down on its promoters. So did of old time Celsus against Christ, Julian the Apostate against the Gospel, Diotrophes against John the Evangelist, Apollophanes against Dionysius the Areopagite, Ischyrras against Athanasius, John of Antioch against Cyril of Alexandria, Grapaldus and William of Ware against Saint Bernard. The same has been done in our times by some poor little bishop (whose crudities I once read, though his name does not occur to me) against Giovanni Pico, Count of Mirandola, and Jacob Hochstraten,

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. pp. 660-661.



of the order of Dominicans, inquisitor at Cologne, against an old teacher of mine, most learned in each faculty, Peter of Ravenna. The same brotherkin, with Arnold de Tungris and other sworn calumniators of Cologne, insulted the most upright and learned man, Reuchlin of Pfortzheim, and spread the most wicked lies about the world to their own everlasting infamy. So did Wigandus, the beginning and the support of the Dominican heresy at Berne; so did that Dominican brotherkin and Thomist doctor against the illustrious doctor in each faculty, Sebastian Brand, now chancellor and councillor at Zurich, as well as against other famous doctors, being and speaking evil. So did Sylvester Prierias, though master of the palace to the Pope at Rome, brotherkin of the same order of Dominicans and Thomist doctor, inveigh against that most combative doctor, Martin Luther of Wittenberg, not without giving proof of his own ignorance. Even John Eckius, although an erudite man, and with scholastic learning, battled against the same Luther, and against Andrew Bodenstein of Carlstadt, with ill-success and to his own mishap. Nor are there wanting envious and pestilent detractors who join you, Salini, in calumny against Erasmus of Rotterdam, and Jacques Faber d'Etaples, whom certain theologists of Paris, because he denied that crude translation of the New Testament, which you, and sophist fellows like you, call Jerome's, to be Jerome's, and proved by arguments that it was not Jerome's, have wished to condemn as a heretic, blackening themselves eternally and universally with their own ignorance and malice,



not without also bringing ignominy on the whole Sorbonne."

Bold speech like this could only invite persecution, and this, as we shall see presently, was not the only way in which Cornelius was making himself odious in a town noted for bigotry. Metz was most cruel to the Jews, and met alike by cruelty and treachery the first efforts of the Reformers to obtain hearing within its walls. The German Lutherans desired much through Metz to introduce the leaven of their bold opinions into France. At first they were met by direct persecution, and years afterwards, when it was politically requisite to promise them a chapel, and they went out to worship on the faith of such a promise, they were cruelly betrayed to slaughter. Jean le Clerc, the first man who dared to preach the Reformed doctrine in Metz, not long after the date of Agrippa's battling with the monks, was by the order of Nicolas Savin, the Inquisitor, publicly whipped through the streets on several successive days; and in the year following, before the convent of the Celestines, the ingenuity of Savin procured for him a cruel martyrdom: his nose was first cut off, then his right hand, then a hot iron crown was placed upon his head, after which he was burnt alive<sup>1</sup>. From the hand of this Nicolas Savin, a burly, ignorant, and vicious man, who years afterwards was expelled from Metz for civil crime, but returned and lived

<sup>1</sup> *Histoire Générale de Metz, par des Religieux Bénédictins de la Congrégation de St. Vannes.* Metz, 1775. Tom. iii. p. 8.



in his monastery unmolested<sup>1</sup>, nothing remains but a sermon preached on the occasion of his publicly degrading brother Chatelain, an Austin friar, who preached Lutheran discourses, and was burnt for them at about the time of Le Clerc's martyrdom. The text of this Christian discourse was John xx. 27—"Be not faithless but believing<sup>2</sup>."

Such were the ministers of Christ in whom Cornelius did not believe, and against whom his soul was at last rebelling fiercely. While he was struggling with Salini, he had strength also, at the same time, bravely and humanely to face the Inquisitor himself, and save a helpless girl from butchery. He was destroying his own worldly prospects, risking alike income and fair fame; but he was being true to his own soul, and to its Maker.

At about this time Father Claudius went to Paris upon business connected with his monastery, and was glad to think that he should there meet with Jacques Faber<sup>3</sup>. Agrippa took the opportunity of forwarding a loving letter to the Christian teacher by whose writings he had been assisted, and enclosed a copy of the Propositions, in which he had defended his fair fame against the monks, by whom he had been slandered. The good doctor received Claudius with pleasure<sup>4</sup>, and returned by him to Cornelius Agrippa the first letter in a kindly correspondence<sup>5</sup>, sending him also sundry books that had been written on the contro-

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Nidepontanus, prefixed to the *Prop. de B. A. Monog.*

<sup>2</sup> *Histoire Générale de Metz.*

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 27, Lib. ii. p. 744.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 29, Lib. ii. p. 745.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 28, Lib. ii. p. 755.



versy provoked by his argument against the three husbands of St. Anne. But the gentle old man shook his head with grave and kindly deprecation over the harsh tone of his young advocate. This is his first letter: "Most honourable doctor, the venerable father Claudius Deodatus gave me your letter, which I read with pleasure. Who would not read gladly what he knows to have come from a candid and well-wishing mind? Do not, I beseech you, take it ill that many oppose what I have written, either about the Magdalene or about St. Anne. I think that, at some future day, the truth of these things will become clearer, about which I decide as an arguer only, not with rash authority. Wherefore, I beg you, let your goodwill to no person be wounded through this matter. Error has decay in itself, and will at last fall of itself, even without being struck." In his second letter, and by another opportunity, he says, "I would rather that the affair about Anne were discussed without contention among the learned; but if, through the malignity of the times, and the perversity of man's wit, this cannot be, and you have a disposition to contend, see that you by no means do it through zeal for my credit, but only for the defence of truth, and out of devotion to the Mother of God and the most blessed Anne. . . . In my opinion, he is happier who does not contend than he who does. Act, therefore, if possible, so prudently as neither to offend God nor your neighbour." This letter was written on the day after Trinity Sunday, in the year 1519, upon seeing the



Propositions only. In September or October, Cornelius forwarded a copy of the defence of the Propositions<sup>1</sup>, regretting that he had not time to copy them in duplicate, because he was obliged to visit Germany, this probably referring to another visit upon family affairs to Cologne, where there lived his widowed mother on her little patrimony. Faber, replying on the fourteenth of November<sup>2</sup>, regretted the hostility Agrippa was bringing down upon himself; the most excellent and wise Reuchlin, he said, had suffered much. If the dissertation of Cornelius was to be printed, he advised careful revision, as "the times yield wonderful critics." What Faber is said at last to have deplored in his own character even these letters show, gentle and kindly as they are.

We leave the subject of St. Anne to note another indication of Agrippa's disposition at this time. A friend and doctor of law, Claudius Cantiuncula, whose relation to the Church is not on a safe footing, has found it requisite to quit Metz suddenly. Agrippa finds that he has gone to Basle, and writes to him<sup>3</sup>, "I know, and do you firmly believe, that it is well with you if you are safe and free away from here. What else I wish you to know I doubt whether I can commit safely to a letter. It remains only that I beg you to send me the works of Martin Luther, as well as the Short Law Cases in a portable volume that were once printed at Basle, and anything truly theological in which you know I take the most delight. Be diligent

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 35, Lib. ii. p. 750.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 36, Lib. ii. pp. 750, 751.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 26, Lib. ii. p. 744.



to recover for me, if you can, my Commentaries on St. Paul, from Christopher Schilling of Lucerne, and set me right with your true friends, as I flinch never from defending you during your absence."

Claudius Cantiuncula—he became afterwards a well known jurisconsult, wrote law-books, and was Chancellor of Einsilheim, in Upper Alsatia—Claudius Cantiuncula replies, about their life of struggle, in a spirit contrary to Faber's<sup>1</sup>: "Virtue, without an energy, decays. Believe me, my Agrippa, that up to this time I have searched all Basle, and can procure nowhere the works of Luther; they have all been long since sold, but are, it is said, to be reprinted at Zurich. The Short Cases you want, nobody has. I give you, however, a Compendium of true Theology, issued by Erasmus, a work, Henry, which if I do not mistake, will give you pleasure; the Conclusions of Luther and Eckius declaimed this year, and also some trifles about the Emperor. Farewell. May 21, 1519."

The Emperor had died, aged sixty, on the eleventh of the previous January. Maximilian's hereditary successor was Charles V., and Agrippa's fealty as a German noble thus became due to another master. The succession to the empire was contended for between Charles and the King of France. Agrippa might ere long be serving Charles; he could not tell. "I cleave to this town," he wrote, on the second of June, from Metz<sup>2</sup>, "fastened by I know not what nail: but so cleaving, that I cannot determine how to go or stay. I never was in any place

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 32, Lib. ii. p. 748.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 33, Lib. ii. p. 749.



from which I could depart more willingly than (with submission to you) from this city of Metz, the stepmother of all good scholarship and virtue." He wrote to one of her own sons, the young doctor of law, who had been forced into voluntary exile from his native town and from his parents.

"My Agrippa," Cantiuncula wrote back<sup>1</sup>, "soundest of all friends, greeting: I received your two letters sent by Sbrolius<sup>2</sup>" (a poet), "and thank you for commending me to the friendship of so learned and humane a man. . . . Nothing new of Luther's has come out; if anything appears, it shall quickly be communicated to you. Farewell, and love me as you are wont: remember me also to my parents. Salute your incomparable, exemplary wife, and your son, who is so full of promise. Sbrolius also sends good wishes to these, though he has no love for your elder famulus, an unkempt fellow, who deserves, he says, to be turned out of your house, and drudge his sordid days out at a handmill. Basle, August 27th, 1519."

Agrippa's son is in another letter called "Little Ascanius." His name was Aymon<sup>3</sup>. He was but six or seven years old at this time, and was his only son, though not his only child. I think, for a reason that will afterwards appear, a daughter may have died at Metz, a little one, very dear to his wife Louisa, and that it was buried in the church of St. Cross, at which they worshipped, by the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 34, Lib. ii. p. 749.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Sbrolius, a scholar and court poet, had translated Maximilian's *Dewrdank* into Latin verse. He taught in Swiss universities, and afterwards served Charles V.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 38, 49, 58, Lib. iii. pp. 804, 9, 17.



good pastor, who was one of their best friends, John Roger Brennon. Brennon was a man very like-minded with Agrippa upon matters of honour and religion. "When I am gone," Agrippa used to tell him, as they sat together, "when they have me no longer at Metz to worry, they will worry you instead, my friend<sup>1</sup>." There were strong friendships formed by those who worked together in the midst of strife, resisting ignorance and superstition.

At Vuopy, a neighbouring village, to north-westward of Metz, on the other side of the Moselle, there lived a young woman, a poor man's wife, whose mother had been burnt for a witch<sup>2</sup>. This source of endless horror and distress to her, was also her own crime. As the mother had been, so, it was said, the daughter must be; and one night a crowd of rustics, who had been drinking together, broke into her house, dragged her with much ill-treatment from her bed, and locked her in a prison of their own invention. There, without any authority whatever, they detained her until the chapter, moved by urgent representations, brought her into the town for proper trial before the official of the Court of Metz. The rustics were allowed a certain time to decide whether they would accuse before the civil power, or denounce the woman to the Inquisition. On the appointed day eight scoundrels came forward as accusers; they were ordered to give prisoners as pledges of the good faith of their suit against the woman, and demurring to

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. ii. p. 759.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. ii. pp. 755, 756, for the main narrative, compared with letters 38 and 39, covers all that follows on this subject.



this, were allowed two days' more reflection by advice of Nicolas Savin, the Inquisitor, who sat with the Judge. During those two days the Inquisitor received eggs, butter, and cakes, the Judge gold pieces; and when the case was next heard, the miserable woman was sent to Vuopyy, in the hands of her accusers, or of four of them, the other four having been rejected as notorious ruffians. This was done suddenly, without the cognisance of Cornelius Agrippa, who had come manfully forward to protect the woman in her helplessness, and had argued publicly as a jurisconsult, privately as a Christian, the illegality and immorality of previous proceedings. Especially he had opposed the right of the Dominican, Nicolas Savin, to exercise his office of Inquisitor, or sit beside the Judge. He had appeared in the court as advocate of the accused on that occasion when the cause was postponed for two days, had been reviled, he says, by "that brotherkin (I err), that great, swollen, and fat brother, Nicolas Savin, of the Dominican Convent, Inquisitor<sup>1</sup>," and threatened with a process against himself also, as favourer of heretics; he had been in that spirit turned out of court. On the same evening he wrote a letter to the Judge, showing the law in writing that he was not suffered to explain by word of mouth. For his being called a favourer of heretics, "the rascally Inquisitor," he says, "as you may see by these his words, condemns the simple woman as a heretic, when the cause of action scarcely has been stated.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 38, Lib. ii. p. 752. This is the letter, pp. 752-754, from which the succeeding passages are quoted.



I seek fair hearing for her while she is untried and uncondemned, and the vile scoffer calls me favourer of heresy ! Have you admitted this man to sit on the bench with you ? The lie is on his head, the infamous calumniator, and he thinks to quell me with his threats ; but, to the best of my calling, to the best of my constancy, I will not desist from the defence of this innocent woman. Let this brotherkin, priest, or Levite, turn his heart from her. I will be pitiful with all my power, and call myself Samaritan, that is to say not favourer of heretics, but a disciple of him, who when it was said to him that he was a Samaritan, and had a devil, denied that he had a devil, but did not deny that he was a Samaritan." Presently he tells how, on the evening before, Savin, though he had never before visited the place, went to Vuopyy, feasted with the girl's accusers, and took presents from them. "But," he adds, "the hypocrite dissembles his iniquity under the shadow of the Gospel !" He ends a letter, touching upon sundry legal points, by urging that in the case in hand there is no heresy at all, or none that comes at any time under the control of an inquisitor. For no inquisitor has cognisance or jurisdiction on matters of suspicion. Heresy must be manifest before it can fall under inquisitorial correction : therefore the monk must be excluded. "I pray you," he says, "not to despise what I have written, unless indeed, even from these privileges, the poor are excluded. If you are so persuaded, laws help us in vain, and I have no need to discuss their meaning. But I hope better things from your integrity,



and have little distrust concerning that bloodthirsty monk. Farewell. From my study,—with all speed. In this city of Metz, 1519.” He wrote to a corrupt judge, as we have seen. The woman, given, on the next appointed day, into the power of her enemies, was dragged back by them to Vuopyy, beaten and insulted on the way. She was then thrown into a filthy place of durance—filthy it must have been to have been called in those days “worse than penal”—suffering under the injuries she had received, and deprived of rest by night or day, while her accusers were at liberty, drinking and playing with their trenchers. After some days, John Leonard, the official of the court at Metz, gave hearing to the case in the village itself, which lay beyond the circle of his jurisdiction. Then the unhappy creature was proceeded against contrary to the tenor of the law, by a double suit at once, by civil action and by inquisition. Her advocate, Agrippa, being absent, her husband not permitted access to the place of trial, lest he should interpose objection or appeal, “by the advice,” says Cornelius, writing an account of the case to his friend Cantiuncula, at Basle<sup>1</sup>—“by the advice of that great bloated and fat brute, the Inquisitor, more cruel than the very executioner, the poor little woman, by virtue of the before-named stupid book (the ‘Malleus Maleficarum’), was exposed to the question under torture. But at last the civil magistrate himself, and those who were appointed questioners and censors, having gone away smitten with horror at the savage

<sup>1</sup> The 38th letter of Book II. already cited.



spectacle, the woman was left in the hands of the executioner and that Inquisitor, only her accusers and enemies being present, but the judge and censors absent, and among these she was then racked with atrocious torments. Carried back to her dungeon, at the hands of her enemies she suffered more ill-treatment, and was iniquitously deprived of her appointed food and water. At length, the iniquity becoming known, she was brought back to Metz, by order of the chapter."

By a strange chance it happened that the unjust judge, John Leonard, had fallen sick, and was haunted by the tortured woman's agonies upon his death-bed. He expressed horror at Savin's cruelty, and sent a special messenger to the chapter, pleading for the victim with the eloquence of his remorse, and to the Inquisitor Savin he sent, by the hands of a notary, his written judgment that the woman was innocent, or, if suspected, that she was purged of offence by her late sufferings, and by all means to be set free. But she was not set free. Nicolas Savin took the writing addressed to him by the dying judge, as an admission of his jurisdiction, and demanded that the miserable woman be delivered up to him to be exposed to a more searching torture, and then burnt. Cornelius was indefatigable, and Louisa had reason to love her husband for the noble energy with which he spent his days in working all the powers of the law, seeking out witnesses, and by public and by private pleading, ever active in a work of mercy, careless of the ruin it might bring to his own worldly reputation.



To the successor of the deceased magistrate, as soon as he was appointed, Cornelius sent this appeal<sup>1</sup> :

“ You have seen lately, most honourable man, from the acts themselves, those impious articles of a most iniquitous information by virtue of which brother Nicolas Savin, of the Dominican convent, Inquisitor of heretics, has fraudulently dragged into his slaughter-house this innocent woman, in spite of God and justice, in spite of law and equity, contrary to Christian conscience, brotherly kindness, contrary to sacerdotal custom, the profession of his rule, the form of laws and canons: and has also, as a wicked man, wickedly and wrongfully exposed her to atrocious and enormous torments: whereby he has earned for himself a name of cruelty that will not die, as the lord official John Leonard, your predecessor now departed, himself testified upon his death-bed: and the lords of the chapter themselves know it with abhorrence. Among those articles of accusation one and the first is, that the mother of the said woman was burnt for witchcraft. I have excepted against this man as impertinent, intrusive, and incompetent to exercise in this case the judicial function; but lest you be led astray by false prophets who claim to be Christ, and are Antichrist, I pray your reverence to bear with a word of help, and only pay attention to a conversation lately held with me upon the position of this article, by the before-named bloodthirsty brother. For he asserted superciliously that the fact was in the highest degree decisive, and enough to warrant torture; and not

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 39, Lib. ii. pp. 754, 755.



unreasonably he asserted it according to the knowledge of his sect, which he produced presently out of the depths of the 'Malleus Maleficarum' and the principles of peripatetic Theology, saying: 'It must be so, because it is the custom with witches, from the very first, to sacrifice their infants to the demons, and besides that' (he said), 'commonly, or often, their infants are the result of intercourse with incubi. Thus it happens that in their offspring, as with an hereditary taint, the evil sticks.' O egregious sophism! Is it thus that in these days we theologise? Do figments like these move us to the torturing of harmless women? Is there no grace in baptism, no efficacy in the priests bidding: 'Depart, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Ghost,' if, because an impious parent has been sacrificed, the offspring must be given to the devil? Let any one who will, believe in this opinion, that incubi can produce offspring in the flesh. What is the fruit of this impossible position, if it be admitted, unless, according to the heresy of the Faustinians and Donatists, we get a greater evil as result? But to speak as one of the faithful, what matters it if one is the child of an incubus, what hurt is it to have been devoted as an infant to the devil? Are we not all from the nature of our humanity born one mass of sin, malediction, and eternal perdition, children of the devil, children of the Divine wrath, and heirs of damnation, until by the grace of baptism Satan is cast out, and we are made new creatures in Jesus Christ, from whom none can be separated, except by his own offence. You see now the worth of this position as a plea for judgment,



at enmity with law, perilous to receive, scandalous to propound. Farewell, and either avoid or banish this blaspheming brotherkin. Written this morning in the city of Metz." Delivered doubtless as soon as the ink was dry.

Thus, both as lawyer and as theologian, Cornelius Agrippa laboured, and he won his cause. He brought the Inquisitor into discredit and made of him a by-word for a little time. The chapter excluded him from jurisdiction in the case, the woman received absolution from the vicar of the church at Metz, and her enemies were fined a hundred francs<sup>1</sup> for unjust accusation of the innocent.

That was nearly the last cause pleaded among the citizens at Metz by their Town Advocate and Orator. He had expended his own reputation on the work. To have carried on simultaneously against the Dominicans two disputes open to a perilous misinterpretation, was to have made an enemy of the whole order, and of every corrupt monk in the town. He had many good friends there: Master Raynald, a physician; the family of the young lawyer Cantiuncula, who had retired to Basle; Tyrius, a clockmaker; Jacopo, a bookseller; a notary of the adjoining township, Baccarat; James and Andrew Charbon; and Pierre Michel, a learned canonist, native of Metz, who was versed in many kinds of literature, was afterwards honoured of princes, and became Abbot of St. Arnoul<sup>2</sup>. He was in close friendship and correspondence with the monk

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 46, Lib. ii. p. 763.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 43, Lib. ii. p. 759.



Chatelain<sup>1</sup>, whom Nicolas Savin soon afterwards expelled from his order and committed to the flames for preaching Lutheran discourses. These were powerless against the mass. Among his special enemies we should name Claudius Drouvyn<sup>2</sup>, an athletic Dominican. His special friend at Metz was John Roger Brennon, curate of St. Cross.

Preached against in the churches and avoided in the streets, out of the narrow circle of his household friends regarded with suspicion, the vocation of Cornelius was gone at Metz; it was not there that he could found a quiet home. Directly after he had assured the success of all his pleading against the Inquisitor, he accepted the consequences of the course he had pursued, and asked permission of the deacons to resign his office and be gone. Leave was granted readily, and after brief preparation, with his fortunes for the third time wrecked, Cornelius Agrippa, towards the close of January, 1520<sup>3</sup>, journeyed with wife and son through wintry weather to his mother at Cologne. "He was hunted from this town," say the Benedictine monks, who wrote a copious history of Metz<sup>4</sup>,—"he was hunted from this town in 1520."

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 45 and 47, Lib. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. ii. p. 761.

<sup>3</sup> Compare dates of letters 42 and 43, Lib. ii.

<sup>4</sup> *Histoire de Metz, par des Bénédictins*, Tom. ii. p. 700. "Il fut chassé de cette ville en 1520. Il a passé pendant sa vie pour un grand sorcier, et est mort en réputation de fort mauvais Chrétien." He is already "fort mauvais Chrétien," but the character for sorcery is not yet earned.



## CHAPTER IV.

## FROM METZ TO COLOGNE.

LEAVE to quit Metz was obtained from the Deacons on the twenty-fifth of January<sup>1</sup>, and a few days afterwards Cornelius Agrippa set out with his family upon the journey to Cologne, travelling in spite of heavy rains, not without risk of being stopped by floods<sup>2</sup>. At Cologne he had a mother and a sister<sup>3</sup> living on the little patrimony that remained after his father's death. It would maintain them all while he was seeking a new field of labour for himself. What the perplexed scholar could earn he earned as a physician, for it was as doctor of medicine that he proposed to make his next attempt to climb the hill of life<sup>4</sup>. He never had encouragement to settle in his native town. As often as he returned thither, and truly

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 42, Lib. ii. p. 758.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. ii. p. 759. "Condolui," says Brennon, "vices tuas, per-timuique, ne tibi cœlo cadentes imbres iter intercluderent."

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. ii. p. 762.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 15, Lib. iii. p. 789.



as he felt bound to it by the ties of home, the city of Cologne, and even his relations out of his own actual home, denied him honour<sup>1</sup>. The University of Cologne had become known as the head-quarters of the men who directed against Reuchlin, and those who were at all like-minded with him, the attacks of all the blockheads in the Church. For favourers of Luther there was in Cologne no tolerance. It was in spirit another Metz, and by this time, as will presently be evident, Cornelius Agrippa had arrived at theological opinions and sympathies with which the air of Geneva, his wife's birthplace, agreed better than that of any city in which priests of the old school were paramount.

We have seen, too, how he went to Cologne with his spirit chafed by the bigotry and ignorance of people of this class. They have taught him to speak bitter words<sup>2</sup>. Henceforth he is against them, and they are against him. For the first few months after his return to the paternal walls, while he could do no more than associate himself in friendship with the few liberal and learned men whom his town tolerated, among whom Hermann Count of Neuwied was the most conspicuous, with these friends it was his chief pleasure to agree in adverse criticism on his late antagonists<sup>3</sup>. The heat of the fierce conflict did not

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 26, Lib. vii. p. 1041.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 43, Lib. ii. p. 759.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 50, Lib. ii. p. 768. "*Ubi invicem cum doctissimis viris non absque jucundissimo fructu læte convivimus qui jam Fratrum illorum Theosophistarum verbovomas linguas aded excantavimus, ut amplius ne murire audeant.*"



instantly subside; his private labour was the preparing of his disputation with Salini for the press, and he was proposing to print with his own thesis the whole of Salini's argument for the three husbands of St. Anne<sup>1</sup>. It was in Cologne that he meant to reissue his denunciations of a bigot! At the same time, the most welcome news he had at first, until the heat of controversy had abated, came in the letters from his old pastor, Roger Brennon, of St. Cross, who faithfully informed him of the further issue of the strife in which he had been for a time so actively engaged.

Brennon was seeing the fulfilment of Agrippa's prophecy by falling into his friend's place among the controversialists<sup>2</sup>. In his reports—though he expresses distrust of his Latin, and seems to wish it were consistent with his station in society to write in the vernacular—we get some of the most graphic sketches of the sort of life that was then being led at Metz among the scholars and the theologians.

At one time, Brennon has to tell of a council held by the learned, in one of the town churches, to discuss the topic upon which there had arisen bitter strife—the number of the husbands of St. Anne. There is a great assembly of rustics, grandmothers, mothers, and children, listening open-mouthed to the president, who begins the discussion with a sermon three hours long, accompanied with much throwing about of the arms and actor's gesture,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 43, Lib. ii. p. 759.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. ii. pp. 759-762, until the next reference, but the statement in the next sentence rests on Ep. 49, Lib. ii. p. 766.



only at last to be stopped by the hand-clapping of the other priests and scholars, who desire to help in the debate. Then Master Reginald, a priest of influence, rises, and argues against the blessedness of second nuptials, but is of opinion that St. Anne married three husbands for the sake of building up the Church. Then follows Master Reynald, the physician, one of Agrippa's friends, arguing against the contamination of her who had once been immaculate, and urging that if Anne was the mother of more Marys than one, the birth of all was equally miraculous. To this it is replied that the second and third Marys were born in sin, but that the subsequent sin did not affect the purity of the first Mary's conception, nor was it derogatory to her honour, having been permitted. Then Brennon comes forward, warmly decrying all such reasoning as rash and scandalous; and showing that it is not founded on authority of Scripture. He urges that one Mary was the wife of Cleophas, and not his daughter; it is replied that so far may be true, but that there was another Cleophas who was her father. "Did you never see," cries a monk, "two asses in a market-place named Martin?" Brennon replies: "I have seen two asses together, of which I am one, and you the other; but I have never seen or read that there were two men in Scripture with the name of Cleophas." Hereupon there is great laughter in the crowd. Brennon quotes the histories of Eusebius and Hegesippus. It is replied that they are not to be believed; they sometimes dreamed. The Dominicans quote Thomas Aquinas; Brennon will not hear of him, nor of Augustine, Jerome,



Chrysostom, or anybody else; they also are not to be believed, they sometimes dreamed,—and the rustics enjoy and applaud the retort, while the Augustinians and Thomists become angry. Then Brennon suddenly revokes all that he has said, and asserts that Saint Anne had not three husbands, but four. They ask who was the fourth, and he replies, Marcolphus. Dangerous jesting, Master Roger Brennon! After he has withdrawn, a herculean priest, Claudius Drouvyn, approaches him with glowing eyes, and labours in vain to provoke him to an open quarrel. Presently thrusting out head and lips towards Brennon's ear, the Dominican whispers fiercely: "I wish you were burnt for a heretic. I have some fagots I would gladly spend upon you." Nobody being by to hear his answer, Brennon replies, with a reference to the Dominican Wigand, who some ten years before had been burnt for feigned miracles at Berne: "Keep them; they will yet be wanted for yourself and your brother Dominicans; they have not cleared off all your heresies at Berne." Drouvyn, not cooled by such a taunt, next meets with Brennon the same evening in the public square, and, going up to him furiously, as he stands conversing with some friends, shouts, "You are a fool,—you are an ass,—you are an impudent fellow, who have calumniated the great Saint Augustine!" For such words, publicly spoken, Drouvyn is liable to be brought to the proof, and Brennon summons him to answer for himself before the judges. The Dominican makes overtures for reconciliation, and they are refused.



Brennon's conduct of course is not praiseworthy, but it seems to be after the manner of the life of Metz. "I will tell you," he says, in another letter<sup>1</sup>, "what has been done during these last few days by Nicolas Savin, master of the heretics. A certain decrepid old woman, suspected of witchcraft, being exposed by Savin to dire tortures, confessed herself, under excruciating pain, to be a witch, to have denied Christ on the suggestion of an incubus, to have flown through the air, to have raised storms, to have inflicted damage and disease on men and cattle. But she confessed also, that when a communicant at Easter, she took away Our Lord's own body and mixed it with herbs and ashes into a magical ointment in the presence of the demon, who took part as his own share, and left her the rest for wicked uses. More of these fables, such as commonly are told of evil women, Savin himself extorted from the before-mentioned crone, who, since it was her miserable lot in her innocence to want a defender, was burnt to ashes. Savin, boastful of his achievement, then vehemently exaggerated in a wordy assembly every article of accusation, chiefly that which I have just told you about the Eucharist, and the whole population was incited to a search for witches. There is a murmuring of the rough mob against poor little women; a detestable hatred springs up. Here and there the peasantry confer together, and many crippled old women are seized, but most run from the danger. Savin rejoices, hoping that it may bring him hereafter praise and profit if he can tyrannise in a like

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 59, Lib. ii. pp. 776-778.



way over these poor bodies. Then I, indignant at our citizens, and at the insolence of the surrounding country-people, published my detestation of the senselessness of Savin, who could so foolishly believe that the Sacrament of the Eucharist could be meddled with by a demon, changed into the form of a poisonous ointment, and in part taken away by him; it was, I said, over bold to preach this to a Christian people, when such a thing was in no way credible by any Christian man. The obstinate crowd runs down upon me; they put forward Savin, so well skilled in sacred letters; he, the Inquisitor, he, the pious father, is safe, they assert, even if the cowl can cover error. I withstand them all, persist in giving reason for so doing, bring forward the Scripture: at length my words have weight with all, and reverence cools towards Savin. But he, to consult his honour, and confirm his influence, promises an assembly on the Sunday following. Therein, to confirm his error, he deluded the people with this trivial argument, that Christ was carried over a high mountain, and to the pinnacle of the temple, by the Devil; therefore it was no marvel that Satan might lay a hand upon the Eucharist. Again the unlearned masses would have assented to him, had I not opposed him to his face, upon the spot, saying: that at that time, when the Lord was tempted in the desert, He was not known by the Tempter; who had at last, when told that he should not tempt the Lord his God, trembled suddenly and fled. Before that Lord, become now the Redeemer of the human race, he trembles, and takes flight eternally, so



that by the mere name of Jesus, and the signature of the cross, devils are cast out. . . . When I had said these, and more such things, the friends of Savin left him; he was again laughed at; they scoffed at him, and by many even he himself was called a heretic. At last all the poor women who were imprisoned were set free, and those who had fled returned in safety. Savin meanwhile sits in his cell and gnaws his finger-nails for grief, not venturing to show himself in open street." Of the great picture of the Reformation in the Church, bred by the revival of letters and awakening of independent thought, of the historical scene of that grand controversy, much of the background was, as it were, shaded in with little arguments like these. Brennon reports to his friend more of this kind of life at Metz, but enough has been said to show of what sort were in that town the experiences of Cornelius Agrippa. We must add, however, that the country-woman whom Agrippa wrested from the clutch of the Inquisitor is reported as having remembered Brennon for her benefactor's friend, and bringing to him frequently thank-offerings of eggs and butter<sup>1</sup>.

From Metz to Cologne had been, in respect to toleration, no change for the better. To a friend, John Cæsar, who had been wronged by the Cologne magistrates because accused of heresy, Cornelius wrote<sup>2</sup> in that year, 1520,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 53, Lib. ii. p. 771. "Te salvere jubemus omnes, tuosque omnes, precipuè vetulam de Vapeya, quæ mihi frequenter ob tui familiarem consuetudinem rustica munerula adfert."

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 60, Lib. ii. p. 778.



that he would not lament with or console him, but that he offered his congratulations: "For what more brilliant fortune could befall you than to receive the vituperation of those who have hated none except the best and wisest men, among whom it is no slight honour for you to be numbered? Who does not know that these are the masters who expelled from the schools John Campanus, a man noted for his learning and his virtue;—who turned out of the town Peter of Ravenna, the most famous doctor of law;—who were the backbiters with foulest calumny of the most learned Hermann Count of Neuwied;—who have aspersed with their foul thoughts Erasmus of Rotterdam, a man superior to all by reason of his life and of his learning, and Jacques Faber d'Etaples, the single restorer of peripatetic philosophy, most skilled in mathematics and in literature, human and divine? But against John Reuchlin of Pfortzheim, most illustrious jurisconsult, master of many mysteries of literature and of languages, they fought with obstinacy until all their learning, credit, fame, authority, fell into one total and final wreck, when through the whole world the infamy of their ignorance, ignominy, and perfidy became a common talk. See, then, what glory has befallen you in being attacked by such foes, and numbered with so many illustrious heroes. See how you have suddenly acquired what was until now wanting to your merit——" And in this strain Agrippa runs on merrily until he closes with triumphal song, fitting to words of exultation several bars of merry music. There is a heart-ache under it, the bitterly defiant mirth is the cry not of con-



tent, but disappointment; it is the voice not of strength, but of weakness; there is too much in it of despair.

Nevertheless, Agrippa labours still on his own path, honestly and boldly, though not with the strength of men who are before him in the race. Cantiuncula, at Basle, sends word to him of any new thing published by theologians whom both admired. When an edition of the Letters of Erasmus was on the point of being issued from the press of Frobenius, Cantiuncula expressed his opinion that it would be a work not to compare with Politian, but to prefer to him, and conjectured that its price would be two gold pieces<sup>1</sup>. Cantiuncula himself was retained at Basle by a salary, and had in this year (1520) finished preparing a collection of his lectures upon many legal topics for the press, forming a book, written, as the author stated to the public, neither for the most ignorant nor for the most learned; but he trusted that, although "the omniscient Henry Cornelius Agrippa, aristarch of polite letters," belonged to the latter class, he would take pleasure in the work, and help the writer by free criticism<sup>2</sup>.

It had been understood when Cornelius left Metz in January, that his friend Brennon was to visit him at the succeeding Easter time<sup>3</sup>, with a learned acquaintance, Marcus Damascenus, who had in manuscript three books on the Nature of the Soul.

A few matters of business left unsettled at Metz, Brennon managed for his friend, among which was the receipt

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 41, Lib. ii. p. 757.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 58, Lib. ii. p. 755.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 47.



on his account of money due from Chatelain<sup>1</sup>, as we may reasonably suppose for medical attendance. All references to this Chatelain, who duly paid his debt, are in the kindest spirit. No doubt it is the same who soon afterwards was burnt at Metz upon the charge of heresy. At Easter, Brennon was unable to join his friend, who was already being troubled at Cologne by one person at least with slanders, not against himself only, but also against his wife, so frequent and public, so bitter and malicious, that he called upon the Church as a reconciler of disputes among communicants to reprehend and check them<sup>2</sup>. Brennon, unable to travel to Cologne at Easter, promised that he would go at Whitsuntide, if he was not despatched to Rome. The Abbess of St. Glodesindis was dead, and there was a contest of three candidates for the succession to her office. The decision having been referred to Rome, Brennon thought he might have to go thither upon that business<sup>3</sup>. Cornelius replied that it would be imprudence and folly to go to Rome when the weather was so hot—he wrote this on the fourth of May—a visit to Cologne would be much better for him. On a question of health, Cornelius was sensitive just then, for he was in the first days of recovery from an attack of tertian fever. Brennon had better come to Cologne with all possible speed, and with this invitation there went to their old pastor Louisa's greeting, and the expression of her reverence as to a parent<sup>4</sup>. The young couple—Agrippa's present age is

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 47 ; also Ep. 50, Lib. ii. ; and Ep. 57, Lib. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 48, Lib. ii. p. 764.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 49, Lib. ii. p. 767.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 50, Lib. ii. p. 768. ■



thirty-four—had brought away with them from Metz a strong affection for the parish priest by whom so many of their bold opinions had been shared. Many little gifts were despatched to him by Louisa from Cologne, one of which only, Cornelius fears, reached its destination; for although the most trifling—it was a piece of her needle-work<sup>1</sup>—it was the only one acknowledged (and that one most lovingly), therefore they must put no more faith in the messenger to whom the others were entrusted<sup>2</sup>.

The succession to the rule over the nuns of St. Glodesindis having been settled quietly without the intervention of the Pope<sup>3</sup>, obstacles more serious arose to prevent Brennon's fulfilment of his promise to Louisa and her husband. At the beginning of June, or end of May (old style), he was seized with an acute fever, which, because it was characterised by great chill at the surface of the body, and much inward heat, he treated for himself by roasting the outside of his body at a fire, and cooling his inner man for two days with a diet composed wholly of cherries. Astonishing the doctors of Metz by the result of this very direct way of fighting with a case, Brennon recovered speedily, and, while recovering, was summoned to the funeral of his mother<sup>4</sup>, whom a month before he had been expecting to have with him at Metz, together with a sister<sup>5</sup>. His mother's death gave Brennon much private care and occupation. The visit to Cologne was

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 55, Lib. ii. p. 774.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 61, Lib. ii. p. 779.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 53, Lib. ii. p. 771.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 55, Lib. ii. p. 773.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 49, Lib. ii. p. 767, and for the next fact.



deferred, therefore, till Michaelmas<sup>1</sup>, when he and Cornelius would read together certain dogmas of Trithemius, by this time dead, which had come by testament to the hands of Agrippa. Meanwhile he sends transcribed a portion of the work of their friend Damascenus, on the Various and Admirable Nature of the Human Soul<sup>2</sup>.

Of their acquaintance Tyrius, the clockmaker, Brennon had to report that he was deep in alchemy, and believed himself to be on the point of solving the great problem of transmutation. The quick-witted priest told pleasantly the story of a day's excursion he had made with Tyrius and others, over surrounding hills and fields and through the woods, all armed with swords and other weapons (because of the brigands), and so following a guide who was to point out to them a little herb, supposed to be the one thing requisite to render Tyrius the happiest and most illustrious of men. All day long they sought in vain; at last, however, they found one herb in a field. This plant was dug up and was carried home, as a wild boar might be, in triumph by the hunters. On the way home the party travelled through a wood wherein there was the same herb growing in profusion; all, therefore, finally returned in great excitement, loaded with it, and at the house of Tyrius was held high festival that night. By this account Cornelius is slightly interested, much amused<sup>3</sup>.

Over the first months of quiet at Cologne the bustle of the past thus spreads its influence. There is only one

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 61, Lib. ii. p. 779.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 58, Lib. ii. p. 771.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 52, Lib. ii. p. 770.



more of these references to old friends at which we have to pause. Cantiuncula, visiting his parents, writes from Metz to Agrippa, begging that his mother may be comforted with a few letters from him in the vulgar tongue. He had won her confidence as a physician and a friend. "I cannot tell you," her son writes, "how much the little gift of a few words from you will comfort her. She makes so much of you, of your advice, your words, and all your opinions<sup>1</sup>." In words like these we find another little touch of life that indicates Agrippa's gentleness of character. Brennon expresses some concern lest his friend should not have improved his worldly fate by quitting Metz, and overwhelmed by cares, may be lost altogether to his friends. I can hold my course, Cornelius replies, unhindered by fortune. I can remain myself, through all changes of home and lot.

In a letter to his friend Brennon, written from Cologne on the sixteenth of June, in this year 1520<sup>2</sup>, he tells exultingly of the discomfiture of Hochstraten and his tribe by Reuchlin and Sickingen, but with a stronger interest and a much deeper concern of the "bold temerity" of Hutten, who has been in Cologne together with some other Lutherans, openly throwing off allegiance to Rome. Are there not primates and bishops in Germany, they said, that we must degrade ourselves even to the foot-kissing of the Roman bishop? Let Germany part from the Romans, and return to its own primates, bishops, and pastors. Some princes and states, adds Agrippa, lend

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 58, Lib. ii. p. 775.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 54, Lib. ii. p. 772.



their ears to this. I know not in what way will avail the Emperor's authority (that of Charles V.); "for my part, I have contemplated him as a man wholly saturnine, and repose in him no hope of any good. I shall remain here at Cologne during this twelvemonth. Next spring I shall migrate again into Savoy."

For by the Duke of Savoy expectations had been raised once more, and Cornelius was now at the beginning of a two years' course of destructive hope. I may forestal the narrative—if it be to any reader of experience a forestalling—to say that this hope is one doomed to end in disappointment. It means only the wasting of long days, the purposeless halt in a difficult career, loss of time, loss of peace, and loss of bread. Agrippa has the world before him, and a prince inviting him back into his service bids him make terms with his chancellor.

Charles V. visited Cologne and stayed there for several days with many princes, but of him or of his court Agrippa sought no favours<sup>1</sup>. He was content with his experiences of service to the court of Austria, and he had no desire at all to make part of a court in Spain. He still, however, had his Austrian connexions, his rank as a noble, and the family position in Cologne inherited from his forefathers. Thus it is that we find him to have been applied to by a friend to procure proper honour and harbour in Cologne for Paul Oberstayn, chief magistrate of Vienna, when he was about to travel through that city<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 61, Lib. ii. p. 780.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 62, Lib. ii. p. 780.



Student still of the Cabala<sup>1</sup>, and known both at Metz and Cologne as an investigator of the abstruse secrets of nature<sup>2</sup>, we find Cornelius applied to once or twice for help in magical and mathematical perplexities. The Count Theodore of Manderscheyd—who afterwards received pay from the town of Metz as the commander of its military force—caused him to be applied to for the name of the mathematician who constructed the Metz fortifications, and for information of his own respecting them<sup>3</sup>. Early in 1521, Brennon sends to him special tidings of a travelling practitioner, who has a secret cure for the disease spread so widely by the licence of the French camps, and promises to find the secret out if possible<sup>4</sup>. In the beginning of the year 1521, there is a famulus who had been dismissed,—the same no doubt of whom Sbrolius had given so bad a character—making his peace with his old master and mistress, pardoned and on his way, with dogs—Cornelius has tenderness for dogs—to join them. He is to make haste, because they are not likely to remain more than about another fortnight in Cologne; but the floods detain him on the journey, and he is obliged to borrow money on Agrippa's credit.

Agrippa's journey was to have been first to Metz. The negotiation with the Duke of Savoy was still unsettled: nothing was being earned, there was only the patrimony to be spent under the roof of his mother at Cologne<sup>5</sup>. Active steps of some kind were to be taken, and the first

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 63, Lib. ii. p. 780.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 5, Lib. iii. p. 784.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 1, Lib. iii. p. 781.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 2, 3, 4, Lib. iii. pp. 781-783.



step out of Cologne was to have been to Brennon's house at Metz, for a short sojourn<sup>1</sup>. Was to have been: and the step truly was taken, but with how much unexpected sorrow!

On the eve of departure from Cologne, not many days before Palm-Sunday, Cornelius Agrippa wrote to his friend Brennon, who had been spending at their house some of the first weeks of the year,—“From the very day of St. Catherine, on which you left us, my dearest wife began to sicken:” she had suffered severe pains from visceral disease. “On Quadragesima Sunday she took to her bed, to my great grief and loss; but I would bear all things most cheerfully if she would but recover, to which end I strive with the most diligent help of physic and physicians” (alas, for thee, Louisa!), “sparing no cost or labour. And if it would please the most high God to relieve us of our distress, or if my dearest wife, as we hope, regained ever so little health, we would take boat at once, and make the utmost haste to you with sail and oar. About my delay or about my coming write by the first messengers, and of what you wish me to know secretly inform me in our cipher. . . . My wife sends you endless greetings, and beseeches that you will help her with your holy prayers, that she may be restored as soon as possible to her old state of health, and that we all come to you together safe and sound.”

Vain were all prayers. If Louisa died at Cologne, in the arms of Agrippa and his mother, the bereaved hus-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 5, Lib. iii. p. 783.



band re-entered Metz with his dead wife, carried for burial by Brennon in their old Church of St. Cross. For this reason I think she may have had her little daughter buried there. But if it was not so, there was a brief recovery, permitting the boat-journey on the Rhine and the Moselle, and it was with a dying wife that Cornelius Agrippa passed again under the gates of Metz, that were to him the gates of sorrow. By Brennon, in the Church of St. Cross at Metz, the faithful wife was buried. Agrippa supplied money for a worthy tomb<sup>1</sup>, and ever afterwards took care that a pious service was held annually in her memory, and for her soul's repose<sup>2</sup>. When all was over, he and his son quitted the inhospitable town. Even his friend Brennon knew not whither he was flying, in his poverty and his despair<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 8, Lib. iii. p. 785.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. iv. p. 846.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 8, Lib. iii. p. 785. "Ab eo quo a nobis discesseris," he says, when he has found him, "nullus unquam fuit qui aut literas dederit, aut saltem de te verbum ullum: id siquidem suspicione magna non caruit, quæ nos mente cruciatos satis effecerit."



