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Centro Internazionale di Studi Bruniani "Giovanni Aquilecchia" (CISB)

BIBLIOTHECA BRUNIANA ELECTRONICA

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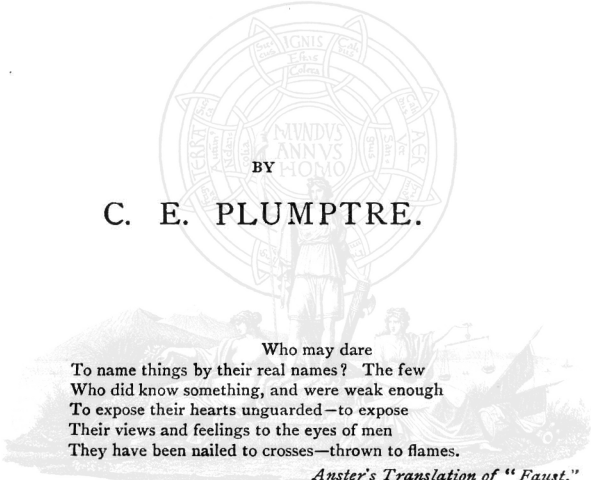
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J. A. Mc Cracken. Sur-Lt Colonel. in S

GIORDANO BRUNO:

✓
29/
1201 ✓ A Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

BY
C. E. PLUMPTRE.



Who may dare
To name things by their real names? The few
Who did know something, and were weak enough
To expose their hearts unguarded—to expose
Their views and feelings to the eyes of men
They have been nailed to crosses—thrown to flames.

Anster's Translation of "Faust."

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

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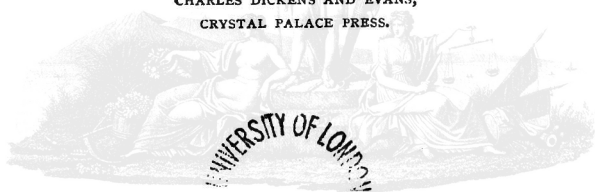
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PREFACE.

HISTORICAL tales are of two descriptions. One, where a few historical characters are wrought into a story that is otherwise wholly fictitious ; the other, where one or two fictitious characters are interwoven with personages and events that are wholly historical. This story is of the latter description. I cannot indeed venture to hope that it will be found entirely free from inaccuracies, since how seldom is history itself perfectly accurate? Yet I can honestly say that I have spared myself as little in the way of research as if I had been writing a biography of Giordano Bruno, instead of a romance. Since this story will probably find more readers amongst those who are interested in the life and times of Bruno, than with ordinary novel readers ; and since, moreover, there is no detailed account of Bruno in our language, I have thought it well to notify in this Preface what are the characters and events that are fictitious, so that the reader may be enabled to separate fact from fiction.

(1.) The slight sketch of the parents of Bruno, in the early part of this tale, is, with the exception of their names, entirely fictitious ; or, if it has any basis in fact, it is only such as rests upon negative evidence. It is somewhat singular, that in an age like this, when the doctrine of

heredity has assumed such an important position, so little has been discovered about the parentage of a thinker such as Bruno. Some have said that his father was a soldier ; others, that his mother was a laundress, and his father a tailor ; while Pietro Colletta, in his "History of Naples," describes Bruno as born of noble parents.* I have selected the first hypothesis, chiefly because Bruno himself, when brought before his accusers, and questioned as to his parentage, described his father as a soldier.† My reasons for making him gently nurtured are the following : The only ground for the notion that he was born of a tailor and laundress is that in one of Bruno's own works, "De L'Infinito," consisting of a series of dialogues, he makes one of his fictitious characters insolently taunt him with being of this origin. It seems to me that there is greater probability of truth in Bruno's deliberate description of the profession of his father, when questioned by his accusers upon that subject, than in the mere utterance of a fictitious character in a dialogue. But even a stronger reason than this for the little probability that he was of so low an origin lies in the acknowledged fact that, at the age of fourteen, Bruno surpassed other boys in learning and general knowledge. Now, although we are all familiar with tales of young geniuses, who have had little or no education—the young poet, or musician, or artist—in whom inspiration seems to take the place of education ; to be *learned* implied in Bruno's day even more than in our own, not only that his father must have had the means to provide him with masters and books, but that he himself must have had *leisure* (a boon no child of very poor parents could

* "History of Naples," vol. ii., page 44, note.

† "Documenti intorno a Giordano Bruno," by Domenico Berti, p. 17.

have possessed) to prosecute his studies. The improbability of this story is increased when we remember that his father was on very intimate terms with the poet Tansillo, who was of noble origin. Gerolamo Scarampo, Bishop of Campagna, was also a relation of his; and although, doubtless, in Bruno's day, even more than in our own, bishops were occasionally taken from plebeian families, still the probabilities lie on the other side. At the same time, I have not followed Pietro Colletta's statement that Bruno was of noble extraction, partly for the reason that the name of Bruno seems never to have possessed the dignity of the little prefix, *di*—that nearly all-essential distinction of Italian nobility—before it. Moreover, we must not forget, that after all, when nothing is recorded about the social position of the parents of a distinguished man, it generally implies that there is very little worth recording. If a man is of very high, or of very low origin, he is tolerably certain not to allow either fact to be forgotten. On the one hand, there is the pride of race; on the other, that of individuality, or the consciousness that by his own inherent genius, he has conquered every obstacle of environment and ancestry. Who does not know, for instance, that Byron was a lord, and Burns a ploughman? Yet few, unless they have studied the subject for a particular purpose, would be able to describe the exact profession of the fathers of such among our distinguished men as have sprung from the middle classes.