## CHAPTER V.

CORNELIUS PRACTITIONER OF MEDICINE IN SWITZERLAND—QUESTIONS OF  
MARRIAGE AND OF CHURCH REFORM.

GENEVA was the place to which Cornelius Agrippa had retired with his son<sup>1</sup>, when his friend Brennon feared that he might have acted desperately in the paroxysm of a recent grief. That he should have gone to Geneva was most natural. It was the only town in which he had ever thought of establishing himself as a physician, to live wholly by his own exertions, without help from any public office, or engagement with a private patron. When Louisa died, Agrippa was being still flattered with hope of an establishment in life under the auspices of the Duke of Savoy. The issue of his hope was doubtful; and it was well that he should, without forming firm ties in any place, support himself until the issue of the pending treaty with the Duke was known; and that he should also prepare the way for other means of livelihood, in case of its un-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 7, Lib. iii. p. 784.



favourable termination. Cornelius was thirty-five years old, and could not afford to waste more of his lifetime in idle waiting at Cologne. Then again, Geneva was the place in which lived they who could speak to him with sympathy of his departed wife; and there was an additional consideration, of no slight importance, in the fact that this was one of the Swiss towns, in which free thought upon religious matters had asserted itself boldly, and in which Cornelius could find most of that spiritual consolation which the bruised heart seeks.

If there had before been any hesitation with him as to his relations with the Church, none remained after the death of Louisa. He did not secede from it, for he thought of the reforms then afoot as coming from within; with the spirit of reform, however, and with the Reformers, he allied himself completely. Persecuted Protestant pastors were his friends in Switzerland; Fabricius Capito<sup>1</sup> was his companion; Zuinglius<sup>2</sup> regarded him as an acknowledged helper in the great war he was waging against Church corruption. Although more earnest than Erasmus in this war, Agrippa still followed the example of Erasmus in avoiding open breach with the Church Universal—not erring in this matter through any personal cowardice, but as one feeling how much easier it is to destroy than to build up, as one timidly settled on the rock of Rome, and labouring to make it fertile; not quitting it, lest he might suffer spiritual shipwreck in the open sea of strife, while

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 18, Lib. iii. p. 791.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 82, Lib. iii. pp. 829, 830.



seeking a more fruitful soil that perhaps never would be discovered. With a less contemplative mind Cornelius would probably have done more memorable service to the cause he favoured, and he would certainly have taken a position among Protestant reformers so well recognised as to have baffled calumny. Let us know Luther as we hitherto have known Agrippa, by the showing only of his orthodox detractors, and of which of the two men who sought righteousness—Luther or Agrippa—should we have to believe most emphatically that he was a child of Satan? Luther, however—"that most combative monk," as Agrippa calls him—laid about him lustily, headed a host of conquerors, and left his fame entrusted to the jealous care of thousands of his fellow-warriors. Cornelius Agrippa dreamed, and reasoned, and aspired, making his worth known but to a few dozen wise and learned friends, who honoured him in private, while he said and did enough to constitute a multitude of busy priests his merciless detractors.

In what way Cornelius, after the first grievous shock, bore the bereavement of his wife we shall understand best when we know clearly his views upon the sacrament of marriage. He has expressed them in a little treatise<sup>1</sup>, for in his time the whole topic was laid open to discussion; and it was one part of the contest carried on by many of the Reformers, to oppose what they assumed to be the strictly scriptural view of marriage to opinions, both in

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. de Sacramento Matrimonii Declamatio. Opuscula* (ed. Mense Septemb. 1532), sig. pag. D v.—E iv.



the Church and in society, that seemed to them corrupt. There was something of a protest against what they considered error, and a practical assertion against it of one of the texts of St. Paul, when both Capito and Zuinglius took young widows for wives. Their doctrine, and that of Cornelius, was, that in heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage: that marriage is a human bond—of all such the most sacred—designed for solace, for the peopling of the world, and for the preservation of a chaste life without violence to nature. They held marriage to be the natural state of man in society, from which no person could withdraw himself justly, except only by reason of incompetence, or of a religious vow, in accordance with the saying of St. Paul to the unmarried and widows, “It is good for them to abide even as I.” But if nature is not to be curbed, then “let every man,” says St. Paul, “have his own wife, and every woman her own husband. Art thou loosed from a wife?” he adds, “seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned.” So he says also of a wife, “if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.” This doctrine of St. Paul many of the Reformers were, in Agrippa’s time, asserting against celibacies, that were not righteous, but conventional, and tended to increase of lust;—against widowhoods and widowerhoods, that, in avoiding second marriage as discreditable, fell into the snares out of which marriage was, among other of its uses, ordained to keep men’s souls. During the past three centuries it has been one mark of the growth of civilisation



that more spiritual views of marriage have arisen, which may not be truer than those here detailed, in as far as they do more than include them, but which, nevertheless, may bring their own fulfilment, and so make of the bond between some husbands and wives a blessing for eternity. Such views did not prevail in the sixteenth century; scarcely had they found any one to express them, even among poets. But Agrippa's view of marriage, as his life thus far has shown, and as his writing testifies, is high, and worthy of a Christian. "Man," he says<sup>1</sup>, "(since he is of all animals the most sociable), then only fulfils truly and rightly the duties of humanity, puts confidence into his life, and safety into the course of it, when he has entered into the stable and indissoluble contract of marriage. . . . For what association between human beings can be more sacred and pleasant—what safer, more secure? what chaster than that between husband and wife? When one is as the other, two bodies are conformed to one mind and a single will. Only they who are wedded envy not each other, only they know the infinitude of love, when each depends entirely on the other, and reposes on the other: when they are one flesh, one mind, in one concord: having the same sorrow, the same joy: when the worldly increase of one is the increase of the other, they being alike in wealth, alike in poverty, resting in one bed, refreshed at one table, companions night and day, not quitting each other for sleep or for watchings; conjoined through life in the same actions, labours, perils, in all

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. de Sacramento Matrimonii.* D vi. vii.



fortune, they do mutual service to each other while they live. They accompany the one the other to the close of life; only by death are these companions parted; and one dead, scarcely can the other remain living." This Agrippa felt when, after Louisa's death, Brennon was trembling for him. "Whoever has taken to himself an only wife," he says again, "let him cherish her with love inviolate and constant mindfulness to the last moment of life; let father, mother, children, brothers and sisters, give place to her: let the whole concourse of friends give place to the good-will established between man and wife. Truly, so should they; for father, mother, children, brothers, sisters, relatives, and friends, are gifts of nature and of fortune; man and wife are a mystery of God, and the husband had the wife, the wife the husband, before father, mother, brother, children were. . . . Therefore, no law prohibits the departure of children from their parents, or of parents from their children; sometimes necessity compels it, expediency suggests it, reason urges it; often children are emancipated, often claim for religion's sake their liberty, often live as pilgrims absent from their homes, or build up other homes elsewhere. But that a wife should depart from her husband, or a husband from his wife, no law permits, no necessity, no expediency, no reason, no repudiation, no religious feeling, no license to quit. One parted from the other lives a desolate and solitary life, which must be most unhappy, because it is led in contempt of the help and joy that God has given, and that one has dared to spurn."



The little treatise upon marriage quoted here was written three or four years after the date (1521) at which this narrative now stands. It expresses faithfully, however, one of the most constant features of its author's mind, and I place here the few passages that have to be quoted from it in this narrative, because it is in this place that they are most helpful to the proper comprehension of one aspect of Agrippa's life. These are his words again<sup>1</sup>:—"They sin heavily, whether they be parents, relations, tutors, guardians, who (not looking to the lifelong good-will, or to the prospect of children, or to the maintenance of chastity, but through avarice and ambition, for the dignity of lands, the power of nobility, wealth, or the like) urge beyond their duty the divine rule of obedience to parents (by a sort of tyranny), and fettering the free will of their sons or daughters, force them into unwelcome nuptials; prompted by no reason of age, kindness, condition, manners, love, or any divine precept. Out of such marriages are bred adultery, dissension, scorn, continual anger, perpetual scoldings, discords, hatreds, repudiation, and other unending ills. Sometimes there follow even poisonings, slaughterings, or sudden deaths, so that not God, but Satan, appears to have joined those pairs together. Add to this that in many places some princes and lords of this world, under the name of Christians—foes to God, blasphemers of the Lord, overturners of the Church, defilers of things sacred, arrogating to themselves divinity,—by their arbitration, sometimes even by their command

<sup>1</sup> *De Sacramento Matrimonii.* E, E ii.



as tyrants, compel the marriages of subjects, taking, moreover, tithes of the dowries, not without most wicked sacrilege, for their private treasuries: thus, leaving adultery untaxed, they punish marriage. There is, moreover, yet another custom to condemn, which has grown up in many nations,—that second marriages are pursued everywhere with I know not what contempt. Moreover, they levy a fine of a certain sum on those who marry twice, and give the money to be devoured by a certain fraternity of theirs, making Joseph, the husband of the blessed Virgin Mary, patron of this scorn of a divine mystery. Of this fraternity the devil was the founder, and the wrath of God delivers it to its own reprobate sense, which, applauding fornication, decries second nuptials; as if, destitute of divine grace, mocking the sacrament, to which is due all honour, reverence, and freedom.” For having suppressed this custom in his own dominions, Agrippa praised King Francis as a Christian king.

“You, therefore”—I am again quoting Cornelius—“you, therefore, who wish to take a wife, let love be your inducement, not opinion: choose a wife, not a dress; marry a wife, not a dowry. In this temper having prayed to the omnipotent God, who alone gives a true wife to man, having sought also the consent of her parents, and shown to them a due obedience, putting away all avarice, ambition, envy, and fear: with mature self-communing, with free consent, with fervent but yet chaste and reasonable love, accept the wife given to you for a perpetual companion, not for a slave, by the hand of God: let your



wisdom guide her with all gentleness and reverence. Do not submit her, but admit her to your counsels; let her be in your house the mistress, in your family the mother." Agrippa dwells upon the lessons of good order and government in states that are best learnt in families, and dwells on the unhappiness of all who, except when they do so for the more exclusive contemplation of celestial things, live solitary lives. Except death, he allows no reason whatever for a severance of the marriage tie, beyond the one asserted in the Gospel as the single cause for which a man may innocently put away his wife. Finally, it is urged upon all who are not by impediment of nature less than men, or more than men by their angelic power of maintaining an eternal purity, that they have a divine law to fulfil, a duty to the state and to themselves to perform, by marrying, so filling up the round of their own lives and educating children into righteousness. In passing from this treatise, I should not omit to say, that in one passage towards the close of it<sup>1</sup>, after speaking in unmeasured detestation of men who destroy or wrong their wives, he points out indignantly, that, while for the lightest theft men were sent to the gallows, wives might be killed or wronged to the uttermost by their husbands almost

<sup>1</sup> *De Sacramento Matrimonii.* E iv. "Uxoricia etiam acerbiore morte quam parricidia vindicantur: et merito, nam parentes natura facit, uxor Dei mysterium est. Neque eum satis condigna pœna affici posse arbitror, qui datum sibi a Deo auxilium, et præbitam vitæ consortem ausus fuerit interimere: . . . . sed nescio qua justitiæ, Deique negligentia uxoriciidæ, atque adulteri, nunc fere omnem pœnam evadunt, fures vel ob leve crimen fune suspensi necantur, nisi qui traditi iudices nostri in reprobum sensum."



with impunity. Such a blot has remained upon the public justice of some nations even to the present day.

To Cornelius at Geneva, Brennon wrote word<sup>1</sup> that the stone, carved most decently, as ordered by him, had been placed over the grave of his dear wife. He sent news to him, received from a friend lately in Cologne, of the well-being of Agrippa's sister and mother, added also what he had last heard about Luther, namely, that he had found safe shelter in Bohemia, and that his labour was being carried on by Hutten and Melancthon. He furnished also some political intelligence, and an account of a siege close at hand which he himself had witnessed. The tidings about the Reformers were most interesting to Agrippa; by the death of his wife previous religious feelings had been deepened, perhaps by the conversion of some parts of his theology into religion. The influences at Geneva were all favourable to the development of his convictions, and their character becomes at this time of his life more strongly marked. A monk whom he had known at Metz, and with whom he had talked liberal things, writes to him from Annecy<sup>2</sup>, that "four cowed masters of the Dominican faction and (as I believe) persecutors of our faith—I meant to say inquisitors—by some chance entered my cell a few days since, and among their discourse fell upon the memory of our most erudite Erasmus, and after many things said in a sinister way of him and Luther, they at last vomited out their poison, babbling that there were now four Antichrists, doctors in

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 8, Lib. iii. p. 785.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. iii. p. 786.



Christ's kingdom—namely, Erasmus, Luther, Reuchlin, and Faber Stapulensis. See what men are these sycophants who persecute good literature! But the bearer of this is a man skilled in good literature, singularly learned, who desires much to speak with you; trust yourself to him."

Soon afterwards this friend begs for a copy of Agrippa's lucubration against Prior Salini, and wants specially to know in what way his friend now regards Luther. "I think," he says<sup>1</sup>, "you do not forget how you honoured me, by showing me at Metz some Lutheran writings, and that you extolled them with the highest praise." This question of opinion was discussed verbally, for the friends met soon afterwards<sup>2</sup>; and to a subsequent scruple upon the subject of obedience to the Church, Cornelius replies<sup>3</sup>: "I think you know that a Christian is, of all men, the most free, but at the same time the most dutiful of servants." That answer would surely have been different had he been greater and stronger than he was. He did not stifle conscience, he was not a coward; all his life long he had been asserting his desire for independence, but asserting it in a too speculative temper.

While practising medicine with little profit at Geneva, where his late wife's relations and Eustochius Chappuys, known for his learning throughout all Savoy<sup>4</sup>, were among his most intimate friends, Cornelius was engaged, as to worldly things, in much negotiation to secure that which

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 10, Lib. iii. p. 787.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 12, Lib. iii. p. 788.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 11, Lib. iii. p. 788.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 10, Lib. iii. p. 787.



had been offered to him by the Duke of Savoy; and as to spiritual things, he was entirely occupied with the great questions of Church reform. To an inquiry about the Virgin Mary<sup>1</sup>, founded on an argument drawn from the rubric, he replied<sup>2</sup>, that "the services of the Church are of no authority in argument, because they contain many uncertain things, many doubtful things, many things empty, feigned or false, many even of which the direct contrary is what the Church believes; such services are not to support the integrity of faith, and cannot exercise the authority of the Church." He believed it not impossible for the whole Church to become that which a part of it became. Without any thought whatever of secession, he was ready to show all the errors that he believed had crept into its discipline. He was a Lutheran, but throughout distinctly that which Luther and all his fellow-labourers were at the outset of their course, a faithful member of the Church in which he saw that so much change had become necessary. He no more thought of avowing himself a heretic, than the citizen of a state, when he demands some great political reform, thinks of proclaiming himself alien or outlaw.

The reformer Capito wrote thus from the neighbourhood of Basle to Cornelius Agrippa at Geneva<sup>3</sup>. The date of his letter is the twenty-third of April, 1522: "A good man began speaking of you honourably to me on my journey; he depicted to me a man more learned than any,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 13, Lib. iii. p. 788.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 14, Lib. iii. p. 788.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 15, Lib. iii. pp. 789, 790.



by profession a physician, but of all knowledge at the same time a cyclopædia, chiefly, however, strong in disputation, being able with a little finger to arrest the onsets of the Sophists. I asked the name.

“ ‘ Agrippa,’ he said, ‘ native of Cologne, by education an Italian, by experience a courtier; that is to say, trained at court, urbane and civil.’

“ Almost disturbed by an unexpected pleasure, ‘ What!’ I said, ‘ that physician has a tincture of the German heresy. Does he repudiate Luther? Does he think with the most learned Parisians?’

“ Then said he, ‘ Far from it. He can go beyond Luther, but he cannot oppose him, as that Luther himself has seen.’ ”

“ Moved by this talk,” Capito went on to relate, “ I have written this to you while refreshing myself at the tavern, whereby you may understand how mindful is Capito of the kindness you showed him when he was received by you hospitably at Cologne. But there is matter in the knowledge of which you are interested—namely, the condition of the Germans. The Lutherans at Wittenberg have declared as follows: First, they taught that whatever they thought they perceived of the truth of the Gospel, they were to express with freedom of speech. I will tell you a few of their expressions. Whoever, they say, does not eat meat, eggs, and the like on Fridays, let him not be called a Christian. Whoever does not take the sacrament of the Eucharist in his hands and finger it, let him not be esteemed a Christian. Whoever confesses in Qua-



dragesima, let him not be a partaker of the mercy of God. Whoever thinks good works are anything, closes for himself the way of salvation: and much of that character. They excite the simple crowd, there is a mustering, the houses of the priests are attacked, force is brought in by the citizens; thus there is a reverse caused in the opinion of the vulgar, so that the common cause of the faith, as it is maintained by Luther and his friends, is brought into public odium. Learned men wrote to Luther, urging him to come forward openly to check this. He is now, therefore, at Wittenberg, where assemblies are being held daily. He finds fault with his followers, chides those who have made rash innovations, not regarding the simplicity of the populace, but at the same time does not omit to assert what he before asserted. The people now flock round him, and with patience persevere towards the liberty of Christ. I wish the nobles understood how swift and ready is the work of Christianity, and next, how wide the difference between a seditious innovator and a patient Christian. . . . Wherefore, most learned man, I do not dissuade you from the Gospel, but I rejoice that you are opposed to the unseasonable ventures of imprudent men. But do as you are doing, and carry with you the gentleness of Christ, even into familiar talk, that nobody may be able to calumniate your pious purposes. If anything seem to require candid interpretation, do not condemn with a malignant scorn. What bitterness did ever Christ speak? to what place, I ask, did he carry the mind of a condemning judge? O preposterous piety, so



morosely pious, that obliterates the very shape of piety,—never be urged to that! Farewell, and write to me sometimes. At leisure I will write with more deliberation. Dated in haste from the tavern. Farewell again. Oltingen, near Basle, April 23, 1522.”

Nothing could be clearer than the illustration here supplied of the degree and nature of Cornelius Agrippa's sympathy with the Reformers. The inferences it suggests are all confirmed by the succeeding correspondence. When Capito's letter was delivered at Geneva, Cornelius was away from home, at the court of Savoy<sup>1</sup>, making vain efforts to secure either a fulfilment or a retraction of the great man's promise. When he returned, he wrote to Capito that if he knew who it was that had spoken so lovingly of him upon the road, he would send many, many thanks to him for his good offices, and he wished he might some day become all he had been painted. The bearer of his letter he commended to the help of Capito as a man needing help, who was just, and a diligent preacher of the Word of God. In the same way we find by letters from friends to Agrippa, that to him also travelling “preachers of the Gospel of truth” were, from time to time, commended as to a man ready to entertain them in his house, and help them with his friendship<sup>2</sup>.

The letter from Wolfgang Fabricius Capito just quoted was quite characteristic of its writer's gentleness of way

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 18, Lib. iii. p. 791.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 16, Lib. iii. p. 790. Ep. 34, Lib. iii. p. 801. Ep. 80, Lib. iii. p. 829.



and steadfastness of purpose. It was no mean tribute to the piety and learning of Agrippa that they had the respect of Capito. Capito was by eight years the senior of Cornelius Agrippa. Born at Hagenau, in Alsatia, he had studied medicine at Basle to please his father, but on the death of his father, while he was still in his student years, he turned to the study of theology to please himself, and was in 1504 created doctor in that faculty at Basle. He then went to Freyburg, in Brisgau, where he taught scholastic theology, and in the four years next following he studied jurisprudence under Zase, one of the most famous jurisconsults of that age. Then, by Philip Rosenberg, Bishop of Spire, the young Capito was called to preach at Bruchsal, in his diocese. While there he became the close friend of Œcolampadius, who was at Heidelberg. At the same time Capito learned Hebrew from a converted Jew. Called from Bruchsal to Basle, there to preach in the cathedral, he laid the foundation of the first Protestant church in that town, and while there, as a member of the theological faculty, he helped to make Œcolampadius a doctor. From his friendship for Œcolampadius he never swerved; and after his friend's death became (in 1524) the husband of his widow: she was Capito's first wife. Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg, Archbishop of Mayence, had called Capito from Basle, and had appointed him court preacher and chancellor in the archbishopric. He became at about the same time doctor of canon law, and on account of his varied knowledge and experience, his services were used in many



weighty state affairs. For the same reason, not long before the date of the letter to Agrippa lately quoted, Emperor Charles V. had raised Capito and his entire family into the order of nobility. His course was not altered, and when he wrote that letter he had left Mayence, because he could not introduce into the town any Reformed doctrines, and had joined Bucer at Strasburg. He was a man remarkable for learning, although his attainments were less varied than Agrippa's, and he was, like Agrippa, moderate in his hopes and endeavours for the reformation of the Church, but, unlike Agrippa, duly mingling in the actions of his life determined power with his softer qualities. "I heard at Basle," Cornelius writes to another friend, "of the work of a certain brother, Jacob Hochstraten, against Luther, also of another similar work, issued under the name of the King of England. I should like them to be sent to me, and any response, if any, of which Luther may have thought them worthy; whatever may be their price, I will pay promptly to their bearer. Finally, I desire to know how the Lutheran matter prospers with the Germans. If you have occasion to write to Fabricius Capito, most excellent and true theologian, commend me very greatly to him. I wrote to him lately, and mean to write more at leisure. The bearer of this, a man who studies theology and is a linguist most eager to master Greek, Hebrew, and Chaldee, by nation a Scotchman, by profession a Dominican, I commend to you as to myself. I beg that you will be so good a helper to him as to show that ours is not a common

friendship : as for me, I will never fail when I am able to do anything for you and your friends. Farewell. From Geneva, September 20, 1522."

While Agrippa was at Geneva he was corresponding with his friend the lawyer Cantiuncula, at Basle<sup>1</sup>, and he was also continuing by letters to make interest with those who might have power to stimulate the Duke of Savoy and his advisers to increased activity. The Duke had himself reopened the protracted negotiations by inviting Agrippa to him, but on the condition that it should be left to his Chancellor to settle in what office and at what salary the philosopher was to be connected with his court ; he had also admonished Agrippa to look after his own interests, and take care that the Chancellor did not forget him. But the Chancellor needed much admonition. On the sixteenth of September, 1522, Cornelius wrote from Geneva to remind him of these things<sup>2</sup> ; on the same day he wrote also to a friend of his own residing near the minister, requesting that he would help, if possible, in pushing matters forward, and also asking for his interest on behalf of the petition of a certain widow<sup>3</sup>. The letter to the Chancellor just mentioned went by the hand of the Abbot Bonmont, of the monastery of Moutiers, the capital of a small principedom in Savoy, the Tarentaise, and this good abbot, who was appointed to high clerical office in Geneva, told Cornelius on his return that the Duke had repeated to him his desire that everything should be settled by the Chancellor,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 20 and 35, Lib. iii. pp. 792, 801.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. iii. pp. 792, 793.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 22, Lib. iii. p. 793.



who would in a few days be coming to Chambéry, which is a town of Savoy, distant from Geneva some fifty or sixty miles. To a friend, therefore, at Chambéry, Agrippa wrote, requesting him to urge his suit for him, he being himself, short as the distance was, unable to bear the cost of a journey to that town, and the stay there requisite for the due help of his own cause<sup>1</sup>.

But in the midst of poverty and disappointment he was unable to live alone. When he wrote that he could not pay his way from Geneva to Chambéry, he had been only for a few months married to a second wife, a Swiss maiden, aged nineteen, of a good Genevese family, whom one of his friends heard to be rich ; but that friend must have been greatly misinformed. Cornelius wrote of her, two years afterwards, to his friend Brennon, as "a maid of noble birth and of great beauty, who so adapts herself to my ways that you could not tell that they had not been in the first instance her own, or know whether either one of us equals or excels the other in a readiness of love and homage." Agrippa's first wife left him with Aymon, an only son ; his second wife began at once a steady course of child-bearing. Within the first two years and a half she became mother to two sons and a daughter<sup>2</sup>, after whom there came others in quick succession.

On the twenty-ninth of September he again ventured to urge the Chancellor by letter, telling him that the matter in hand was of less urgency to him than its distinct settle-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. iii. p. 794.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 60, Lib. iii. p. 818.

ment<sup>1</sup>. Four days later he wrote to his friend at Chambéry, urging the misery and waste of the continual delay<sup>2</sup>. He had been kept two years in suspense, trusting to the Duke's promise, spending his money, and receiving in return only sweet words, letting birds escape while chasing flies. In the middle of that September he had been offered favours by the royal house of France; but although free to serve France, he looked to Savoy for more congenial patronage. He did not wish to die of hope. The promises of Savoy must be either fulfilled or retracted<sup>3</sup>. His friend promptly replied that he had spoken earnestly to the Chancellor, who appeared chilly in the matter, and less friendly to Agrippa than his virtues merited<sup>4</sup>. He promised to make fresh endeavours, and to write again in three or four days, advising Cornelius in the mean time to urge the Chancellor again by letter.

In the next despatch to his friend, Agrippa writes that his business is moving "*ægris pedibus*" and making good the omen of his name, but that he trusts in help from others, being, as he had before said, unable to go to Chambéry himself, even if the whole issue of the case depended on his presence<sup>5</sup>. A few weeks after this, salary and honourable consideration being offered to Cornelius as its physician by the mountain town of Friburg, that offer was accepted, and an end was made of the expectations that the Duke of Savoy had excited<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. iii. p. 795.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 26, Lib. iii. p. 795.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. iii. p. 794.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 29, Lib. iii. p. 796.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 32, Lib. iii. p. 799.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. 39 and 55, Lib. iii. pp. 805, 813.



The venerable Abbot Bonmont, from the monastery at Moutiers, who had become at Geneva a high church authority, was a warm friend to Agrippa and his family. He had become godfather to one of his children, thus taking a position which in those days gave him an artificial tie of relationship to Agrippa's wife. The tie was so distinct that matrimony was unlawful between man and woman, one of whom had at a former time been sponsor for the other's child. The good name and credit of this abbot extended to Friburg, and helped to increase there the cordiality of the reception given to Cornelius. The same abbot retained also at Geneva his friend's first son, Aymon, and took friendly charge for a time both of his maintenance and of his education.

Bonmont had great faith both in the moral and intellectual power of Agrippa. There is a letter extant, written by Cornelius at his desire for the admonition and help of a young student<sup>1</sup>, the gist of which is that the pupil was to learn rightly from the righteous, because time was lost in listening to the depraved; that he could not be learned without Greek, or eloquent without Latin; that he should cultivate a wide field, but since the whole field of knowledge was more than a single man could travel over, he should read especially two authors, Pliny in Latin, and Plutarch in Greek. These, more than any others, could be made sufficient to render a man learned in all sorts of sciences and in each necessary language; only, above all things, he exhorted to the close study of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 31, Lib. iii. p. 797.

sacred literature.—We find also that Agrippa, poor as he was, contrived in Switzerland to show himself not wanting in the observance—so essential in those days—of hospitality<sup>1</sup>, and he was hospitable not only to the traveller, but also glad when he could spend some hours in joyous social intercourse with learned friends. His nature was affectionate, and spent its kindness upon more than men and women, also upon animals. He is said to have been almost foolish in his good-will towards dogs.

Of course there came also to the dwelling of the poor philosopher at Geneva and Friburg letters of compliment, to tell him of the barren honours he had won. Claude Blancherose, a French physician, who afterwards published a book on the Epidemics of his time, wrote to Cornelius Agrippa Latin letters full of euphuism, speckled with verse of his own making, epigrams, tetrastiches, and decastiches<sup>2</sup>. They are long letters, meaning well, and labouring obviously to earn for their writer the respect and good-will of a man noted for his learning. John Laurentin of Lyons, preceptor of St. Antony's at Rivolta, who had introduced Agrippa to the town of Metz, seems to have introduced him also to Blancherose, who begs leave to be Pylades to his Orestes, Hegesippus to his Titus. One long letter this friend despatches, full of laboured verse, dating it "from Amnaise, swifter than light, more quickly than asparagus is cooked"—an old Augustan saying; in the next, which is to go swifter

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 28, Lib. iii. p. 796, and the letters already referred to illustrative of his hospitality towards travelling ministers of the Gospel.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 36 and 37, Lib. iii. pp. 801-804.



than wind, he lauds his Orestes as a man who has come into the labyrinth of this world "not without the clue." And yet he knows—every friend of Agrippa knows—how in the labyrinth of the world he has been long astray: he knows it well enough to see an opportunity of quoting in this letter the text, Yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

The removal from Geneva to Friburg, in the beginning of the year 1523, indicated some slight increase of prosperity. Friburg was but a small Swiss mountain fortress, with a narrow-streeted town attached to it, and scarcely could pay a high salary to its physician. We know how slender was the payment made by small Italian towns to the physician attached to their service<sup>1</sup>; it was, indeed, not greater than that which would be now offered in England to a parish surgeon, and retained his services not for the poor alone. It would be more correct to find a parallel as to principle for these appointments of physicians in the appointment, by communities, of men who were to be their spiritual pastors. Agrippa was received in the best spirit at Friburg, both by magistrates and people; they were a hardy, warrior race, but noted for kindness and hospitality. Their treatment of Agrippa was not only courteous, but, considering their means, munificent, and in their town, as in Geneva—always, in short, while in Switzerland—Cornelius, however little money he might earn, had only kindness to acknowledge, and was held

<sup>1</sup> *Life of Jerome Cardan* (1854), vol. ii. pp. 154, 155.

always in generous esteem<sup>1</sup>. At Metz and Cologne all had been antagonism ; at Friburg and Geneva all was in sympathy with his desire for freedom of opinion and action. Twice, as we have seen, he connected himself by marriage with the natives of Geneva. As a scholar, Italy was the land of his desire ; but as a man, he was at home in Switzerland, and never in his whole life was he so well honoured by his neighbours as in these his days of a sore poverty among the Swiss. His friend the Abbot Bonmont wrote to him from Geneva, soon after his change of abode, "As for our little son Aymon, I wish you to be under no anxiety about him, for he is to me as my own son, and no help or labour of mine shall be wanting to train the boy in the right way and make a man of him<sup>2</sup>."

All thoughts of Savoy had been abandoned ; but there was still temptation offered by the court of France that might bring down from his spare diet and happiness in the Swiss mountains a man conscious of the position that he had a right to take among the most polished, and warned also that he had the prospect of a large family of children to support out of such worldly means as he could compass. In one of his first letters, written after settlement at Friburg—it is to Christopher Schelling of Lucerne, who still has, or is supposed to have, the manuscript of Commentaries on St. Paul—we find that Agrippa happens to have gone to Berne, and has there met with an old Parisian comrade of his student days, Godfrey Brullart,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 38, 39, and 55, Lib. iii. pp. 804, 805, 813.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 39, Lib. iii. p. 805.



become a royal treasurer, who is staying at the house of the General Nurbeck. He has offers to make to Schelling, and no doubt has played the tempter to Agrippa too. "My commencement of Commentaries on Paul, and other things left with you, I trust, are safe," Agrippa says. Afterwards, on the eighth of June, in this year, 1523, he writes to Schelling of his wife's impending confinement, and of his close occupation upon pressing and important business by the magistrates of Friburg<sup>1</sup>, who would thus seem to have made use of his skill, not only as a physician, but to have availed themselves also in other ways of his extensive knowledge. This tended, no doubt, to the improvement of his salary.

While falling into affectionate correspondence with his friend at Lucerne, he attackè merrily his friend Cantioncula, at Basle, for stinting him in letters. He has been to Basle, and there, at supper with Cantioncula, has met Erasmus, and his talk over the supper-table has dwelt on the mind of Erasmus pleasantly, so that he speaks afterwards with admiration in his household of the rare gifts of Agrippa. In the household of Erasmus is a youth who had once courted Agrippa's good-will with some specimens of Latin verse, and being admitted to his friendship—a thing not hard to acquire—writes to him about these things<sup>2</sup>.

Many good friends were made in Switzerland, and at Friburg the physician had a cordial patron in a citizen,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. iii. p. 805.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. iii. p. 806.

John Reiff, who loved all learned men; occult studies, too, were cheerfully resumed. Copies of the work on Magic had been circulating among learned acquaintances; additions were made to it, and it was further lent<sup>1</sup>. The use of the printing-press being comparatively new, there still remained in Europe much of the old plan of circulating books in manuscript; and we must remember this while noticing the reputation for great learning that Agrippa had acquired by this time, although he had issued nothing from the press. Much of his writing was known widely as writing, and his familiarity with many languages and many sciences, as well as his known habit of experimenting, were sufficient to assure him very high respect.

He had not forgotten Roger Brennon, but after a long time had ceased to send him letters, because answers never were returned. It afterwards appeared that Brennon's correspondence had been intercepted by the orthodox of Metz, and that letters to and from Cantiuncula, when he was with his family, had been also stopped<sup>2</sup>. To a friend who had accepted office at Metz, and was proceeding thither from Basle, he sent a letter by a preacher of the Gospel, Thomas Gyrfalcus, whom he commended with the greatest earnestness to his faithful protection. He sent to Brennon, curate of St. Cross, his greetings, and announced—writing on the fifth of January, 1524—that the cloud had passed over his fortunes, and that he was about to return into

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 55 and 56, Lib. iii. pp. 812-814.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 45 (which is from Cantiuncula, and misplaced in the printed series), Ep. 62, Lib. iii. p. 819.



France<sup>1</sup>. Many of his old friends in Paris and Lyons had been helping him, and were desirous to have him among them. He was offered court favour, and the honourable position of physician to the queen-mother. Tempted, then, by France, in March or April, 1524, he quitted Friburg, leaving behind him none but persons who respected him—true friends and patrons, genuine, though poor. Offers had been made to him also on behalf of the Duke of Bourbon; these he had refused, and he had also used successfully his influence to take with him into the service he himself adopted certain young captains, his relatives, who had a following of not less than four thousand soldiers<sup>2</sup>. On the third of May he was at Lyons with his family; looking back lovingly to Friburg, enjoying the good-will of his old French comrades who gathered round, possessed of a few gold pieces from the treasury wherewith to pay the cost of establishing his household, and in daily expectation of a messenger who was to come to him with payment of his first year's salary. So he wrote to the Abbot Bonmont, his son's teacher and friend, and begged him to instruct a person in charge of some tables of his to take care of them, because in a short time he would send money to pay for their conveyance into France<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 52, Lib. iii. p. 810.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 42, Lib. iv. p. 881.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 58, Lib. iii. p. 816.

## CHAPTER VI.

ACCEPTING OFFERS FROM THE ROYAL FAMILY OF FRANCE, CORNELIUS REMOVES TO LYONS—AS A COURT PHYSICIAN HE GROWS RICH IN PROMISES.

THE queen-mother was Louisa of Savoy—it was still, therefore, from the house of Savoy that Cornelius was receiving promises of favour. At the first glance, also, we notice this unpromising condition of his case—his patroness was a strict Catholic, with a strong tendency to persecution of Reformers.

During the period of Agrippa's separation from the greater bustle of political events, a new complication had been arising, which we shall find presently exerting an important influence over his fortunes. The year 1520 had been the year of the Field of the Cloth of Gold. In that year war between Charles and Francis, the successful and the unsuccessful candidate for the succession to the empire, appeared probable. In the year following, the injustice of the court at Paris, bred out of intrigues, created disturbances in Italy. Slight was put upon the Constable de Bourbon by his recal from Milan, war burst into life, and



the French were once more driven from Italian soil. This might not have been the case if the avarice of the queen-mother, Louisa of Savoy, Duchess of Angoulême, had not led her to embezzle money destined for the army. Four hundred thousand crowns, that should have been sent as the pay of the Swiss, went to her private purse, and Semblançay, the treasurer, who, in the year following, confessed to whom the money had been paid, was followed pertinaciously by Queen Louisa's hatred, until five years afterwards it gained its end and brought him to the gibbet. Pope Leo was dead, and his successor was Pope Adrian, a friend to Charles V.

In the year 1523, that is to say, during the last year of Agrippa's residence in Switzerland, Charles Duke of Bourbon had been alienated finally from his allegiance to the crown of France. The previous Duke had left a daughter, named Suzanne, inheriting much land, and Charles had joined her possessions to the dukedom by contracting marriage with her. When she died, the queen-mother, considering the Duke to be a handsome man—his age was only thirty-four—and knowing that his territories were desirable, proposed to marry him, as plainly as queen can, and also claimed inheritance of so much of his duchy as came to him from his deceased wife, by right of her own descent in the female line from one of the past dukes. The age of her majesty was forty-seven. Charles of Bourbon would not marry her, and had to bear therefore the anger of a slighted woman. The queen-mother retaliated at once by a claim on the

whole Bourbonnais. Now the Duke knew that King Francis loved him little, because he was cold and grave, and soberly attached to business; a man so little disposed to bear frivolous jokes as to be called at court the Prince of Small Endurance. He saw reason to fear the queen-mother's influence over her son, and was thus driven to seek help from counterplots. Charles the Fifth, losing no time in the use of what he held to be his opportunity, promised Bourbon his own sister in marriage, with various advantages, if he would attach himself to the imperial cause, and originate in France civil dissension. Bourbon hesitated, but stung by the progress of the court intrigues, towards the close of the year he consented, and but a very few months before Agrippa came to Lyons he had fled from his own country with a single attendant, leaving the Bourbonnais to be immediately confiscated, and gone over to the enemies of Francis.

In the spring of the year 1524, when Cornelius came to Lyons as physician to Louisa of Savoy, a campaign was reopened in the Milanese, and Bourbon began in concert with Italians to operate successfully against his countrymen. It has been long remarked of this revolt of Bourbon, that it affords the first modern example of a strong opposition of the sentiment of patriotism to the alliance of a great prince with the enemy of his king, when such a king has done or is about to do him wrong. Until with the revival of letters Greece and Rome instilled into educated men their strict views of the duty owing to one's country, and of the sacrifices that become



the patriot, certainly it was not in France that any abstract sentiment existed to restrain princes and dukes from forming what alliances they found most profitable when at enmity with an offending sovereign. Bourbon's revolt was the first of great note that occurred after the change made by the revival of letters in the public feeling of society. He found opinion everywhere against him; he was not received cordially even among his chosen allies, and he lived in his camp as a morose soldier among his troops, the only men who had a solid faith in him, a rough but friendly master, who took care to find them opportunities of plunder that should more than cover their deficiencies of pay.

Of the state of affairs here described, Agrippa had, of course, when he went to Lyons, only an imperfect and one-sided view. It was not until several months afterwards that the queen-mother, become regent during her son's captivity in Spain, showed to the world the full strength of her disposition to deal cruelly with the Reformers. Had Agrippa known in what way Queen Louisa's passions were involved in the affront of Bourbon to the crown, had he known only the shallowness of her religion and the depth of her bigotry, he would have known the step to be a false one that took him, a German and an advocate of church reform, from the true fellowship and favour of Swiss burgomasters to the service of Louisa of Savoy. But as it was, he held it to be good advancement in the world to have become a queen's physician.

As a fortunate man he was congratulated by his friends,

though one of them wrote that if, as one attached to the French court, he exchanged doctor's cap for helmet, and rode with his spear in the Italian wars, it was to be hoped he would not ride against a Swiss friend ranged upon the side of Bourbon<sup>1</sup>. Agrippa had no thought of taking active part in war. Before anything was settled with the queen-mother he received the titles of a man attached directly to the court, as counsellor<sup>2</sup>, and took part at Lyons in such public business as belonged to his position. The communication with his old friend Brennon was reopened and secured. To him Cornelius had sent, in letter after letter, confidential details on the subject of his worldly efforts and achievements; none ever reached their destination, or came back into the writer's hands<sup>3</sup>. He had had death again in his house. Of the three children born to him by his second wife, before the end of August, 1524, two, both of them sons, survived; the other child, a daughter, died. Brennon replied<sup>4</sup> with sympathy, and this piece of good news: "A woman here died lately, who bequeathed to me a press and all things necessary to the printer's art, at which I shall be able to work as I get leisure." Cornelius<sup>5</sup> answered to this: "I wish you had my little works, that you might print them; but I have no scribe, and possess no more than single copies. I will get duplicates of some and send them you to print, beginning with the Apology against that calum-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 59, Lib. iii. p. 817.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 68, Lib. iii. p. 823.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 60, Lib. iii. p. 818; and for the next facts.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 61, Lib. iii. p. 818, 819.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 62, Lib. iii. p. 819.



nious Dominican. The brute is in this town, but nearly muzzled, and disliked by all his own companions. These tumults of war are a great hindrance and damage to me. I depend wholly on their issue. If they end well for the King, I am fortunate; if ill, I am almost lost." In another letter to the Abbot Bonmont, Agrippa wrote<sup>1</sup>, after some warm recognition of his generosity to Aymon: "In answer to your inquiry about my fortunes, certainly I am rich in promises from the King himself and other princes; but these wars, for the most part, snatch away from me the fruits of their munificence." He wrote this after he had been living for six months at Lyons upon barren honours.

At about the same time another glimpse was offered to him of a way to get his books before the world. A friend at Basle sent him a letter<sup>2</sup>, by the brother-in-law of the great typographer, John Frobenius, with a message from Frobenius, requesting that he would explore the oldest libraries in Lyons, and see whether they contained any codices of Pliny's history, especially the later books. If he found any he was to send them by the bearer, who would find whatever surety was required for the safe keeping of the manuscript. "I discussed with Frobenius," the friend added, "about your work against the Dominican Monk, as well as about the printing of your complete works. He says that when they are sent to him he will take care that no one of them shall be found to meet with less consideration than is well and fairly due."

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 63, Lib. iii. p. 820.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 64, Lib. iii. p. 821.

Cornelius, at Lyons, belonged not only to the courtiers, but also to a cheerful literary circle<sup>1</sup>; he was pursuing a variety of studies; had been improving himself in astrology<sup>2</sup>; and among other sciences was studying the Cabala still, and beginning to work at the books of Raymond Lully<sup>3</sup>. He was courted by learned strangers; young scholars wrote to him soliciting his friendship<sup>4</sup>. Those who had been in his household always turned to him—though they could anger him sometimes—with confident affection. We have found him just now telling Brennon that he was without a scribe. The person who had been serving him in that capacity had been taken ill upon a journey, and was laid up with stone in the bladder. Seeing no hope of speedy return to his duties, he petitioned that his brother might be taken in his place<sup>5</sup>.

The renewed wars closed many an old channel of communication, and the Abbot Bonmont being hostile to France, and associating with the enemies of France, although old friendship remained unabated, and Cornelius expressed constant reverence for his warm friend, free interchange of thought by letters between them ceased to be possible<sup>6</sup>. In June, 1525, Cornelius sent for his son Aymon by a messenger, who was to bring him,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 65, Lib. iii. p. 821. A piece of good-humoured denunciation for Agrippa's having promised an *Aristotle* to the writer and not having made his promise good.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 56 and Ep. 57, Lib. iii. pp. 813-816.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 67 and Ep. 75, Lib. iii. pp. 822 and 826.

<sup>4</sup> As in Letters 73 and 77 of Book iii.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 66, Lib. iii. pp. 821, 822.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. 68, Lib. iii. p. 823; and for the next facts.



if the kind priest thought it well for him to rejoin his father. He was then expecting daily to have his future settled, and a home appointed for him by his mistress, either at Tours, Orleans, or Paris. The Abbot replied<sup>1</sup>, that Aymon should be sent home when the weather became cooler; but that he was of too tender age for a long journey under summer heat. The same reply offered congratulations on the subject of a second letter<sup>2</sup> from Cornelius, written on the twenty-fourth of July, to announce that his wife had recently given birth to a third son,—so that he had now four children, all of them boys,—and that the infant had profited by his relation to the court, in having the Cardinal de Lorraine for a godfather, and for godmother the Dame de Saint Prie. The queen-mother and her court were then at Lyons; she was Regent, and King Francis was a prisoner in Spain. In the middle of the previous October siege had been laid to Pavia. In January no progress had been made; Bourbon, however, having raised an army on his own account, had procured money from the Duke of Savoy, and marched to relieve the besieged city early in the year. On the twenty-third of February, King Francis, defeated by Bourbon, was taken prisoner, and given to the keeping of his rival at Madrid. Louisa, Duchess of Angoulême, became Regent of France during his absence. At the beginning of August, soon after the birth of Agrippa's infant, the queen-mother was leaving Lyons with her

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 78, Lib. iii. p. 828.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 76, Lib. iii. p. 827; see also Ep. 79, Lib. iii. p. 828.

daughter to visit Spain, on behalf of the captive. Instead of carrying her new physician with her, she bade him remain at Lyons, without settling there, until her return, when she would be at leisure, she said, to determine where his domestic establishment was to be fixed. It was to be in some town of the interior of France, so that he might be at hand for the performance of his duties<sup>1</sup>. He was not the richer for having been flattered, while the whole court was at Lyons, with a distinguished godfather and godmother for his infant; such things only induced him—and perhaps were by the Queen meant to induce him—to consent longer to exist, as his wits enabled him, on the mere royal promise of a salary.

The queen-mother was avaricious; war absorbed public money, and Agrippa, there can be no doubt, suffered delays and slights because there was a stain upon his character. "Does he repudiate Luther? Does he think with the most learned Parisians?" Capito's playful doubt whether that physician was not tinctured with the German heresy, echoed the saying of the orthodox against Agrippa, and such questioning told heavily upon his fortunes. Because of this, no doubt the Duke of Savoy's chancellor had dallied with his hopes, and paid a cold attention to his claims; because of this, the queen-mother was hesitating about the fulfilment of her promises, while his inquiries into occult science, and his books of magic, that a few had seen, enabled the priests already in a very slight degree to taint his name,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. iv. p. 838.



by attaching to it some of the disrepute connected with forbidden studies.

But Cornelius was still in active sympathy with the Reformers. There was a letter written to him in May, 1525, by a reformer in Lorraine<sup>1</sup>, a hot partisan in the controversy upon the Eucharist. Luther believed that there was something like real presence in the sacramental bread and wine; Zuinglius taught what is now commonly believed by Protestants, and a fierce strife existed on this subject. To the zealous partisan, Agrippa replied quietly<sup>2</sup>, stating what books he had himself been able to obtain upon the subject, and expressing his desire to see all others, except such as had been written by the Sophists. But the most perfect revelation of Agrippa's attitude towards the orthodox Church, at a time when he was awaiting at Lyons the fulfilment of the promises of the queen-mother, is contained in the following letter addressed to him by Zuinglius or Bucer<sup>3</sup>: "Although most busy, I have nevertheless wished to send you enough writing to prevent you from believing that you are forgotten. Lately the most learned Papilio wrote to me salutations in your name. The whole church of the saints established here has rejoiced very vehemently at hearing the fruit of the Word among the courtiers, as well as throughout nearly all France. We also glorify the Lord for the constancy of Macrinus, servant of God. I have written to many, concerning the glory of the Word

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 69, Lib. iii. pp. 823, 824.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 71, Lib. iii. pp. 824, 825.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 82, Lib. iii. pp. 829, 830.

among you, letters which I doubt not have been communicated to you. I bless the Lord that you remain always the same, namely, a lover of the truth; by following in that course we are happier than by all things else; for what is to compare with truth? I wish it were in my power to come into France, that I might not be always dumb. The Lord's will be done. I pine, I confess, at being so long silent. I doubt not that you know of my having taken a wife" (Zuinglius had married a noble widow, Anne Richartin, in the year preceding, Bucer had married a nun two years before), "and perhaps you have seen my book on Marriage. Christ gave a son to us on the twenty-ninth of November. My sister is still expectant of a child. The boy, named Isaac, is well. Pray that he may live to the glory of God, and that I may teach him to separate himself to the utmost from anti-christ and the vain fictions of men. We endure much poverty, for all things are at the dearest, and I am weighed down by many debts. The brethren at the court, and you, perhaps, among them, sent me twenty gold ducats. Help never came at better time. In all things blessed be the name of the Lord who helps us, and is powerful to set us free from poverty so urgent. I send thanks to all who gave and helped me in my poverty. My little wife salutes you, and we both of us salute your wife in the Lord. I shall be glad if all things prosper with you. Our whole church salutes you, through Christ, Capito especially; and for you and all brethren we entreat happiness from the Lord. Make men, as far as you are able,



well disposed towards me. Write what is done at Geneva, that is to say, whether they love the Word; let there be sometimes letters exchanged between us. Grace and peace from our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Strasburg, the last day of December, 1525."

By an obvious mistake this letter has been printed in Agrippa's works as one sent from Agrippa to a friend. The tone of thought, the style, the facts contained in it, all seem to me to declare Zuinglius the writer. Not only had Zuinglius his marriage to announce, but the tractate on Marriage to which he refers was, at the date when this letter was written, the last thing published by him. It had appeared earlier in the same year, and was an address to the Swiss in reply to an outcry made against himself for having joined a husbandman in wedlock to a woman who stood to him in the relation of godmother to one of his children; this tie of commaternity, or com-paternity, as it was called, having been held by the Church, but being repudiated by Zuinglius, as a bar to marriage<sup>1</sup>. Bucer was head of the Reformed Church at Strasburg.

It was at this time that Cornelius wrote and dedicated to the King's sister, Margaret of Valois, his tractate on the Sacrament of Marriage<sup>2</sup>. She was clever, spiritual, skilled in languages, favourably disposed towards the cleverness of the Reformers, and a skilful inventor of tales, then amusing, and not more immoral than some sermons

<sup>1</sup> *Operum D. Huldrici Zuinglii, vigilantissimi Tigurinae Ecclesiae Antistitis*, Partes iii. &c. &c. Tiguri. Exc. C. Froshover, 1581. Pars Prima, fol. 151-154.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 1, Lib. iv. p. 831.

of the time, but certainly remarkable to men of these days for their looseness. She was then thirty-four years old, and had become somewhat recently a widow by the death of Charles Duke of Alençon. As a widow she had been to comfort in his prison at Madrid King Francis, her brother, to whom she was much attached; she had gone charged by the queen-mother with plenary powers to negotiate, and it had been hoped that she might, by her fascinations, conquer the heart of a saturnine emperor. That visit to Madrid had been paid in the previous year. The journey to Bayonne with the queen-mother was for the purpose of meeting the King on his liberation, and conveying his two eldest sons as hostages to Spain. Margaret of Valois was quite ready to marry again, and was, indeed, in the year following, espoused to Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre. To this princess, then, Agrippa felt that he should do well to dedicate his treatise upon Marriage, the substance of which has been in this narrative already described. He sent it to a learned friend and correspondent, one of the King's physicians, John Chapelain, to be presented to her highness. Chapelain very soon found that it was a clumsy compliment. Let any one compare the tone of Margaret's diverting tales with the unbending morality of this discussion on the Sacrament of Marriage, and it will be evident that, honest as her life was, such a lecture as Cornelius wished to present ran no little risk of being accepted as a rebuke against her daily conversation.

"I will see to your pension," wrote Chapelain<sup>1</sup>,—who

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 2, Lib. iv. p. 832.



was a kindly man, clever enough to justify the printing of the only work of his that came before the public, *A Medical Opinion on the Plague*, in the same volume with the *Medical Opinions* of a man so famous as Fernel<sup>1</sup>, —“I will see to your pension; but the matter is not likely to be settled yet, for in such matters the Queen is apt to be slow. However, we shall soon be coming to Paris,” he wrote from Bordeaux on the second of April; “now, if I understand rightly, we are to return to Lyons, because the most Christian King has to accomplish a vow made while in Spain to the Holy Napkin at Chambéry; in Paris I have no doubt your affair can be settled, in the mean time I will do my part as a friend when opportunity arises. Some who are nevertheless accounted Christians, little approve of that work of yours upon Marriage on account of certain passages contained in it, and they who object are people who speak often with the Princess. Therefore, fearing lest I might bring you more hurt than honour, I have deferred the presentation. Nevertheless, if you bid me, I will give it.”

The poor scholar made a manful answer<sup>2</sup>: “You write, my dear friend Chapelain, that there are some persons at court who are numbered among the wise, and who speak often with the Princess, who little approve my declamation upon Matrimony. Fearing, therefore, lest it may bring me into more contention than commendation, you have deferred offering that little treatise to their highnesses until you had again consulted me. Hear now,

<sup>1</sup> See *Jerome Cardan* (1854), vol. ii. pp. 100-104.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 3, Lib. iv. pp. 832, 833.

therefore, my opinion. Among the masters at court there are some who write filthy and dirty jests, lewd comedies, songs steeped in lust, and pestilent books that dishonour the name of love. There are some, also, who translate such writings into sundry languages. And books of this sort are received without offence as gifts by ladies; the tales of Boccaccio, the jests of Poggio Bracciolini, the adultery of Euryalus and Lucrece, the wars and loves of Tristan and Lancelot, and the like, by reading of which women are made familiar with wickedness, are greedily read even by girls. Whoever is most deeply read in such works, can quote fragments of them, and talk about them fluently and often with her wooers, comes to be called a true lady of the court. I wonder, then, that our discreet and very witty censors, who make often so great a tragedy out of a trifle, not merely suppress their objection to such writings, but also read, translate, expound, and occupy themselves about them, even though they may be bishops, chief maintainers of religion, like that Bishop of Angoulême, who has turned Ovid's amatory letters into French. Such priests of their mysteries have our court ladies, of whom, since they have never learnt from good authors, and have not a morsel of right training, how can I expect that they will like such a work as this of mine, so utterly at odds with their established ways? Nevertheless, boldly offer to them these little books" (separate copies, it would seem, one for the Princess, one for the queen-mother), "nor think that your Agrippa, whose name some read *Ægris Pedibus*, lame-footed, is so gouty that he cannot



place foot against foot in combat with those wise court censors. I am not yet so destitute of the arms of honest study, that I cannot both defend this writing and confound its adversaries. A most happy farewell to you. From Lyons, May 1, 1526."

There is not a syllable too much of emphasis in this letter, in the tone of which we find, not only the purity of soul which marks the whole life of Agrippa, but a little also of the voice of a man whose heart is with the Swiss Reformers.

The treatise upon Marriage, written in Latin, had been also translated into French<sup>1</sup>; and during this month of May we find its author very busy in dispersing copies of it, and defending it among his friends. One is sent to a friend Conrad at Chambéry, with a request for Ptolemy's *Cosmography*, which Conrad had been promising to lend him. Martin the painter, however, had the Ptolemy<sup>2</sup>, had borrowed it eight months before, and there was a question whether it would ever be returned. "I never break my promises," says Conrad, "so I will get you a new copy. In the mean time, rheumatism tortures me to madness. Can you tell me of a remedy<sup>3</sup>?" "By no means get me a new Ptolemy," Cornelius replies; "I can wait very well for Martin." And he sends an enclosure of elaborate prescriptions, capping them with a secret and sure remedy that must be told to no one else. And all this time Cornelius is reduced even to bare want, by the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 4, Lib. iv. p. 833.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 5, Lib. iv. p. 834.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 11, Lib. iv. pp. 839, 840.

impossibility of getting the first instalment of his promised salary from Martin of Troyes, the treasurer<sup>1</sup>. Since the Queen left for the frontier, he tells Chapelain, every good thing he had has flown out of his Pandora's box, except his hope, and that has its wings almost full-grown. Chapelain is attached to the Queen's suite, and he must see what can be done; "Go to her," says Agrippa, laughing over his distress, "fasten upon her, [seize her, ask her, conjure her, compel her, torment her: add prayers, entreaties, complaints, sighs, tears, and whatever else there is by which people are stirred." He himself writes a letter to her by that messenger, and asks his friend to take care that his letter, of which he sends a copy to him, is not left unread. Above all, he wants treasurer Barguyn to be made to send a letter to his subaltern, Martin of Troyes, and command the payment of Agrippa's salary that he is holding back. If not paid, he shall become one letter more than *medicus*, which sorry joke being interpreted, means that he must become *mendicus*, a beggar.

But still hope, fast as her wings were growing, kept them folded. Cornelius maintained a cheerful spirit, and was somewhat assisted in the effort by the small distraction that arose from the objections to his declamation upon Marriage. To Michael d'Arandia<sup>2</sup>, the recently appointed Bishop of St. Paul-Trois-Châteaux, in Dauphiné, he sent an explanation upon two points, chiefly urged against him by the theological objectors to his essay. They were

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 6, Lib. iv. pp. 834, 835; and for what follows.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 7, Lib. iv. pp. 835, 836.



trifling, and need not be dwelt upon. At about this time also there seem to have been persons about the court who wished to be amused or edified by his skill in occult study, and had asked him for some astrological predictions. He accordingly sent Chapelain a calculation of the stars duly made out, with a double interpretation, so that he might let the courtiers see how he could profit by their folly. "Why," he asked in this letter<sup>1</sup>, "do we trouble ourselves to know whether man's life and fortune depend on the stars? To God, who made them and the heavens, and who cannot err, neither do wrong, may we not leave these things,—content, since we are men, to attain what is within our compass, that is to say, human knowledge? But since we are also Christians and believe in Christ, let us trust to God our Father hours and moments which are in His hand. And if these things depend not on the stars, astrologers, indeed, run a vain course. But the race of man, so timorous, is readier to hear fables of ghosts and believe in things that are not, than in things that are. Therefore, too eager in their blindness, they hurry to learn secrets of the future, and that which is least possible (as the return of the deluge) they believe the most; so, also, what is least likely they believe most readily of the astrologers, as that the destinies of things are to be changed by planning from the judgments of astrology—a faith that, beyond doubt, serves to keep those practitioners from hunger."

All this shows into what form Agrippa's mind has

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 8, Lib. iv. pp. 837, 838.

ripened. It was two years since King Francis, when he went to relieve Marseilles, besieged by Bourbon at the outset of the war, promised the pension, of which, except a gift for travelling expenses, not a coin had been received. The King went into captivity. The captain charged by the King with the execution of his will was dead; but there were others, as the Seneschal of Lyons (godfather to one of Agrippa's children), witnesses to his command. Attached to the queen-mother as physician, he was looking in vain to her for his salary; but she had destroyed his means by charging him to stay at Lyons, without fixing himself in a home there, until she was ready to determine on his future<sup>1</sup>. He and his household had begun to look absolute hunger in the face, and still they were kept quiet by promises. "Barguyn the treasurer," wrote Chapelain, on the seventeenth of May<sup>2</sup>, "has been absent till now, and promises to make Martin of Troyes pay you your salary in Lyons. Her highness does not deny that she will some day do what you desire, but she is making a long matter of it." Nine days afterwards he reports that he has given to the Queen letters from Agrippa, but that he can get no definite reply. "I know by my own experience," he adds<sup>3</sup>, "how difficult that is, for I have wanted one thing from her for many years, and have not received it, and almost despair of getting it, though I have had not unfrequently her promise. We are treating about peace with an uncertain issue. Thanks for the prognostications.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. iv. p. 838, for the preceding facts.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 10, Lib. iv. p. 839.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 12, Lib. iv. p. 840.



I gave one to our friend Barguyn. To-morrow I depart for Paris, and thence go to St. Germain." At length, with the June weather, there came a letter that seemed to report promises more definite than usual. It was from the Bishop of St. Paul Trois-Châteaux, Michael d'Arandia<sup>1</sup>, reporting the issue of a conversation he had just been having with the King, in which Agrippa's case was represented. Francis spoke of the unlucky scholar more kindly than ever, promising that he should have the money due to him and more to boot. Moreover, said the bishop, "M. Chapelain has written by the order of the queen-mother herself to the treasurer, who now is at Lyons, commanding him to pay your salary."

Hope flutters her wings and does not think of flying. Dread of hunger vanishes, and the threadbare philosopher can look with a new satisfaction on his wife, and on his annually expanding family of children. What can he do to express his thankfulness to the good bishop, who has been so fortunate in intercession? He must send some little gift; and, looking through the heap of his own writings in his study, he selects a little paper proper to be dedicated to a Christian priest, and sends it to him, with some modest words, in a most grateful letter<sup>2</sup>.

The brief essay dedicated to the bishop was Agrippa's "Dehortation from Gentile Theology." Brief as it is<sup>3</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 14, Lib. iv. p. 841.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 15, Lib. iv. p. 841.

<sup>3</sup> *H. C. A. Dehortatio Gentilis Theologiæ, ad amicos aliquos quondam perorata*. It occupies only nine pages (sig. fol. H ii.-H vi.) in the *Opuscula*, ed. Mense Sept. 1532.

there is a depth of meaning in it, for it marks distinctly what had been the influence of recent lessons on its author's life. A year or two before this time, probably while he was at Cologne, before his settlement in Switzerland, some young friends of Agrippa who believed in him, had asked him to give them a lecture on the subject which they understood he had expounded with so much success at Pisa, the "Pimander," or book on the divine nature, of Hermes Trismegistus. Instead of complying with their desire, he wrote for them and read to them this Dehortation, against the mistake of looking for a knowledge of God to the wise heathens, when there were the Scriptures to be searched. Out of the depth of his desire for a revived study of the Gospel in its purity, he urged them earnestly to betake themselves to faithful study of the Scriptures. "Is it," he asked, "because there is not a God in Israel, that ye send to inquire of Baal-zebul, the god of Ekron?" What virtue is there—and virtue there is—in Hermes, Plato, Plotinus, Æmilius, Iamblichus, Proclus, that is not better taught by the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Lord himself? Why go to those worthies before we have gone to Him who is the truth and the way? We need for the study of divine things a pure, free mind, not infected by corrupt doctrines, which root ignorance so firmly in the name of knowledge, that it cannot be uprooted; and we think we know, and we declare that to be catholicity and truth, which after all is heresy and error. "But when your mind is once established in sound doctrine, then by the light of



it you are free to wander safely through the gloom of error, you may freely penetrate all depths of study. Then, if you enter, like Ulysses, the cave of the Cyclops, and descend even to hell, you return scathless ; if you drink the cup of Circe you will not be changed : if you steer your way by Scylla you will not be swallowed in the gulf ; if you listen to the Sirens you will not be laid to sleep, but will be as the Apostle declares, of all men judging, judged by none. The doctrines of the heathen then will be of the greatest aid to you, and by their help you may ascend to the loftiest theology." That is the whole purport of this Dehortation,—that young men should go for wisdom to the Scriptures, search them with free minds, and obey the teaching of the Gospel, as the only basis of a sound philosophy.

## CHAPTER VII.

## LABOUR AND SORROW.

CHAPELAIN had in many letters told Agrippa that his cares were ended, that his salary was to be paid. The Bishop of Bazas, in Guienne, had written that by his intercession all was settled. The Seneschal of Lyons had sent to his friend the same good news, and the Baron Laurentin (godfather to another of the children) had sent comfort also from the court. "By this hope," Agrippa wrote, in the middle of June, "I have been highly delighted, but to this moment not a speck of money has been seen. Martin of Troyes says that nothing has been written to him by Barguyn, so that my affair has not come to my net, but is still in its web among the spiders. I have let all my good birds escape, and am compelled to chase the flies<sup>1</sup>." Two more weeks passed over the afflicted household of the scholar, not the only man whose fine spirit was fretted with the knowledge of what hell it is in suing long to bide : at the end of that time Cornelius

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 16, Lib. iv. p. 843.



again attacked Martin of Troyes, who told him then that he had received orders from Barguyn for the payment of various moneys, but that there was no mention in the letter of Cornelius Agrippa<sup>1</sup>. He wrote immediately to the Bishop of Bazas, telling him how he was forced to lose good days that might be better spent, and how, if his salary was still withheld from him, penned up in Lyons, now unable to stir through poverty, he must altogether perish. Could the King procure for him a portion of his promised income, anything with which to meet the present need<sup>2</sup>? A few days after this letter was written, a brief note came to Cornelius from the King's doctor, Chapelain, telling him that Treasurer Barguyn had commissioned one Antony Bullion of Lyons to pay the money that was owing<sup>3</sup>. To which note the reply is very touching<sup>4</sup>:

"Your letter, written on the twenty-ninth of June, my dearest Chapelain, I received on the seventh of July, and learn from it that our friend Barguyn has referred the payment of my salary to one Antony Bullion, of Lyons. If Barguyn wished me well, as you write that he does, and desired my money to be paid to me, he would not have referred me to that Antony whom he knew to be absent from here, but either to Martin of Troyes, as was before arranged, or to some other, either resident here or passing through the town. On the day that I received your letter I went with M. Aimar de Beaujolois, a judge, a polished man,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 20, Lib. iv. p. 846.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 22, Lib. iv. p. 847.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 23, Lib. iv. p. 848.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. iv. pp. 848, 850.

and one of my best friends here, and had some trouble in meeting with Thomas Bullion, the brother of that Antony; he did not altogether deny that he had orders to pay me, but said he was ordered to pay in these words: if he found that he could,—if there remained any money with him. At last he said he would refer again to his instructions, and that I should have an answer from him the next morning. On the next day, therefore, when we anxiously called many times upon the man, he, hiding at home, feigned absence, until at a late hour of the night we departed, having made a very close acquaintance with his door. On the next day, however, the before-mentioned judge meets him, questions him on my behalf, and presses him; he replies that he will come over shortly to my house and settle with me about the stipend; and, with that falsehood, securing an escape, in the same hour he mounted his horse and rode away, as it is said, to join the court. You see how we are played with! Think of me, fought against on every side by sorrows—by griefs, indeed, greater and more incessant than I care to write. There is no friend here to help me; all comfort me with empty words; and the court title, which should have brought me honour and profit, aggravates my hurt, by adding against me envy to contempt.” He goes on to repeat how he was led by false promises into his false position at Lyons, and how he was taught to feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow. “Held in suspense,” he says, “by this continual hope, to this hour no messenger has told me whether to remain at this place or quit



it: here, therefore, I live with my large family as a pilgrim in a caravansary, and that in the most expensive of all towns, under a load of charges, subject to no little loss. You write that the Queen will some day comply with my request; but that she is always slow—slow also in your affairs. What if in the mean time I perish? Truly, so slow a fortune cannot save me, mighty goddess as she is. Perhaps you will say I should propitiate her with some sacrifice—a ram, or a bull, and those of the fattest—that her wings may grow, and she may fly to me the faster; but so extreme is my want of everything, that I could not find her a cake or a pinch of frankincense.” He entreats, therefore, his friend at court to conquer for him those obstacles with the Queen, that he, who has placed all his hope in her, who has left all other means of living at her bidding and the King’s, may not be reduced to the last limit of despair. “For believe me,” he adds, “my affairs and my temper so incline, that if you cannot win for me a speedy help I shall be following some evil counsel, since there is good fortune to be had out of ill doing.”

In the middle of July this was written. Still the weary days of cross and care followed each other; on the eighth of August a new doubt arose. Martin of Troyes had professed himself Agrippa’s friend, and had himself written in several letters to Barguyn for instructions on the subject of the salary; with the answers to each of these letters came a reply on every point contained in them but one: the subject of Agrippa was passed over without a word. The cry of his heart now is, “Would that I could be per-

mitted to despair<sup>1</sup>!" Yet at this very time his services are being used by the queen-mother, and he has been putting aside at her command his private labours for a most annoying task, out of the performance of which added trouble is to come.

Forty years old is Agrippa now; conscious of strength, subservient to no man, but the centre of his own small circle in the great community of scholars. He has reached the age when commonly the form of a man's mind or of his fortune becomes definite, and, roughly speaking, represents the spirit of his whole career. With meaner aspirations in his soul, he perhaps would have mounted higher on the path to fame and honour which he had a right to seek, and sought with honest industry. His mind had grown in stature and in power, but it had grown to knowledge that procured him enemies among the priests. While Louisa of Savoy and her son Francis were becoming known as persecutors, and obedient to such influence as flowed from the Sorbonne, we cannot be surprised at the neglect suffered by Cornelius Agrippa. His correspondence with his friends at court was sometimes intercepted<sup>2</sup>. His scorn of the corrupt dealings of the worldly class of priests—the class most able to thwart him in the world—was not concealed; it broke out in his books, his letters, and his conversation.

Especial utterance it found in a book of ambitious size and more ambitious aim, to the writing of which he had betaken himself at the beginning of his cares in Lyons.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 30, Lib. iv. p. 854.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 30 and 31, Lib. iv. pp. 854-855.



While busy with the pen he could keep all his cares at bay; and that he was so busied, and intensely busied, that his brain was at work upon more labours than one, and chiefly upon one, a book written in these his later days of disappointment—about which the second half of his life appears to gather, as the first half of it gathered round the cruder books of occult science, written in his early days of hope—it is proper here to indicate. He did not utterly consume this portion of his life in beating at the doors of obdurate sub-treasurers and treasurers. Out of his own treasury of thought during all these miserable months the coin flowed with more than customary freedom. Even in the manner of his letters we see how the wit is being spurred by trouble, how an active brain does its sad battle with an aching heart.

Among Agrippa's correspondents, during the two months of trouble among treasurers that have been last accounted for, was a Dominican, Peter Lavindus, who had made his acquaintance while delivering the Quadragesimal discourse at Lyons, and after his return to his own monastery was afflicted with some worldly trouble or perplexity, in which he was most anxious to determine rightly on his future course. Impressed by the reputation for occult knowledge that Agrippa had, this friar sent a messenger with a mysterious letter, begging earnestly of Cornelius that he would on his behalf consult the stars<sup>1</sup>. "Judicial astrology," he was told in reply, "is nothing more than the fallacious guess of superstitious men, who have founded a science on

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 17, Lib. iv. p. 843.

uncertain things and are deceived by it: so think nearly all the wise; as such it is ridiculed by some most noble philosophers; Christian theologians reject it, and it is condemned by sacred councils of the Church. Yet you, whose office it is to dissuade others from these vanities, oppressed, or rather blinded by I know not what distress of mind, flee to this as to a sacred augur, and as if there were no God in Israel, that you send to inquire of the god of Ekron." Having thus spoken his mind faithfully and privately, as "a Christian bound to support his neighbour in the faith," he says, "Lest you think me but denying you, and by a subterfuge avoiding trouble for a friend, I will do all that you ask me, to the best of my ability, having thus warned you first not to put more faith in these judgments than befits a Christian<sup>1</sup>."

Another of Agrippa's cares during this time was to attend at the death-bed of a physician of Dijon who had become his friend, to announce his loss in gentle words, and take thought for his widow and his children<sup>2</sup>.

Another incident in his life during these months was his meeting in the streets of Lyons with an old friend, Christopher, from Metz, and a glad rushing to him, in the hope of a despatch from Brennon; but the thoughtless Christopher had come away without asking for

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. iv. pp. 844, 845.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 18, Lib. iv. p. 843. It is headed *Amicus ad Agrippam*, but should be *Agrippa ad Amicum*. As it stands, it gives Cornelius charge, as nearest friend, of the widow and children of a physician of Dijon, who fell sick and died at Lyons after an illness of some days; Agrippa knowing nothing of it until all was over, and then being informed in a consolatory letter.



errands. The sight of him, however, soon produced a letter from Agrippa to his friend, with whom he had for two years been without means of communicating. By diligent inquiry there was found a travelling trader whose affairs carried him sometimes through Metz as well as Lyons; through him, therefore, Cornelius told, hiding his sorrows, what he was expecting; asked Brennon for letters, which were to be addressed to the Baron Claudius Laurentin, commended himself to his old friends by name, and "to the ears of Jacob, the librarian, for I am told that on account of Lutheranism, he has left nothing of himself but them at Metz." The letter also contains this passage: "I commend to you the funeral rites of my late dear wife, buried in your church, that no duty relating to her be omitted: but that as I disposed and founded, all be executed and completely carried out; and that I beseech of you again and again, by the memory of all the hours you spent with her and me, and as the sacred bond of our perpetual friendship<sup>1</sup>."

Brennon replies to this: "The obsequies of your wife, on the anniversary of her death, we celebrate as you desired; that is to say, on the day before the anniversary, the vigils for the dead, but on the next a solemn mass. Also we announce on the preceding Sunday, that during the week there will be these services." Of Metz gossip he sends, of course, a fit supply, in two letters written to his friend, on successive days<sup>2</sup>. The Steganography of Trithemius and Agrippa's manuscript of his own

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 20, Lib. iv. pp. 845, 846.    <sup>2</sup> Ep. 26 and 27, Lib. iv. pp. 850-852.

Geomancy, in an oblong book, Cornelius had not lost, but left behind him in the hurry of his leaving Metz. They shall be duly forwarded. Tyrius the clockmaker (he who was seeking the philosopher's stone) is always prepared for great things, but he is often drunk. Carboneus is going soon to Cologne, and will bring news back of Agrippa's parents. Thus we find that his mother was still living; and if the plural be no error of Brennon's, she had married again, as was quite possible.

A young physician, now four-and-twenty years of age, had been among the youths who heard Cornelius at Pavia, and being in Metz, had recommended himself by praise of Agrippa to the good priest Brennon. This youth, John Paul, having the world before him, offered to walk to Lyons, taking Brennon's letters and the books—the Steganography and Geomancy;—at Lyons, since the town was large, Cornelius a kindly man and a court physician, he hoped, with Agrippa's influence, to begin rising in the world, if not as a physician, yet perhaps by being recommended to the post of tutor to a nobleman<sup>1</sup>. The young doctor marched as long as money lasted, and broke down at Langres, when he had achieved about a hundred and twenty of the two hundred and sixty or seventy miles he had proposed to walk. At Langres he contrived to live in decent esteem upon the reputation of the brother, who was a court physician, to whom he said he was travelling, and who would send him some money, and he contrived

<sup>1</sup> This incident is from Brennon's Letters and three others, 28, 33, and 38, of the Fourth Book.



to send, by a person travelling from Langres to Lyons, a letter to Agrippa, telling his misfortunes, begging that he would not injure him by repudiating the fraternity he had been claiming, when at his wit's end, and asking for the loan of two gold crowns to carry him on with the books—he made much talk about the books—to Lyons. Out of his wretched means, Cornelius squeezed the two gold crowns, and sent them, through a druggist of Langres, to whom he told his young friend that he might apply for them if they were wanted, but he assured him that it was not in the least worth his while to travel any farther. He was quite as likely to make a practice or to find friends at Langres as at Lyons; he had better, therefore, wait and try his fortune where he was. As for the books, they could be sent quite safely through the druggist. The young doctor replied that he had never found so much use and comfort in his life from thirty crowns as from those two, which he hoped he might live to repay. That he would be advised and stay at Langres, though he feared he wanted two main requisites for success as a physician, age and pomposity.

Such incidents of life, and energetic progress with the book to which allusion has been made, varied the days and weeks and months of weary waiting upon princes' favour, of sad watching of a wife's pale cheek, and anxious thought about the future of a little family of children.

One noticeable topic more arose. The friend to whom he had sent prescriptions for the gout, and who had crossed the Alps before they reached him, had a neigh-

bour who had been changing his profession. He had left the Law and gone into the Church. "I want to know," Agrippa wrote to his friend, during those anxious months — "I want to know about our Achilles, how he is fitted with the cowl and wooden shoes, and all their family of disguises? whether, as before, he has admirably perfected himself in the art of pleading, having the laws ready to support every opinion; able to cast, recast, bend and twist them into the same shape with his own gloss, and even contest oath against oath? Is he as quick now in the brother trade, or cowl trade, that is, the trade of sycophancy? Is he skilled in feigned sanctimony and the way of stealing by an impudent mendicity? With rubbing of the forehead and importunate hypocrisy, can he rake money in from every side, minding that he does not take hold of it with naked hands? Does he think no gain disgraceful made in the market-place, the choir, the church, the schools, courts, palaces, councils, festive assemblies, taverns, barbers' shops, public and private gatherings, confessions and disputes; from the benches, the chairs, the pulpits; in scattering among the people, by an impudent craft, trumpery indulgences, selling good actions, measuring out ceremonies; tearing from merchants, usurers, and grasping nobles their ill-gotten prey? Can he chouse of their money the fat citizens, unlearned people, superstitious crones; attract weak little women, and, after the way of the Serpent, tempt them to the ruin of the men? Can he, in fine, meddle with everything? join in unlawful marriage, adjust quarrels, reform nuns, doing all for



his own profit? If he has mastered all this, and much more than can be written in a hurried letter, he will never regret having been changed from an advocate into a brother. If not, he had better go *ἔς κόρακας*, or rather to the galleys<sup>1</sup>."

"Through the royal promises," Agrippa wrote again to Chapelain, early in August, "I am turned like Ixion on a wheel, haunted by all the furies. I am almost losing human senses, and become good for nothing : wherefore I am the apter perhaps for prophecy, which some think comes best from mad people, as if the loss of human wit meant the acquisition of divine, and what the wise man cannot foresee, the fool can." Thus he wrote, under the annoyance of a command from the queen-mother, that he should consult the stars for her upon the future issue of the contest with the Emperor and Bourbon. Having lost, as he said, all but honour at Pavia, and been carried prisoner to Madrid, King Francis had just obtained his freedom by the force of vows and promises, which he was now making up his mind to break. Having lost all but honour, he was sacrificing that to regain everything else. His mother, bigoted and superstitious, wished to know the issue of their policy by help of the stars, and issued orders for a horoscope to her servant Cornelius Agrippa. "I am in the right way," he said, "to become a prophet, and obey my mistress; I wish I may predict her something pleasant, but what pleasant prophecies are you to

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 32, Lib. iv. pp. 855, 856. See also *De Incert. et Van. Scientiarum*, cap. lv.

get out of the furies and Hecate? All the mad prophets of antiquity foresaw nothing but murder, slaughter, war, and havoc, and I know not how mad people can foresee other than the works of madmen. I fear, then, that I shall prophesy in this way, unless some good Apollo, chasing off the furies, visit me with his light in beams of gold. But I will mount the tripod, prophesy, or guess, and send the result ere long to the Princess, using those astrological superstitions by which the Queen shows herself so greedy to be helped—using them, as you know, unwillingly, and compelled by her violent prayers. I have written, however, to the Seneschal that he should admonish her no longer to abuse my talent by condemning it to such unworthy craft, nor force me any more to stumble through this idle work, when I am able to be helpful to her with more profitable studies<sup>1</sup>.”

He did write that request to his well-meaning but clumsy friend, the Seneschal of Lyons; and the good Seneschal, instead of following the hint by dropping here and there a fit remark to modify the lady's notion of the sort of service for which her physician was most fit, placed in her hands Agrippa's letter<sup>2</sup>.

On the twenty-fifth of August, Cornelius had found reason to fear that other letters of his had been seen. Doctor Chapelain had for some time sent him no replies, and it appeared, at length, that he had been at Orleans, while his letters were sent to the court. Of course there had been a good deal of plain-speaking in them on the subject of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 29, Lib. iv. pp. 853, 854.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. iv. p. 860.



Barguyn and Bullion, and it was to be hoped that they had not fallen among thieves. At that date he wrote, also<sup>1</sup>, "I have just completed those revolutions, according to the superstition of astrology, which the Princess so eagerly desired; but as you are absent from the court, I know not to whose hand to commit them, unless the Princess herself name some person. I know not whether she will. I have caused her to be admonished by our Seneschal, if he receives my letters."

A few days afterwards Chapelain was at the court, and found what mischief had been done. The queen-mother herself sent for him, and told him that the Seneschal of Lyons had shown her a letter from Agrippa, which suggested that she made improper use of judicial astrology, and was led by a vain hope and superstitious faith; whereat she felt a little hurt. Agrippa was to be told to set himself at rest about the astrological predictions; that she held him in high esteem without them<sup>2</sup>. It was rumoured, Chapelain also wrote, that they were to go to Lyons—he hoped so, and that Cornelius would have an opportunity of saying something about Christianity before the King. It was all right as to his salary. Antony Bullion had promised to write to his brother that it was to be paid directly. Two men, with views upon Church matters like Agrippa's, Nicolas Cop and the old Faber Stapulensis, who were both then with Margaret of Valois, desired to have Cornelius saluted in their name.

More days elapsed, and then there came two letters

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 36, Lib. iv. p. 858.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 37, Lib. iv. p. 859.

from Chenonceaux; one short one from the Bishop of Bazas<sup>1</sup>, simply exhorting the unhappy waiter upon royal leisure to believe what Chapelain had written in the other. Chapelain wrote<sup>2</sup> that he believed Barguyn and Bullion to be Agrippa's friends; that it was an unlucky mistake of the Seneschal's to show Agrippa's letter to the Queen Louisa, since it had compelled all his friends to be silent before her. That he must by all means send his astrological calculation to her highness, and without delay, acting as if in entire ignorance of what had happened. That to avoid suspicion, he had better direct it to be presented by the Seneschal, and that the Queen having received it, would communicate it to the court, upon which there would arise occasion to assist the absent doctor with legitimate apology.

Cornelius, to the most important clause in this letter, could only reply<sup>3</sup>, "I repeat, that I am in a marvellous way defrauded by that M. Bullion. You know that I have not received the letters which you say you forwarded to me through him, and that his brother denies ever having letters or commissions from him. Unless you procure payment for me through Martin of Troyes, I am doomed to receive nothing. Farewell, and be happy.—From Lyons, September 11, 1526. Greetings to you from my dearest wife, who labours under a double tertian fever; and I have some fear lest, through the distress of mind she suffers, it may pass into a quartan. Of this most knavish

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 39, Lib. iv. p. 860.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. iv. p. 860.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 41, Lib. iv. p. 861.



sport those treasurers are authors: may all gods and goddesses confound them! But again and again I say, may you be happy."

Four days afterwards, Thomas Bullion, met in the street, went so far as to confess<sup>1</sup> that he had been instructed to pay to Cornelius what money he received; but he denied the receipt of instructions from his brother to make payment forthwith. Agrippa still begged that he might get his salary through Martin of Troyes. "I do not trust the Bullions, but if they pay me, I shall be appeased: if not, I must still be importunate with letters, whereof you perhaps are weary, and which they despise; I in the mean time shall hunger. Greet for me Cop, and Faber. My wife greets you; she continues ill."

It is hard to realise the weary misery of the position to which learned and high-spirited men were reduced when they were promised means of living by a prince not active to see that the promise was fulfilled, and so were left to haunt the doors of underlings, and to be treated with disdain by knaves. But here we have the whole tale told. On the sixteenth of September<sup>2</sup>, Agrippa had found that his correspondence with the court was continually being intercepted. "After the receipt of your last letter," he wrote, "I persecuted that brother of Bullion for four days, and got nothing but mystification. I am grieved and vexed to batter your head daily with these most annoying letters, and to give you so much trouble, while those thievish treasurers do but laugh at us both: yet I

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 42, Lib. iv. p. 861.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 43, Lib. iv. p. 862.

hope that their iniquity will not have so much power as to cloud with the smallest doubt our mutual good-will. . . My wife greets you, but she is in a weakly state, being with child: and truly had not fortune added it, this one thing might have been wanting to the heap of my distresses.”

In another letter, written on the same day<sup>1</sup>, he enclosed the astrological prediction, and expressed delight at getting rid of it. “As to your counsel, that I should say something upon Christianity to the most Christian king, that requires no little consideration, and must be pondered maturely: whether it be better to translate other men’s works, or offer one’s own thoughts, I am still uncertain: it is most honest to fight with one’s own weapons, safer far to hide behind another person’s shield; but safest to be silent. For at this day, as you perceive, Christian truth can be cultivated in no more secure way than by stupor and silence, lest by chance we be seized by the inquisitors of heretic preachers, and by those men of the Sorbonne, most learned Scribes and Pharisees, according to the law, not of Moses, not of Christ either, but of Aristotle: so we may be forced to recant through fear of fagot. I have been writing in these last days a volume of some size, which I have entitled ‘On the Uncertainty and Vanity of Sciences, and on the Excellence of the Word of God.’ If ever you see it, I think you will praise the plan, admire the treatment, and consider it not unworthy of his majesty: but I do not mean to dedicate

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. iv. pp. 862, 863.



it to that king, for the work has found one who is most desirous to become its patron, and most worthy so to be. But I am writing now on Pyromachy, and not so much writing as experimenting, and I have now at my house buildings and models of machines of war, invented by me, and constructed at no little cost; they are both useful and deadly, such as (I know) this age has not yet seen. . . . And still you do not know all, my Chapelain, that lies hidden under the cloak of your Agrippa."

## CHAPTER VIII.

DESCRIBING ONE HALF OF AGRIPPA'S BOOK UPON THE "VANITY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS."

THE motto placed by Agrippa on the title-page of his book upon the "Vanity of Sciences and Arts<sup>1</sup>"—*Nihil scire felicissima vita: Ignorance is Bliss*—points out the spirit of its satire. He dedicates the work to an Italian

<sup>1</sup> *Splendide Nobilitatis Viri et armatæ militiæ Equitis Aurati, ac utriusque Juris Doctoris, Sacræ Casareæ Majestatis a consiliis et archivis Inditiari, Henrici Cornelii Agrippæ ab Nettesheym, De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum et Artium, atque Excellentia Verbi Dei Declamatio. Nunc denuo recognita: et Scholiis Marginariis illustrata. Nihil scire felicissima vita. Anno MDXXXII. Mense Septembri, Colonia, 12mo, pp. 351. From this copy, which is the third published edition and the most perfect, I take the sketch in the text, and to it reference is made in the succeeding notes. Subsequent reprints were mutilated by the censorship. In sketching the contents of the volume I have had also before me one of the English translations, of which several were made in the same and the succeeding century, and have made some use of the old translator's language. But as he was by no means conscientious in behaviour to his text, and especially was apt to put his own Protestantism into his author's mouth, he has needed much correction. The view given in the text represents, I believe accurately, from the biographer's point of view, the spirit of Agrippa's satire, and is expressed very much in his own words; typical sentences being so chosen to stand for chapters as to present, to the best of the narrator's power, not a long skeleton of the contents of the book, but a full representation of its spirit and its meaning as a portion of its author's life.*



friend, Augustine Furnario, citizen of Genoa, and in his dedication calls it a cynical Declamation; says that he writes as a dog; and that in his next book on fire-weapons, pyrography, he shall appear as a dragon, after which he will return to his old shape of philosopher.

If we bear in mind the disappointments and distresses in the midst of which this bitter jest was written, and the life also that prepared the author for his work, we shall know perfectly well its meaning. The bigotry of schoolmen who would test all knowledge, even all religion, by what they could find in a few Latin and Greek books, was a heavy drag upon all independent aspiration. It infected the Church: it followed with its hue-and-cry every one who sought to explore new regions of art and science. There were brave and strong men in those days, who battled with it, and broke loose from it. Cornelius Agrippa, half emancipated, in this book turned fiercely upon those who watched the prison door. You tie down free inquiry, it is meant to say, you chain our spirits to the ground; you claim to have all wisdom when you know what has been written about your sciences and arts. But you are wrong. There is as much vanity as sense in all your wisdom, and beyond it lies an undiscovered world in God's Word and His works. Hear me cry, Out upon your knowledge! You who claim to be the fountain-heads of wisdom, are not so wise as you account yourselves. I can say more, you shall find, in praise of an ass than of any one of you. The fountain-head of wisdom is the Word of God, and it shall pour its fertilis-

ing stream over a philosophy less barren than yours. "They will all run me down," he says, in a preface to the reader, and conjures up a pleasant vision of himself, with the followers of every art and science clamouring against him, every pack with its own cry. "The obstinate theosophists," he says, in his climax, "will cry me down for heresy, or compel me to bow down to their own idols. Our scornful magistrates will demand of me a recantation, and I shall be proscribed under the great seals of the world-supporting men of the Sorbonne; but I write this because I see men puffed up with human knowledge contemning the study of the Scriptures, and giving more heed to the maxims of philosophers than to the laws of God. Moreover," he adds, "we find that a most detestable custom has invaded all or most schools of learning, to swear their disciples never to contradict Aristotle, Boethius, Thomas Aquinas, or whoever else may be their scholastic god, from whom, if there be any that differ so much as a nail's breadth, him they proclaim a scandalous heretic, a criminal against the holy sciences, fit only to be consumed in fire and flames." He urges, accordingly, his apology, if he should seem to speak too bitterly against some sciences and their professors, "How impious a piece of tyranny it is to make captive the wits of students to fixed authors, and to deprive their disciples of the liberty of searching after and following the truth!"

The work contains no other subdivision than that into chapters, of which there are one hundred and two. It admits, however, of a not unnatural division into two



main parts: the first fifty-one chapters comprehend a review of the Sciences; the other fifty-one, having discussed the nature of man, speak of his Arts, and lead up to the desired conclusions. Dividing the book in this manner, therefore, I describe it in two chapters of the present narrative.

Of the Sciences in general<sup>1</sup>, Agrippa says that all of them are evil as well as good, and that they bring us no divine advantage, beyond that which was promised of old by the Serpent, when he said, Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. They have nothing of good in them or truth but what they borrow from the possessors or inventors of them, for if they light upon any evil person they are hurtful, and there is nothing more ominous than art and science guarded with impiety. If they light upon a person not so much evil as foolish, there is nothing so insolent or dogmatical; but if good and just men be the possessors of knowledge, then Arts and Sciences may become useful to the commonwealth, though they make their possessors none the happier. True happiness consists not in the knowledge of good things, but in good life; not in understanding, but in living understandingly. Neither is it great learning, but good-will that joins men to God. Furthermore, all sciences are but the opinions and decrees of private men, as well those that are of use as those that are hurtful, being never perfect, but full of error and uncertainty; and that this is evident we shall

<sup>1</sup> *De Incert. Van. Sci. et Art.* Cap. i. pp. 1-8.

make appear, by taking a survey and making a particular inspection into every particular science.

He then begins his survey by entering at the wicket of the Sciences, the first elements of Letters<sup>1</sup>, and shows how there is no agreement among men as to their number or form, and how they have gone through so many vicissitudes that there is no language able to claim possession of the alphabet as it was first given to man. Then he goes on to the art of well speaking, called Grammar<sup>2</sup>, founded upon rules that only are considered right because they are established. But he asks, are they established? How many toil and labour day and night! scribbling continually all sorts of commentaries, forms of elegance, or phrases, questions, annotations, animadversions, observations, castigations, centuries, miscellanies, antiquities, paradoxes, collections, additions, lucubrations, editions upon editions. And yet not one of them all, whether Greek or Roman, has distinguished among parts of speech, or settled the order to be observed in their construction; or assured us whether there be fifteen pronouns, as Priscian believes, or whether more, as Diomedes and Phocas will have it; whether gerunds are nouns or verbs; why among the Greeks nouns plural of the neuter gender are joined with a verb of the singular number; why many write such Latin words as *felix*, *questio*, with a Greek diphthong, others not; whether H be a letter or not, and many other trifles of the same nature: so that not only as to words

<sup>1</sup> Cap. ii. pp. 8-11.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. iii. pp. 11-19.



and syllables, but also in the very elements and foundations of grammar itself, no reason can be alleged to end the continual warfare. The divines and holy friars, too, mixing themselves with the tribe of grammarians, overturn the Scriptures for the grammar's sake; which puts us in mind of the story of the priest who, having many hosts at one elevation, for fear of committing himself in his grammar, cried out, "These are my bodies!" Moreover, though it be apparent to the world that there is no faith to be put in these grammarians, there never was an author of so sublime a wit as to have escaped their malicious slanders. Neither is there any man that ever wrote in Latin whom Laurentius Valla, the most learned of all the grammarians, hath spared in his anger; and yet him hath Mancinelli most cruelly butchered.

But what of the Poets, who have preserved and pickled up the bestialities of the gods in neat verse and metre, communicating the same to posterity, as mad dogs venom? They weave their fictions with an art often destructive of the truth of history. Rightly did Democritus call Poesy<sup>1</sup> not an Art but a Madness. Therefore Plato said, that he never knocked at a poet's doors being in his wits. Yet, in the midst of their trifles, poets, with a boldness like that of the Lycian frogs, promise themselves, and others through them, lasting remembrance in the world. No very great fame or reward is that. Neither is it the office of a poet, but of a historian, to prolong the life of reputation.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. iv. pp. 19-23.

What then of History<sup>1</sup>? Historians are at such variance among themselves, delivering several tales of the same story, that it is impossible but that most of them must be the greatest liars in the world. Agrippa fills a pleasant chapter with accounts of the Uncertainties and Vanities of the historians, in the number of whom Ephorus is to be reckoned, who related that there was but one city in Ireland; as also Stephen the Grecian, who said that the Franks were a people of Italy, and that Vienna was a city of Galilee. There are other historians more to be condemned for their untruth than this, who having been present at scenes, yet will, through favour or affection, in flattery of their own party, deliver to posterity falsity for truth, writing not what the thing is, but what they desire it should have been. Many, again, write histories, not so much for truth's sake as, like Xenophon in writing his account of Cyrus, to delight the reader and set forth some idea of a king which they have framed to their own fancy.

In Rhetoric<sup>2</sup> great is the question even as to what its purpose is, whether to persuade men or to teach good utterance. There is a maze of theses, hypotheses, figures, proems, insinuations, and so forth; yet it is denied that among these the end of rhetoric is to be found. There was Corax, a rhetorician among the Syracusans, a man of shrewd wit, who taught his art for gain. To him came Ctesias as a pupil, having no money, but promising double pay as soon as he was perfect. When Corax had taught

<sup>1</sup> Cap. v. pp. 24-30.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. vi. pp. 30-36.



him, he asked, meaning to defraud his teacher, What is Rhetoric? and was answered, It is effectual persuasion. Then, said Ctesias, if I persuade myself I owe thee nothing I am quit effectually of my debt. If I cannot persuade myself, I shall then also owe thee nothing, because I have not been perfected in my art. To which Corax replied, Whatever I was to be paid, if I can persuade myself to take it, I must have. If I cannot persuade myself to take it, you should give it me, for having bred a scholar that excels his master. When the Syracusans heard this talk, they cried out, Bad crows lay bad eggs. Æschylus writes that composed orations are the greatest evils in the world. A confident eloquence defending bad causes prevails over justice, therefore the Romans for a long time would not receive rhetoricians in their town; and the Spartans exiled Ctesiphon because he bragged that he could talk a whole day upon any subject. There are men so affected with the charms of eloquence, that, rather than not be Ciceronian, they will turn Pagan; but they are vain babblers, who will have account to render of their idle speech.

Dialectics<sup>1</sup> they call the art of Reasoning; but, says Agrippa, our dialecticians don't succeed in making things so clear that they may not be asked why they should not as well call Man a Man, as Animal Rationale, or Mortal Rational Creature. Cornelius, having described some of their niceties, says, these are the nets and these the hounds with which they hunt the truth of all things, natural or supernatural; but, according to the proverb of Clodius

<sup>1</sup> Cap. vii. pp. 36-39.

and Varro, they never fall upon their game by reason of the noise they make in brawling with each other.

But the late schools of sophistry<sup>1</sup>, Agrippa says in his next chapter—the eighth—have produced worse, portentous things: Infinites, Comparatives, Superlatives, Incipits and Definites, Formalities, Hæcceities, Instances, Amplifications, Restrictions, Distinctions, Intentions, Suppositions, Appellations, Obligations, Consequences, Indissolubles, Exponibles, Replications, Exclusives, Instances, Cases, Particularisations, Supposits, Mediates, Immediates, Completes, Incompletes, Complexes, Incomplexes, with many more vain and intolerable barbarisms. In this study our sophisters are so stupidly employed that their whole business seems to be to learn to err. These are they who, as Quintilian says, are extraordinarily subtle in disputing; but take them from their impertinent cavilling, and they can no longer endure the blows of a right reason; like little bugs that, secure in chinks and crevices, easily are trodden upon in the plain field. I deny not the use of such science in scholastic exercises, but I cannot apprehend how it may assist or uphold theological contemplation, whose chief logic consists in prayer.

The art of Raymond Lully<sup>2</sup> is the subject of the next chapter; and as he has written, he says, a commentary on it, he dismisses it with a few words, simply warning men that its use is to display learning and wit, not to increase it.

The Commentary here referred to has not yet been

<sup>1</sup> Cap. viii. pp. 40-43.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. ix. pp. 43, 44.



mentioned in the narrative, its exact place in it being uncertain. It is included among Agrippa's works, and presents simply, at some length, a sketch of one of Lully's works, the *Ars Brevis*<sup>1</sup>. This is a technical system for the due fitting of knowledge to the memory, by a right use in reference either to simple or complex objects of study, of propositions, definitions, arguments, and exhaustive questions; the application, in fact, of a short and good logical process to the art of study. A commentary upon this system has, therefore, not much biographical significance. Not a few clever men, including Faber Stapulensis, were employing Lully's system in their studies. Men who began their studies late, made, it was said, a surprising progress by its help. Cornelius Agrippa was among the learned men who used it. He had learnt it from one of three young Germans, Andrew, Peter, and James Canter, by whom it was taught in many lands; and, having digested it afresh in his own mind, he reproduced it in the shape of a Commentary, and dedicated his work to the Reverend and Noble John Laurentin of Lyons, Preceptor of St. Antony's at Rivolta. There is no date to the dedication, and the friendship with Laurentin, who had helped in sending him to Metz, and who is now at Lyons, runs over so many years that his name is no clue to the date of dedication. Enough that

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. In Artem Brevem Raymondi Lullii Commentaria. Opera*, Tom. ii. pp. 331-436. Lully was a man who lived a wise wild life in the thirteenth century.

a rather full account of this method of study was at this time among the number of Agrippa's writings.

From his brief chapter on the Art of Lully, the satirist passes, in the tenth chapter of his *Vanity of Sciences*, to the Mnemonic Art<sup>1</sup>—technical memory. This art, when Simonides or somebody else offered it to Themistocles, he refused, saying he had more need of forgetfulness than memory; for, said he, I remember what I would not, but I cannot forget what I would. After all, a great memory is but a childish thing to display, for it is shame and disgrace to make a show of great reading after the manner of those who parade all their wares outside their doors, and have an empty house within.

Of Mathematical Sciences<sup>2</sup>, which treat of figure, number, and motion (though there was never any figure yet found perfectly round), the first is Arithmetic<sup>3</sup>, mother of all the rest, and only valued among merchants for the mean benefit of keeping their accounts. Geomancy<sup>4</sup> is a vain branch of arithmetic, related to astrology. "I myself," Agrippa says, "have written a Geomancy" [a lost work, to which we have had previous allusions], "far different from the rest, though not less superstitious and fallacious, or, if you will, I may say equally lying." Arithmetical science has another offspring in the Art of Dicing<sup>5</sup>, whereof Chance is the father. This dicing is now-a-days

<sup>1</sup> *De Incert. et Van. Sci. et Art.* Cap. x. pp. 44, 45.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xi. pp. 45, 46.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xii. p. 46.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. xiii. p. 46.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. xiv. p. 47.



a game in the utmost request, even among kings and nobles. How do I say, a game? Yea, the sole wisdom of men wickedly bred up to cheat and cozen. Then there is, also, the Pythagorean Lot<sup>1</sup>, by which fortunes are told from numbers got out of the letters of a name. But to return to Arithmetic<sup>2</sup>: it yields such idle and uncertain labour, that among arithmeticians has arisen that irreconcilable dispute, Whether an even or odd number be most to be preferred; which is the most perfect number between three, six, and ten; and whether any number may be properly said to be evenly even, in which matter of great consequence they say that Euclid, the prince of geometricians, very much erred. Some account the numerical inventions of Pythagoras among the sacraments, and the arithmeticians think themselves as gods because they are adepts in numeration; but the musicians regard harmony as more divine.

Of Music<sup>3</sup>, which Aristoxenes called the soul of men, Agrippa then describes the scales and measures, of which the Doric was preferred by the Tuscans, as being more grave, honest, and every way modest, than the Phrygian or Lydian. So Agamemnon, going to the Trojan war, left behind him at home a Doric musician, to the end that he might, by his grave spondaic songs, sustain the virtue of his wife; and thus it was impossible for Ægisthus to disturb the faithfulness of Clytemnestra, until he had first murdered the said musician. Yet is the com-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xv. pp. 47, 48.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xvi. pp. 48, 49.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xvii. pp. 49-54.

mon opinion verified by much experience, that music is an art professed only by men of ill-regulated dispositions, who neither know when to begin nor when to leave off; as is reported of Archabius the piper, to whom they were wont to give more money to leave off than to continue playing. Music hath been always a vagrant, wandering up and down after its hire. Athanasius, by reason of its vanity, exiles it from the Church. True it is that St. Ambrose, delighting more in pomp and ceremony, instituted the use of singing and playing in churches; but St. Augustine, in the mean between them both, makes a great doubt of the lawfulness thereof in his Confessions.

Dancing<sup>1</sup> belongs also to the science of numbers, and, were it not set off with music, would appear the greatest vanity of vanities. Yet, as the worst things have their extollers, some of the Greeks have deduced the origin of dancing from the heavens themselves, comparing the steps of dances to the motions of the stars, that seem in their harmonious order to move by a kind of dance, which they began as soon as the world was created. Others say it was an invention of the Satyrs. Socrates, judged by the Oracle to be wisest of the men then living, was not ashamed to learn to dance when he was far stricken in years; and not only so, but highly extolled the same art, reckoning it among the most serious parts of education. Nevertheless, this art attends always upon immoderate feasts, and is a part of wantonness. Also, when the children of Israel had erected themselves a calf in the

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xviii. pp. 55-57.



wilderness, they sacrificed thereto, eating and drinking, and afterwards, rising up to play, they fell to singing and dancing. Infamous certainly is gladiatory dancing<sup>1</sup>; neither is pantomimic dancing<sup>2</sup>, which has been compared with eloquence, worthy of honour, and indeed all sorts of dancing are not only to be dispraised but utterly abominated, seeing they teach nothing but a wonderful mystery how to run mad. The similar art of Rhetorical Gesticulation<sup>3</sup> is now, Agrippa says, quite laid aside, except it be among some acting friars, whom you shall see with a strange labour of the voice making a thousand faces, looking with their eyes like men distracted, throwing their arms about, dancing with their feet, lasciviously shaking their loins, with a thousand several sorts of writhings, wrestings, turnings this way and that way of the whole body, proclaiming in their pulpits their frothy declamations to the people.

Geometry<sup>4</sup> is the science next akin to Arithmetic, of which such is the uncertainty, that no man could ever find out the right squaring of the circle, or the line truly equal to the side. Akin to this is the science of Optics, or the Perspective Art<sup>5</sup>, by which we come to Painting<sup>6</sup>, which is mute poetry, as poetry is a speaking picture; and to Statuary and Engraving<sup>7</sup>, arts invented by those who first introduced idolatry, the ministers of pride, and lust, and superstition. "But that pictures and statues are

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xix. pp. 57, 58.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xx. p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xxi. p. 59.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. xxii. pp. 59-61.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. xxiii. pp. 61-63.

<sup>6</sup> Cap. xxiv. pp. 63, 64.

<sup>7</sup> Cap. xxv. pp. 64-66

authorities not to be scorned I learned once upon a time in Italy, for between the Austin friars and the regular canons there arose a great debate before the Pope about the dress of St. Augustine, that is to say, whether he wore a black stole over a white tunic, or a white stole over a black tunic, and finding nothing in Scripture that gave light toward the determination of the question, the Roman judges thought best to refer the matter to the painters and sculptors, resolving to be guided by what they should declare they had seen in ancient pictures and statues. Encouraged by this example, I myself, labouring with indefatigable diligence to trace the origin of the monk's cowl, since I could find nothing about it in the Scriptures, at length I betook myself to the painters, seeking the truth of the matter in the porches of halls belonging to the brethren, where the histories of the Old and New Testament are generally painted. But seeing that I could not find in all the Old Testament any one of the patriarchs, or of the priests or prophets, or of the Levites, or Elijah himself, whom the Carmelites take for their patron, wearing a cowl, I looked through the New Testament pictures, when I saw Zacharias, Simeon, John the Baptist, Joseph, our Lord, and his apostles and disciples; scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate, and many others, but never saw one cowl among them all. Beginning again at the beginning, and examining them all figure by figure, presently, in the very front of a scene, I found the Devil himself with a cowl on, as he stood tempting Christ in the wilderness.



I was very glad to have found among the pictures what I had before failed to find in writing, namely, that the devil was the first inventor of cowls, from whom I suppose the other monks and brothers borrowed it, unless perchance he may have bequeathed it to them as his heirs."

Returning then to optics, or the use of Reflectors and Perspective-glasses<sup>1</sup> (refractors), the experiments thereof, he says, are daily seen in glasses of various kinds, hollow, convex, plane, orbicular, angular, pyramidal, and so forth. They have their impostures, representing things that are below as being above us, or surrounding them with rainbow colours. I myself have learnt to make glasses wherein while the sun shines you may discern for the distance of three or four miles together, whatever places are enlightened or overspread with his beams. However, he adds, they are vain and useless things, invented only for ostentation and idle pleasure.

So may the toy of one age come to be the precious treasure of another. The first telescope was not made till the beginning of the seventeenth century. Cornelius was, with other men, upon the traces of a great discovery, but had probably advanced towards it no farther than many of his learned neighbours.

Cosmimetry<sup>2</sup> is divided into cosmography and geography: both measure the world; one by a system drawn from the heavenly bodies, the other by furlongs and miles; and by division into mountains, woods, rivers, towns,

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxvi. pp. 66, 67.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxvii. pp. 67-70.

nations, and so forth. But what authors shall instruct us in this art? manifold being the contentions about boundaries, distances, longitudes, latitudes, climates, characters of countries! Neither are the masters of this science agreed about the middle, or navel, of the earth, which Ptolemy places under the equinoctial circle, and Strabo believes to be the mountain Parnassus in Greece; with whom Plutarch and Lactantius the grammarian agree, and believe that in the time of the deluge it was the only mark left between sky and water. Other theories Agrippa gives, and then falls upon the disputes of geographers concerning the Antipodes.

Architecture<sup>1</sup> is a good and honest art, except that it so much seizes the minds of men, for there is scarcely one to be found who, if his wealth will permit him, does not wholly employ himself in rebuilding, or adding to that which is done already well and decently. Vanity was the ostentatious architecture of the Labyrinth, the Pyramids, the Sphynx. Vain was the architect who proposed out of Mount Athos to cut an effigy of Alexander that should contain a city of ten thousand inhabitants within the hollow of its hand. "Vain," he says, "are the great churches erected in our days, with most lofty towers and spires, vast heaps of stone, rising to an incomparable and prodigious height; together with innumerable steeples for bells, erected at a vast expense of money, drained under the pretence of charity and pious use, which had been better spent in the relief of thousands of the poor, who, being the true temples of

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxviii. pp. 70-72.



God, fall through hunger, thirst, pain, sickness, want; while they might, and should be, more properly erected and supported by help of those sacred alms." Death, too, is brought by this knowledge of architecture among men, not only by means of the deadly engines it constructs on land, but by means of the ships which it fits out to multiply the perils of the sea.

Mining<sup>1</sup> is allied to architecture. It were to be wished that men would aspire as eagerly to heaven as they descend into the bowels of the earth, allured by veins of riches that will not content their souls.

We, turning our thoughts now heavenward, pass to the science of Astronomy<sup>2</sup>, and find the men who talk about the stars, as if they had conversed with them in heaven, and were but newly come out of their company, having among themselves the most dissentient opinions even concerning those things by which they say all things are kept up and subsist. Of course, the diversities of doctrine among the astronomers find a long chapter for Cornelius, though he will say little of such questions as the contention as to which is the right and which is the left side of heaven. All the twelve signs, with the northern and southern constellations, got into the sky by help of fables, and by these fables the astrologers grow fat, while the race of poets that invented them is left to die of hunger. Judicial astrology<sup>3</sup> is next discussed and denounced, as we have seen in his letters how Cornelius de-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxix. pp. 72-74.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxx. pp. 74-80.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xxxi. pp. 80-90.

nounces it. Yet, he says, these fortune-tellers do find entertainment among princes and magistrates, from whom they receive considerable salaries; whereas there is, indeed, no sort of men more pernicious to a commonwealth. For their skill, it lies in the fitting of ambiguous predictions to events when they have happened; and so it is that a man who lives by lying shall by one chance truth obtain more credit than he loses by a hundred manifest delusions. These men have attributed to Mars the cause and necessity of the Lord's death; yea, they do affirm that he made choice of his hours to work his miracles, and spoke as an astrologer in saying that his hour was not yet come; also, that by knowledge of the stars he was enabled to ride into Jerusalem at times when he knew that the Jews could have no power to hurt him. In this chapter—the thirty-first of his work—Agrippa cites the twelve books against Astrologers, written by Giovanni Pico di Mirandola, and declares his assent to all their arguments. In a like spirit he denounces arts of Divination<sup>1</sup>, points out that there is idleness in Physiognomy<sup>2</sup>, in Metoposcopy<sup>3</sup>, and Cheiromancy<sup>4</sup>, foster-children of astrology. He turns again to Geomancy<sup>5</sup>, to remark upon its astrological connexions; declares Augury<sup>6</sup> to be a practice depending only on conjecture, grounded partly upon the influences of the stars, partly taken from parabolical similitudes, than which there is nothing more deceitful. Speculatory divination<sup>7</sup> he

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxii. p. 90.<sup>2</sup> Cap. xxxiii. pp. 90, 91.<sup>3</sup> Cap. xxxiv. p. 91.<sup>4</sup> Cap. xxxv. pp. 91, 92. <sup>5</sup> Cap. xxxvi. p. 93.<sup>6</sup> Cap. xxxvii. pp. 93, 94.<sup>7</sup> Cap. xxxviii. p. 94.



dismisses in a line or two, as being notoriously false. The treatises that have been written on the interpretation of Dreams<sup>1</sup> are mere dreams concerning dreams. As for the foreknowledge of the Mad<sup>2</sup>, it is not to be credited that what the wise and waking know not, mad folks and dreamers should see; as if God were nearer at hand to them than to the vigilant, watchful, intelligent, and those that are full of premeditation.

The circle of the sciences turns next to Magic<sup>3</sup>, which is allied closely with astrology. Natural magic<sup>4</sup> is the force above human reason which is the active principle in nature, and the practice of it is the art of producing with open act the hidden and concealed powers of nature, as if any one should cause parsley to spring from the seed into a perfect plant in a few hours. Mathematical magic<sup>5</sup> produces wonderful inventions by help of mathematical learning and celestial influences, such as the wooden dove of Archytas, which flew. It produces contrivances neither partaking of truth nor divinity, but certain imitations in some way akin thereto.

Of the sort of natural magic which is called Witchcraft<sup>6</sup>, Cornelius speaks next, as one not doubting that the browsing of Nebuchadnezzar, the incantations of the witch of Endor, and the deeds of Pharaoh's magicians, were so many scriptural authorities for a belief in the deeds said to be done by witchcraft. "It is manifest, however," he

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xxxix. pp. 94-96.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xl. pp. 96, 97.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xli. pp. 97, 98.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. xlii. pp. 98-100.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. xliii. pp. 100, 101.

<sup>6</sup> Cap. xliv. pp. 101-103.

concludes, "that this natural magic, inclining toward conjuring and necromancy, is often entangled in the snares and delusions of bad spirits."

Of Conjuring and Necromancy<sup>1</sup>, which are to be abhorred as detestable arts, he teaches that, unless there were something of reality in them, and that many mischievous and wicked things were accomplished thereby, both divine and human laws had not so strictly provided for the punishment thereof, and ordered them to be extirpated from the earth. Among the practisers of wicked arts are the necromancers, who gave to the ancient fathers good cause to ordain that bodies of the dead should be buried in consecrated ground, assisted with lights, sprinkled with holy water, and prayed for so long as they were aboveground. For the Serpent, prince of this world, eats the dust, which is our carnal body, so long as it remains unsanctified; and something to this purpose, it was thought, was the great dispute (which St. Jude mentions in his epistle) of Michael with Satan about the body of Moses.

Theurgy<sup>2</sup>, or divine magic, is the search for communion with good angels by the purification of the soul; it is not evil, rightly understood; but is a pernicious superstition to the foolish.

In the next chapter, which is upon the Cabala<sup>3</sup>, Agrippa shows that he has again outgrown the enthusiasm of his youth, and that there died out a great part of one of his

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlv. pp. 103-106.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xlv. pp. 106, 107.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xlvii. pp. 107-112.



own favourite vanities, while there increased within him the severe and simple faith of the Reformer. He does not say that there is no Cabala, but discourages the search for it. "As for my part," he writes, "I do not doubt but that God revealed many things to Moses and the prophets which were contained under covert of the words of the law, and not to be communicated to the vulgar: so I own that this art, of which the Jews boast their possession, and which I at one time investigated with great labour and pains, is a mere rhapsody of superstition, allied to theurgic magic. For if, as the Jews contend, coming from God, it did in any way conduce to perfection of life, the salvation of men, true understanding,—certainly that Spirit of Truth which, having forsaken the synagogue, is now come to teach us all, would not have concealed it from the Church, to which there is no name given under heaven by which man can be saved, but only the name of Jesus. Wherefore the Jews, although most skilful in divine names, after the coming of Christ, were unable to do what had been done by their forefathers. The Cabala of the Jews, therefore, is now only a vain delusion, by which men extract their vain inventions from the oracles of God, and, feeding upon empty speculations, lose the Word of Truth. Coming to the subject of Magical Illusions<sup>1</sup> in his next chapter—his forty-eighth—Agrippa speaks of magic, and says of another of his trains of youthful speculation, "It is true that, being young, I wrote three books of magic

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlvi. pp. 112-115.

myself, in a considerable volume, which I entitled ‘Of Occult Philosophy,’ in which what errors soever I then committed through the curiosity of youth—now grown more wary—I do publicly recant; for I vainly wasted much of my time and means upon these vanities. This advantage I got, that I know now by what arguments to exhort others against following the same way to ruin.”

Natural Philosophy<sup>1</sup> staggers constantly upon unsound and slippery opinions, and finds nothing at all fixed to hold. As to the very Origin of Things<sup>2</sup>, Agrippa shows how great is the uncertainty of knowledge, and in the next shows how philosophers have argued opposite opinions respecting the Plurality of Worlds, and the world’s continuance<sup>3</sup>. Empedocles said there was one world, but that it was a small particle only of the universe. Metrodorus, a disciple of Democritus, and afterwards<sup>4</sup> Epicurus, said that there were innumerable worlds, because the causes of them were innumerable; neither was it less absurd to think that there should be one world in the universe, than to imagine one ear of corn in a whole field.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xlix. pp. 115, 116.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. l. pp. 116, 117.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. li. pp. 117, 118.

<sup>4</sup> I correct here a trifling slip of Agrippa’s memory. He calls Metrodorus a disciple of Democritus and Epicurus.



## CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH IS COMPLETED THE DESCRIPTION OF AGRIPPA'S BOOK UPON THE  
VANITY OF SCIENCES AND ARTS.

HALF the number of chapters into which Agrippa's satire is divided have been now described. They may be summed up as having treated, first, of the means of knowledge,—letters, language, and the arts of speech and study; then of the group of sciences dependent on the primary idea of number, with some arts arising out of them; next of the science of Nature displayed in the heavens, with the arts of astrology, augury, and the like therewith connected; and, lastly, of the science of Nature in the study of the powers of things upon earth, and of the studies therewith most immediately connected. Supplementary to this view of the universe was the chapter upon the Plurality of Worlds.

Cornelius now turns to man, and begins with the study of his Soul<sup>1</sup>, showing at some length how vain and uncertain are the opinions of the books concerning it. Thus of its seat, he says, Hippocrates and Hierophilus place it

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lii. pp. 118-126.

in the fibres or ventricles of the brain; Democritus, in the whole region of the temples; Erasistratus, in the cranial membrane; Strabo, in the space between the eyebrows; Epicurus gives it room in the whole breast; Diogenes, in the arterial ventricle of the heart; the Stoics, with Chrysippus, in the whole heart, and in the spirits that surround the heart; Empedocles places it in the blood, to which opinion Moses seems to incline; Plato and Aristotle, and the more noble sects of philosophers, place the soul in the whole body; Galen is of opinion that every part of the body has its particular soul. As to its nature, as to the fact or manner of its continuance, the mode of its propagation, there are equal dissensions among the philosophers, and through them it has come to pass that there are so many absurd contests upon the origin of the soul among our Christian divines. Some believe that soul begets soul, as body, body; against whose heresy St. Jerome fiercely combats. Others are of opinion that souls are created daily by God, which opinion is that of Thomas Aquinas. Moreover, concerning souls, some have ventured to write many things about the apparitions of departed souls, which often are repugnant to the doctrine of the Gospel. "I do not absolutely deny that there are holy apparitions, admonitions, revelations from the dead, but I admonish caution, knowing how easy a thing it is for Satan to transform himself into the semblance of an angel of light. There is nothing in any such visions of solid truth or secret wisdom tending to the growth of the soul; they only persuade people to alms, pilgrimages, prayers, and



such works of piety, to which they are persuaded by the Scriptures themselves with far better reason and authority."

As to the study of mind, or of things having no visible existence, which study is Metaphysics<sup>1</sup>: this philosophy is full of the vainest speculations, and by it is all theology adulterated. Moral philosophy<sup>2</sup> is not taught with more certainty by the philosophers; for as it is the discipline of manners, it is found to vary as the manners of those with whom the lot of the philosopher is cast. What was once called a vice is to be called now a virtue; what is here a virtue is a vice in the adjoining land. For character is various as clime. "Who," says Agrippa, "that beholds a man strutting like a cock, with the bearing of a prize-fighter, an unruly look, an ox voice, austere discourse, fierce behaviour, a dress unfastened or torn, does not at once judge him to be a German? Do we not know the French by a well-ordered gait, mild gestures, bland aspect, fair-sounding voice, facile discourse, modest behaviour, and loose dress? We know Spaniards by their holiday step and behaviour, the high lifting of the countenance, the plaintive voice, the choice speech, and the exquisite attire. But we see the Italians rather slow of pace, in gesture grave, in countenance unsettled, low-voiced, captious in talk, magnificent in behaviour, and having a well-ordered attire. We know, also, that in singing the Italians bleat, the Spaniards howl, the Germans hoot, and the French trill. In speech the Italians are grave but crafty, the Spaniards polished but vain-glorious,

<sup>1</sup> Cap. liv. pp. 126-129.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. liv. pp. 129-137.

the French ready but proud, the Germans hard but simple. In counsel the Italian is provident, the Spaniard astute, the Frenchman inconsiderate, the German useful. Over food the Italian is clean, the Spaniard choice, the Frenchman a free eater, the German clumsy. Towards strangers the Italians are obliging, Spaniards placid, Frenchmen gentle, Germans boorish and inhospitable. In dialogue Italians are prudent, Spaniards cautious, Frenchmen polished, Germans overbearing and intolerable. In love Italians are jealous, Spaniards impatient, Frenchmen fickle, Germans ambitious; but in hate Italians are secret, Spaniards are pertinacious, Frenchmen are threateners, Germans avengers. In transacting business Italians are circumspect, Germans laborious, Spaniards watchful, Frenchmen anxious; in war the Italians are stout but cruel, the Spaniards subtle and thievish, the Germans truculent and venal, the French high-spirited but rash. The Italians are distinguished by their literature, the Spaniards by their navigation, the French by their courtesy, the Germans by their religion and mechanic arts." Thus every nation has its way, and tends to its own notions of a moral code. Agrippa cites some scandalous things out of the morality of Aristotle, and abuses Aristotle heartily; for as he is showing the schoolmen the bad side of their case, it is not improper to point out to them how lustily their idol Aristotle may be battered with abuse founded on plenty of authority. Then, again, how have moralists contended with each other about pleasure and pain, and what is to be considered happiness!



St. Augustine puts us in mind of one hundred and eighty opinions collected by Varro touching this one subject. Agrippa turns, however, to the teaching of the Gospel, and ends his chapter on Moral Philosophers by a comparison of some of their fine doctrines with those of Him who preached the Sermon on the Mount.

From morality he turns to Politics<sup>1</sup> and shows how uncertain and various are the speculations of the learned on the comparative excellence of monarchies, aristocracies, and democracies. In stating the case for each, he seems to show decided preference for the last, but in stating the case against each, it is of democracy that he shows most emphatically all the ill. He is unmerciful in judgment on the evil deeds of kings. Emperors, he says, in a passage that may be one of the many which he found too well remembered by the great men with whom lay the building or destroying of his worldly fortune,—“emperors, kings, and princes, that reign now-a-days, think themselves born and crowned not for the sake of the people, not for good of their citizens and commonalty, not to maintain justice, but to defend their own state and prerogative, governing as if the estates of the people were committed to them not for protection but as their own spoil and prey. They use their subjects at their pleasure, oppress their cities with borrowing, the common people some with taxes, some with penal statutes, and grow rich by fines and confiscations, for as the offences of delinquents are the strength of tyrants, so does the multitude

Cap. lv. pp. 137-143.

of offences enrich princes. When I was in Italy I had the honour of familiarity with a powerful prince, whom when I once advised to suppress the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines within his dominions, he confessed to me ingenuously that, by means of those factions, above twenty thousand ducats came every year into his exchequer." Cornelius refers also to mixed governments, but sums up all with the opinion that for good government the essential things are integrity and ability in those who rule ; for a single person may govern best, so may a few, so may the people, provided that in each there be the same intention of unity and justice ; but if the designs of all be evil, then can none rule as they should.

The survey next extends to man's Religion<sup>1</sup>, a sense rooted in him so deeply by nature, that it marks more clearly than reason does the distinction between man and beast. He shows how many antagonist faiths there are in the world, a great part of it with its philosophers worshipping Mahomet, while, he adds, among us Christians various popes, various councils, various bishops, have prescribed various forms of worship ; differing among themselves, either touching the manner of the ceremonies, meats lawful, fasts, vestments, public ornaments, or else about clerical promotions and tithes. But one thing overcomes the admiration of wonder itself, to see how these ambitious men think to climb heaven by the same way that Lucifer fell from it. In this chapter we learn that among the matter declaimed by him in the schools of

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lvi. pp. 143-146.



Cologne, after his return from England and Dean Colet, the Pomps of the Church were discussed fully.

In this book upon Vanities of course they are not spared. From the general topic of religion he passes to an attack upon Images<sup>1</sup> and Image-worship. He who desires to know God, cries Agrippa, let him search the Scriptures. And they who cannot read, let them hear the word of the same Scripture, where St. Paul pronounces that Faith comes by hearing; and what Christ in another place saith, My sheep know my voice. He attacks relic-worship. He does not deny that relics of the saints are sacred, or that in the presence of them, when they happen to be genuine, one may approach, as by help of a sort of pledge, nearer to the saint who is invoked. But to avoid falling into idolatry and superstition, it is better, he urges, to put no faith in things visible, but seek the saints in spirit and in truth, imploring help from them through our Lord Jesus Christ. We have no relic so efficacious as the Sacrament, which is to be found in every church. But a greedy sacerdotal race, hungry for gain, not only of wood and stone, but also out of the bones of the dead and relics of the saints, make instruments of rapine and extortion. They show the sepulchres of the saints; they expose the relics of martyrs, which no man must so much as touch or kiss except for money; they adorn their pictures, set out their festivals with great pomp and state, advancing the fame of their miracles, themselves utterly differing in their lives and conversa-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lvii. pp. 146 151.

tions from the lives and examples of those whom they praise. These are the men of whom our Saviour spoke when he cried out, Woe unto you that build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, being like to those that slew them. Then, like to the heathen, they allot to every divinity its proper charge; to one, with Neptune, they assign watch over the dangers of the sea; to another, they confide Jove's thunder; another, they give as a Lucina to the women. The Temples<sup>1</sup>, too, they dedicate to their saints, as heathens to their gods. But the Most High dwells not in houses made with hands. Men themselves, pious and devout towards God, are His most holy and most acceptable temples: our Lord sent not his followers into the synagogues to pray, but into their private closets; and he himself went up into a mountain, where he spent the night in prayer. Only because of sin, because men could not worship together in their homes and in their fields free from ungodly intrusion, places were appointed separated from profane business, wherein the divine word might be preached to the multitude, and the divine sacraments decently administered. But these have now, by endowment and enrichment, and by misdirected zeal, increased so needlessly in number and in wealth, sums so enormous have been spent upon their superb magnificence of architecture, that, as I said before, many of Christ's poor, true temples and images of God, are forced

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lviii. pp. 151-153.



to suffer hunger, thirst, heat, pain, toil, weakness, want, and downfall.

There is a vanity in the undue esteem of holidays, as if it were lawful to be more religious or more ungodly at one time than at another. To true and perfect Christians there is no difference of days; theirs is a continued festival and rest in God. For the sake of the untrained, the fathers instituted holy days, that they might obtain leisure and liberty to hear the word of God, not meaning that the Church should serve the days, but that the days should serve the Church. For the sake of this convenient freedom, rest from labour was enjoined; but after what lewd fashion is this leisure spent, and what vain controversies have arisen about sacred days and seasons<sup>1</sup>. Ceremonies<sup>2</sup>, too, have obtained undue reverence before a God who demands not to be worshipped with corporal actions, but in spirit and in truth. God requires of the Christian no incense but that of praise and thanksgiving; the sacrifices and ceremonies instituted for the Jews by Moses were allowed to the hardness of their hearts, being the indulgence of a small error to recal them from things more unlawful, directing sacrifice to God and not to devils. Moses established those laws by the suffrages of the elders and the people; they passed away, only the law of God remains, and it was God who spoke by Jeremiah, To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and cinnamon from a far country? your burnt-offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me. It is not to

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lix. pp. 153-156.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lx. pp. 156-159.

be denied that the Apostles, Evangelists, and fathers decked the Christian Church with decent rites, as a spouse for the bridegroom; but later statutes and decrees have added to these out of human weakness. The Christians are now as much burdened with ceremony as were of old the Jews; and, what is more to be deplored, although these ceremonies are neither good nor bad in themselves, the people puts more faith in them, and observes them more strictly than the ordinance of God,—our bishops and priests, abbots and monks misleading men concerning them, and consulting in that way the comfort of their bellies.

The Magistrates of the Church<sup>1</sup> can possess no power of ordaining what is right, except by the suggestion of the Holy Spirit. “Whoever is not called by the spirit to the great office of the ministry, enters not by the door which is Christ; he is a thief and an impostor if he be a minister of the Most High through favour of men to his worldly strength, or by the purchase of votes at an election. Yet such customs now subvert the ancient constitution of the Church, that many popes and apostles sit in the seat of Christ, like to the Scribes and Pharisees who once sat in the seat of Moses. They say and do not, they bind heavy burdens on the shoulders of the people, and themselves touch them not with a finger; they are hypocrites. Doing all their works that they may be seen of men, displaying their religion on the platforms, they desire first seats in the choir, in the schools, in the synagogue, and every-

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxi. pp. 159-165.



where in the market-place, and in the squares they look to be called rabbi and doctor. They close the way to heaven, and themselves, not entering, keep others out; they devour widows' houses, making their long prayers; compass sea and land, seduce and steal young children, that having made one proselyte they may increase the number of those lost, as they themselves are through vain comment and tradition. They neglect souls and the altars of the public, and with a covetous eye seek after only gold and gifts; and, minding the more profitable and sinister parts of the law, are very strict in their decrees touching tithes, oblations, collections, and alms; tithing fruits, cattle, money; not sparing, also, things of the smallest price, as mint, anise, and cumin, for which, barking like dogs, they contend with the people from the pulpit. Now the Pope of Rome himself (as the holy Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux complained) is the most intolerable and burdensome of all whose pomp and pride never yet any of the tyrants equalled." Agrippa then sketches some of the historical misdeeds of popes, who feed on the sins of the people, and are clad, and nourished, and luxuriate upon the same. The comment is continued in the same vein, but arrives at this conclusion, that as all powers that be are good, being of God, who so provides as to turn all our evil actions for the best, we ought to obey and not resist those who are appointed rulers in the Church. It is infidelity to doubt the Scriptures, and impiety to spurn the priests: priests are good, a bishop is better, holiest of all is the most high Pope, and chief of priests, into whose hand are

given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, to whose keeping are committed the secrets of God. In God's name he is a king, in Christ's name a priest, whom he who honours God will honour, he who dishonours God will dishonour, and he shall not escape vengeance. A sentence meant to be a guard upon the author's life, and to a certain extent perfectly sincere, but perhaps also by the exaggeration of sincerity partly connected with the satire.

Of the Monastic Orders<sup>1</sup> we next find Agrippa speaking, in a vein familiar to us, with no great respect for these ecclesiastical establishments; he says and shows that there is an abominable rout of sinners crept in among them, and his honour for the fraternity is expressed by the fact, that from considering them he passes in his next chapter—expressly calling the transition natural—to the arts of prostitutes<sup>2</sup> and panders<sup>3</sup>, in which he speaks with a stern plainness, and in the temper of a Huguenot tells rugged truth not of monks only, but also of kings and courtiers.

The next chapter is on Beggary<sup>4</sup>. It is incumbent both on Church and State to take thought for the poor. Therefore, there are appointed public almshouses, whereof the endowments daily increase through the alms of well-disposed people. The chapter on beggary soon passes, by way of impostors, to the mendicant friars, and denounces them with vigour.

Economy<sup>5</sup> is the next subject, and a large one; economy is private or public, regal, noble, commercial, and so forth.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxii. pp. 165-169.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxiii. pp. 169-179.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lxiv. pp. 179-193.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. lxv. pp. 193-197.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. lxvi. pp. 198, 199.



It is not so much an art or science as a doctrine of opinion and custom, and applies to every craft, even to that which is most unhappy, the life of the mariner, who in his perilous sea-prison, ill-faring among filth, is the most wretched of men, and also the most wicked and desperate. But of the mechanic arts, the most important are merchandise, tillage, warfare, surgery, and the inferior parts of law, on all which topics we shall treat in due succession.

To begin with the fundamental principle which is to be found in private economy<sup>1</sup>, the chief strength of that consists in matrimony. It is the only condition in which man may be said to live happily. Therein, if there come care and labour, as many times crosses will happen and there is no man's life without misfortune, yet the very burden becomes light, and the yoke easy. He closes his eulogy with examples of unhappy marriages, but attributes these in most cases more to the fault of the man than of the woman. He speaks of trial that may come through children, and heaps together, from Plautus, Euripides, and Lucian, proverbs against servants, adding of these, too, that we do not so often find them enemies as make them so, while masters carry themselves proudly, covetously, cruelly, and contumeliously, becoming lords and tyrants at home, exercising a severity over them, not as they ought, but as they please.

Economy of kings and courts<sup>2</sup> is then dissected with no trembling hand. "A court," Agrippa writes, "is nothing

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxvii. pp. 199-204.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxviii. pp. 204, 206.

else than a college of giants, a convent of noble and famous knaves, a theatre of the worst satellites, a school of the most corrupt morals, and an asylum for execrable sins. There pride, arrogance, haughtiness, extortion, lust, gluttony, envy, malice, treachery, violence, impiety, and cruelty, with whatever other vices and corruptions there may be, dwell, rule, and reign. There rape, adultery, and fornication are the sport of princes and of nobles, and even kings' mothers are pimps to their sons. There virtue suffers wreck unspeakable. There the just man is oppressed by the unjust, the man of simple mind becomes a jest, boldness and impudence obtains promotion. There none prosper but flatterers, whisperers, detractors, denouncers, slanderers, sycophants, liars, reputation-killers, authors of discord and outrage among the people. Whatever there is worst in every beast, seems to be brought together in the single flock of the court fold: there is the ferocity of the lion, the cruelty of the tiger, the roughness of the bear, the rashness of the boar, the pride of the horse, the greed of the wolf, the obstinacy of the mule, the fraud of the fox, the changefulness of the chameleon, the dog's bite, the camel's vengefulness, the cowardice of the hare, the petulance of the goat, the filthiness of the hog, the fatuity of the ox, the stupidity of the ass, and the ape's jabber." Agrippa's spirit was in arms, and he could think only of what he felt while he was writing. He made his denunciation more complete and stern than this. "I know," he said, in illustration of one portion of his argument, "a famous town of France so changed by



the arrival of the court in it, that when it left hardly had one husband a modest wife—hardly was it possible for one young man to wed a virgin.” Fearful, indeed, is such a description of the French court in those times; but it is history, not rhetoric.

Then of the nobles of the court<sup>1</sup>—Thrasos in gold, purple, and plumage—Agrippa tells the wicked arts. “As a class, lecherous and gluttonous, men counting it no dishonour to be so prodigal at one meal as to be beholden to other men’s tables for a quarter of a year after, their common discourse is a mere trifling tittle-tattle of detraction, giggling, half-truth, falsity, and brag. Some lie about dogs and hunting, about forest bounds, ways through the woods, and the result of hunts; others about horses, or about the wars and what valiant acts they themselves performed there. If any one has a mind to thwart the other, he begins a discourse equally idle, at cross purposes, to put the other out; which the other not brooking, proves to be lying, and laughs to scorn: thence the whole festival is often broken up with quarrels and recriminations, and, as in the banquets of the Centaurs, there is no end to the gifts of Bacchus but in blood. But the chief art and business of these men is to observe the times and humours of their prince, seeking their own opportunities, and flattering whatever passions or desires they find in him, thus often by their perfidy confirming him in error. Such councillors,” adds Cornelius, “has at this day Francis the King of France, who freely urge

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxix. pp. 207-209.

him to all perfidy and tyranny against the Emperor, yet are themselves all the while held to be excellent and faithful." Here then is a distinct opinion on the memorable act of perjury then under deliberation. While this chapter was being written by Cornelius, the advisers of King Francis were encouraging his wish to get rid of the hard conditions upon which he had bought his escape from durance at Madrid. His councillors abetted his resolve to break the sacred oath wherewith his faith was pledged, so putting out the light of his own honour while he rekindled the flames of war. We see, therefore, that while it existed in suggestion only, Cornelius Agrippa spoke of their deed as an act of perfidy. His detestation of it, had, as we shall find, some influence upon his subsequent career.

The Commonalty of the Court<sup>1</sup> Agrippa next describes, and chiefly in the chapter given to them shows by what arts men of low birth and mean nature rise to wealth and dignity. First they, for the sake of opportunities afforded, and without receiving wages, enter as menials the service of some nobleman, into whose confidence they know how to insinuate themselves, by watching day and night, ready at any time to run or ride. Thus they become secretaries, and from step to step rise by like cunning, trusting themselves only, loving themselves only, wise only to themselves.

Neither are the Court Ladies<sup>2</sup> without their vices. Their elegant forms, hung with jewels and decked out

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxx. pp. 209-213.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxi. pp. 213-215.



with raiment of purple and gold, are such as Lucian fitly compares to Egyptian temples, beautiful structures painted delicately, and adorned with costly stones, but if you look for the god within you shall find there nothing but an ape, a dog, a goat, or a cat. Of their morality, Cornelius speaks his whole opinion: "And they have tongues," he adds, "to which silence is a punishment, yet is their talk most idle and impertinent,—upon ways of arranging, combing, dyeing their hair, upon the management of their cheeks, the folds of their dresses, manners of walking, getting up, and sitting down, what they shall wear, to whom they must give precedence, how often to bow in saluting, whom it is right or wrong to kiss, who may ride on an ass, who on a horse, who on a saddle, who in a coach, who in a litter, what gold ornaments, gems, corals, neck-chains, earrings, bracelets, brooches they can wear, and other idle points in the laws of Semiramis." Many worse things than these are urged against these dames and damsels. "Whoso would marry an honest woman," adds the satirist, "let him not look for her at court. My tongue has spoken out too freely, nevertheless I have said what it was impossible for me not to have said. But I will put my hand upon my mouth, and say no more about the matter." He quits the subject of the court, therefore, to speak of Trade<sup>1</sup>.

The tricks of Trade were a large subject in those days, and traders travelling from land to land, among the subjects of contending princes, when communication was not

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxii. pp. 216-220.

at all open, were to a great extent letter-carriers and news-carriers, and had it in their power to earn money as spies. For these causes, for their monopolies, and for the luxury they stimulated, Agrippa finds that a bad side of their calling can be shown also to the merchants, and that they can have Church authority produced against them, for St. Chrysostom says that a merchant cannot please God; and St. Augustine says that it is impossible for soldiers and merchants truly to repent. Then come to be discussed the arts of thievish Treasurers<sup>1</sup>, who live by their fingers, whose fingers are so birdlimed and beset with an infinity of hooks, that although money can fly and is as quick at slipping through men's hands as an eel or serpent, yet it sticks to them if once they touch it, so that it can by no force be pulled away. These men delay payments until they are bribed to make them, counterfeit bonds, open and re-seal letters, and are often in close league with the alchemists, who help them to substitute false money for true, some being also alchemists themselves.

Of Agriculture<sup>2</sup> worthy things are said, as of an art worthy to have given names to noble families, the Beans and Peas of Rome, the Fabii, the Lentuli, the Ciceros, and Pisos. Pasturage<sup>3</sup> is named with equal honour, as the first calling which mankind followed. Thus Italy itself was named from Vitulus, a calf, which the ancient Greeks called Italus, as men of reading know.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxiii. pp. 220, 221.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxiv. pp. 221, 222.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lxxv. pp. 222, 223.



Fishing<sup>1</sup> deserves less praise, for that fish are a hard food, not grateful to the stomach, nor yet acceptable in the sacrifices to the gods. Nobody ever heard of a fish being immolated. Hunting and Fowling<sup>2</sup>, as pastimes, are to be condemned for cruelty. "We read of no person in the New Testament who was given to hunting, and in the Old Testament the mighty hunters mentioned were bad men. It is a fierce and cruel thing, when the poor beast, overcome by dogs, has its blood shed, its bowels torn out, to exult and count the end of pleasure gained, except that the victim has to be cut up according to the rules of a polite art of butchery. These exercises, base and servile in themselves, are come to be so far esteemed, that now the chief nobility, forsaking liberal and noble studies, learn these only, and find in them no small help to preferment. Now-a-days the whole life of kings and princes, nay, which is a greater grief, the very religion of bishops, abbots, and chief doctors and masters of the Church, is consumed in hunting, wherein mainly they have experience and show their goodness. And those beasts which are by nature free, and by law belong to those that can possess them, the tyranny of the nobles has by its bold interdicts usurped; husbandmen are driven from their tillage, their farms and lands are taken from the rustics, woods and meadows are closed against shepherds, that there may be more herbs for the wild game to feed upon, more dainties for the nobles, by whom only this game is eaten. If any villager or husbandman but

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxvi. p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxvii. pp. 223-227.

taste of it, he becomes traitor, and, together with the beasts, the hunters' prey."

Having spoken in a former chapter briefly and honourably of workers on the soil, he adds now "the Rest about Agriculture<sup>1</sup>," namely, the ill that may be spoken of it. It is the direct produce of the sin of Adam, the visible form of a Divine curse, the symbol of our loss of happiness, from which and its attendant arts we nourish our own pride and luxury ; of which matter Pliny complaining, gives for instance the seed of hemp, which, being but a little seed, in a short time produces a large sail, that by the help of the wind carries a ship all over the world, occasioning men, as if they had not earth to perish in, to perish likewise in the sea.

Since soldiers are chosen especially from husbandmen, as the strong men who are most hardy for fight, we may pass from agriculture to the Military Art<sup>2</sup>. War is nothing but a general homicide and robbery by mutual consent ; of all arts the most uncertain and vain. It is exercised only to the ruin of many, causing the destruction of good manners, law, and piety. The rewards thereof are glory got by the effusion of human blood, enlargement of dominion, out of greed of rule, obtained through the damnation of many souls. And truly the Italian wars, which in those days covered half Europe with sin and sorrow, were to be, not only for argument's sake, but fairly, so described.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxviii. pp. 227-230.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxix. pp. 230-234.



War first begot Nobility<sup>1</sup>. To this subject Cornelius devotes the longest chapter in his satire. It chiefly contains an historical sketch, designed to show that nearly all technical nobility in this world had a morally ignoble origin. He feels so strongly on this subject, and thinks it so well worth demonstrating for the abasement of vanity, that he has even written a distinct book<sup>2</sup> (one of those which have not come down to us in print, but, like his book on Pyromachy, may exist somewhere in manuscript) to show nobility in its true colours. He has shown, he says, that there never was, and that there is not any kingdom in the world, or any great principality, that did not begin with acts of parricide, treason, perfidy, cruelty, massacre, and other horrid crimes,—arts of nobility. If any man wishes to be ennobled, first let him be a hunter—that is the first element in the calling; then a mercenary soldier, ready to do homicide for pay—that is the true virtue of nobility, which reaches to its height of glory for him, if he prove himself an able plunderer. Whoever cannot do these things, let him buy his patent of nobility for money, for it is also to be had by paying for it: or if he cannot do that, let him fasten himself as parasite upon a king or grandee of the court, let him become a pander to the palace, let him prostitute his wife or daughter to his prince, marry a king's cast mistress, or the daughter of his shame, and that leads to the highest

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxx. pp. 234-254.

<sup>2</sup> Ego hanc rem, quam hinc summario conceptu tetigi, ampliore volumine descripsi alibi. . . .—*Ibid.* p. 250.

of nobility, a mingling with the royal blood. These are the roads, these are the ladders, these are the steps to dignity.—Agrippa was a nobleman himself, and it was noble, not ignoble blood, that over all such matters tingled in his cheeks with scorn.—Oppressed by the tyranny of such men, he says, the Swiss destroyed them all, and extirpated their whole race out of the country: by which conspicuous action they earned a name famous for valour, and with that their liberties, which they have happily enjoyed now for four hundred years, hatred towards those nobles still abiding with them. From ancient story and from Scripture, Cornelius argues that there is a tyrannicide just in the eyes of God and man. Nature, he says, finally, bears witness against nobles. Our noble birds are eagles and others, always birds of prey; our noble beasts are lions and tigers, dragons, serpents, things cruel and venomous. Among plants, those reckoned noble are not corn, not the fruit-trees, but trees yielding no fruit, or fruit by which man is not nourished, as the oak, the laurel. Among stones, we count not marble or the grindstone noble, which serve men, but diamonds and jewels, that are useless. Among metals we account noble the pernicious gold, for which the peoples fight together at so great a cost of blood.

Heraldry<sup>1</sup> is an art which supplies these noblemen with fitting emblems. They may not wear on their coats an ox, a calf, a sheep, a lamb, a capon, or a hen, or any creature necessary to mankind; but they must all carry

<sup>1</sup> *De Incert. et Van. Sci.* Cap. lxxxi. pp. 254-259.



for the emblems of their nobility the resemblances of cruel monsters and birds of prey. Some there are that bear for their arms, swords, daggers, towers.

From war and nobility let us hasten to Physic<sup>1</sup>, which is another art of homicide, mechanical, though claiming the name of a philosophy. Cornelius describes the factions into which physicians were divided, and which, although less numerous than those of the philosophers, raised equal controversy. He shows also, by example, the uncertainty of their opinions, how many things are said about the humours, or digestion; Asclepiades and his followers even believing that the meat is not at all digested, but distributed raw into all parts of the body. Practice of Physic<sup>2</sup> furnishes matter for a chapter of some length; and although Agrippa himself studies to live by it, he is not for that reason the more merciful towards the healing art. The pomps and vanities of the physicians, the way that will bring practice to the man with velvet coat and rings, with certain shows of religion, addicted to uncompromising self-assertion, or the use of Latin sentences and authors' names, are fair matter for satire; so too are the saturnine gravity and martial confidence with which a popular physician sets about his trade. Then there is the way of tickling solemnly with knick-nacks the palates of the effeminate; there is the portentous majesty of deportment towards the apothecary, and the affectation by the doctor of sometimes ordering a medicine to be made up before him; pretending himself to be at the choice of the best

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxxii. pp. 259-263.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxxiii. pp. 264-279.

ingredients, when, for the most part, he knows not good from bad, nay, hardly knows the things themselves when he sees them. There is the commanding of unusual things, and the prohibiting of things common. There is the further advice, and the wrangling consultation by the bedside; the hole picked by every one in the opinion or treatment that seems best to any other, out of which a proverb grew upon the differing of doctors. There is the attributing of the patient's death to everything but the doctor, and of the patient's recovery to nothing but the doctor. There is the use of far-fetched and costly medicines, that can rarely be got except in a most adulterated state, as scammony; or of which the remedial use depends upon the time when it was gathered, as colocynth—and who can tell when it was gathered?—while the simples of the country, which God caused to grow there as the proper antidotes to the diseases of the country (this opinion Agrippa held, with many others of his age), which can be had pure and culled at right times, are despised and rejected. Yet there have been philosophers, he says, who have thought them worthy to be subjects of famous volumes, as Chrysippus wrote one upon Colewort, Pythagoras one upon the Squill, Marcion on the Radish, Diocles on the Turnip, Phantias on Nettles. But it was feared of old that, with their far-fetched drugs, physicians—who are worse than hangmen, inasmuch as they are not content to put to death those only who have received sentence of death from the judges—would try vain experiments upon the sick. Therefore the Egyptians had



a law, that in the first three days the physician was to cure a disease at the hazard of the patient's life, but, after three days, at the peril of his own. The Apothecaries are attacked next for their dealing in adulterated drugs<sup>1</sup>, and for the vanity which drives them to cause the sick even to eat man's flesh spiced, which they call mummy. Surgery<sup>2</sup> is a surer science, of an evil origin, for it is bred of war. Anatomy<sup>3</sup> was practised once on living criminals; surely, Agrippa says, it is an abominable and an impious spectacle to see it practised on the dead. Here he expresses the universal feeling of society, against which protests had been very few and faint. It was only a few years afterwards that Andreas Vesalius began, while a student of Paris, his career as the apostle of a right of free inquiry into the anatomy of man. Veterinary surgery<sup>4</sup> is discussed, briefly and kindly, as a useful art, too proudly scorned by the physicians. Dieting<sup>5</sup> tends to an undue quarrelling with the meats and drinks God has created, as St. Bernard complains of the disputations of the physicians, who assert that such a thing hurts the eyes, this the head, and that the body; pulse is windy, cheese offends the stomach, milk affects the head, drinking water is injurious to the lungs; whence, St. Ambrose says, it happens that in all the rivers, fields, gardens, and markets, there is scarce to be found anything fitting for a man to eat.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxxiv. pp. 279-282.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. lxxxv. pp. 282, 283.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. lxxxvi. p. 283.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. lxxxvii. pp. 283, 284.

<sup>5</sup> Cap. lxxxviii. pp. 284-286.

From Diet. the survey of knowledge passes to the art of Cookery<sup>1</sup>, useful, and not dishonest, when it passes not bounds of discretion. Gluttony, however, has sought in all regions for provocatives of appetite; and as for those who in the name of religion deny themselves no pleasure of the gullet, but reviling a part of the food God created for man's sustenance, abstain from meat, but are more thirsty for wine than Epicureans themselves, and say that they abstain and fast, when they fill themselves with fish of every sort and choicest wines, to which they bring their lips, tongues, teeth, and bellies, never their own purses—Enough of them! Agrippa cries: I pass on to the crucible of Alchemy<sup>2</sup>, which consumes not less treasure than the flesh-pots. The alchemist may earn a scanty livelihood by the production of medicaments or cosmetics—whence, they say, every alchemist is either physician or soap-boiler,—or he may use his art, as very many do, to carry on the business of a coiner. But the true searcher after the stone which is to metamorphose all base metal into gold, converts only farms, goods, and patrimonies into ashes and smoke. When he expects the reward of his labours, births of gold, youth, and immortality,—after all his time and expense, at length, old, ragged, famished, with the continual use of quicksilver paralytic, rich only in misery, and so miserable that he will sell his soul for three farthings, he falls upon ill courses, as counterfeiting of money. Many things Agrippa declares that he could tell of this art (whereof he is no

<sup>1</sup> Cap. lxxxix. pp. 286-290.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xc. pp. 290-295.



great enemy) were he not, as one initiated, sworn to silence, but it is vain. The prophet says, Because thou eatest by the labour of thy hands, therefore thou art blessed, and it is well with thee; but these men, contemning the Divine promise of happiness, think to make mountains of gold by child's play. I deny not, he adds, that to this art many excellent inventions owe their origin. Hence we have the discovery of azure, cinnabar, minium, purple,—that which is called musical gold, and other colours. Hence we derive knowledge of brass, and mixed metals, solders, tests, and precipitants. To it we owe the formidable invention of the cannon, and the most noble art of glass-making.

Of Law<sup>1</sup> the chief heads are now-a-days the Pope and Emperor, who boast that they have all laws written in the cabinets of their breasts; whose will is reason, and whose opinions govern science. The censorship claimed by the Pope over matters of religion; the Emperor claims over philosophy, physic, and all the sciences. But the Law, that claims to be the judge of knowledge, is itself infirm, subject to change as princes change, and as time passes. Its origin, too, is the sin of our first parents, which brought divisions among men, Law having no other use than to enable the good men to live among the bad. Canon, or Pontifical Law<sup>2</sup>, shelters its precepts of avarice and formulary robbery under a semblance of piety, though it contains the fewest possible decrees that regard piety, religion, the worship of God, and the sacramental rites.

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xci. pp. 295-299.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xcii. pp. 300-304.

Some of its laws are even repugnant to those of God ; others are mere matters of contention, pomp, and gain. New canons are being constantly established by the ambition and lust of the Roman pontiffs, whose arrogance has grown to such a head that they address precepts to the angels of heaven, presume to rob hell of its prey, and lay hands upon dead men's souls ; while they also play the tyrant over the Divine law with their own interpretations, declarations, disputations, in order that there may be nothing wanting to the fulness of their power. Did not Pope Clement, in a bull, of which authentic copies are kept at Vienna and elsewhere, command the angels of heaven that the soul of a man dying on the way to Rome for indulgences, should be loosed out of purgatory and taken to perpetual bliss ; adding, It is our pleasure that he suffer no more of the pains of Hell ! He granted also to those signed with the cross, power, at their pleasure, to take three or four souls out of bale. From these canons and decrees we have learnt that the patrimony of Christ is kingdoms, camps, endowments, foundations, wealth, and large possessions ; that the priesthood in Christ and the Church is foremost rule and empire ; that temporal power and jurisdiction is the Sword of Christ ; that the rock of the Church is the Pope's person ; that bishops are not the servants of the Church only, but its lords ; and that the goods of the Church are not Gospel doctrine, zealous faith, contempt of the world, but tribute, tithes, oblations, collections, purple robes, mitres, gold, silver, jewels, plunder, cash. The power of the most high Pope is to wage war, dis-



solve leagues, loosen oaths, absolve from obedience, and make the house of prayer into a den of thieves. He may condemn to hell—no man asking him, *Why do you this?*—a third part of the souls of the faithful. But from the same laws we learn that the duty of bishops is not to preach the Word of God, but on payment of fees to confirm youth, confer orders, dedicate temples, baptise bells, consecrate altars and drinking-cups, bless clothes and images: if any have a wit above these works he leaves them to I know not what titular bishops, while he himself becomes a king's ambassador or queen's companion, excused thus by a sufficiently great and high cause from the service of God in His temple, because he is doing homage to the king at court. In this spirit, and without one sentence to modify his censure, Cornelius attacks that Canon law, according to the prescriptions of which, he says, men are compelled to live more strictly than according to the rules of the Gospel.

In the next chapter he speaks of Advocates<sup>1</sup>, whose calling is to pervert equity, and who entice people into the meshes of the law. From these he turns to Notaries<sup>2</sup>, not one of whom can frame an instrument from whence there may not be some cause of quarrel picked. The Study of the Law<sup>3</sup> he calls the craft by which the world is governed, and a way, if taken by wicked men, to honour and great influence. Then he attacks the Inquisition<sup>4</sup>, and his old foes the Dominicans, denouncing that

<sup>1</sup> Cap. xciii. pp. 304, 305.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. xciv. pp. 306, 308.

<sup>3</sup> Cap. xcvi. pp. 308-313.

<sup>4</sup> Cap. xcvi. pp. 308-313.

new rule of the masters in the Church which puts fire and fagot in the place of reason. Berengarius, he says, revolting to a most damnable heresy, was not only not put to death, but continued in his archdeaconship. But now, if a man slip into the least error, it is more than his life is worth, and he shall be thrown into the fire. He denounces also, as he has denounced before, the usurpation of Inquisitors, who have, by their own law, no power over suspected heresy, but only over heresy declared and manifest, yet seize even the innocent and hurry them to torture. Again, they may convert a punishment from penal into pecuniary, and they do take annual stipends for the term of their lives from persons whom they threaten on default to torment. When I was in Italy, says Agrippa, several Inquisitors in the Duchy of Milan persecuted many honest matrons, even of the noble class, and extorted great sums of money secretly out of those poor affrighted women; till, at length, their cheating being discovered, they were severely handled by the gentry, hardly escaping fire and sword. He refers also to the conduct of the Cologne theologians, who were led by the Inquisitor Hochstraten to signal defeat and the complete wreck of their reputation, in the ten years' war against John Reuchlin, about Hebrew studies. He recalls also his experience of the witch-seeking priests at Metz.

In all this argument there is no timid assertion of Agrippa's faith. He attacks boldly the undue pretension of the Pope. He denounces the Inquisition, protests against image-worship, exposes with a bold hand the



corruptions of the priesthood, decries the pomps and vanities of formal worship, and urges that every man should, for his instruction, have free access to the Word of God.

In his next three chapters he treats of the three sorts of Theology : scholastic, interpretative, and prophetic<sup>1</sup>. The Scholastic is that taught at the Sorbonne, a combination of Scripture texts with philosophical reasoning, a study of the Centaur class ; it produces sophisms, glosses, questions, problems—a vain logomachy of a class of theologians, more ready to discuss than to examine, who are called subtle and angelical, and seraphic and divine doctors. Preaching Christ through contention, these men produce labyrinths of heresy. No man is now accounted a good doctor who does not belong to some sect, and is not ready to bite and devour on its behalf, and glory in its name, as Thomist, Albertist, Scotist, Occamist. It is not enough for such great men to be called simply Christians, when they have to share that title with fishermen, wool-combers, cobblers, tailors, and poor ignorant women. Some rise above the Saviour and his apostles, and correct their erroneous opinions ; others, who do not scale such heights, construct stories of saints, adding some pious lies ; supply relics, and invent plausible or terrible tales, which they call warnings ; count prayers, weigh merits, measure ceremonies ; become hucksters of indulgences, distribute pardons, sell their good deeds, and, as beggars, feed upon the people's sins. They substitute for the Gospels and the Word of

<sup>1</sup> Caps. xcvi. xcvi. xcix. pp. 313-331.

God trifles and human traditions, preaching a new gospel, adulterating God's word, which they deliver, not for mercy's, but for money's, sake. They are not fishers of evil men to draw them to salvation, but hunters of good men into exile. Enough of them! Agrippa says; it is not safe to tell about them freely: when angered they conspire to drag their enemies before the Inquisition, or to get rid of them by secret poison; for they have this also among their mysteries, that to avoid scandal they poison any one of their own class, whose shame is threatened with a public punishment.

Interpretative Theology is not to be attained by such a path as this; the Divine Word needs an interpreter, but it has one interpreter alone, given by God to every man in answer to his prayers. Governing all that he says by this idea, Cornelius shows what are the six modes of interpretation commonly in use; and passes, next, to the Prophetical Theology, which is the gift of God to those who by a pure and holy aspiration strengthen their own spiritual nature, and become like-minded with Him. He speaks critically of the prophetic books of Scripture, names those referred to in the Bible but now lost, enforces the authority of Scripture, and thence passes to his hundredth chapter on the Word of God<sup>1</sup>.

You have heard, he says, how vain and uncertain is human learning, how hard it is for Truth to be found, even in Theology. The only way to the attainment of it is by following the Word of God; and he cites from Gregory a

<sup>1</sup> Cap. c. pp. 331-340.



passage which expresses in one sentence the spirit of the book he is concluding: "Whatever is not built upon God's Word may be as easily condemned as approved." It needs no scholarship to find God in the Bible; the people need not trouble themselves about its senses, moral, mystical, cosmological, typical, analogical, tropological, and allegorical; we need to search the Scriptures not by syllogism, but by faith in Jesus Christ, from God the Father, poured down through the Holy Spirit into our souls. As says Isaiah to the wise men of Chaldea, Ye are deceived in your cunning, ye are wearied in the multitude of your counsels: so is it with us. The grammarian, watchful against barbarism in speech, lives filthily; the poet would desire rather to halt in his life than in his metre; the dialectician would rather deny manifest truth than yield to an adversary the most insignificant conclusion. Musicians have their concord in their lyres alone. Philosophers inquire into creation, but seek not for the Creator. Theologians desire rather to understand God than to love Him. But in the Scripture there is nothing so difficult, so deep, so recondite, so sacred, that it shall not belong to all faithful Christians, or that it shall be entrusted to those sesquipedalian doctors, to be kept concealed by them; but all theology ought to be a common possession to the entire body of the faithful, enjoyed by each according to the measure of the gift of the Holy Spirit. None of Christ's sheep should be defrauded of their pasture.

In one more chapter, Agrippa, treating of the masters

of the Sciences and Arts<sup>1</sup>, compares the confusions of the worldly wise with the fulness of the knowledge that has been revealed in God's Word to the simple. Human learning had declined to its lowest level, he observes, when Christianity ran pure from its source, and rapidly spread. It is defiled now with the multitude of human counsels. Then it was that our Lord chose for his apostles, not rabbies, scribes, magistrates, priests, but rude men, almost wholly destitute of learning, ignorant men and asses.

So the work ends, with a Digression in Praise of the Ass<sup>2</sup>. Let no man, he asks, speak ill of him because he has called the apostles asses; let him first hear what are the mysteries of the ass. With Hebrew doctors it was the symbol of fortitude and strength, patience and clemency, and its influence was said to descend on it from the Sephiroth called Hochma, which is Wisdom. For the ass lives, as all must live who would be wise, content with scanty and poor fare, most tolerant of poverty, hunger, toil, ill-treatment, neglect; most patient when persecuted, most simple and poor in spirit, ignorant of the distinction between lettuce and thistles; of a harmless and chaste life, destitute of bile, at peace with all other creatures; patiently carrying all burdens on his back; while his reward is, that he is not troubled with lice, is seldom diseased, and works longer than any other animal in harness. There is a great deal more said in this vein. It is shown, too, how the ass is throughout honoured in Scripture, how in Old Testament law, when the first-born of all animals were

<sup>1</sup> Cap. ci. pp. 340-343.

<sup>2</sup> Cap. cii. pp. 343-347.



ordained for sacrifice, asses alone were exempt—asses and men. For a man a price might be paid, and a sheep substituted for an ass. The ass has of all animals the noblest place in the New Testament, and many things go to confirm this saying of the people, *The Ass carries Mysteries*. Let us, then, rather be asses than philosophers.

The peroration<sup>1</sup> urges, almost entirely in the words of Scripture, that men should aspire to become like-minded with God; and learning of Jesus, the true Master, be wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

This is the whole lesson of Cornelius Agrippa's book upon the Uncertainty and Vanity of Sciences and Arts. I have endeavoured accurately to represent its scope, its spirit, and all that seems to a biographer especially significant in its illustrative detail. The wide range of study shown in the whole work it was not possible to represent within the limits of this narrative. Agrippa had tried nearly every art that he found wanting: a Courtier in Austria, a Soldier in Italy, a Theologian at Dôle, a Lawyer at Metz, a Physician in Switzerland, an experimenter in optics and mechanics, a deeper searcher than perhaps any man of his age into the philosophy of the ancients; student of the Cabala, sworn possessor of the secrets of the alchemists, master of the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin languages, and, among modern tongues, not of his own German only, but also of French, Italian, Spanish, and English. He was not a reviler from without, but a satirist from within,

<sup>1</sup> Cap. cii. pp. 347-351.

of the uncertainties and vanities of the imperfect art and science of his day.

As has been seen, he used in this book all his knowledge in the interests of that great struggle, begun in his time, for the cleansing of filth out of the Old Church, and for the free concession of the Gospel to the people. He felt, too, as we cannot fail to see, that he was having his revenge upon the savage men, who, with their flinty bigotry, had pelted him and struck him on his upward flight, whose act it was that kept him fluttering among the clods with broken wing, while eyes and heart strained heavenward. Had but the way of his life led Agrippa to the scaffold! Had but the wing been stronger, the flight higher, and the end a death-wound in mid-air!



## CHAPTER X.

## ACCOUNTS FOR THE REST OF THE TIME SPENT BY CORNELIUS AT LYONS.

HOSPITABLE in his poverty, hiding his sorrow from acquaintances, revealing it with bitter jesting to his friends, while loving none of them the less, because he found much to complain of in the world about them, still Agrippa lived and strove through many other months at Lyons. One learned man who had been a guest sent him a little gift, by help of which he could relieve his eyes, dull of sight through his assiduity in studying by night and day<sup>1</sup>. We find that he corresponded still with distant friends, and grumbled at them pleasantly if they deprived him of the solace of their gossip in return<sup>2</sup>; that he responded as a kind friend to the letters of the young physician, John Paul, who had sent for the two gold pieces when detained at Langres, and provided him—when he failed at Langres, and went into Lorraine—with letters of introduction to some of the most influential of the people, whom he had himself known in those parts<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 45, Lib. iv. p. 864.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 57, Lib. iv.; also Ep. 59, and Ep. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 58, 67, 68, Lib. iv. pp. 878, 887.

He troubled himself cheerfully to answer abstruse questions, sent from afar, on matters of scholarship<sup>1</sup>. His book finished, he worked still at his inventions of machines of war, and at his architectural ideas; while he bore in the midst of his family the pinch of want, not without the most indefatigable effort to remove it, or abate the pain it gave.

Chiefly he looked for assistance to his friends at court, Jean Chapelain, one of the King's physicians, and the Bishop of Bazas. In the middle of September (1526), somebody having told him of an office at Lyons, in the gift of the queen-mother, that would shortly become vacant, the holder of it being on the point of death, Cornelius, who again had to write word that he was trifled with upon the subject of his salary, asked of both his friends their interest with the Queen to procure for him this other chance of a subsistence<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, however, of Chapelain, at court, spiteful inquiries were made by the Queen about Agrippa, and to all the good words of his helper she replied with so little kindness that it became Chapelain's duty to report faithfully his doubt whether, unless her temper changed, even the promise of a salary from her would not be withheld for the future<sup>3</sup>.

Chapelain's advice still was that Agrippa should act as in ignorance of all these doubts, and write to the Queen an account of the machines of war he had invented, and was

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 1, 2, 11, Lib. v. pp. 895-897, 902.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 46, 47, Lib. iv. pp. 864-865.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 48, Lib. iv. pp. 865, 866, and for what follows.



ready to present to the most Christian King, if she commanded him to do so. He was also, if he would take Chapelain's advice, to show that he had not been negligent of her wishes in her absence, by sending her the desired astrological judgments and calculations. He should send them by no means through Chapelain himself, but through the Bishop of Bazas. He was also to write to the Queen, professing his continual promptitude to obey all her commands, and say no more in condemnation of astrology. At the same time Doctor Chapelain wanted Agrippa's judgment upon the marvel of a great battle among crows in Apulia; and also upon the marvel of an army of locusts in Sicily, which had devoured everything except the vines, and then either cast itself into the sea or died because no food remained.

The judgment of Agrippa on the crows was that they usually signified bad monks, being rapacious, greedy scenters of corpses, and feeders upon the substance of dead men; being also black, ill-omened, and unclean. They might mean, too, a rebellious people; and the battle of the crows might be a figure of the civil war in Italy round about Naples, where priests, nobles, and people were destroying one another. The locusts were, of course, the Moors and Turks; the abstinence of the locusts from the vines indicating the abstinence of those devastators, as being Mussulmans, from wine. These barbarians might be destined to plague Europe, and part of them might succeed in occupying Sicily, while part would be driven back into the sea. He told another recent marvel in return for

these suggested ones, interpreting it very ingeniously ; but we may pass it by<sup>1</sup>.

As for the salary from the queen-mother, he had not received any part of it, and saw no hope whatever of receiving any. His book of Pyromachy, and the warlike machines and architectural contrivances, he reserved, he said, as a gift for King Francis, whenever he should come to Lyons, always supposing he himself remained alive at Lyons, or had not abandoned the place and the hope in it before King Francis came. He had been invited elsewhere when he entered the French service ; he had had good offers from Bourbon. The unjust wrath of the Queen, his own just grief, and the urgent need of a subsistence, might bring him to he knew not what extremity. To the Bishop of Bazas, Cornelius suggested that as he had once by his influence made the Queen well-wishing towards him, he should make her now well-doing ; and, above all, if his salary was ordered to be paid, let the payment come through Martin of Troyes, who could be trusted, as the Bullions could not, to pass money through their hands<sup>2</sup>.

The smallness of his offence—the expression of a desire that she would put his abilities to worthier use than the practice of astrology—as compared with the obstinacy of the Queen's wrath, was a puzzle to Agrippa. “Let her say what she means,” he tells his friend ; “if I am in fault, I am content to suffer. Perhaps there was some dog of the court at hand to give malignant meaning to

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 55, Lib. iv. pp. 873, 874.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 49, 50, Lib. iv. pp. 867, 868.



the letter that was shown her. But I know how difficult it is to make a dog's bed, because wherever he is going to lie down he twists round and round, so that it is impossible to know where we should place his pillow. So those court dogs, hounds that hunt down men of letters, who frisk at the heels of princes, twist round and round with their opinions, so that we do not know which way they mean to settle; surely, too, there is nothing so clean that they cannot defile it." The sending of his prognostics to the Queen, Agrippa thought, would only lead to more occasion of offence, "for they contain matter that she would be most pleased not to read; and I, as you know, am not able to flatter. Besides, on receipt of your former letter, I desisted from the task and threw it aside, rejoicing to be set free in any manner from these fortune-telling follies<sup>1</sup>."

A critical day came at last to the much troubled philosopher<sup>2</sup>. On the morning of the seventh of October he was walking in St. John's Church, when a man who was a stranger, but had good-will in his face, stopped him, and drawing him into a corner, asked him how matters stood with him at court; whether he had certain intelligence of any sort. Cornelius told the stranger what he supposed to be the state of his case, but the man then answered, "I serve in the office of Barguyn the treasurer, and as a friend I warn you not to be misled by any false

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 51, Lib. iv. pp. 868, 869.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 52, Lib. iv. pp. 869, 872, for what follows until the next reference.

suggestion, but to take thought for some better way of prospering. A very little while ago I saw your name struck off the pension-list."

Agrippa thanked his friendly counsellor, knew that he must be saying what was true, and became, as he says, after the event a prophet in his own affairs. He had not only trusted princes, but put faith in woman. Why had Chapelain never told him—or did Chapelain not know—that he was labouring to reap the wind, when he abandoned solid opportunities of prospering to wait upon the promise of his Queen, accepting certain loss for doubtful gain? "For my faith in your mistress," he writes to the doctor at court, "I am repaid with perfidy; not warned, but discharged furtively. Had I been servant to a merchant or a draper, or even to some peasant—man or woman—of the meanest class, no such master or mistress would have turned me off without a warning, even if I had been guilty of offence. But from this court I am thrust out secretly without blame and without fault, and in the mean time, nursed on a vain hope, and, led to renounce every good offer from elsewhere, am driven to the wreck of all my fortunes. I am destroyed thus by my honesty and the good faith I have kept with your Princess, and (may it please the gods!) this is in her an act of authority which would be called in any private person an act of perfidy and betrayal. I will not say this of the Queen herself, but of the court harpies who abuse her name and her authority, who prosper only by detraction, fraud, and sycophancy. This, my Chapelain, is the end of the



tragedy, that, being altogether destitute, I can sing with empty wallet in the presence of the robber, and shall henceforth dare to speak and write with increased boldness. . . . The Queen has renounced her part of the contract, and I am free of my oath of service, ready to accept any good fortune that may offer, and offend her further, if I must, by doing so."

It need hardly be said that the office in the Queen's gift which had become vacant at Lyons was filled up with another man<sup>1</sup>.

Cornelius sent letters to the Queen, expecting little fruit from them; but he was not without hope that if the Bishop of Bazas spoke to the King, Francis would be found more friendly than his mother, while he felt that he could really do good service to the crown, and, as a first-fruit, said that he was ready to produce a plan, thought out by his own wit, which would enable the King to increase considerably his revenue, not only without pressing upon his subjects, but even with advantage to the nation, and the glad consent of all the people. But if the King desired to have this information he must ask for it. And still, for the increase of his own revenues, the philosopher discovered no successful plan.

His bitterness against the courtiers he expressed of course, in these days, even more emphatically than he had expressed it in his book, written under the sting of their contempt. "Hear what rules I have prescribed for myself,"

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 53, Lib. iv. pp. 872, 873, and for what follows.

he wrote to Chapelain<sup>1</sup>, "if ever I am tempted to return to the court service : to make myself a proper courtier, I will flatter egregiously, be sparing of faith, profuse of speech, ambiguous in counsel, like the oracles of old ; but I will pursue gain, and prefer my own advantage above all things : I will cultivate no friendship save for money's sake ; I will be wise to myself, praise no man except through cunning, decry any man you please. I will thrust forth whom I can, that I may take what he is forced to leave, will place myself on half a dozen seats, and despise every one who offers me his hospitality but not his money, as a barren tree. I will have faith in no man's word, in no man's friendship ; I will take all things ill and brood on vengeance ; the Prince only I will watch and worship, but him I will flatter, I will agree with, I will infest, only through fear or greed of my own gain. You may admire me for that I have become so good a courtier only now, when I am liberated from the court. . . . The astrological judgments, as I before told you, I have not finished, and will not finish, until the Queen has replied to my letter, and herself required them of me. . . . But I should like you to tell me who my evil genius is by whom the Queen's mind is possessed, to the obliteration of her good-will, so recently expressed towards me : because I ought to cast him out by some religious exorcism, or appease him by some magical sacrifice, or fortify myself against him with barbarous names of the gods and

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 54, Lib. iv. pp. 873, 874.



cabalistic pentacles." Agrippa afterwards repeated sometimes his desire to know who was his enemy, but was told only that he was a man whose name was not worth mentioning<sup>1</sup>.

"All hail! my dearest Chapelain," Agrippa wrote, a few days afterwards, mocking his own misfortunes. "Blessed be the Lord, I am a rich man, if there be truth in fable. A man of consideration, long my friend, has brought me seeds of gold, and planted them over my furnace, within long-necked flasks, putting underneath a little fire, as of the sun's heat; and as hens brood over eggs, we keep the warmth up night and day, expecting forthwith to produce enormous golden chicks. If all be hatched we shall exceed Midas in wealth, or at least in length of ears, and I shall say a long farewell to those great Ninuses and Semiramises. A rich and prosperous farewell to you!—From Lyons, from your soon to be long-pursed or long-eared Agrippa. Oct. 21, 1526<sup>2</sup>."

There was as much faith to be put in the long-necked flask as in the court of France. His letters were often intercepted<sup>3</sup>, and he was still fed with promises, reported from the lips of Thomas Bullion, on the subject of the arrears of salary to which he was entitled<sup>4</sup>. He could not feed his family on hope, he said<sup>5</sup>. Moreover, he had penetrated to the bottom of a mystery<sup>6</sup>. The Queen's

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 3, Lib. v. p. 898; Ep. 5, Lib. v. p. 899.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 56, Lib. iv. pp. 877, 878.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 57, Lib. iv. p. 878.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 60, Lib. iv. p. 879.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 61, Lib. iv. p. 879.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. 62, Lib. iv. pp. 879-884, for what follows until the next reference.

anger always had appeared to him absurdly disproportioned to so simple an offence as the expression of an honest, loyal wish that the best use might be made of his services, and that he might not be compelled to waste time on a science in which he had little faith. That zeal on the part of a plain-spoken and faithful servant ought not to have produced against him a malicious anger. After pondering this matter one day, he dismissed it wearily, and went for relief, as usual, to his Bible. Therein he chanced to open on the history of Jezebel, at that passage where Ahab says of Micaiah, "I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil<sup>1</sup>." The words spoke to him as an oracle, for suddenly, and then for the first time, he recollected that in the letter shown to the Queen by the Seneschal, he wrote that Bourbon's nativity promised him again a year of victory and the defeat of the French armies. Unlucky prophet! he then said to himself; that is the beginning of this grief. Know now that the Queen rages because you touched her ulcer with that cautery. In that way you threw the gate open by which all the flatterers, and slanderers, and time-servers could come in and abuse you. So he himself describes his meditations. "I knew," he adds, "that Bourbon was an enemy, but I did not think he was so pestilent that one might even be poisoned by uttering his name. I remember now how a good mathematician and astrologer, Orontius of Paris, was vexed with a long imprisonment for prophesying what was true.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings, xxii. 8.



Certainly, if I had sent the rest of my prognostication I should have passed through the smoke into the fire. Because, like Balaam, I could not curse Bourbon, I am guilty already, marked as Bourbon's friend and the court's enemy. How far I am so, many of that duke's noble followers can testify, who, when I was leaving Friburg, tried to divert me, both by prayers and large promises, into his service. How I answered them and what I did, there are some captains to testify, cousins of mine, named von Eylens, who would have favoured Bourbon had I not caused them to come hither with the four thousand foot-soldiers under their command. I induced them to serve the King of France, and trusted my whole fortunes on the faith which has been kept neither with them nor me. Our men have been carried to slaughter: one of my relatives is lost, another seriously wounded, but neither pledges, promises, nor the usual public military contract, have secured for us what is our due. Had we served Bourbon we should have grown rich upon your spoil, and I, a soldier and a knight, should never have been basely used as the physician to your Queen. Your King in absence has forgotten and neglected me; your Queen, for candid speech, impatient of the truth, immoderate in vengeance, has spurned, repulsed, expelled me." Proceeding to pour out his heart to his friend, he speaks next of the flight of the King's followers, leaving him captive in the Duke of Bourbon's hands. They were braver men who followed Bourbon than the people who denounced as Bourbonist Cornelius Agrippa. These men had fled from their

King's enemies, and, their master being captive, the queen-mother Regent, had found shelter for themselves behind the woman's petticoats. From that post of advantage they had whispered scorn against Agrippa; and her sex is mutable, and she was herself one of a race that had already learnt to chastise merit, as there was cruel evidence, and recent. He was not bound to live under these adverse stars: trouble could sharpen wit, and many men had found despair the step to better fortune. "Hitherto I have fought in the ranks, now I will fight alone; armed cap-à-pie, you shall see me act more boldly, hear me speak more boldly. But you must forgive my wrath, for there is no animal created so infirm as never to break out into anger. I know your honesty, or I would not have written words like these. Be of good courage, and say no more to the Queen in my behalf, make no further attempt to appease her; our Seneschal may try this if he pleases, since he gave occasion to her fury, though, in truth, by no fault of his own. Take care never to address to me again as Counsellor, or Queen's Physician. I detest this title. I condemn all hope it ever raised in me. I renounce all fealty that I ever swore to her. She never more shall be mistress of mine (for already she has ceased to be so), but I have resolved to think of her as some atrocious and perfidious Jezebel, if she thus heeds rather dishonest words than honest deeds. Salute for me Jacques Lefevre (Faber), Cop, and Bode, patriarchs of literature and virtue, and all others who love you and me. I wish them all peace and good fortune:



the rest of the courtiers, may the gods confound ! I now hate princes and courts equally. Again farewell. Remembrance to you from my dearest wife, the most faithful companion of my fortune.—Lyons, Nov. 3, 1526.”

With his wife and children hungering around him, certainly Agrippa had fair reason to be angry. He would have been, as he suggests, no animal at all, had he not turned in wrath. A week afterwards he wrote a letter, addressed both to Chapelain and the Bishop of Bazas, telling them they had proved slow doctors in his case, and bidding them good-by, with counsel to forget him<sup>1</sup>. At about the same time he despatched a servant to one of his military cousins with this message : “ Now it is time, and there is fit occasion to avenge ourselves upon the perfidy of the Frenchmen, who have so shamefully deluded us. Do you, therefore, on sight of this, prepare at once for travel, and come straight to me, accompanying the bearer, for you must go with all speed to the Imperial camp, and present yourself to Bourbon. You will be a welcome messenger to him. The rest I will tell you when you come. Infinite greetings, both in my name and my wife’s, to Captain Claudius, Otto, John and Francis your brothers-in-law, and my cousins.—From Montlai, Lyons<sup>2</sup>.”

At the time when he had come to the determination indicated by this letter, he was indebted to a woman’s way of doing business for the means of forcing from between the fingers of the treasurer one sum of money

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 64, Lib. iv. p. 885.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 65, Lib. iv. p. 885.

that was due to him. A quick-witted woman, Madame Salle, who was a true friend to Agrippa and his family, had called in a determined mood on Thomas Bullion, for advice had been received that a donation had been sent for Agrippa through the royal treasurers from certain friends at court. Bullion dealt, as usual, in hopes and possibilities, fingering, at the same time—incautious man!—with an official air, his paper of instructions. Madame Salle pounced upon it suddenly, and was carrying it off in triumph to her friend, when the enemy recovered from his consternation. The precise instructions became known, denial of them was impossible, and Bullion was required imperatively to obey them to the letter. He called upon Agrippa, angry at the woman's trick that had been played him, asked for his official papers, and promised to pay in a few days Agrippa's money. Promises not being valued, he then added threats that he would never pay, that he would take care not a sous came ever to Agrippa's hands, if he did not at once restore the document. "You have deceived me with so many falsehoods," said Agrippa, "that I shall keep these papers as evidence of what you have to pay, till I am paid. I can use it before a judge; and if I must, I will despatch it to the Queen, that she may know where to look for a dishonest treasurer." After a four-days' struggle the money was produced; but there was produced with it, under the name of receipt, a long document supplied from the court, beset with legal traps, to which Bullion desired Cornelius to sign his name before two notaries. Cornelius not only refused, but carried



about with him the court scheme of a receipt, showing it to lawyers and others, until Bullion was so much resisted by the judgment of all men of his own class in Lyons, that at a late hour of the night he withdrew his unusual demand, and paid the money, taking no more than the usual form of quittance in return. This happened on the fourteenth of November, and next day report of it was made in a letter to the Bishop of Bazas<sup>1</sup>; but this was crossed by a very stiff note from the Bishop, who had been offended by the tone of the letter in which Agrippa had sent farewells to his Reverence and Doctor Chapelain. Yet there was no quarrel, for Agrippa went on worrying his friends in his own affectionate, impulsive way, and attacked Chapelain, especially by confiding to him, as a courtier, his disgust at courts. Chapelain had not written for some days. "I have been reading in the Gospel," said Agrippa, "about a certain rich man who was in hell, and wanted to send messages to his friends; and it seems to me that you, being at court, must be in hell, a place from which it is taught us that no messages may come." Thus started, he proceeds in a letter of considerable length to carry out minutely a comparison between the French court and the poet's Tartarus. His jest ends with advice to his friend to come up and join him in the upper regions, and for some time, when writing to a friend at court, we find him in his poverty pleasantly dating "from the upper air." "Do not condemn me," he pleads, at the end of the letter just described—"do

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 66, Lib. iv. p. 886.

not condemn me for the vexed life that I lead. There are gods at whose name the very gates of your Inferno tremble, and by them I shall be vindicated. There are friends unknown in your dark regions who will be my helpers; and I have strength besides of which the dwellers in your world know nothing<sup>1</sup>."

In the mean time, Agrippa had invented a machine for propelling fire-balls swiftly and easily at a cheap cost<sup>2</sup>, and he had not abandoned the idea that King Francis might be induced to behave towards him better than his mother. He reserved, therefore, his book on Pyromachy for the king, but when he heard from the Seneschal that, as he expressed it, Pluto was only to be approached through Proserpine, he wrote to Chapelain, "Promise nothing as to that work, for I have changed all my counsel."

The Bishop of Bazas, not having written for some weeks, and the last letter from the Bishop having expressed annoyance, Cornelius teased him again by telling him that he was justifying his complaint by silence and by touchiness. He told him again, that he wanted nothing more of him and Chapelain but the debts payable to friendship—namely, letters; and that if they were not paid he thereby declared war against them both. He had shown himself, indeed, but a bad fighter in their hen-roost, but no French cock—he was playing on the Latin word for cocks and Frenchmen—was his master. If need were, he would pelt them both with letters till he

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 72, Lib. iv. pp. 889-892.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 68, Lib. iv. p. 887.



buried them under the heap, and then they should be made to sing for him at all hours of the day, or else he would eat them on his plates and dishes. "You must suffer me to joke," he adds, "for you know I have lost all my bile by pouring it out over Tartarus<sup>1</sup>."

Chapelain having suggested a new intercessor at court in the Archbishop of Bourges, Agrippa said that he might tell the case to him, and show all the letters if he pleased, except the Tartarean one. If the Archbishop could help him, it was well<sup>2</sup>. But Chapelain told Agrippa that it would be better for him to write to the Archbishop himself than that he should show the letters, in all of which there was a trace of bitterness. The King also, it was said, would in a short time be at Lyons<sup>3</sup>.

Weeks elapsed, and by the fifth of February, in the next year, there was an end of all rumour of the King's coming to Lyons<sup>4</sup>. The man of whom I wrote to you, he tells his friend—namely, the man who informed him in St. John's Church that his name had been secretly erased from the Queen's list of pensioners—"lifted me out of darkness into upper light. If you could at an earlier time have made known to me what he disclosed, you would have done me a great service." He means to assert himself boldly against the Queen. "Lest any one may suppose me guilty of some secret crime," he says, "by which I was made unworthy of your royal court, and by reason

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 74, Lib. iv. pp. 892-893.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 75, Lib. iv. p. 893.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 76, Lib. iv. p. 894.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 3, Lib. v. pp. 897, 898, and for what follows.

of which I have been thus, while absent, clandestinely cast off:—for although no definite charge is made against me, yet by the ejection I seem to be accused and judged before all men, and, as warns the proverb, what has not been said is made the worst of:—I myself intend to publish the whole matter. For while I hold it to be the duty of a generous mind to refuse to endure calumny or insult, and to make the innocence of its life manifest to all, I see no better way of doing that in this instance than by publishing those letters of mine, which will suffice to represent this tragedy in every street and market square, and cause that there shall be no place hereafter in which its noble tale shall not be known. Let who will be displeased. I will incur the implacable wrath and endless hate of all the courtiers and of your King and Princess too, and will not care a straw when once the truth is public. However the matter end, it is as dangerous for me to keep silence as to speak. I am ready to bear anything rather than throw down my fair fame, and take upon myself a load of infamy. When, as I hope soon will be the case, I have steered into another safer harbour, your Semiramis shall know what manner of man she has rejected. I understand that certain long letters of mine addressed to you and to the Bishop of Bazas have been intercepted. Possibly there have been others which did not reach you; but as the proverb says that certain animals all at last come together in the tanpit, so perhaps these will be found to come together in the press.” From this intention Chapelain gravely and kindly sought to turn his



friend<sup>1</sup>. The letters, however, did, after a few years, come together in the press, and in this narrative their tale is told again.

At this time Cornelius was in communication with the Duke of Bourbon, and the next letter he caused to be published is one in which he addressed himself as a man cheerfully at work on his behalf to that commander. It was dated on the twenty-sixth of February, 1527. A month later, on the thirtieth of March, Cornelius again wrote in reply to letters brought him by a messenger from Bourbon. Bourbon promised him fairly, and desired help from his counsel. In the last month of the preceding year, King Francis had procured the support in France of what was termed an Assembly of Notables, who justified their sovereign's desire to break the treaty to which he had sworn, and which had been the price of his own liberty. This act of perfidy renewed the war, and of course helped to turn the current of Agrippa's sympathy from France towards the Emperor and those who fought with him. Against the Emperor there was a great league formed. The first thought of Bourbon next year, was both to strike a blow that should startle Europe, and to find the richest plunder for the payment of his troops, by an attack on the Pope in his own city. He proposed to besiege and capture Rome. Upon this subject he had asked from Agrippa counsel, and no doubt also prognostications. "Do not be disturbed," replied Agrippa, "by the power of those enemies who depend not upon their

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 5, Lib. v. p. 899.

own strength, but upon mutual support in their weakness, for already fate declares their coming ruin. You will soon see how those proud walls will fall together almost at the first attack. Go forward, then, bold Prince, whom the Fates make the leader to so great a victory. Delay no more. Continue fearlessly in what you have begun, and prosperously. Advance in strength, fight steadfastly; you have armed bands of the best chosen troops, favour of Heaven is on your side, God will favour a just war; fear nothing, for glorious is the triumph that is near<sup>1</sup>." I do not know whether a contrary advice would have arrested or delayed the siege of Rome. Certain it is that the counsel given in this letter describes the course that was pursued. On the last day but one in March, Cornelius wrote his answer to Bourbon, and despatched it by the Duke's messenger from Lyons. On the fifth of May, Rome was stormed and taken by the Duke of Bourbon's troops, but one thing happened that Cornelius had not foreseen—the Duke himself was killed in the assault. The pride of the Pope was humbled, the French court was alarmed, but Agrippa lost again his hope of better days, and it was at about that time—during Lent<sup>2</sup>—that his wife made him the father of another son.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 6, Lib. v. p. 900.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 7, Lib. v. p. 900.



## CHAPTER XL

## FROM LYONS TO ANTWERP.

ABANDONING all question about money due to him, Agrippa became once more a petitioner through his court friends. He desired but one more thing in France, formal license to quit the queen-mother's service, with letters of safe-conduct into another land<sup>1</sup>. That desire granted, he should be as happy as, were the fable true, Pope Gregory made Trajan, when he removed him out of hell and gave him a seat among the angels. Such was his prayer on the seventeenth of July, 1527. On the twelfth of August he was still urging the same request<sup>2</sup>. On the twenty-first of September it had not been granted. Whither he was to go when he left France he did not know certainly; he only knew that he must leave. He was then living with his family as a guest in the episcopal residence attached to the monastery of the Austin Friars<sup>3</sup>. He was still finding occasion to complain that letters addressed to him were intercepted<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. v. p. 901.<sup>3</sup> Ep. 12, Lib. v. p. 903.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 10, Lib. v. p. 902.<sup>4</sup> Ep. 13, Lib. v. p. 903.

But at about this time, among the letters not lost on the way, came one from an Italian monk of the order of St. Augustine, resident at Antwerp, Father Aurelius of Aquapendente, whom Cornelius appears to have known in Italy, and who was now desirous of his closest friendship. For Aurelius had amused himself with the study of mysteries, and when by chance a written copy of Agrippa's books upon Occult Philosophy came into his hand, he regarded it as a masterpiece, and betook himself immediately to the source whence they had sprung. Those manuscripts of the Occult Philosophy which were in circulation were in many respects defective, and of the third book there was to be found in them only an epitome<sup>1</sup>. Having learnt what was Agrippa's position at the court of France, Aurelius invited him to Antwerp; one of his friends there living testified to the welcome that might safely be promised, and to the number of friends he would find active to promote his interests<sup>2</sup>. There was also at Antwerp another prosperous Italian, Augustine Furnario, a citizen of Genoa, disposed cordially towards Cornelius, and prompt in offer on behalf of Antwerp and himself<sup>3</sup>.

These cordial offers, and the prospect of obtaining at the age of forty-one the patroness whom he had sought in his youth, Margaret of Austria, Regent in the Netherlands, caused Agrippa to determine as to the next step

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 14, Lib. v. pp. 904, 905.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 15, Lib. v. p. 905.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 15, Lib. v. p. 906.



he should take. At Christmas he would quit Lyons, to which place he had so long been bound by the Queen's perfidy, and proceed with his family and all his household goods to Paris, travelling by the Loire to Briare, whence he understood that it was only a day's journey to the other river that would carry him to Paris<sup>1</sup>. (It is from Briare that a canal now departs which joins the Loire and Seine.) He would travel, he told his Antwerp friends, as fast as winter weather would permit, but the road was difficult, the times were dangerous, his children were young, and his means being exhausted, it was only by the generosity of the Genoese citizen, Furnario, that he was enabled to meet the expenses of the journey<sup>2</sup>.

Of his Occult Philosophy he was at this time writing to Father Aurelius, in answer to inquiries, and the purport of his information was that such philosophy consisted in a study of God through his works, and that the key to the Occult Philosophy was Intelligence, for the understanding of high things gives power to man, when he is lifted by it to nearer communion with God, and dying to the flesh has his life hidden in Christ. So it was with the apostle who, whether in the flesh or out of the flesh he knew not, was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words. It is a substantial faith in that doctrine of Aspiration which had guided him in youth that abides by him in his maturity; this, he informs Aurelius, is the key to his philosophy. "But I warn you," he adds, "not to be deceived herein concerning me,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 17, Lib. v. p. 907.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 18, Lib. v. p. 908.

or think that I myself have attained any divine heights. I have been baptised a soldier in human blood, have almost always been attached to courts, am now bound by a tie of the flesh to a most dear wife, am exposed, an unstable man, to all the blasts of fortune, am wholly turned aside by the world, the flesh, and household cares, and have not sought after those heavenly gifts. But I wish to be accepted as a guide who, himself standing at all times outside the gates, shows other men where they should enter<sup>1</sup>."

Busy throughout November with the packing and the other preparations for departure, on the fourth of December Cornelius and his wife had everything ready. His models and inventions, with a new scheme for a bridge, he had sent to the citizen of Genoa by whose friendly hand he was to be assisted out of France<sup>2</sup>. He had also forwarded his whole library by way of Lorraine, addressed to Furnario, for safe keeping until he rejoined it<sup>3</sup>. On the sixth the pilgrimage began, license having been obtained for the party of ten persons to pass to Paris. The ten persons were Cornelius Agrippa himself, aged forty-one; his wife, aged twenty-four, and delicate in health—she was always referred to by Chaplain, who liked her heartily, as a girl, and the quality in her upon which he seemed to dwell most was her modest bearing;—his boy Aymon, aged about fourteen; three boys, of whom the eldest was not four years old, the

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. v. pp. 908-910.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 20, Lib. v. p. 910.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. v. p. 912.



youngest a baby of eight months, his wife's maid, two young servants, and a boy as runner. With these he had to take his household goods in many packages<sup>1</sup>. They had a clear sky and the mildest winter air to favour them, so that they reached Paris in fifteen days<sup>2</sup>, that is to say, on the twentieth of December<sup>3</sup>. They had landed at Briare on the fifteenth, but as Agrippa did not find there waiting a learned friend residing in those parts to whom he had written, and whom he desired to meet, the travellers went on to Gien, and slept there at the inn of the Three Kings. On the day following they crossed to Montargis for the other water way, and Agrippa wrote to his friend that they would wait for him two or three days in that town, at the Golden Winepress in the Rue St. Martin, but that it would not be possible for them to tarry longer<sup>4</sup>. So they reached Paris on the twentieth, and put up at the sign of St. Barbara, in the street called La Harpe<sup>5</sup>. He expected to be detained in Paris a few days<sup>6</sup>.

He had his safe-conduct, or passport, out of France to wait for. Very soon he obtained the distressing knowledge that he was to be still further tortured by delay. The little fund that was to take the family to Antwerp, went to pay their lodgings at the Paris inn. The desire of Agrippa to leave France excited a desire in the queen-mother, or in those about her, to detain him. His request for a safe-conduct into the Netherlands was

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 48, Lib. x. p. 928.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. v. p. 912.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 43, Lib. v. p. 928.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 27, Lib. x. p. 918.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. v. p. 910.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. v. p. 912.

the request of leave to pass over to the public enemy. The sack of Rome and capture of the Pope, who was then held by the Emperor imprisoned in the Castle of St. Angelo, had not alarmed King Francis only, it strengthened the confederacy between France and England, and led to the devising of a vigorous attack upon the Netherlands as the most ready way of offering a check to the Emperor's ambition. This counsel was changed. It was thought better to press the war in Italy, and reasonable offers of accommodation made by Charles having been rejected, in the month of January, 1528, heralds, who had been despatched at about the time when Agrippa brought his family to Paris, made the declaration of war to the Emperor. The field of the great struggle was, as usual, Italy; but active hostilities, on a small scale, broke out between France and the Netherlands, and raised on each side of the boundary-line between those countries a tumult of disorder. Between Paris and Antwerp much of the ground soon came to be overrun by military bands and hordes of plunderers. The travellers, it was then found, required not only the usual official passport, but also a military pass from the Duke of Vendôme, and letters of safe-conduct from Margaret at Brussels.

Chapelain, who was at St. Germain, wrote to Agrippa, ten days after his arrival in Paris, that he had been unable to attend to his friend's affairs, the King and his mother having both been out of health and needing his professional attendance. The Seneschal of Lyons and some other



friends would shortly be in town, and it appeared to him that it would be most easy—considering the value of Agrippa's recondite inventions—for them all to recover the Queen's grace towards him. "Tell me," he said, "a way of restoring obliterated writing, that I may see who is the owner of that Greek book so necessary to physicians which is in my keeping, and restore it to him." Agrippa sent the desired recipe, and warmly repudiated any intention of humbling himself to beseeching more of the Queen than license to depart out of her service and safe-conduct to the Netherlands, with a reasonable sum, if she would pay what it was her duty to pay, for travelling expenses. So he wrote when he had been only eleven days at Paris, and had spent already nearly twenty gold crowns on the cost of maintaining his household at the Harp-street inn<sup>1</sup>. Sixteen days later he was still detained, receiving no letters of dimission, but in place of them new promises of favour, by which he was not to be deceived<sup>2</sup>. On the twenty-first of January letters of dimission having been promised by the queen-mother's Chancellor, but not produced, Agrippa, with his little ones about him, was grown painfully impatient of the expenses of the tavern. He had written to the Queen, and had received no answer<sup>3</sup>. While he was suffering under the displeasure of the French court because he was no juggler, and was left with salary unpaid, it did not soften his wrath to see that a magician, who was said to have power over demons, was

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 23, Lib. v. p. 911.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. v. p. 912.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. v. p. 913.

being brought at considerable cost from Germany, that as Jannes and Mambres resisted Moses he might resist Cæsar. "You see," he said, "where they put their faith who seek to subject the elements, nature, Providence, God, to the command of one magician, saying as Saul, when the Lord answered him not, said to the witch, I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit. This is done by the most Christian king and by his mother; bishops and cardinals connive and suffer the counsels of the Father of Lies to be rewarded from the sacred treasures of the Church. What profit had the mighty ones of eld from the diviners who deluded them with promises of happy fortune? Did they not all come to the dust, and perish miserably in their sins? Those impious follies lead to ruin, and make none more miserable than the men who trust them most. I do not deny that there are arts, wise thoughts, by which, without offence to God, injury to faith or religion, kingdoms may be defended, counsel tested, wealth increased, enemies overcome, the good-will of mankind conciliated, sicknesses be combated, health preserved, life prolonged, the vigour of youth restored: there are also holy intercessions, public supplications, private prayers of good men, by which not only the Divine wrath may be averted, but the Divine blessing obtained. But if there is beyond this any art of prescience, or of working miracles, certainly to these triflers and slaves to the demons it remains unknown. By the grave counsels of wise men, who have sought to be filled with the spirit of God, states may be served, not by the follies which pro-



duced the ruin of the greatest empire in the world." Agrippa showed how a verse of Jeremiah that expressed this in Latin (*Cecidit corona nostra, vae quia peccavimus*), yielded numerals that gave the date of the capture of King Francis at the battle of Pavia. "In vain the watchman wakes, except the Lord be keeper of the city. There is only one way of averting evil, by the change of perfidy and malice into repentance and charity, then it may be to any man against whom judgment has been decreed, as it was with Ahab, when the Word of the Lord came, saying, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? Because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days." In that spirit Agrippa was a prophet cast out by the court of France<sup>1</sup>. Not because he was a magician, but because he was a magician in the best instead of the worst sense—philosopher, not charlatan—he was despised among the courtiers; and here we see how, as the philosopher was passing out of France, the charlatan was passing in; one largely persecuted, and the other largely paid.

The court was at Paris when Cornelius arrived there with his family; he went immediately to his late mistress, and might have had his letter of dimission with no more than a few hours' delay. The Queen at first displayed wrath at his wish to leave her, then flattered him with verbal inducements to remain; finally promised letters of safe-conduct, but requested him to wait a little time. Soon afterwards she went to St. Germain, and for three

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 26; Lib. v. pp. 913-917, for the preceding.

months the little family of travellers was compelled to remain at the inn in Harp-street, while the means of safe departure were withheld, and various attempts were made to induce Cornelius to change his resolution. At the end of the three months he was still uncertain when he might be able to proceed, for he was then not only without the necessary papers, but without the necessary money for the journey. The innkeeper at Paris had received the greater part of that which was to have been spent upon the road between Paris and Antwerp; and although Agrippa, having marketable knowledge, did, after a little time, find means to live upon it in the French capital, yet his earnings sufficed only to pay the tavern bill, and there was little or no prospect of his being able to lay by a fund to meet the costs of travel<sup>1</sup>. In the mean time, he was meeting with old friends, forming new friendships, learning and seeing many things of which he had been ignorant before; that was the only consolation he had in his impatience at the hindrance offered to his attainment of the rest from care that Antwerp seemed to him to offer<sup>2</sup>. His mind during this time of detention seems to have been possessed firmly with the belief that he had only to reach Antwerp to be at peace.

In these perplexities Agrippa saw no way of leaving Paris unless he could borrow, and no hope of borrowing upon his own security. If any known merchant of Antwerp would be answerable for repayment through him of the loan and interest after Agrippa should have

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 27, Lib. v. pp. 917, 918.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 28, Lib. v. p. 919.



reached that city, the money-lenders would enable him to move. Father Aurelius was advised with, and requested to procure for him, if possible, the desired guarantee. He was also to obtain for him the passport from the Princess Margaret, without which it would not be possible to complete safely the journey of the father, the young mother, and the little ones, among the drawn swords of the soldiers, and through the tumult of a people eager to shed blood. Margaret's safe-conduct was to be sent to a friend at Cambray, from whom Agrippa could receive it when he had reached Peronne<sup>1</sup>. The military safe-conduct requisite to be obtained in Paris, was an order from the Duke of Vendôme to the captains engaged in the border war to furnish him with an escort of soldiers at his own expense, and conduct him, together with his family—ten persons in all—safely across the ground they occupied<sup>2</sup>. Some of Agrippa's friends having obtained the written form of the desired passport, and being in favour with the Duke, offered to procure his signature. But he, when he saw or heard Cornelius Agrippa's name, fell into sudden wrath, and tore the paper across, saying that he would never sign anything in favour of a fortune-teller. The Duke of Vendôme had been the only prince of the blood royal left in France after the battle of Pavia, and he would have been made Regent by the Parisians, to the exclusion of the queen-mother, if he had not wisely supported her authority, and acted under her only as President of the Council. Agrippa's own re-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 29, Lib. v. pp. 919, 920.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 43, Lib. v. p. 927.

sentment at this check to his desire was lessened by his contempt for a prince whom he regarded as preposterously devout and dull of wit, with comprehension of but little beyond cups and platters. He supposed Treasurer Barguyn, or some unkind courtier, to have been at the Prince's ear, but ascribed all in the first place to the queen-mother, who, having abused his genius by desiring him to waste it upon astrological inanities, added to all the other loss she brought upon him for resisting her desires, the decoration of him with these titles of conjurer or fortune-teller<sup>1</sup>. When the military pass was thus refused him—on the thirtieth of March—Agrippa was in the fourth month of his durance at the tavern. He had sent his baggage on already to Antwerp, and on the very next day received from Aurelius at Antwerp a letter, which was regarded favourably by the Paris money-lenders. He was at that time entirely without money, and was ready to give every personal security a lender might require, whenever on the faith of Antwerp letters he obtained the necessary loan. That at Antwerp he should be unable to repay, seems never to have occurred to him as possible. Antwerp had become to him and his wife the haven towards which they strained all their desires; there they were at last to prosper and to be at rest<sup>2</sup>.

At this time of his sore distress, one of Agrippa's friends—who is not named—deserted him, and was cast out of his friendship in a letter written after the manner of the form of excommunication with which an offender

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 30, Lib. v. p. 920.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 31, Lib. v. p. 921.



is expelled out of the Church<sup>1</sup>. It is the only instance known of such a quarrel in the whole course of Agrippa's life. Friends that he made he kept; if he teased or scolded them sometimes, if sometimes, when sorely pinched, he became petulant, they understood and loved him as he loved them; no interruption of good-will was the result. Chapelain had a letter now and then that must have worried him, but affectionate and gentle words usually followed in the next. Agrippa had, in fact, two qualities that go far to make friendship stable—a great tenderness of disposition, and a habit—dangerous in some other respects—of giving free expression to his thoughts.

One difficulty in the position of Agrippa while detained at Paris, arose from the fact that although he had the solace of some learned friends, he was avoided on the whole by the Parisians as a man known to be passing over to the enemy. By the sixteenth of April he had received the necessary papers from the Queen Louisa, and waited only for such as were to be signed by the Duke of Vendôme, and for those of Margaret. He waited also for the power of borrowing sufficient money<sup>2</sup>. Wanting this, he became destitute and desperate<sup>3</sup>. A letter, sent by him to the Duke of Vendôme, was opened by his private secretary and suppressed, because, it was said, nobody dared aid in soliciting again that which had been so angrily refused<sup>4</sup>. Chapelain came to the rescue<sup>5</sup>, but in vain. The queen-mother complained that

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 32, Lib. v. p. 921.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 33, Lib. v. p. 922.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 34, Lib. v. p. 923.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 35, Lib. v. pp. 923, 924.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 36, Lib. v. p. 924.

Cornelius had spoken imprudently about her. So much he confessed; but he wished her no ill, he said—nothing worse than long life, that would enable her to see who were false friends, who agreed with her when present and abused her when absent: what, after all, was the difference in value between fraudulent dissimulation and the free tongue of plain truth<sup>1</sup>.

When May began, Agrippa saw no hope of travelling till May was at an end. To the other difficulties there were added rumours of new risings in Flanders and Brabant. His friends all warned him against the exposure of his wife and his young family to the mercies of plunderers, who cared little for royal passes. He was admonished to wait for a lull in the quarrel, which was then being expected; there were even fresh endeavours made to win him back to service in the court of France. He explained his position to Furnario, and requested him to send instructions, addressed to the care of Pierre Billardy, merchant of Paris, living in Rue St. Denis, near the church of the Innocents. His wife sent all good wishes, and added the expression of her eagerness to see their friend, and to migrate to Antwerp, where the Fates promised a rest<sup>2</sup>.

Some members of Agrippa's family, who have not yet been named, travelled with him from Lyons, and resided with him at the inn in Harp-street: these were his pet dogs. There was a young family attached to one of them. A learned friend, who had access to an influential

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 37, Lib. v. pp. 924, 925.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 38, Lib. v. pp. 925, 926.



courtier, M. Nicolas, seems to have been bribed with a pup: he wrote word, that without wishing to dictate, he would prefer a male<sup>1</sup>; and afterwards wrote that M. Nicolas, who had intended to get the necessary signature to a form of pass supplied by Cornelius, had dropped the form and lost it, as he said: also, that it was quite wise that the male pup should be allowed to stay a little longer by its mother<sup>2</sup>. Soon afterwards, Agrippa was invited to meet at a supper-party this important M. Nicolas<sup>3</sup>, but excused himself because his heart turned from the importunities by which he seemed to be now doomed to support his household, as if they were made the substitute for honest labour<sup>4</sup>. On the sixth of May, Chapelain wrote to him that what he wanted was already prepared. He positively had letters of safe-conduct, signed even by the King, made out for ten persons, during six months following the twenty-fifth of February. The one document needed was the instruction to the military captains from the Duke, and even these would of course leave them, with what military escort they could afford to maintain, to take their own chance against actual banditti<sup>5</sup>.

Among the learned friends made by Agrippa while in Paris, M. Fine, or Orontius, is not to be forgotten. He was a mathematician, who, like Agrippa, had a great taste for mechanical inventions. He also, in the course of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 39, Lib. v. p. 926.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. v. p. 926.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 41, Lib. v. p. 927.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 42, Lib. v. p. 927.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 43, Lib. v. pp. 927, 928.

his life, suffered imprisonment for having discovered bad omens for France among the stars. He earned wide fame as a geographer, was married and had a family, with which Agrippa's wife made herself intimate. We find that when Agrippa writes to M. Fine, his wife sends in the note kind greetings to Madame Fine and her daughters<sup>1</sup>. Cornelius and his whole household remained in good health, though he and his wife were almost laid up with grief at their ruinous detention. Much money was owing from the court, of which they did not hope to receive a coin; whatever was earned, was spent in payment of the tavern bill. "Armed with wit and pen," Agrippa wrote, "I fight at the paper, and that is my only solace here<sup>2</sup>."

His trouble was not at the worst. In the middle of June, when he had nearly completed his sixth month in Paris, news came of his library that had been sent on from Lyons to Antwerp, and of his other luggage that had been more lately forwarded from Paris. All was detained on the frontier. French property was proscribed in Flanders, and unless Agrippa could prove that he was detained in France against his will, and had left the queen-mother's service before war broke out, his books and household goods were to be confiscated. He wrote to Chapelain on this, and added to his note, "My lamenting wife salutes you, and prays that you will have

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 44, Lib. v. p. 928. This is the Orontius who refused to meet Cardan. *Life of Jerome Cardan* (1854), vol. ii. pp. 96-98.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 45, Lib. v. p. 929.



pity on our lot, and help us. From our tavern, June 14, 1528<sup>1</sup>."

When Father Aurelius, at Antwerp, received news of this climax of sorrow, he bestirred himself, and on the second of July sent word<sup>2</sup> that he was seeking to provide a travelling fund, and hoped that a remittance would come to his friend's hand even sooner than the letter he was writing. The case remained, however, nearly in the same state for another fortnight. As for the Duke of Vendôme, he refused always to admit the scholar to his presence<sup>3</sup>; and Agrippa then, entrusting to William Forbot, his wife's relation, the protection of his family till he returned, himself took horse and crossed the frontier, to seek personally the help without which Antwerp never could be reached by his wife and children.

He arrived there on the twenty-third of July<sup>4</sup>, to find Father Aurelius absent, none knowing whither he was gone<sup>5</sup>. During a whole month Cornelius searched Antwerp for his friends. Both Aurelius and Augustine Furnario were absent; other friends he found, none eager on his behalf. At the end of a month news came from Aurelius, not of the most cheering, although of a friendly character<sup>6</sup>. On the same day, a letter arrived with tidings from the feeble little household waiting and depending on his efforts, in their desolate inn-lodging at Paris. The mother had fallen sick, her kinsman wrote. "Alas!" he

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 46, Lib. v. pp. 929, 930.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 47, Lib. v. p. 930.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 50, Lib. v. p. 931.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 51, Lib. v. p. 932.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 53, Lib. v. p. 932.

<sup>6</sup> Ep. 54, Lib. v. p. 933.

replied<sup>1</sup>, "what do you announce, my dearest cousin? My dearest wife labouring under so perilous a disease, and she with child, and I absent, who had scarcely been able at great risk of my life to depart alone, that at last I might find means to bring into safety her who is to me my only soul, my spirit, my wit, my salvation, my life? Ah me, how wretchedly this die has fallen! I am here now in wretched agony. My wife is at Paris, miserably perishing, and I cannot come near her with any solace; my children are in tears, the whole family mourn, and this sword passes through her soul. Oh that I only could bear the hurt and she be safe! What shall I do? Whither shall I turn? Whom shall I implore? Except yourself I have here no one. I know that she who is present presses heavily upon you, and that I absent am obliged to be burdensome to you in letters: but I ask forgiveness, for I have none other to whom I may be burdensome; in you alone is my whole hope, and you will heed my prayers as I heed you and put faith in you. Spare not cost, spare not attention; call any physicians, so that they be the best, and let my wife recover. In thus doing you will equally help me and bind us all to you for ever. Farewell, and tell me everything without delay. Written with haste, at Antwerp, August 24, 1528."

She did recover, gradually, and the fortunes of Cornelius recovered with her. Augustine Furnario returned in August to Antwerp, and was helpful<sup>2</sup>. The first fruit

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 55, Lib. v. p. 933.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 56, Lib. v. p. 934.



of Agrippa's efforts to obtain money enough for the conveyance of his family from Paris had been eight crowns and a half, forwarded to his kinsman by Michael de Moneglia. In October, however, he was able to send sixty crowns<sup>1</sup>, with a letter, begging that his friend would at once add, from his own resources, what more money was necessary, which he would repay in good faith, and never ask again for a like favour. If he would do that, they were saved, but without such aid, they must despair again<sup>2</sup>. Forbot replied to Agrippa that his wife had recovered slowly, and was only now able to undertake the difficulties of the journey; but that she was able now, and therefore that they would set out<sup>3</sup>. It will be seen that Agrippa set aside the difficulty raised by the Duke of Vendôme, by travelling alone, without his military pass and at his own peril, across the disturbed frontier. Afterwards, when the person asking leave to take an escort for himself and his companions was not Cornelius Agrippa but William Forbot, there was no obstacle to conquer. In safety, therefore, on the fifth of November, 1528, Forbot arrived, with Agrippa's wife and children, at Mechlin<sup>4</sup>. With all speed Cornelius joined them, and the pleasant laughter of new friends over his joy<sup>5</sup> shows how little he had been able to conceal his careful love during their absence.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 58, Lib. v. pp. 934, 935.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 58, Lib. v. p. 935.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 61, Lib. v. p. 936.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 57, Lib. v. p. 934.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 60, Lib. v. p. 935.

## CHAPTER XII.

## A YEAR AT ANTWERP, AND ITS CHANGES.

ANTWERP friends, after the arrival of his wife and family, began to multiply about Cornelius Agrippa. Among the learned and the noble he found helpers and companions. He was honoured in families. We find him, in a very short time, pleading wisely the cause of a father with a son who had fled from law studies attracted by the glitter of the court, counselling in gentle language wisdom to the young, forbearance to the old<sup>1</sup>. Practising as a physician, he obtained quickly a credit that extended beyond Antwerp to adjoining towns, and caused him to be sought by wealthy patients<sup>2</sup>. He obtained credit at court, and the winning ways of his wife commended him and his household, not less than his own learning, to the favour of Margaret of Austria<sup>3</sup>. He obtained by her appointment very soon a formal position at court as Indiciary Councillor, or Councillor in the matter of the Ar-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 62-65, 67, Lib. v. pp. 936-939, 940.<sup>2</sup> Ep. 71, Lib. v. p. 942.<sup>3</sup> Ep. 81, Lib. v. p. 948.



chives, and Historiographer to the Emperor. These titles were given to him already in the January after his arrival in the Netherlands, when, on the seventh of the month, he obtained license to print and possess for six years the copyright of his works<sup>1</sup>. The early work, written in honour of Margaret, on the Nobility and Pre-eminence of Woman, with some smaller writings, formed the first publication. This must have been published at Antwerp in the year 1529, or early in the year 1530<sup>2</sup>, though of this, its first edition, beyond reference of his own to it, no trace is at present extant. In addition to the successes thus achieved, there occurred even a chance of Agrippa's appointment as successor to the physician of the most Serene Princess Margaret, who, with large offers, was being tempted back to his own country. Interest was made on behalf of Agrippa, but the vacancy did not arise. The old physician's salary was raised, and he remained at Mechlin. All went well, and on the thirteenth of March, 1529, a little more than five months after her arrival at Antwerp, Agrippa's wife became the mother of another son, born, as it seemed, to happy fortune<sup>3</sup>. His father's fame was spreading. They talked of him at Ghent as a man gifted with rare knowledge<sup>4</sup>. He was summoned in June by one patient, a secretary's wife, who offered the most liberal pay, from Antwerp to Louvain, and by another patient, in July, to Mechlin<sup>5</sup>. Pupils sought his

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the license is prefixed to all the early publications.

<sup>2</sup> In December, 1530, he speaks of it as a known publication already extant. Ep. 8, Lib. vi. p. 961.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 68, Lib. v. p. 941.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 70, Lib. v. p. 942.

<sup>5</sup> Ep. 71, 73, Lib. v. pp. 942, 943.

instruction ; one of them was John Wier, son of a citizen of Gravelines, who became an illustrious scholar and physician. He was a boy of fourteen or fifteen when in Agrippa's house ; and afterwards, when it was almost heresy to say a good word for his early teacher, whose memory the priests had befouled, he spoke of him lovingly, and ventured to defend his reputation against the charge of having had a familiar spirit in form of a dog, by telling of the foolish fondness he had seen him show when at Antwerp for his dogs, especially for two whom he had brought from France, and used to call Monsieur and Mademoiselle. Monsieur used often to lie on the table by his master's papers when he wrote, and even slept sometimes upon Agrippa's bed. That Monsieur was the little black dog who was afterwards identified by the Church with the Prince of Darkness<sup>1</sup>.

While Agrippa was away from home, attending on a wealthy patient dangerously ill at Mechlin, his secretary wrote home-news to him. His little wife—no rare thing in those days—could neither write nor read. The tone of these letters—in which even the scribe writes affectionately—shows how peacefully and pleasantly his home was ordered. Let us dwell upon it ; for it is the last glimpse of his happiness that we shall have. The wife had been in weak health since her last confinement. “ All are safe at home,” ran one of the reports ; “ your wife be-

<sup>1</sup> Wierus, *De Præstigiis Dæmonum*, Lib. ii. cap. v. (Opera ed. Amst. 1660), p. 111. Wier appended this and like matter to the chapter cited, only in later editions of his work, when, he said, he could keep silence no longer.



comes stronger and stronger every hour, the children are happy, chirrup, laugh, and grow. Mary" (that was the nurse, called in the household Mary the Greater; there was another little maid, whom her master called Mary the Less)—"Mary sedulously watches over your wife's health. Tarot, Franza, Musa, with the concubines" (these are his dogs), "day and night make themselves heard, and threaten torture against thieves; but they trot so constantly about the lawn that I fear lest they be changed from dogs to garden deities, or husbandmen, or, at any rate, philosophers, that is to say, of the academic sort. For the rest of the company here, the nurse nurses; Hercules" (a man-servant) "is herculean; Aurelius works in the laboratory. All, in fact, goes well. I set at rest your notary, who came here in your name; I wonder that you did not give me any kind of hint about him. Everything else I have done to the best of my ability. Your wife bids me write this that you may address yourself with an easier mind to the healing of your patient, and be able to come back to her the sooner. She wishes you fortune, health, and all the happiness you ask, and wishes to be very much commended to you<sup>1</sup>." Agrippa replied in the same tone—these letters were passing in the middle of July—especially inquired about the progress of a slow distillation that he had left behind him to be watched carefully in his laboratory, and, in a postscript, said that if the young servant to be sent by the master of the Oratory

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 72, Lib. v. pp. 942, 943.

came, he was to be either received into the house, or sent to him at Mechlin<sup>1</sup>.

“Your most ancient wife, Mary the Greater, and the host of dogs salute you,” said the answer. “We were on the point of sitting down to dinner when your note was brought; how sweet it made the dinner of your little wife it is beyond my speech to tell<sup>2</sup>.” The patient at Mechlin was dying, and he and his friends pleaded with Agrippa that he should not quit him until all was over. A servant who brought one of the letters from Antwerp told Agrippa that his wife was well, except feeling uneasy in her stomach. On that account he was desirous to return to her, and expected that in two or three days either his patient’s death or a change in him for the better would enable the physician to rejoin his family<sup>3</sup>. The next household budget informed him that Father Aurelius wished for his return, and that his wife was not only restored in health, but that her whole aspect was changed. While the letter was being written she was in the highest spirits, but had not, up to that date, gone out of doors, for she waited till the weather mended. (During this month of July the rains were very heavy<sup>4</sup>.) “She greets you,” said the scribe, “a thousand times, and grieves that she cannot write so as to be able to make merry with you in letters. She asks, also, that as soon as you can tear yourself from that place, you run to us for the comfort of your friends. This I write from her lips at eleven o’clock at

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 73, Lib. v. p. 943.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 75, Lib. v. p. 944.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 74, Lib. v. p. 943.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 80, Lib. v. p. 947.



night, after receipt of yours. Farewell, and take care of your health. Tarot, Franza, Musa, Ciccone, Balassa are well, salute you, and cry for your return. Mary the Greater greets you; the Less, with Hercules and Margaret, can bear your absence easily for some time longer. Again, farewell<sup>1</sup>."

This is the next happy letter, and, alas! the very last.

"While I write to you, your wife stands at my right hand and Mary at my left, both of them dictating, so that if I write amiss, you must forgive, for neither my ears nor my hands are made of iron. First, your wife had a letter from you to-day, which, because it was written in French (write the next time in Latin, that I may interpret, for I am a Roman, not a Gaul), I could not read to her correctly. But of what can you complain? Your wife is strong, her beauty is come back, she wants nothing on earth but your constant presence, and for that longs continually. But as she is not less prudent and honest than she is fair, she weighs the gain and credit you obtain by your long absence, if your patient will begin to get a little better: therefore she bears bravely these days of solitude. You must, therefore, study to cure him, for his own sake and to please your wife. Mary is well, and after you return will have little to do. The dogs trot about the lawn, now surround their mistress, now sleep, bark, devour. The children are in the best health. You have no cause at all for troubles, no friend to distrust: while there is spirit in my body I shall

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 76, Lib. v. p. 945.

love you wholly. Everything proceeds happily. I will write more fully to-morrow ; just now the departure of the messenger, the dogs, the dinner, everything brings disturbance to my pen<sup>1</sup>."

But the letter of the morrow said that the wife had passed a wretched night, that there were signs of the return of her old malady, that they were persuading her to send for a doctor, but that she wished to have no one but her husband<sup>2</sup>. He hurried to her instantly. Plague raged in Antwerp, and Agrippa's wife was stricken.

She had been ailing since Easter. Skilled attendance, nurses, medicines, the most anxious care, sparing no cost, had been engaged on her behalf. Three times she had recovered and relapsed. She had enjoyed an entire month of health when she was seized by the plague. An abscess opened in her groin ; she suffered heats, pain, change of expression, redness of the face, inflammation of the jaws, wretched anxiety, and nervous spasms ; she spat blood ; the exhalation from her body became horribly foetid<sup>3</sup> ; great plague-spots broke out over her whole body ; finally in her husband's arms she died, and so at Antwerp did indeed come to her rest.

"I am lost," wrote Agrippa to Forbot, her kinsman<sup>4</sup>, "for I have lost her who was the only solace of my life, the sweetest consolation in my labours, my most loved wife. Ah, she is lost to me, and dead, but eternal glory

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 77, Lib. v. p. 945.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 78, Lib. v. p. 946.

<sup>3</sup> Agrippa describes in a letter the symptoms and treatment of the plague raging this summer at Antwerp. Ep. 85, Lib. v. pp. 952-954.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 81, Lib. v. pp. 947-949.



covers her. She had been well for nearly a whole month, was in all things prosperous and joyous, fortune smiled on us from all sides, and already we were engaged in furnishing a new and larger house, against the new days that were coming to us, when on the last St. Lawrence's-day a violent pestilential fever attacked her, with abscess of the groin: remedies of every suitable kind were instantly applied; nothing that could help us in the house, or out of it, was overlooked; the most diligent watching and attendance were added, and I did not withdraw one step from her side by day or night; nobody fled from her, so much was she beloved by all: already on the fourth day she appeared a little better; but, woe is me, no remedies availed, and on the seventh day, which was the seventh of August, at about nine in the morning, with great difficulty, but a clear intellect, a soul firm towards God and an innocent conscience, while we stood round she rendered up her spirit, the plague pouring itself through the entire body in large blotches. Ah, she is dead, to my greatest sorrow, to my greatest hurt, to the greatest disadvantage of our children, to the greatest grief of all who knew her. Within twenty-three days of the age of twenty-six, she was known everywhere for her goodness, and loved and revered for her rare modesty. She lived with me, as you know, for eight years all but a month, always in the utmost love and peace; there never was between us anger upon which the sun went down. All my hard fortune, poverty, exile, flight, perils, she bore with me in patience, and already all our troubles were

surmounted, and we were about to lead thenceforth a cheerful, quiet life. The Princess Margaret was seeking her because of the virtues that she heard ascribed to her on every side, and there were several opportunities of wealth and honour in our hands. She had been dead only two hours when there came to our house fresh tidings of prosperity. Nothing would have been wanting to our happiness in this world had she but survived; but woe is me, she has perished, and with her for me has perished all. My spirit is beaten down, my mind prostrated, and my life still in danger from contagion; there remains for me no consolation. My house is left in the hands of the nurse and Hercules, ill guarded. My sons, with the little nursemaid Mary, taken to another house, were, after a few days, through the sordid petulance of a wicked girl, turned out and obliged to find a new asylum. I am alone in some tavern with one servant, and he sickening. I lie apart, day and night weeping for my dearest wife, enduring torture. Augustine and Aurelius visit me daily; they never deserted me and my dear wife, in any affliction, any peril of contagion. Oh, that you had been by, my Forbot, how much solace you would have brought. Ah, how often did she speak of you when dying—how often sigh for you. She bade me speak to you her last farewell, and write this, praying that you will forgive her if she ever sinned against you, and devoutly pray for her to God. But in her former illnesses she vowed a visit to St. Claudius; this burden, in dying, she imposed upon you, supplicating you, whenever you



return to the home country, or chance to travel near, that you will turn for her sake to the threshold of that saint and offer for her holy prayers and waxen images, that you may free her from this vow. This I now beg of you in her name, and I will myself do the same thing for her, if I survive. And I beg you that the money which you were to have spent in buying for her a gold chain, you will now put to better use in alms or oblations for the repose of her soul. Much remains, my dearest Forbot, of which I must speak with you, about the disposal of the residue of my life, and the provision for our unhappy little ones. But these things require to be discussed by speech. I have indeed good friends here, who advise me wisely in this way and in that; but in you my firmest trust is placed for counsel: so my dearest, dying wife enjoined, that I should look to you as to my friend and the protector of our children. Farewell, and pray to God for me and for the salvation of my dearest wife, your kinswoman, of whose salvation, however, I am so far from having doubt, that I implore her constantly with pious prayers to be my intercessor before Christ."

Hercules and the elder nurse Maria died, the younger nurse and a servant also caught the plague, and with difficulty were recovered<sup>1</sup>. Regular physicians had fled from the town, and the most active and able man who remained was an unlicensed practitioner, to whom, when he was persecuted afterwards by the brethren of the craft in Antwerp, Agrippa gave a most emphatic testimonial of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 84, Lib. v. p. 951.

praise<sup>1</sup>. Over Cornelius himself and all his children the disease passed, leaving them untouched, nor was the bereaved man suffered to remain long weeping “in some tavern;” his friend Augustine Furnario took him into his house. And it was in this hour of affliction—when she was gone for whom he would have rejoiced to prosper—that there seemed to be no bound to his prospect of advancement in prosperity. Henry VIII. of England was inviting him, and offering great things, which he did not choose to accept. The chancellor of the Emperor Charles V. wished to attach him to his master’s court, and tempted him with brilliant offers of advancement if he entered the Imperial service. Furnario received letters from Italy, in which a marquis, whom Cornelius had known—Monferrat, probably—entreated him to come to Italy with all his household, while, at the court of the Netherlands, Margaret offered honourable conditions of service, with emoluments less tempting. “Which I shall choose,” Agrippa said<sup>2</sup>, “I know not. I would rather live free than go into service. It becomes me, however, to consult not my own pleasure, but the well-being of my children.”

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 7, Lib. vi. p. 959.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 84, Lib. v. pp. 951, 952.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## IN GAOL AT BRUSSELS.

AGRIPPA, during a few months before and after the death of his second wife, enjoyed at Antwerp high repute as scholar and physician. Every man of letters visiting the town made haste to call upon him, sometimes with, sometimes without letters of recommendation from others of the learned<sup>1</sup>. There are various indications in his correspondence of this sort of life. A student of occult knowledge asks help from him<sup>2</sup>. A stranger lodging in a tavern rises with the light to hasten to Agrippa's house, and being told by the old woman who has become house-keeper in place of the deceased wife that he has slept abroad, hurries back to his inn and asks the philosopher to dinner<sup>3</sup>. To a friend impatient to be visited, and to be shown Schepper's table of geomancy, he writes that he will certainly come at the end of a week, but that he has been detained by attendance on the death-bed of his own physician<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 2, Lib. vi. pp. 954, 955.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 6, Lib. vi. p. 959.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 5, Lib. vi. p. 958.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 17, Lib. vi. p. 969.

When first established happily in Antwerp, Cornelius had lost no time in setting about the fulfilment of a natural desire to get his writings printed, but it was not until the year (1530) following his wife's death that some of them were published.

One of the first things that appeared was the *Histoire* of the recent Double Coronation of the Emperor at Bologna by Pope Clement VII. This was the beginning of his labour in the office of Imperial historiographer and keeper of the archives. It is a minute description of the ceremonies observed, and other incidents of the coronation, drawn up after the manner of old chroniclers, from the details forwarded at the time out of Italy to Margaret, and by her entrusted to the Imperial historiographer, for prompt digestion and publication<sup>1</sup>. The event happened at the close of February, in the year 1530, and the finished history was presented in the same year, without any loss of time, to the princess at Brussels. Wherefore, Agrippa told her, in reading it, she would pardon him if its language were not worthy of a pomp so famous, and he promised at the same time that he never would be wanting in faithfulness of narration, diligence of investigation, or industry in the celebration of her honour and that of her race, but that he would labour all his life to make it certain that the place she had given to him was

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A. Armatae militiæ Equitis Aurati, Cæsareæ Maiestatis à Consiliis et Archivis Indiciarii, De Duplici Coronatione Cæsaris apud Bononiam Historiola.* Opera, Tom. ii. pp. 1121-1145.



not ill bestowed<sup>1</sup>. To her minister he wrote at the same time, saying that he had fulfilled Margaret's commands, and dedicated to her the first fruits of his new vocation, the dignity of which he commended, and of which at the same time he did not omit to hint that, among the Greeks and Romans, historiographers who celebrated the great deeds of kings lived with them as witnesses of their acts, were treated with all honour, and paid also with liberality<sup>2</sup>. There was much need for a suggestion of this kind, because Cornelius had office given to him, and work found for him, and salary promised to him in a formal document, assured by the Imperial seal; but he had not, up to the time when he wrote thus, received a ducat.

This difficulty ceased to be a temporary one upon the publication of the *Vanity of Sciences and Arts*. In December, 1530, Cornelius had a printed copy of this work, which he could send to a friend, greatly deploring the innumerable printer's errors it contained. The treatise upon the Nobility and Pre-eminence of Woman, at last dedicated to Margaret, in fulfilment of the intention cherished by its author in his youth, had been issued a short time previously, in a little book, together with the *Essays upon Matrimony, upon Original Sin, upon the Knowledge of God, the Avoidance of Gentile Theology, the Expostulation with Catilinet, &c.*<sup>3</sup> The little book of *Essays* did no mischief, but the publication of the *Vanity*

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 3, Lib. vi. p. 956.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 4, Lib. vi. p. 957.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 8, Lib. vi. p. 961. But of either of these early editions I do not know where there is now a copy to be found.

of Sciences effected finally the ruin of the author's fortunes.

What the book was, and under what circumstances it was written, we have seen. The writing of it was, I have no doubt, suggested by Erasmus, through his *Moriæ Encomium*, or Praise of Folly. In that pleasant satire we find passages that seem to have supplied directly the idea of Agrippa's volume. This, for example: "Ay, but (say our patrons of wisdom) the knowledge of arts and sciences is purposely attainable by men, that the defect of natural parts may be supplied by the help of acquired ones. As if it were probable that nature, which has been so exact and curious in the mechanism of flowers, herbs, and flies, should have bungled most in her masterpiece, and made man as it were by halves, to be afterwards polished and refined by his own industry, in the attainment of such sciences as the Egyptians feigned were invented by their god Theuth as a plague surely and punishment to mankind, for they are so far from augmenting happiness that they do not answer that end for which they were first designed, which was the improvement of memory, as Plato in his *Phædrus* cleverly observes." Erasmus also had treated the callings of the lawyer, the physician, the divine, in successive sketches, much upon the plan which Agrippa seems to have expanded; he had spoken also precisely as Agrippa spoke of the scholastic theologians, and was not more friendly than Agrippa in his satire on the Pope and on the monks. But in the interval of nearly twenty years that had elapsed between the publica-



tions of the Praise of Folly and the Vanity of Science, the great struggle against church corruption had become every year more earnest and momentous. Harder blows were exchanged; Agrippa, too, was not content to risk a mortal combat with corruption in the church, he must needs fight in earnest against vices of the court, and therefore had more than the priests for enemies. The mere attack on the deficiencies of art and science was no dangerous proceeding. It expressed a feeling of the time when many were becoming conscious that a great deal of the wisdom of the day was made of words alone. Agrippa's volume had not been long published when a scholar at Comines sent to the author for inspection and correction a work very similar in plan<sup>1</sup>.

At this period for him so critical, the patroness was lost whose friendship had been sought so long, and for so short a time enjoyed. Margaret died at the age of fifty-two, and the second work of the historiographer—also complete before the close of the year 1530—was to narrate at some length the story of her life in the form of a polished funeral oration<sup>2</sup>. This panegyric is the last of Cornelius Agrippa's published speeches. A short speech composed for the son of Christiern, King of Denmark, to be delivered by him in the presence of the Emperor, written at Antwerp; and another that had been written at Paris, for use by a relative, on being admitted bachelor of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 9, Lib. vi. pp. 961-963.

<sup>2</sup> Oratio, habita in funere divæ Margaretæ Austriacorum et Burgundorum Principis æterna memoria dignissimæ. Opera, Tom. ii. pp. 1098-1120.

theology, are all his other writings of this kind that have not been already mentioned. The funeral oration was dedicated formally to Jean de Carondelet, Archbishop of Palermo, lately Margaret's ecclesiastical councillor, who, upon her decease, had civil charge over the provinces that she had ruled<sup>1</sup>. The letter to the Archbishop was dated from Mechlin, in which town Cornelius was staying, probably to look after his salary, in the last days of the year 1530.

At the beginning of the next year he was at Antwerp again, busy with his printer. On the thirteenth of January he was sending to press the close of the first book of Occult Philosophy. He had designed to print the whole, but was checked by prudential suggestions. He complained to his printer that the bookseller had sent him copies of the *Vanity of Sciences* in loose sheets, and not bound as he had promised; asked for an account of copies sold, and himself forwarded some money received for copies purchased from himself, promising at the same time that he would look money up from other sources<sup>2</sup>. It is to be supposed, therefore, that he was publishing these books at his own risk.

The printing of the first issue of Cornelius Agrippa's *Occult Philosophy*, by John Graphæus of Antwerp, was completed in the month of February, 1531, after which date the book was sold by him at the sign of the Lime Tree, in the street called the *Lombardenveste*<sup>3</sup>. It is

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 10, Lib. vi. p. 963.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 11, Lib. vi. p. 964.

<sup>3</sup> *Henrici Cor. Agrippæ ab Nettesheym, à Consiliis et Archivis Indiciarii*



elegantly printed, paged only by the numbering of the sheets, from A to V ; is entitled Agrippa's Three Books of Occult Philosophy, and sets out with an index, giving heads of chapters to the entire work. But at the end of the first book the publication closes with the following announcement: "TO THE READER.—Candid reader, the author of this most divine work intended to bring to light also the second and third book, which are indeed promised to readers at the beginning of the work, but suddenly almost, and unexpectedly, the death of the sainted Margaret, as well as other cares, changed his course, and compelled him to desist from what he had begun. But it is not to be doubted that when he has understood this little book not to be scorned, and to be not wholly unwelcome to the learned, he will edit also the other two. At present receive this, and embrace with good will the most occult mysteries and secrets of the divinest things that are contained in it. Farewell."

Prefixed to the work is a copy of the Imperial privilege to Agrippa, dated the seventh of January, 1529, granting him six years' copyright of this and other writings, namely, the Declamation on the Vanity of Sciences, the Commentaries upon the *Ars Brevis* of Raymond Lully, and the Collection of his Letters and Orations. Then follows the author's address to the reader, in which he does not doubt that a great number of persons will be

*sacrae Cæsaræ Maiestatis. De Occulta Philosophia. Libri Tres. Antuerpiæ, Anno MDXXXI.* The book is described from my own copy. It is very rare.

attracted to his book by the rarity of the subject, of whom many will read carelessly and misunderstand, many will cry out against it even before they have quite read the title, call him a wizard, a demoniac, a superstitious man, and a magician. He reminds his readers that the Eastern magi were the first who came with worship to the Lord. He advises those who cannot overcome their hatred of a name to leave his work unread, and asks people of more equanimity to read with discretion, throwing aside what they do not like as matter not commended to them, but narrated only. "I confess," he says, "that there are many very vain things and curious prodigies taught for the sake of ostentation in books of magic; cast them aside as emptiness, but do not refuse to know their causes." . . . Again he says, "where I err, or have too freely spoken, pardon my youth, for I was less than a youth when I composed this work, so that I might excuse myself and say, When I was a child I spoke as a child, I had knowledge as a child, but now that I am a man I have put away from me childish things, and a great part of what is in this book I have retracted in my book upon the Vanity and Uncertainty of Sciences. But here again you perhaps reply to me, by saying: If you wrote this when a youth, and retracted it when older, why have you now printed it?" He then explains how, when it was first written, he had meant some day to mature and complete it; but after a time, corrupt, rough, and defective copies began passing from hand to hand in Italy, France, and Germany; "and some, I know not whether more



through impatience than through impudence, designed to commit that crude work to the press. Mastered by this evil, I thought it would be less dangerous to edit the work myself, a little improved by my own correction, than to let it get abroad in undigested fragments from the hands of other people. Besides, I thought it no crime if I saved a specimen of the toil of my youth from perishing. I have added a few chapters, and have also inserted many things which it would be incurious to have passed over, these the critical reader can detect easily from the inequality of composition; for I did not wish to write the entire work anew, and, as they say, to weave the entire fabric afresh, but to correct a little, and infuse a little brightness. Wherefore, again I ask you, candid reader, not to judge the book according to the time when it is published, but to pardon the curiosity of youth, if you find in it anything displeasing."

He adds next his letter to Trithemius, written when the book was written, twenty years previously, with the abbot's answer; then, finally, he dedicates his publication to the Reverend Father in Christ, and most Illustrious Prince Hermann, Count of Wied, Archbishop of Cologne.

Hermann, Archbishop of Cologne, was showing kindness to Agrippa; his other friend of the same family, the literary Hermann, Count of Neuwied, had died suddenly at the age of thirty-nine, in the preceding year. The goodwill of the Archbishop, Agrippa was, by predilection and by policy, disposed to cultivate; he had attachment to

the family, and he was in need of clerical support. He might be in need even of a patron, for since Margaret's death his dependence on the favour of the Emperor had been more uncertain than ever, and his Vanity of Sciences having made enemies of courtiers, treasurers, and priests, nothing could have better pleased those eager to ruin him than that he should have immediately afterwards published his book of Occult Science, which gave them their revenge in the opportunity of persecuting him as a magician.

The salary that had been promised him as historiographer, and upon the credit of which he had been obliged to incur debts, was never paid; he was, moreover, traduced to the Emperor, and libels of the most malignant and absurd description, founded on his character of wizard, began to be industriously set afloat. His book of Occult Science was freely read; and in the same year that it was published at Antwerp there appeared an edition of it in Paris also<sup>1</sup>. In this year, too, the Vanity of Sciences, printed for the first time the year before in quarto, at Antwerp, was reprinted, with correction of the many printer's errors, both at Antwerp and Cologne; and two editions more of the same work appeared in the year following<sup>2</sup>. The books excited at once very much attention and no little praise, whereby was increased the virulence of the hostility they braved.

The financiers were glad of an excuse that covered

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 26, Lib. vii. p. 1033.

<sup>2</sup> Jöcher's *Gelehrten Lexicon* : *Fortsetzung*. Art. Agrippa.



their neglect in payment of Agrippa's salary. Certainly Margaret had ordered them<sup>1</sup> to pay him what was just when she appointed him historiographer; and to his first applications for some payment, made to Count Hochstraten, who was in charge of the finance, or to the Archbishop of Palermo, chief of the council, the reply always was encouragement to be at ease upon the subject, since he would not fail to receive the remuneration proper to his office. It was his misfortune to put faith in these fair words, and by his trust in them at last to be reduced to the most wretched state of debt and want. After the death of Margaret, his only trust was in Charles V., to whom he for months paid suit; but the end of it was only the stirring in the Emperor of extreme wrath against him for the matter written in his book upon the Vanity of Sciences, and he would even have been put to death had not two reverend and learned cardinals pleaded his cause at court, and actively assisted him at home: these friends being Everard de la Mark, Bishop of Liege, and the Cardinal Campegio. The steward of the Bishop of Cologne's household, who was a scholar, and Agrippa's friend, had presented the offending books to Hermann, who received them favourably<sup>2</sup>. Cornelius was at that time—towards the end of January, 1531, in great want—and had just learnt how much peril he had escaped, from anger that

<sup>1</sup> The groundwork of the succeeding narrative is taken from Agrippa's statement of his case to the new Regent, Mary of Austria. Ep. 21, Lib. vii. pp. 1020-1027. This is the reference, on money matters in Brabant, when no other is cited.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 14, Lib. vi. p. 968.

had been raised against him by the priests. They had touched even the mind of the late Princess Margaret, so that he might have perished if she had survived, while he was actually then in peril from the Emperor, to whom offence against the cowl had, through King Ferdinand, been represented as offence against religion. "Emperor Charles," he says, "is in great wrath, and denounces me with I know not what blistering menaces, so that I know not what to expect from my book on Vanity, except that which I promised myself in the preface<sup>1</sup>." At this time a Reformer writes him, with grace and peace in the Lord, encouragement to persevere in the free profession of the glory of Christ, and asks him for a present of his works<sup>2</sup>.

Creditors were gathering about Cornelius. Nominally he had an income, actually he had not wherewith to support his children; and his liberty was threatened. For more than a year and a half he had held the post of historiographer, abandoning for the Imperial service opportunities of private practice, betaking himself to court, living with money borrowed from the usurers<sup>3</sup>, upon the credit of court promises, the worth of which he should have learnt at Lyons once for all. His best friend, the Genoese citizen Furnario, was far away; Father Aurelius was also absent; but the Cardinal Campegio befriended him, so did Signor Luca, the Cardinal's secretary, and the venerable Bernardo Paltrini, his steward. These friends obtained from Everard, Bishop of Liege, promise of intercession

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 15, Lib. vi. p. 969.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 16, Lib. vi. p. 969.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. vi. p. 976.



with the Emperor. To Everard, Bishop of Liege, the poor philosopher accordingly addressed himself; he was a gentleman, he said, and told what were his antecedents; he was capable of efficient service, he said, and hinted at his acknowledged powers; promises had been made to him, and they had not been kept; he wished either to have his appointment cancelled upon payment of his services thus far, or to be maintained in it upon a fair and honest footing<sup>1</sup>. He pleaded thus from Ghent upon the twelfth of May, and but a few weeks afterwards he was in gaol for debt at Brussels.

In vain, more weary of petitioning than any man could be of reading his petitions, he had besieged with his suit for common justice at its hands the privy council of the Emperor. "While I follow the court," he said, "absent from home, my family hungers, my sons weep, creditors beset me, a mortal poverty increases to my hurt, my liberty is insecure." He asked either at once the means of paying what he owed, or an order that time should be granted him, during which his liberty should be assured, while he sought elsewhere for the means of paying<sup>2</sup>. The council washed its hands of him, referring him to the Emperor himself; for seven months he had followed the Emperor with his vain suit, living in inns, to his great hurt and loss, while waiting on the court, away from his unhappy little ones at Antwerp. The Emperor had been made deaf to him, stood as a statue to his supplication; cared no more, he says, for his incessant

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 18, Lib. vi. pp. 970, 971.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. vi. pp. 975-977.

cry than for the croaking of a thirsty frog. What could he do but appeal from Cæsar in the interest of Cæsar's honour to his private councillors? The Emperor, just at that time, was not too fortunate; he had no little need of friends. Agrippa and Agrippa's family had served his ancestors. Agrippa could serve him. He urged again his offers and his claims, besought not so much for the payment due to him as for protection of his person from imprisonment, for the life of his little children, for dismissal, for rejection, for a definite permission to despair<sup>1</sup>.

Petition was not wholly fruitless. The most pressing creditor, Alexis Falco, was restrained from seizure of Agrippa's person during fifteen days; but he defied the order of the council, and together with John Plat took constables of the town of Brussels, seized the philosopher, and conducted him ignominiously through the open streets to gaol. He wrote from his prison to Bernard, the steward of Campegio, who might cause the council to maintain its own decision, and to set him free from an imprisonment incurred through no crime, no dishonesty, but the injustice of the Emperor and the neglect of those who served him<sup>2</sup>. Bernard was a prompt friend. He applied at once on behalf of Agrippa, in the name of Cardinal Campegio, to the Archbishop of Palermo, president of the council: the Archbishop promised to interfere. Bernard offered to return in an hour, to be told the result of his interference. The Archbishop objected to that offer, but sent word to Cornelius that he should take

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 22, Lib. vi. pp. 977-980.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 23, Lib. vi. p. 980.



courage, and that a messenger would soon be sent to tell him of his liberation<sup>1</sup>.

The result of intercession seems to have been a prompt bringing of Agrippa's case before the judges, and the same plain speaking which in the *Vanity of Sciences* had made of the Emperor a mortal enemy, and had exposed the author to the vengeance of offended priests and courtiers, was now used by him with a perilous boldness in the presence of the judges also. "You would not," he said<sup>2</sup>, "concede me time to pay my debts; you would not credit me with the pledge of the Emperor. Why am I to implore of you clemency, when you deny me justice? Do you account the Emperor one of those men who are not bound by their promises? In harshness, avarice, ingratitude, open breach of his written word, what excellent material you offer me for writing Cæsar's praise. Tell me whether it is fit that I should be bound by oath to the Emperor for two years, as the keeper of his records, and, my dues from him being withheld, my service to him be compulsory? While I have been following him about for the last year as a beggar, I might have died of hunger had not the most reverend apostolic legate, Cardinal Campeggio, sustained me. Possibly you may say that I share this evil with many others, that not I only live upon other people's tables, but that almost all the Emperor's retainers, satellites, and doorkeepers, even those of his chamber, do the same, whom we see going the round of other men's dinners, as seekers of table-talk or parasites,

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. vi. p. 981.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 25, Lib. vi. pp. 981-983.

to the no slight shame of the Emperor himself. Here let me say I wish you sometimes heard what I hear very often ; saw what I see. Certes, if you had at heart the credit of the Emperor, you would advise him otherwise, and would not let your eyes blink as they do at his avarice, as if it were not base in him to let his pensioners go ragged for lack of their pay, his nobles without salaries do suit to others for their meat, to suffer me, his historiographer, to be dragged into suits before you, and vexed with the terrors of a gaol, while I have Cæsar for my debtor, and he being passed over, you order me to beg among my friends the means of paying what I owe. What equity is this of yours—what justice?" Has he not, he asks, suffered enough contumely without being ordered now to beg for charity? "Either," he cries, "confess or deny that the Emperor is in my debt. If he owes money to me, take his pledge, accept him as my bail, unless you hold that he is unfit to be trusted. But if he owes me nothing, free me from my oath of service to him, and I will not only find wherewith to pay my creditors, but will soon turn this calamity into a matter of rejoicing." Just and bold speech, utterly unwise, doubtless, but would to God all men disdained, as Agrippa did, to cover honest feeling with false words. Such direct language being added to the general strain in the Vanity of Sciences and Arts, we need not wonder that the Emperor hated Agrippa to the death ; and, as the *Sieur Clavigni* of *St. Honoré* relates<sup>1</sup>, would have brought him

<sup>1</sup> *Use of Suspected Books*, cited by Bayle.



to an end as tragical as that of Lucilius Vanini (who, for his hard words against the Dominicans, on accusation of magic and atheism, was a few years later burnt alive, his tongue having been first cut out), had not the Cardinal Campegio and the Bishop of Liege prevailed in intercession.

In a judiciary protest Cornelius pleaded that Alexis Falco had, by a violent and illegal seizure, taken from him far more than the value of his debt—namely, the fair fame of his debtor; and, contenting himself with that, ought to be allowed to claim no more<sup>1</sup>. To the Emperor himself he sent a note, as a last effort, begging that if his clemency would not permit him to pay what he owed, he might have the benefit of his indignation in dismissal from his post and freedom to depart; if there was no more hope for him, he asked leave to despair<sup>2</sup>. Thus he was plunged into the old perplexity; escaped, as he said, from Tartarus at Lyons and restored to upper air, not many months elapsed before he found himself at Brussels fairly tumbled into Tartarus again.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 26, Lib. vi. pp. 983, 984.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 27, Lib. vi. p. 984.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## OF MARRIAGE AND OF MAGIC.

ERASMUS at this time was saying to Agricola: "About Cornelius Agrippa some learned friends have written to me from Brabant, but in such terms that they seem not to approve of the man's violence, and to ascribe to him more care in collection than judgment in selection. To some it is not disagreeable that he has thus far happily opposed the theologians and monks, and that, too, under the shadow of the Emperor, whose councillor he professes himself, and under the protection of the Cardinal Campegio. But I fear lest the man's courage bring great ill-will on polite letters, provided all is true that my friends write to me. I have not yet happened to see his book, nor has he ever written to me<sup>1</sup>."

Agrippa revered Erasmus; when he did write to him, it was in the tone of one who looked up to a higher spirit, but he did not write until he had an opportunity of doing so without appearance of intrusion. It arrived

<sup>1</sup> *Erasmii Epistolæ* (ed. Lond. 1642), Lib. xxiv. Ep. 18, p. 1319.



a few months afterwards in this way: A young priest named Andrew, pious and modest, had been engaged in out-of-the-way studies, and having two questions in Magic which he wished one of the wise men of the world to answer, having also, as it would appear, leisure and money, he set off to find Erasmus, who received him kindly, but, having heard his questions, laughed at them, and ridiculed magical study. Andrew, therefore, begged an introduction to Cornelius Agrippa, which was readily conceded, and so set on foot a correspondence between Erasmus and Agrippa<sup>1</sup>: "Greeting to you, illustrious man, your name here is in everybody's mouth, especially on account of the book you have issued on the Vanity of Studies, concerning which many of the learned have written to me—I myself not yet having seen it—that it contains, in all conscience, liberty enough, though as to other things opinions differ. I will take care to get it as soon as I can, and devour the whole. This Andrew, a priest, in my opinion modest and pious, has come hither to see Erasmus; but having hoped for a treasure, has found coals. Now he is hastening to you, expecting to draw from your breast a greater flow of wisdom. He seems to have a special love for your talent, and carries your book on Occult Philosophy as his constant companion on the way. I do not commend him to you, but ask rather to be commended to you through him. When I shall have read your book, I will write to you more

<sup>1</sup> *H. C. A.*, Ep. 31, Lib. vi. p. 993.

fully. In the mean time, I pray for your prosperity. From Friburg in Brisgau, Sept. 17, 1531."

The priest who took this letter was a true enthusiast. Hearing that the Emperor was expected at Strasburg, he went thither to await Agrippa, who would follow in his train; then he went with the same idea to Spire, and waited there three weeks, at the end of which time he learnt that the Emperor would not be at Spire before Christmas, if he came at all that winter. Andrew, therefore, set off with his questions to Cologne and Brussels, and having thus travelled in search of him, not without toil and risk, more than two hundred leagues, he humbly sought Agrippa's resolution of his doubts, asking it as from a philosopher, who was as a prince out of whose presence nobody went empty away, on whom especially the command was laid, *Freely ye have received, freely give*<sup>1</sup>.

The letter brought by this man from Erasmus was received gladly by Cornelius as an opportunity of expressing his respect for that fine-witted scholar. He expressed a sincere wish that Erasmus would condescend to read his book with care, promising that in religion it expressed nothing hostile to the Catholic Church. He expressed also gently his ambition for the friendship of Erasmus; and a couple of months afterwards, having received no reply, though he had, indeed, been absent from Brabant and might have missed a letter, he again wrote, ex-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 32, Lib. vi. pp. 995, 996.



pressing "love and reverence<sup>1</sup>," and begged pardon for his audacity in asking that, at leisure, a word might be written back to him sometimes. Erasmus was good-natured, but had not quite made up his mind as to Agrippa's character; he wrote at intervals two notes that were both short and kind, chiefly consisting of excuses for their brevity; a little more experience of Agrippa's single-heartedness, and closer understanding of his courage, at last conquered the reserve, and this was the letter<sup>2</sup>, written some months later: "I wrote to you at first in few words, to the effect that the doctrine of your book on the Vanity of Sciences had pleased some of the most learned in these parts. I had not then read the book, but soon afterwards, having obtained it, I bade a famulus read it aloud at supper, for I had no other vacant time, and am myself compelled to abstain after supper from all study. I liked the *δείνωσις* (courage) and the eloquence, nor do I see why the monks should have been so angry. As you attack the bad, you praise the good, but they like altogether to be praised. What I advised you before, I would advise you now, that if you conveniently can, you extricate yourself from this contention. Take Louis Barguin for a warning, whom nothing ruined but his simple freedom towards monks and theologians, he being a man otherwise of unstained character. I often advised him dexterously to disentangle himself from that business, but the hope of victory misled him. But if you cannot fly, and must hazard the fortune of war, see that you

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 6, Lib. vii. p. 1003.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 40, Lib. vii. p. 1056.

fight from a tower, and do not trust yourself into their hands. Of this, before everything, take heed that you do not mix me up with the matter: I am burdened with more than enough ill-will, and this would trouble me, while doing you more harm than good. I asked the same of Barguin, and he promised, but deceived me, trusting more to his own courage than to my advice. You see the end. There would not have been the smallest danger had he yielded to my counsel. Many a time I harped to him that monks and theologians are not to be overcome, even if one had a better cause than St. Paul had. Now, therefore, if I have any influence with you, again and again I would warn you that the task you have undertaken leads to perilous encounters, and may cost you the power of advancing in your studies. At present I have not leisure to say more, for I am writing to several friends. Farewell. Friburg, April 21, 1533."

These letters from Erasmus are peculiarly characteristic. Their warning was ere long fulfilled, but still to priest or prince Cornelius spoke as his heart dictated. A faithful servant they lost in him who resented his plain speech.

During some months before and after his imprisonment at Brussels, an attempt was made to enlist Agrippa's energies into the service of the Queen of England, Katharine of Arragon, the question of whose divorce was then before the Pope, and had been made matter of discussion in the schools of Europe. Orator for the Emperor Charles V. at the Court of Henry VIII. was Agrippa's friend Eustochius Chappuys, the same by whom he had

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been helped in Savoy and Switzerland. Chappuys had all due faith in his friend's vigour and ability, and when he found in the *Vanity of Sciences* a passage that implied strong condemnation of the King of England's project of divorce, it occurred to him to ask his friend to write something in aid of the cause of Katharine. He wrote accordingly from London, on the twenty-sixth of June, 1531<sup>1</sup>, renewing old acquaintance with Agrippa, calling his attention to the passage in his book, and asking him to speak his thoughts more amply. Nobody, he said, could state the case more faithfully and ably than Cornelius could, if he chose. The passage to which Chappuys referred was in the sixty-third chapter, and said, "I have heard in these days of a certain King who is persuaded that he has a right to put away a wife to whom he has now been married more than twenty years, and wed his mistress."

We have already seen what were Agrippa's views of marriage. It was binding only for this world; death ended it, but nothing short of death justified separation of a married pair, except the one reason which has been declared alone sufficient in the Gospel. The cause of Queen Katharine was, indeed, naturally that of Charles V., and Agrippa was a writer bound to the Imperial service; but Chappuys appealed to his convictions only, and by them he was impelled to take his place among the supporters of the falling Queen.

But Agrippa's way of life was at that time beset with sorrow. He was on the threshold of the prison, and in

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 19, Lib. vi. pp. 972, 973.

peril of his life : Chappuys invited him to make an enemy of one more king. There were others, he said, stronger for the battle to which he was summoned. He cared not, indeed, for the opinion of the Sorbonne; he knew the arts of its fraternity, and would like to ask of it, by way of problem for solution, What is the influence of gold upon theology? The proposed task certainly tempted him, but he was not at liberty to undertake it without having asked the permission of the Emperor and of his sister Mary, Margaret's successor in the Netherlands, but of them he could get nothing but ill-will, because of his recent book upon the Vanity of Arts. If Chappuys meant himself to urge the matter, no time was to be lost, because the Emperor would, in a few days, be leaving Brussels. "As for me, I am uncertain where to remain, whither to turn. There is no place here in which I can prosper, unless I will bid farewell to truth and honesty." Agrippa sent his friend a copy of the funeral oration on the Princess Margaret, with his own manuscript corrections of the printer's errors. Chappuys having sent several of the books published on the subject of the King's divorce, Cornelius asked for more of those which had been written on the Queen's side, that of the Bishop of Rochester, which he had received, having much pleased him. He dated from "this inhospitable court at Brussels," on the nineteenth of July, 1531, and begged that the reply might be addressed to him under cover to the steward, at the house of his sole Mæcenas, Cardinal Campegio, his defender from the wolves who ravened for him as their



prey. On the tenth of the following September, Eustochius wrote a very long reply from London<sup>1</sup>, the purport of which was praise and encouragement. The King of England, he said, was not so much ill minded as ill advised, and however bent on a divorce, yet liberally disposed to stand aside and see his whole case discussed fairly. Queen Katharine, he said, too, would herself in a few days write to the Emperor and to the Regent Mary, asking from them, on behalf of Cornelius, permission to employ his powers in her cause. The Queen was herself liberal, and Chappuys would take care that she did not omit amply to reward her champion. Towards the close of November, Chappuys wrote again on the same subject, sending more encouragement and more material<sup>2</sup>, but at that time Agrippa's life had become overgrown with other hopes and cares, therefore the subject was pursued no further<sup>3</sup>.

He had been released from prison by the intervention of his patrons, and assured the payment of a very humble salary in a patent signed and countersigned by many names, with Cæsar's eagle in red wax to make assurance perfect. Well content with this, and once more putting trust in princes, the historiographer departed from the court before which he had been disgraced by an imprisonment, and in which he met daily with insult. He retired to

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 29, Lib. vi. pp. 986-993.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 33, Lib. vi. pp. 996, 997.

<sup>3</sup> Bayle points out Burnet's error in stating in the *History of the English Reformation* that Cornelius Agrippa was employed to advocate Henry VIII.'s divorce from Katharine. It is hardly necessary to add, that as to the discussions held by the Sorbonne and other points relating to this subject, abundant illustration of this passage in Agrippa's life is to be found in Burnet's *History*.

Mechlin, because here he could maintain a house at small expense<sup>1</sup>, and very shortly afterwards took for his third wife a native of the town<sup>2</sup>. Surely his heart must have yearned for human solace and companionship; twice he had found entire happiness in marriage, and now left helpless with young children about him, he again looked to a woman's tenderness for aid. This time he sought a blessing and obtained a curse. He has himself told the world not a syllable of his third wife. She was faithless; if report spoke truly, infamous. Rabelais, not many years afterwards, scoffed at Agrippa because, while his eyes were on the sky, he remained blind to his own shame<sup>3</sup>. He did, indeed, look heavenward, though he was no believer in astrology, for the last hope he had of gentle solace upon earth was gone; men saw his shame, God only was witness to his sorrow.

For the one reason that was valid in his eyes, three years after this marriage, Cornelius Agrippa was divorced from his third wife at Bonn, and there remained for him then only to wander out alone into a hostile world and die<sup>4</sup>.

In what spirit the endeavour of this persecuted scholar to maintain with narrow means a little home at Mechlin was regarded by the court, a very trifling matter is suffi-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. vii. p. 1023.    <sup>2</sup> Wierus, *Opera* (ed. Amst., 1660), p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Tiers Liure des faits et dits heroïques du bon Pantagruel*, chap. xxv. "Bien sçay-je que luy un jour parlant au grand Roy des choses celestes et transcendentes, les laquais de cour . . . . Et il, voyant toutes choses ethers et terrestres sans bezicles ne voyoit sa femme brimbalante et oncques n'en sceut les nouvelles." It is stated by Wier that his master's third wife was a Mechlin woman; that being the case, it is natural to assume, not from direct authority but inference, that the date of marriage is as here given.

<sup>4</sup> Wierus, *De Præstigiis Dæmonum*. Lib. ii. cap. v.



cient to disclose. He applied for exemption from the beer-tax, a concession commonly allowed to every person holding rank, however mean, under the seal of the Emperor. Trifling and common as the favour was, it was refused. Midsummer-day came, and the first instalment of the little salary was due. Agrippa's creditors presented themselves, and he himself went to Michaud, the treasurer, who said he should be paid immediately<sup>1</sup>, wrote a form of receipt, which Agrippa signed, firmly intending that the whole sum payable to him should be distributed among his creditors. But as he meant to devote the whole of his salary as historiographer to payment of his debts, he left himself, for the support of his family, no income at all, except what he could earn elsewhere. For this reason, and to avoid the pressure of such creditors as were disposed to put his liberty in peril without profit to themselves, it became necessary to leave Mechlin. Relying, therefore, upon offers of assistance, generous in every sense, that had been made by the Archbishop of Cologne, Cornelius passed into Germany with his whole household, leaving at Mechlin a poor woman in charge of a small house and of some furniture, which was to represent the home he should revisit when his means allowed. While he owed money, he proposed, by exercising at Cologne or Bonn the strictest parsimony, and by devoting to his creditors the whole of his official salary, to pay his debts if possible; at any rate, to do his duty as an honest man.

<sup>1</sup> The preceding and succeeding details are from Agrippa's representation of his case to the Princess Mary, the new Regent, Ep. 21, Lib. vi. pp. 1020-1027.

The Archbishop of Cologne was unquestionably pleased at the manner in which the first book of Occult Philosophy had been inscribed to him. On the second of February, 1532, he wrote to Cornelius in cordial terms, invited him to Poppelsdorf, where he was then residing, promised the payment of all travelling expenses, and his worldly help when he arrived<sup>1</sup>. Agrippa said that he would be with him in Lent, and did then visit him<sup>2</sup>; he was, indeed, glad to be near Cologne, where he was just then republishing his smaller works—the Treatise on the Pre-eminence of Woman, the Expostulation with Catilinet, &c.; they were issued in that town during the month of May. A companion volume, uniformly printed, of the Vanity of Sciences, dedicated to Augustine Furnario, was issued in the following September; this, I believe, is the most perfect edition extant of Agrippa's most important work. It is well to remark that the person who commends it to the reader dates from the Sorbonne. To the collection of his smaller works it should be observed, also, that Agrippa did not omit to fulfil an old promise, by appending certain of his letters, which made known the treatment he had received at the court of France, as well as his correspondence subsequently with the Duke of Bourbon. During this year there was in progress, also at Cologne, the printing of the first complete edition—the one which was to contain all three books—of the Occult Philosophy.

In Brabant, the issue of Agrippa's writings was im-

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 1, Lib. vii. p. 1001.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 4, 5, Lib. vii. pp. 1002, 1003; Ep. 10, Lib. vii. p. 1008.



peded by the opposition of the theologians of Louvain. Late in the preceding year his publisher had warned him<sup>1</sup> that he had intimation from reliable authority of the design of the Count Hochstraten to publish an edict prohibiting the sale or the reading of the book upon the Vanity of Science. Cornelius, who was at that time attempting to recover, through friends, books of his own that he had lent or lost in Paris or elsewhere, and also to obtain other volumes which it was desirable for him to consult while his own works were passing through the press<sup>2</sup>, immediately applied himself to the protection of his literary interests. He prepared a dish for the men of Louvain, as he said to a friend, not without use of salt and vinegar, and even a little mustard, but without using a drop of oil. He meant to publish his reply to them, though very likely he would only thereby bring himself into new troubles, as a new truth usually begets new hatred. But he could not endure, he said, Egyptian slavery, he must revolt against it<sup>3</sup>. His friend Bernard Paltrini, of the household of the Cardinal Campegio—who was himself studying occult science, writing chronologies and commentaries—advised him to be quiet, praised his satiric power, but exhorted him not to let impulse conquer reason<sup>4</sup>. Agrippa was not to be turned from an assault on sophists. He was accused, directly and by implication, of impiety, of a capital crime, and the advice of

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 30, Lib. vi. p. 993.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 34, Lib. vi. p. 997; Ep. 7, Lib. vii. pp. 1004-1006.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 3, Lib. vii. p. 1002.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 7, Lib. vii. pp. 1004, 1005; also Ep. 8, Lib. vii. p. 1006.

the Cardinal Campegio was, that he should defend himself; while by the Emperor it was demanded that he should recant all the impeached opinions<sup>1</sup>. The terms of the accusation made against him had been placed in his hands on the fifteenth of December, 1531. He had set to work upon them in the room of Bernard Paltrini in the Cardinal's house, and before the end of January had delivered his Apology to the Head of the Senate at Mechlin, with the understanding that it was not to be given to the world until the case had been decided.

Ten months afterwards, Cornelius complained to his friend the Cardinal, that the theologians had not responded to his justification of himself, and that he had not been declared clear of offence. As for the tone of his reply, it was not, he thought, more vehement than slander should provoke; he did not know how to speak mildly to such men as those whose maledictions he rebutted. He had no fear of their learning; he did fear their violence, which raged against him with impunity. Nevertheless, although they had the ear of Cæsar, he could meet them boldly, trusting in his innocence, and asking for no more than a just judge<sup>2</sup>. To the Cardinal, therefore, his Apology was dedicated.

At about the same time—on the seventeenth of September, 1532—Cornelius Agrippa, being at Frankfort-on-Maine, looking after the interests of his new books in the great literary mart, wrote thus in a letter to Melancthon:

<sup>1</sup> Preface to the *Apologia*. Op. Tom. ii. p. 258.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 12, Lib. vii. pp. 1011-1013.



“Eternal war has arisen between me and the Louvain theologians, into which war I have been led by the audacity of truth. But I have been compelled thus far to fight, subject to the decisions of a judge who is the enemy of all truth, and I lose courage, glory, substance, faith, under an angry tyrant with whose obstinate ingratitude for all the service I have done him these two years past I have borne hitherto, and by patience and constancy I should almost have subdued it, had not fresh truth incessantly brought down on me fresh hatred. I hope either that this Nebuchadnezzar may some day return from the shape of a beast into that of a man, or that I may be enabled to depart out of this Ur of the Chaldees. May God keep you in safety and prosper you, according to the desire of your Christian mind. Salute for me Martin Luther, that unconquered heretic, who, as Saint Paul says in the Acts, after the way which they call heresy worships the God of his fathers<sup>1</sup>.”

No notice having been taken of Agrippa's Apology against the Louvain theologians, which he dedicated to the Cardinal Campegio, later in the year he added a Complaint against the Calumnies of Theologians and Monks, which he inscribed to his friend Eustochius Chapuys, and before November he had sent both of them to press at Basle<sup>2</sup>. They were the last works of the ill-fated scholar.

More than once in the course of his writings Cornelius Agrippa speaks of himself as a knight-at-arms fighting

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 13, Lib. vii. p. 1013.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 14, Lib. vii. p. 1014.

alone in a great battle. As a Reformer, that was truly his position. A defect of judgment caused him to dread greatly the separation of himself from the main body of the Church calling itself orthodox. He claimed to be on its side, and thus lost the support he might have had as one of the main army of Reformers. Nevertheless, Luther himself did not wage war more openly and honestly against all Church corruption than the plain-spoken Agrippa. Let it be owned, then, that he was very properly repudiated by the corrupt Church to whose skirts it was the great misfortune of his life that he felt bound to cling. All the neglect and contumely that he was condemned to bear while living, even all the power of the calumny by which his memory has until this day been overwhelmed, are traceable to the one cause, that in the momentous struggle of his age, he laboured very righteously and very bravely, but alone. He was a solitary knight in the great battle, and, unluckily, the side on which he called himself a combatant was that against which he dealt all his blows.



## CHAPTER XV.

## THE LAST FIGHT WITH THE MONKS.

IT would seem to have been no hard task for an honest and straightforward monk to show grave reason for combating Agrippa's faith in his own orthodoxy, but they were not the honest and straightforward monks who laboured to condemn men of his stamp. The Louvain theologians might have been formidable critics had they been more used to reasoning than sophistry, but they were notoriously mean of spirit, men who could feel a quibble better than an argument, and therefore the best they could do was to attack Agrippa's *Vanity of Sciences* with trivial carpings that it cost no trouble whatever to expose to scorn. Cornelius declined to obey the Emperor by making public recantation of opinions that had been unfairly represented; he preferred to silence his antagonists, "to appeal," as he said in the preface, to his published answer, "from the judge asleep to the judge awakened, from the half instructed to the perfectly informed. For the Emperor cannot condemn one whom the law hath not judged, lest (as the Apostle says in the Acts), judging me according to the law, he command me to be persecuted contrary to the law." He proposed, therefore, to prove

to the Imperial parliament of Mechlin that he had said nothing in contradiction to the teaching of the Holy Catholic Church<sup>1</sup>. The articles of accusation formally preferred against his book were forty-three in number; the citation of a few will show the character of all, and justify the brevity with which they will be here discussed.

The title of the book was truncated, no allusion was made to its treating on the excellence of the Word of God; the scope of the whole declamation having been in this way passed over, and the work, taken seriously, and not as a declamation at all, but as an argument against the Arts and Sciences, for the refutation of it there was quoted the opinion of St. Augustine, that a good education is of service to the theologian. As in the case of the title of the work, so also throughout its whole substance, tortuous ways of attack were preferred; and the Louvain theologians, although the book against which they protested lay unusually open to direct assault, seem to have been sophists utterly incapable of open fighting. Disingenuous representations of the meaning of a passage here and there, everywhere a stolid inability to see the drift of words spoken in satire, or to understand which points in a case are significant and which are insignificant, ignorance of Greek and

<sup>1</sup> *Nobilis Viri H. C. A., Armata Militiæ Equitis aurati, ac Utriusque Juris Doctoris, Cæsareæ Maiestatis a Consiliis et Archivis Indiciarii, Apologia adversus Calumnias, propter Declamationem de Vanitate Scientiarum et de Excellentia Verbi Dei, sibi per aliquos Lovanienses Theologistas intentatas. Opera, Tom. ii. pp. 257-330. For this and for what follows, till the next citation.*



want of skill to write Latin grammatically, or even to spell, were the qualifications put most prominently forward in this instance by Agrippa's enemies. In the course of their articles of accusation against him, the monks of Louvain misspelt even their word of condemnation; they wrote dampnat for damnat, as if one should write condempn. The word Idolatry they began with a Y. The genitive of alius was in their grammar aliis—"aliis generis" of another kind. Their reasoning was like their spelling and their grammar. They saw heresy in Agrippa's statement, that an art is good or bad according to the character of him who exercises it. They transferred to him as a heresy of his own, and aggravated by misquotation, the opinion cited in jest from St. Augustine, that "merchants and soldiers are incapable of true repentance." They urged it as a heresy against Agrippa that he declared no gloss, whether of men or angels, to be of authority beyond the limit of God's Word; the knowledge of God's Word having been given to men by no Sorbonne, no company of scholars, but only by God and Christ. If they oppose me here, Agrippa writes in the brief comment set by him opposite each article of censure, if they oppose me here, plainly they are the heretics; to add to the Scriptures, or subtract from them, is an offence against the Holy Spirit. Upon other topics they would quote with the same want of wit or tact fragments of sentences. "Although," said they, "the Preacher declares Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity, yet the wise man ought to be understood as speaking now in his own cha-

racter, now in the character of a man who admires with astonishment the things that are in the world, sometimes after the manner of fools, at other times after the manner of the prudent.”—“And why,” Cornelius inquires in the margin of this paragraph, “am not I to be read with the same intelligence, O ye malicious sycophants!”

Having printed the whole paper of indictment with curt marginal notes opposite each article, he treats of each head of the accusation in detail, so that in forty-three little chapters he demolishes the forty-three assertions of his heresy. The same University of Louvain had attacked Erasmus, and had been instructed by that scholar as to the licence proper in a Declamation, which form of composition may be enlivened by evasive arguments and by cross reasoning employed either in mockery or jest. “I have been commended by the learned,” said Agrippa, “for the Declamation now attacked, and from them never heard that it was heretical, though they have indeed objected against it a too fearless use of liberty of speech. If that be a vice in me, it is mine in company with many great and holy men, and I would not have fallen into it but for the example they had set. I am not afraid to confess that it is an inbred vice which makes me unable to flatter, and apt now and then to speak more freely than is thought expedient for tender ears. I own that I have offended many by true speech; . . . I know, too, that I am a man liable to err, but always of a sincere mind, and I profess myself to be a Catholic, nor do I think that I have pushed so far the licence of my Declamation



as to have separated myself from the orthodox faith, or that I need fear to receive the admonition and correction of superiors, who will themselves remember that they are men capable of erring in their judgment." Certainly, he had never gone so far as St. Thomas Aquinas, who, in a quodlibetal disputation, asserted that the body of our Lord in the Eucharist was better represented by beef than by bread and wine, because thereby the original substance was more nearly resembled. In this way, protected by the form in which they appeared, the most absurd and heretical positions had been taken, without fear of censure, by grave theologians. But of the masters of the Church in Cologne and Louvain, bent upon interfering where they could not reason, What did it profit you, Cornelius inquired, when you must needs combat John Reuchlin? Were you not then weighed and found wanting? What victory did you obtain over the noble Count Hermann of Neuwied? Had you not publicly to revoke your calumnies and to confess your falsehoods? With your infamy notorious, without a character for truth, what did you gain in contest against Erasmus, Faber Stapulensis, Peter of Ravenna? "Certainly," he exclaimed, with a just instinct of the truth, "your days are numbered and the measure of them is completed by the Lord; your victories shall cease, the voice shall die out of your schools, and the splendour of your sophisms become obsolete; you decline now to your fall, it is quite clear that you are soon to perish."

Again, he told them, that their brutal ignorance had

raised the spark of the Lutheran evil into a vast conflagration, because there was nothing disturbed at the outset that might not have settled, had Luther been treated with more civility, and had he not been opposed by the dishonesty and avarice of certain monks, and by the tyranny of certain prelates. The manner in which, in this Apology, Cornelius Agrippa spoke of Luther to the men who were denouncing him for heresy, is the one feature of it interesting to the student of his life. That he swept with a strong hand through the webs of sophistry in which the monks endeavoured to entangle him, we may take easily for granted. But it was urged by the sophists that in his book he had called Luther "the unconquered heretic." Upon this head, what would he answer? "I know not," he said, "whether by chance there may not be some superstitious theologians who would grudge Luther the name of heretic, as one shared by him with the Apostle Paul, who, before Felix, professed that he served God after the sect which the Jews called heresy; but I make no doubt that our masters of Louvain approve of me for having called Luther a heretic, only it offends them much that I have called him unconquered whom they and their associates at Cologne were the first men dogmatically to condemn. But I am not ignorant that Luther has been condemned for heresy, only I do not see that he is vanquished, when to this day he gains ground in his battle, and reigns in the mind of the people which is won to him in spite of authority by the dishonesty, ignorance, malice, and falsehood of many



of our priests, and monks, and masters. I speak of the event, not of the doctrine, against which, though it has been opposed in the best manner of the schools, judged with all strictness and subjected to the most august condemnation, all efforts end unprosperously." He proceeds to point out the defections to the side of Luther even from among the chosen champions of the Church. If Luther be conquered, he asks, why the cry for a general council? Why so much effort on the part, not only of priests, but of popes and great potentates? I know, indeed, he says, that Luther is most stoutly fought against, but I do not yet see that he is conquered. "First, there descended into this arena Hochstraten and Eckius, so fighting as to earn nothing but ridicule. Then succeeded monks, vociferating among the common people rude abuse of Luther; what did they thereby but scatter among the multitude those questions which before were discussed in Latin by the learned, and confined within the limits of the schools. So they impelled Luther to write in the vernacular, and heresy was then sown broadcast. The schools of Louvain, Cologne, and Paris afterwards came out with their bare articles and dogmatical censures, which, while they spread abroad the smoke and fire of books committed to be burnt—as if fire could put out fire—made Luther's works more to be sought after, more sold. At length there appeared the terrific bull of Leo, which is so much scorned by the Lutherans that they have not hesitated openly to jest at it, with contemptuous scholiæ and glosses. An Imperial decree was added, with no better

success. The slaughter-houses were next opened: what else resulted but the cutting off heads from a hydra? Is this the conquest of Luther? I speak of the event, not of the doctrine, and I wish that Christ were not preached as religiously by some of these heretics as by our teachers. Was Arius conquered when his sect occupied more churches than the orthodox? Is Mahomet conquered when there are more men of his creed than Christians? Again, I say, I speak of the event, not of the doctrine. How have I sinned, then, if I have called Luther an unconquered heretic? Would that I lied, and that Luther had been conquered as happily as he has been boldly provoked to war. I wish he were not unconquered heretic, and even, also, conqueror of heretics, to the great shame of our teachers. For who conquered the Anabaptists? Who has withstood the Sacramentarians? Was it not Luther alone? Show me one writing out of your academies by which you have moved them so much as a finger's breadth. Of what use are you in the Church, if it be enough to say: We condemn, because so has the Church decided? (And to decrees of the Church our teachers fly whenever they are hardly pressed, and there abide, unable to produce the Scripture that defends them.) Certainly, rustics who have not learnt the alphabet, and idiots, can profess as much. If that sufficed for the reconquest of heretics, oh, now would I welcome Martin Luther, who, while our masters slept and snored, alone watched for the Church, and alone freed it from the strong and violent heresies of Anabaptists and Sacramentarians, who



were getting possession of almost all Germany. But I seem here to approve of Luther, and herein I do, indeed, approve of him. But be not enraged; I approve of him as of the serpent in theriaca, which though in itself deadly, is in this form poisonous to poison." He ends by urging, that if they would conquer Luther they must conquer by arguments drawn from the Word of God; that if they must needs argue with fire and sword, they will provoke retort with fire and sword, and only make the storm blacker around them. They must use, also, against Luther better reasoning than they had brought against Agrippa, who professed himself a Catholic and not a Lutheran, and who, if he had fallen into human error, was not obstinately bent on persevering in it, and who had not fallen where he could not rise.

Together, with this Apology, when it was printed in the course of the next year, Cornelius Agrippa published and inscribed to Chappuys his Complaint against the Calumny of the monks and schoolmen, whom he denounced in his title to the complaint as being most wicked sycophants, who had dishonestly and treacherously sought to slander him before the Emperor<sup>1</sup>. In this essay he does not so much rebut attack, as carry war into the country of his enemy. He speaks of his own wrongs not more in sorrow than in anger, yet with a strange tone of philosophic melancholy sobering his wrath. It is the

<sup>1</sup> H. C. A. ab Nettesheym. . . . . *Querela super Calumnia, ob editam Declamationem, de V. S. atque excellentia Verbi Dei, sibi per aliquos sceleratissimos sycophantas, apud Cæsarem Majest. nefarie ac proditorie intentata.*

last thing he ever wrote. Who would not think it better, he exclaimed, ignorant of everything, to stretch out his legs and sleep securely, with both ears locked up, than labouring, and studying, and watching for the good of others, to become surrounded by a net from which there is no extrication. I attacked only the evil men who brought religion and truth into discredit; and I am passionately denounced by classes that I sought to raise, by men who could not see in me a benefactor. They have stirred up against me the wrath of the Emperor, and caused him to be deaf to my supplication. I am condemned—unheard-of tyranny—before defence is heard, and to this tyranny the Emperor is provoked by superstitious monks and sophists. I have carried my mind written on my face, and wish the Emperor to know that I can sell him neither smoke nor oil. But I have lived honestly, having no reason to blush for my own deeds, and little to blame in fortune, except that I was born into the service of ungrateful kings. My folly and impiety have been, I own, worthy of condemnation, in that, against the warning of the Scriptures, I have put my trust in princes. I wished to live as a philosopher in courts where art and literature are unhonoured, unrewarded. If I am not wise, surely it is herein that I am most foolish, that I have trusted my well-being into the power of another, and, anxious and uncertain of my future, rested hope on those whose deeds I find unequal to their promises. Truly, I am ashamed now of my lack of wisdom. I am denounced as a heretic and a magician. As for my magic, I confess that I have



done wonderful things, but none that offend God or hurt religion; many have been amazed at them, but they were the unlearned, to whom it is not given to know the causes of the things they see. Many things are done by the powers of Nature, which ignorance or malice will attribute to the demons rather than to Nature or to God. As for my teaching, if I had planted thorny syllogisms, produced docks and thistles in my writing, with such salad on their lips the asses who have judged me would have found my produce to their taste, and have devoured these books of mine with pleasure. I have planted something higher than their reach, and they become furious against me. "I think, therefore, that in these days, my Eustochius, there is no bliss greater than ignorance, nothing safer than to teach men nothing, when almost nothing can be written at which there shall not be some to take offence; but they who teach and know nothing, or nothing but the meanest and the basest things, are far removed from this fear, from these dangers, for of little things large ruin is impossible; and he who grovels cannot tumble far; but he who seeks to climb the heights, seems to be seeking his misfortune. As pleasant—and with more safety, as pleasant—is the marsh to the frogs, the mire to the hogs, the gloom to the bats, as to the doves the housetop, or the clear sun to the eagle. Therefore Pythagoras in Lucian, having wandered through all shapes in his own round of metamorphoses, confesses that he enjoyed life far more when he was a frog than when he was a king and a philosopher. Which persuasion seems to me so suited to

the present time, that to know nothing and teach nothing, and to differ, as one might say, in nothing from a beast, is now the happiest and safest course; at the same time it is that which makes a man the most acceptable to those courtiers and satraps, who commonly bestow their favours upon creatures having most resemblance to themselves." So the Complaint ends, and with it ends Agrippa's literary life.

While the Apology and the Complaint were being prepared at Basle for the last Frankfort book-fair, in the year 1532, the printer being Cratander, who was not to omit sending one copy to Erasmus, a few copies to the author, and three to the Cardinal Campegio<sup>1</sup>; at Cologne, the printers, Soter and Hetorpius were engaged on the Occult Philosophy, which it was hoped would be ready for publication against Christmas<sup>2</sup>. This was to be dedicated to the Archbishop of Cologne, and was not to have appeared at all, had he refused the dedication<sup>3</sup>. Agrippa had no other patron left. In Brabant the officials mocked him when he applied for his pension. A new way of evasion had occurred to them; he had forfeited his right to it by non-residence, and by not giving the whole of his time to the duties of his office<sup>4</sup>. "But," he said, "I am not absent while I have a furnished lodging on the spot; moreover, I am historiographer, not to the Duke of Brabant, not to the Count of Flanders or

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 16, Lib. vii. p. 1015.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 14, Lib. vii. p. 1014.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 4, Lib. vii. p. 1002.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. vii. p. 1024, and for what follows.



Holland, but to the Emperor: neither am I absent while I live within the empire, seeing that wherever I may be I am able to perform my duty, by which I am not bound to one spot like a sponge, but of which the vocation is to see the world and take note of events and things. Did not my predecessor in the office, Jean le Maire, dwell now in Italy and now in France, everywhere enjoying his due stipend? Neither was I tied by the Emperor to any stated place of residence, but was inducted into a liberal office, the privileges of which, and its duties, were to be interpreted with liberality. Nor have I, although absent from Brabant, neglected any of my duties, for I have during this time planned a history of the French war, waged for the Emperor by the Duke of Bourbon in Italy; and I have collected, with great care, the records of the present Turkish expedition, sent from the camps themselves in Italy and Germany." Nevertheless, he was not paid. When use was not made of the subterfuge, he was told that the Turks swallowed up all public money. He never received, or expected to receive, anything as a servant of the Emperor; and had removed not only his family, but also his library, to Bonn, where he lived, closely beset by the legions of the sophists, and wrote to Erasmus that Louvain was aided by Cologne and Paris, but that he would maintain his freedom. "You," he said, "will laugh, and some will wonder: I, in the mean time, will overcome or die<sup>1</sup>."

Not to omit any just effort on his own behalf, Agrippa

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 17, Lib. vii. p. 1016.

wrote to the new Regent of the Netherlands, Mary Queen of Hungary, a detailed statement of his case as servant of the crown. It abated not a word of the truth as he felt it, and at its close he asked for pardon to his sorrow if, unused to feel his way, he had chosen rather to attack her highness with true warnings than mislead her with blandishment and flattery. He added, "If you will some day admit me into your society, you shall not be ashamed of my homage, or repent the benefit you will confer<sup>1</sup>." This letter to the Regent, Cornelius sent through a liberal and learned man, who was her private secretary and his friend, John Khreutter, and he asked Khreutter so to deliver what he sent the Queen as to secure her actual reading of his case, or, if possible, to contrive that he should himself read the letter to her, and be watchful on his behalf against the men by whom his words and acts were constantly misrepresented. He sent to Khreutter, at the same time, all the letters bearing on the case, and would have liked the royal lady to have all of them read to her, if possible<sup>2</sup>.

Surrounded closely by the monks, Agrippa had, not only in Brabant, a desperate cause to maintain. The Dominicans of Cologne suddenly pounced upon his books of Occult Science while they were yet passing through the press. They were not issued at Christmas. Conrad Colyn, of Ulm, a Dominican monk, who at Cologne held office as Inquisitor, denounced the forthcoming volume to the senate as in the highest degree open to suspicion. He

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 21, Lib. vii. pp. 1020-1027.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 20, Lib. vii. pp. 1017-1019.



urged the senate to command that Agrippa's printer should submit all the printed sheets to the Inquisitor, that is, to himself, who would decide whether they were fit for issue to the world. The press was stopped, and the printers, Soter and Hetorp, applied to Agrippa, for the sake of his own credit and their pockets, to defend his cause<sup>1</sup>. This was not very difficult, because the Archbishop of Cologne, Agrippa's friend, the patron to whom these books of Occult Philosophy were dedicated, was not without power to control the senate in a matter of Church discipline. Moreover, as Cornelius could urge upon the senate the book had received the assent of the Emperor's whole council, and was to appear under Imperial privilege, what right, therefore, had this black monk, out of his great reverence for the Prince of Darkness, raving under the title of Inquisitor, to arrogate to himself a sceptre above Cæsar's<sup>2</sup>? The printer, when Cornelius addressed his plea to the senate, had been compelled by that body to submit what he had printed to the monk. But, as for the author, he did not appear with his head bowed before the senators; they were his own townsmen, who by their way of interfering in religious matters, and by misgoverning their University, had made the town ridiculous among the learned, and he very plainly told them they had done so. Looking down as from his own height upon meaner men, he rained upon the heads of the senators a torrent of unwelcome truths. They had banished

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 24, Lib. vii. pp. 1032-1033.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 26, Lib. vii. pp. 1033-1046.

liberal arts and all good literature from the city by their imbecility as—what he called after the Cologne monk who had commenced the onset upon Reuchlin—Peppercorn Christians. He proved to them, in their own way, that their champion, Jacob Hochstraten, writing against Luther's heresy, displayed himself as the most pestilent of heretics, while as for Conrad of Ulm, now the Cologne Inquisitor, he had promoted Luther's cause so well by opposition, that there seemed to be not a man in the whole town of Ulm and the adjacent county who had not turned Lutheran, and he had even brought about the overthrow of his own monastery, with the expulsion of himself and all his brethren. Having defended his own books of magic, in the next place Agrippa laid hands on the University, exposed the immorality of certain rectors and professors, the mismanagement which could allow the degree of Master of Arts to be given, as it had been given recently to one John Raym, who could not read and could not sing, and knew only one mass by heart, who therefore, having been accepted as a brother teacher and ordained a priest by the Cologne theologians, was obliged to go to a boys' school at Deventer and learn his grammar. He reminded them of sundry other scandals of this character, and called upon them to purify their University, if they were not willing to let it utterly decay. It might be said that all this was the affair of the rectors and principals of the schools, and certainly, added Cornelius, if you leave it to them you will always stick in the same mire. The University is yours, mainly they are your



sons who are instructed in it. The affair is yours. Why do you not invite knowledge from without, and train sons able to take knowledge abroad? Who ever sends youth in these days to be educated at Cologne, whence they have banished all good scholarship, where learning and eloquence are under ban, and books that contain novelty of research upon choice subjects may not be printed, sold, read, or possessed? . . . . . Nobody can deny that your city and your citizens surpass in magnificence all others in Germany; in literature only, which alone gives life and perpetuity to all the rest, you are deficient, and your glory, therefore, is but as that of a picture on a wall. I shall be glad if you will hear my warning; if you will not, I have done my duty, and shown good-will to my native place. As for his own affair, he said he was prepared to serve Cologne by publishing his book there; in other towns printers were ready for it. Of heresy it contained nothing, but if their theosophists wished to convict him as a heretic, a book of his would very shortly be issued at Basle, written especially to raise that issue, upon which they were at liberty to try their strength, if they had any.

The lecture to the Cologne magistrates contained nothing that was not very true. Cologne, chiefly on account of the controversy set on foot by Pfefferkorn, really had fallen into ridicule among the learned; and, in spite of all the wealth of the town, its University was really in the state Cornelius described. He rightly pointed out the cause of the hurt and its remedy, declaring himself censor of the

men from whom he could not but disdain to receive censure. It was not to them that he intended to prefer any petition. As the printer wrote to him upon the subject of the prohibition, "the whole matter depends on the Archbishop and his ordinary: nevertheless, I could wish you had not written so sharply to the senate<sup>1</sup>." It was in the power of the Electoral Prince Hermann of Wied, Archbishop of Cologne, to command his ordinary to remove the veto set by him, according to the order of the senate, on the issuing of Agrippa's volume. He had a good ostensible right to declare that, as the book had been examined and passed by the council of the Emperor, and would appear with Imperial privilege, it was in defence of the Imperial dignity that he felt bound to interfere. Agrippa wrote three letters to him, claiming as a right, more than as a favour, that he would put an end to the short triumph of the sophists, who, at the date of his last note, had hindered him for six weeks, and who then had a fair prospect of inflicting serious damage on himself or on his printer, by making it impossible for the work to be brought out in time for the next Frankfort fair<sup>2</sup>. As for the tumid and inflated sophists, whose brains were all in their bellies, and whose wit was on their platters, at once his accusers and his judges, how, he asked, could it be possible or right to endure them with unruffled mind? The Archbishop chose this time for a distinct and very courteous offer to Cornelius of employment under honourable

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 32, Lib. vii. p. 1049.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 30, Lib. vii. p. 1048; also Ep. 27, 28, Lib. vii. pp. 1045, 1046.



conditions at his court, and promised that considerations of his own convenience should dictate the arrangements made. The offer was so worded as to be grateful to the sensitive and chafed mind of the persecuted scholar; and it was accepted thankfully<sup>1</sup>. Very soon afterwards the interdict upon the publishing of the Occult Philosophy was removed; before that happened, a letter from the Inquisitor, Conrad of Ulm, had become public, in which he replied to the vicar of the Carthusians, by whom he had been addressed on behalf of Peter Quentel, a printer of the town, who wished to issue at his own expense Agrippa's work, but had first sought a theological opinion on the copy. The letter got into the hands of Soter, and ran thus: "Greeting and commendation, venerable father Vicar. I do not wish to contend against it, since the book is full of natural things, and does not extend to the seduction of the simple. Suffer it to be printed, if they wish<sup>2</sup>."

The complete work on Occult Philosophy was published, therefore, at Cologne, in the year 1533<sup>3</sup>, and dedicated to its author's patron, the Archbishop. In the same year also there was published, at Cologne, Agrippa's Commentary on the *Ars Brevis* of Raymond Lully<sup>4</sup>; and that he might put forth all his strength against the sophists and theosophists, he also published, with a dedication to

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 29, Lib. vii. p. 1047; Ep. 46, Lib. vii. p. 1059.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 33, Lib. vii. p. 1050.

<sup>3</sup> It is the copy from which the second and third books have been sketched in the first volume of this narrative.

<sup>4</sup> Jöcher's *Gelehrten Lexicon*. I have not met with this edition.

his old friend Cantuuncula, his attack on the Dominicans written at Metz,—the Disputation touching the Monogamy of Anne<sup>1</sup>. He also edited the publication at Nuremberg of some of the writings of a pious Cistercian monk, Godoschalcus Moncordius, which he believed to be conceived in the pure spirit of the Gospel, though not elegantly worded<sup>2</sup>. The criticism on the Louvain theologians had met at Basle with strong objections, and when partly printed was returned upon the author's hands: a printer in another town then undertook to publish it<sup>3</sup>. While such occupation with the printers kept Cornelius amused, he was relieved in some degree of worldly care by genial intercourse with the Archbishop and his friends. In the summer of the year 1533 he was with his patron, who made holiday at Wisbaden. The Archbishop, who was more than sixty years of age, was of a weak and gentle disposition, easily led by advisers. In the preceding year he had been showing at Paderborn great zeal against the Lutherans, condemning not a few to death and then remitting sentence. In the next place travelling towards a belief in the necessity of some reform, he lived to act upon it, and lived also to be excommunicated. Although no scholar at all, he cultivated the society of learned men, and by the friendly churchman's help, Agrippa, with a little income that enabled him to feed his children, could recover some of his old cheerfulness<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Ep. 35, 36, Lib. vii. pp. 1051-1053.

<sup>2</sup> Ep. 37, Lib. vii. p. 1054.

<sup>3</sup> Ep. 39, Lib. vii. p. 1054.

<sup>4</sup> Ep. 44-48, Lib. vii. pp. 1058-1061.



## CHAPTER XVI.

## EXILE AND DEATH.

WHERE now is the Agrippa who began the world averse from strife, and who, when at the outset of his career as a scholar he was attacked by the monk Catilinet, addressed his enemy with the soft voice of Christian expostulation? Alas for him, he is the same man still. His violence in later years was but the struggling of a spirit, pure and sensitive, against a torment urged beyond its powers of endurance; it is true in one sense that he fought but as the deer fights when at bay. Young motherless children were about him, who looked up to him for sustenance. Because he was unable to abase his soul below the level to which God enabled him to raise it, he met danger upon all the paths he tried, and during his whole life the men who brought him into peril were especially the meaner classes of the monks. There was a feminine element perceptible in his whole character,—the natural gentleness, the affectionate playfulness, the quick, nervous perception, the unworldly aspiration, and the want of tact in dealing with the world; the impulse to seek happiness in a domestic life belonged to this part of Agrippa's nature, and to the same part of it belonged

his scolding of the monks and courtiers. There may have been much of the man's vigour put into his way of speech, but I think that Cornelius resented wrong and cruelty much as a true woman might resent it, and that the hard fighting to which he betook himself at last was not that of a man by nature violent, but—paradox as it may seem to say so—the inevitable issue to which he was led by all that was most truly amiable in his nature. In the last letter of his on record he is found inviting the most learned Dryander to a supper, in the name of the Archbishop of Cologne, and he writes his invitation while beset by sore distresses, in a genial, airy tone, that speaks to us of the man who, twice married, never let a sun set on dispute with either wife; who won entire love in his home, clung to his friends, and fondled his dogs even foolishly.

Very touching is his complete silence on the subject of his last great sorrow. He was resident, in the year 1534, at Bonn, feeding his boys on the salary he earned from the Archbishop, and suffering the ruin of his whole ambition as a scholar from the wicked libels of the monks. He was forty-eight years old, and to his own eyes it must almost have seemed that he had lived in vain. To all his miseries was added in that year the certainty that he had taken to his heart a faithless wife<sup>1</sup>.

But let us look into Agrippa's house, and see it as the monks were at that time describing it among the people.

<sup>1</sup> Wierus, *De Præstigiis Dæmonum*. Lib. ii. cap. v. Opera (ed. cit.) p. 111.  
 "Ubi conjugem Mechliniensem Bonnæ repudiasset anno MDXXXV."



This we may do by help of a well-known story which is told with all faith by Delrio, but Delrio copied it out of a book that had been published in Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish, known in French as the *Théâtre de la Nature*, in Italian as the *Stroze Cicogna*, and in Spanish as *Valderama*<sup>1</sup>. Here it is, as it was issued from the mint<sup>2</sup>:

“This happened to Cornelius Agrippa at Louvain. He had a boarder, who was too curious, and Agrippa having once gone somewhere, had given the keys of his museum to the wife whom he afterwards divorced, forbidding her to allow any one to enter. That thoughtless youth did not omit, in season and out of season, to entreat the woman to give him the means of entering, until he gained his prayer. Having entered the museum, he fell upon a book of conjurations—read it. Hark! there is knocking at the door; he is disturbed; but he goes on with his reading; some one knocks again; and the unmannerly youth answering nothing to this, a demon enters, asks why is he called? What is it commanded him to do? Fear stifles the youth’s voice, the demon his mouth, and so he pays the price of his unholy curiosity. In the mean time the chief magician returns home, sees the devils dancing over him, uses the accustomed arts, they come when called, explain how the thing happened, he orders the homicide spirit to enter the corpse, and to walk now and then in the market-place (where other students were accustomed frequently to meet), at length to

<sup>1</sup> *Apologie pour tous les grands Personnages qui ont été faussement soupçonnés de Magie*. Par S. Naudé, Paris (ed. La Haye, 1653), p. 423.

<sup>2</sup> Delrio, in *Disquisitionum Magicarum*, Lib. ii. Quæst. xxix.: “An Diabolus possit facere ut homo vere resurgat?” (ed. Colon. 1657), p. 356.

quit the body. He walks three or four times, then falls; the demon that had stirred the dead limbs taking flight. It was long thought that this youth had been seized with sudden death, but signs of suffocation first begot suspicion, afterwards time divulged all."

Another writer, of the generation following that of Agrippa, who gave license to much malicious wit by getting credit—or discredit—as a writer on occult philosophy, has indeed heard that Agrippa was no conjurer, but thinks<sup>1</sup> "if it be true, as they relate, that he often delivered public lecture, when at Friburg, from nine until ten o'clock, and immediately afterwards, namely, at ten o'clock, began lecturing at Pont à Mousson, in Lorraine, they must sweat a good deal who would rub out of him the blot of magic."

At Paris, too, where it may be remembered he was detained while labouring to get away from France, and where he lived not on the best terms with the French court, he used, it was said, a power that he had of reading in the moon descriptions of what happened elsewhere, at any even the greatest distance. "During the French war in the Milanese, when Charles V. had entered Milan, not once only what had been happening at Milan in the day was told in the same night at Paris."

Other stories made him just as good a servant to the Emperor Charles V., by virtue of his might as a magician. The Imperial army, they said, conquered sometimes by his help.

<sup>1</sup> *Natalis Comes. Mytholog.* Lib. iii. cap. xvii. Quoted by Schelhorn in his *Amenitates Literariæ*, Tom. ii. p. 589 (ed. Franc. et Lip. 1725). The same person is the narrator of the next story.



Nevertheless, the Emperor's wrath against Agrippa was ascribed to his unholy power. He had proposed, it was said, by magical means, to discover hidden treasures for his master, and for that reason his self-denying master caused him, with two other nobles implicated in the same crime, to be banished from his empire<sup>1</sup>.

The truth seems to be that Cornelius was really banished out of Germany, or under the necessity of flying for his life. At the beginning of the year 1535 he had divorced his wife at Bonn<sup>2</sup>, and at the same time the increasing violence of enemies, whom he had irritated by his own denunciation of their ignorance and malice, and to whom he had given a weapon by the publication of his books of Magic, had not failed of effect upon the Emperor. To the Emperor, as before said, the book upon the Vanity of Science was the real affront. The end of all seems to be expressed in a sentence of Delrio, wherewith he illustrates the position that good princes most rarely pardon wizards. "Emperor Charles V.," he says, "did not excuse Agrippa the penalty of death, but, when he had fled into France, doomed him to exile, and in France he died<sup>3</sup>."

He died at the age of forty-nine, having lived but a few months as a wanderer. His purpose is said to have been to have found his way to Lyons, there to publish certain of his works<sup>4</sup>. Very soon after his death at Lyons

<sup>1</sup> Delrio, Op. cit. Lib. ii. Quæst. xii.    <sup>2</sup> Wierus, Op. cit. cap. v. p. 111.

<sup>3</sup> Delrio, Lib. v. Quæst. ii. p. 749: "Quomodo inquisitio in hoc crimine instituenda?"

<sup>4</sup> Wierus and Melchior Adam (*Dignorum laude Virorum. . . . Immortalitas*, ed. Francof., 1705; in the *Vitæ Germanorum Medicorum*, p. 8) are the authorities for the succeeding account of Agrippa's death. See also Naudé, Op. cit. pp. 426, 427.

his collected works were published, and although, in deference to the priests, many of the things republished were garbled, and the *Vanity of Sciences and Arts* suffered especially<sup>1</sup>, although, too, in deference to the cupidity of booksellers, a spurious and foolish fourth book of *Occult Philosophy* was added, which Agrippa's pupil Wier, careful for the honour of a master at whose hearth he had sat, and whose memory he dared openly to cherish, denounced as an imposture; still there was in the Lyons edition of Agrippa's works the matter that Agrippa must have been most anxious to see fairly produced before the world: there first appeared the complete set of letters which afford the best help to a refutation of his slanderers.

It must have been a friendly hand that took these papers from the chamber of the dead Agrippa. They were sent on to their destination. The poor scholar died hunted, exhausted, and almost utterly forsaken. He did not live to reach Lyons. He had not long crossed the French border before King Francis caused him to be seized and thrown in prison for his publication of the correspondence that discredited the queen-mother. His few friends at court had influence enough to beg him free. But when free he was penniless and homeless. He could think only with anguish of the little children he was forced to leave, a divorced wanton their only shadow of a mother, and their father far away, hunted

<sup>1</sup> A very full list of the passages omitted will be found in Schelhorn. *Amœnitates Literariæ* (ed. cit.), Tom. ii. pp. 518-525.



and dying. God only knew, perhaps God only cared, what was the fate of these orphans; it is enough for us to know that God does care for such as they. Cornelius reached Grenoble and died there, as his persecutors said with triumph, at a mean place, suffering from sordid want. Yet the same men asserted, that when travelling he had the skill to pay his way with what appeared to be good money, but changed afterwards to bits of horn and shell. The truth is, the sick man was received into the house of a friendly gentleman, M. Vachon, Receiver-General of the Province of Dauphiné. The house is in the Rue des Clercs, and afterwards belonged to the family of Ferrand. There died Cornelius Agrippa, forty-nine years old. If spirits walk when restless in their graves, his may have done so, for they buried him within a convent of Dominicans.

The people were instructed very shortly afterwards with a minute account of the magician's death, which I will give as it is to be found in the works of a contemporary. It was an unlucky coincidence, perhaps, that Agrippa really had a little black dog, called Monsieur, among his pets. Simon the Magician, Sylvester, Dr. Faustus, Bragandin of Venice, all had dogs. Cornelius Agrippa had one. He would remain for a whole week together working in his study, having for companion the pet dog, which he suffered to sit on his table, or run loose among his papers. "Wierus," Delrio says, "denies its having been a devil, as others more truly affirm." We have accepted one statement of the manner of Agrippa's death; let us now hear what is more truly affirmed by the

grave priest and learned traveller, M. Thevet<sup>1</sup>: "At last, having betaken himself to Lyons, very wretched, and deprived of his faculties, he tried all the means that he could to live, waving, as dexterously as he could, the end of his stick, and yet gained so little, that he died in a miserable inn, disgraced and abhorred before all the world, which detested him as an accursed and execrable magician, because he always carried about with him as his companion a devil in the figure of a dog, from whose neck, when he felt death approaching, he removed the collar, figured all over with magic characters, and afterwards, being in a half-mad state, he drove it from him with these words: 'Go, vile beast, by whom I am brought utterly to perdition.' And afterwards this dog, which had been so familiar with him, and been his assiduous companion in his travels, was no more seen; because, after the command Agrippa gave him, he began to run towards the Saône, where he leapt in, and never came out thence, for which reason it is judged that he was drowned there. In perpetual testimony of his base and depraved life, there has been composed over his tomb this epitaph."

The epitaph is in bad Latin hexameters and pentameters, of which the following is, as to sense and grammar, an exact translation. The words have been arranged in the way now usual with compositions of this sort, instead of being paraphrased in metre, and I leave untouched the doubt there is as to where dog, man, cake, or spirit, is the subject of the sentence.

<sup>1</sup> Thevet, *Portraits et Vies des Hommes Illustres* (ed. Paris, 1584), Tom. ii. p. 543.



## THIS TOMB

SCARCELY THE GRACES KEEP, BUT THE BLACK DAUGHTERS OF HELL;  
NOT THE MUSES, BUT THE FURIES WITH SNAKES SPREAD ABROAD.

*Alecto*

COLLECTS THE ASHES, MIXES THEM WITH ACONITE,  
AND GIVES THE WELCOME OFFERING TO BE DEVoured BY

*The Stygian Dog,*

WHO NOW CRUELLY PURSUES THROUGH THE PATHS OF ORCUS,  
AND SNATCHES AT  
THAT OF WHICH WHEN ALIVE HE WAS THE COMPANION,  
AND HE LEAPS UP AT HIM.

*And He*

SALUTES THE FURIES BECAUSE HE HAD KNOWN THEM ALL,  
AND HE ADDRESSES EACH BY HER OWN NAME.

## O WRETCHED ARTS,

WHICH AFFORD ONLY THIS CONVENIENCE  
THAT AS A KNOWN GUEST HE CAN APPROACH

## THE STYGIAN WATERS.

So like a Pagan spat the Monk upon the Christian's  
grave !

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## **AGRIPPA, HENRY CORNELIUS.**

Leading Events of his Life.

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| 1486. |      | Born at Cologne, 1, of noble parentage, 12; character of his education, 13, 14; sent early in life to the court of Maximilian the First, and serves there as secretary, 15.                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 1504. | 20.  | At Paris, on secret service, unites with some students, members of an association of theosophists, 25,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1507. | 21.  | in an attempt to establish by stratagem and force the authority of Senor de Geron in the neighbourhood of Tarragon, 26—38,                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1508. | 22.  | is beset by the Catalonians, 39—40, and narrowly escapes with his life, 50, 51; quits Spain and reaches Avignon, where                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 1509. | 23.  | he communicates with his associates in France, abandons the scheme of violence, and returns with them to the study of mysteries, 54—63; assisted by them, 64, he expounds before the University of Dôle Reuchlin's book on the Mirific Word, 65—93, with such success as to be made Doctor of Divinity, 94; at the same time seeking the patronage |

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### **YEAR. AGE.**

|       |     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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|       |     | of Margaret of Austria, 95—97, he writes a treatise upon the Nobility and Pre-eminence of the Female Sex, 98—111; in the same year he marries Jane Louisa Tyssie, of Geneva, 111, 212, 213; and also in the same year, and in the beginning of the next year,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 1510. | 24. | writes three books of Occult Philosophy, 113—211, the manuscript of which he shows to Trithemius, 213—220, who approves but warns him against publishing, 220—222. He has already been denounced at Ghent for his Hebrew studies by Catilinet, a Franciscan monk, who preached in this year the Lent discourses before Margaret and her court, and who by his sermons provoked Margaret to wrath against Agrippa, 222—223; therefore he cannot offer to her his essay upon the Pre-eminence of Woman, 224, and goes back into the service of the emperor, 225, by whom he is sent with an embassy to the court of Henry VIII, at London, 226—229, where he lodges with Dean Colet, 230—240, and whence he addresses to the monk Catilinet a Christian expostulation, 240—249. Returns to Germany, and goes home to Cologne, 250, where |
| 1511. | 25. | he delivers Quodlibetal Lectures on Divinity, 250—252, before rejoining the emperor, who sends him as a soldier to the Italian war, 254—257. Attached to the Council of Pisa by the Cardinal of Santa Croce, 258—260, he lectures on Plato in the University, 261, and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

Y



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|       |      | with other members of the council is excommunicated by Pope Julius II., 261, 262. Returning to the army, 263—265,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |       |      | a poor country girl accused of witchcraft, 56—64. Having incensed the monks, he is                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 1512. | 26.  | he remains in Italy, 265—304; is taken prisoner at Pavia by the Swiss, 266—270, but soon released, 271. He has obtained a patron for his scholarship in the Marquis of Monferrat, 268, and is, at the close of the year, settled in his chief town of Casale, 275.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | 1520. | 34.  | hunted from Metz, and journeys with his wife and son through wintry weather to Cologne, 65, where he lives with his mother and sister, 66, in a town as to tolerance another Metz, 67—83,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1513. | 27.  | Reconciled to the head of the Church, by Leo X., 276, engaged by turns in war and study, 277,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1521. | 35.  | expecting employment by the Duke of Savoy, 80, until the death of his wife Louisa, 82, 83, after which he retreats to Geneva, still flattered with promises from Savoy, 84, practises physic, and becomes known as a friend among the Reformed clergy in Switzerland, 85—101.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1514. | 28.  | he is sent on a brief mission to Switzerland, 278, is knighted in battle, 288, obtains good friends, 278—280, and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1522. | 36.  | Marries again at Geneva, 102; abandons hope in Savoy, and                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1515. | 29.  | expounds before the University of Pavia the Pimander of Hermes Trismegistus, 281—286. He is admitted by that University as Doctor both of Medicine and Law, 287, 288. Francis I. invading Italy, 290, Agrippa fights in the battle of Marignano, where he loses manuscripts, 291, 292, and by the victory of the French is reduced to beggary, 292. Being helped by the Marquis of Monferrat, 294, he writes and dedicates to him two spiritual treatises, one on Man, 295, the other on the Triple Way of Knowing God, 296—304. | 1523. | 37.  | accepts public office as physician and counsellor in the Swiss town of Friburg, 103—109; is generously treated by the Swiss, 104.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|       |      | VOL. II.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | 1524. | 38.  | Tempted by dazzling offers, and refusing invitations from the Duke of Bourbon, he accepts office in France as physician to the queen-mother, 110—114, and removes with his family by her command, 119, to Lyons, three more children having been born to him, of which one died before the end of August in this year, 115.                                                                                                                   |
| 1516. | 30.  | Offers of patronage from sundry persons, 1—6, and a brief                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 1525. | 39.  | To a fourth son, born at Lyons, the Cardinal de Lorraine and Dame de St. Prie are godfather and godmother, but no salary is paid; and Agrippa, attached to the queen-mother's service, learns                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1517. | 31.  | connexion with the Duke of Savoy, 7—10, end in acceptance of office as                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1526. | 40.  | what hell it is in suing long to bide, 119—150, 210—222. He offends the queen by anticipating success to the arms of Bourbon, 219, and by expressing his unwillingness to be employed in a vain art as an astrologer, 145—147. Thwarted in aspiration and ambition by the monks and courtiers, he consoles himself with the writing of his Declaration on the Vanity of Sciences and Arts, and on the Excellence of the Word of God, 151—209. |
| 1518. | 32.  | advocate and orator to the free town of Metz, 13—65, where he labours as a physician among the plague-smitten, 26—30. Hears of his father's death, 33.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1519. | 33.  | Enters into a contest with the monks who had reviled Faber Stapulensis for his denial of three husbands to St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin, 36—50. Beards the inquisitor, Nicolas Savin, 51, and saves from his clutches                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |       |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |

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1527. 41. Slighted at Lyons, and left by the queen-mother to starve, he corresponds with the Duke of Bourbon, 222, 228, and is on the point of entering his service when the duke is killed, 229. Labouring next to find a living out of France, 230, and invited by admirers of his genius who live at Antwerp to establish himself there, 230,

1528. 42. he sets out for that town by way of Paris, 232, with an ailing wife, four children, baggage, and servants, 233; but at Paris suffers ruinous delay for six months at an inn, through the evasions of the court and the Duke of Vendôme's refusal of his passports, 235—245. Crosses the frontier alone without a pass, 246, leaving the family to be brought on by a relation, 247, 248.

1529. 43. At Antwerp he begins to thrive, 249, is appointed by the Regent Margaret Historiographer and Indiciary Councillor to the Emperor Charles V., and commences at last the printing of his works, 250. Another son is born to him, 250; but when his home is full of happiness, his wife dies suddenly of plague, 251—255, to his intense grief, 255. In the time of his despair, 257, 258, he is much sought by princes, 259, but remains

1530. 44. at Antwerp as imperial historiographer. He does the work of his office, 261, but does not get its pay, 262. Margaret of Austria dying, Agrippa writes her funeral oration, 264; but in this year he prints his *Vanity of Sciences and Arts*, 262, which contains enough truth about courts to offend the emperor, and enough truth about church corruption to offend the monks, 263, 264.

1531. 45. A few months afterwards he prints one book of his *Occult Philosophy*, 265—269, and supplies the monks and courtiers with an easy method of traducing him by calling him Magician, 269. He duns the emperor in vain

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for salary, 270, himself beset by creditors, in debt to usurers, 271. He is invited to write in defence of Queen Katharine of England, 281—284. Cardinal Campeggio and the Bishop of Liege are his friends, 271, 272; but he is seized at Brussels and thrown

1532. 46. into gaol for debt, 272, 273, whence he makes his appeal for justice, not for mercy, 273—276. Warned by Erasmus that "monks and theologians are not to be overcome, even if one had a better cause than St. Paul had," 280, 281, but still faithful to his sense of truth, 281, Agrippa, with his salary again promised, leaves the court, 284, takes a small house at Mechlin, and marries a third wife, who proves unfaithful, 285. He is publishing editions of several of his works at Cologne, where the archbishop is friendly, 287; but their sale in Brabant is opposed by the Louvain theologians, 288, who have laid informations against the *Vanity of Sciences* before the senate of Mechlin, 289, 292—295. Agrippa replies to them with an *Apology*, 289, 292—300, and retorts with a *Complaint*, 300—303. His salary due from the emperor is still withheld, 303, 304, and he retires to Bonn, 304, whence he appeals to Mary of Austria, the new regent in the Netherlands, 305. His complete work on *Occult Philosophy* being in the press at Cologne, an interdict is set on it by the magistrates at the desire of the inquisitor, Conrad of Ulm, 305, 306.

1533. 47. Agrippa tells the magistrates some bitter truths about their university, 306—309; by help of the friendly archbishop, gets rid of the interdict, and issues the work in its complete state, 310. For a time he lives under the patronage of the Electoral Count Hermann of Wied, Archbishop of Cologne, 311—313, and so

1534. 48. resides at Bonn, 313, until



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1535. 49. the divorce from his unfaithful wife, 285, 313, which takes place in the same year, when, threatened with death by the emperor, he flies to France, 316; is there imprisoned for the publishing of letters on the subject of the queen-mother's injustice to himself, but soon set free by intercession, 317, and sinking under persecution, exiled from his helpless children, wanders until he dies at Grenoble, and is buried in a convent of Dominicans, 318. Lying monks commit his memory to execration, 314—320.

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THE END.

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