It is the same kind of negative evidence that leads me to believe that Bruno's parents died soon after he entered the Dominican convent. Had they died during his infancy, he would, almost certainly, have been entrusted to the care of some female relative, in which case her name would be

probably handed down to us, as are the names of his early teachers. That, on the other hand, his parents did not live to see him grow up, may be inferred, I think, from the fact that, notwithstanding his great love for his birthplace, he seems, during all the wanderings of his youth, never to have gone back to it; neither are we led to infer, by any word or action of his, that either of his parents still lived.

All these circumstances combined, though affording, I admit, no positive evidence, contain, as it seems to me, a sufficiently weighty amount of negative evidence to justify me in representing Bruno as I have—gently, though not nobly born; related undoubtedly to the nobility through some branches of his family (his relationship to the Bishop of Campagna was through a common relation being of the family of Caire di Casal Monferrato), but yet, since from the sovereign downwards, we none of us can be connected only with equals—not improbably possessing, at the other end of the tree, connections of but humble origin. It seems certain that his father left him no wealth; and such of his relations as were nobly born, either could not, or would not yield him pecuniary assistance, for, after he left his convent, he seems to have entirely supported himself by the precarious employment of teaching.

(2.) The friendship between Castelnau de la Mauvissière and the elder Bruno is without historical foundation. Yet, though only a conjecture on my part, it is one, I think, that I should have ventured to hazard, even had I been writing a biography instead of a romance. The great kindness that Castelnau accorded to Giordano Bruno, seems to me to demand a fuller explanation than it has received. How came it that a man of Castelnau's years, a sincere, though it is true, not a bigoted Catholic, and a politician rather

than a philosopher, should have shown such exceeding interest in an apostate monk, separated from himself by a whole generation, and possessing little or no love for politics? The generally received interpretation is that Henry III. of France had conceived a great fancy for Bruno, and had specially recommended him to the care of Castelnau, who was then acting as his Ambassador in England. But this explanation would not account for the extreme attention Castelnau lavished upon Bruno. An ambassador, in compliance with his sovereign's wishes, might certainly take his king's *protégé* under his protection, he might introduce him to the higher ranks of society; but he surely would not deem it necessary to adopt him into his own family circle, and allow his heretical books to be dedicated to him. But the explanation in other ways is unsatisfactory; is only a difficulty explained by a greater difficulty. For the question at once arises, how did the French King first become acquainted with Bruno? On his arrival in France, the future writer of such wide, though scarcely enviable, repute was barely removed from positive obscurity. He had written very little; and during his sojourn in France, what lectures he gave were almost invariably before private audiences. And assuredly there were few kings less likely to hear of, or take interest in an obscure lecturer on philosophy than *Henri Trois*. Of the many wicked and incompetent kings that it has been the fate of France to possess, few were more wicked and incompetent than this king. With a love of finery and dress that would be contemptible in the most frivolous woman, he seems to have been impelled in almost regular alternation to acts of disgusting debauchery, quickly followed by fits of superstitious remorse, which, if not as morally

reprehensible, are almost equally disgusting ; for he would join in processions from shrine to shrine, flogging himself in the public streets till the blood gushed from the wounds. Was it likely, I ask, that a sovereign thus contemptible and superstitious would have his interest greatly excited in a young foreign teacher of philosophy, much suspected of heresy ? But if we once assume, as I have ventured to assume, Castelnau's great friendship with Bruno's father, there remains no difficulty in explaining either the Ambassador's attachment to his friend's son, nor the sovereign's attention to him. It is known that *Henri Trois* held his high-minded Ambassador in respect, if not indeed, absolutely in awe ; and although he would not give up his vices to please him, it seems probable that he might gladly seize an opportunity where, without any great self-denial, he could oblige him by taking under his protection the son of Castelnau's dearest friend. Moreover, Bruno himself was of pleasing address. His predilection for astrology, too, though affording, as it seems to me, a very insufficient reason for attracting the French king without a previous introduction, might easily, after such introduction, form a bond of sympathy between the two. Probably the king knew nothing of Bruno's heretical opinions, and a hint from Castelnau would render the Italian careful not to disclose them. Then there is an incident in Bruno's early career, which is not difficult of explanation, on the assumption that he was under the protection of a powerful nobleman, but is of almost insuperable difficulty without such assumption ; viz., that he received—he, an obscure monk, who had thrown off the gown of his Order—permission from the Rector of the Sorbonne, a body both religious and exclusive, to lecture at that University at stated times and

seasons. In addition to all these considerations, if we remember what is an undoubted fact, that Castelnau spent a large portion of his youth in Italy, it becomes, I think, a conjecture not without warrant that the cause of Castelnau's exceeding kindness to Giordano Bruno had its origin in the early friendship that he had formed when in Italy for Bruno's father. Still, for fear of misleading the reader, I would again remind him that this is only conjecture on my part. I can find no historical proof of Bruno having any acquaintance with Castelnau till he met him in England.

(3.) Signor Berti has selected Milan* as the probable meeting place of Bruno with Philip Sidney. My own investigations into the life of Philip Sidney have led me to form the opinion that the meeting place was Venice and not Milan. It is, of course, a matter of quite minor importance; yet the alteration, such as it is, is one that I should have ventured to make had I been writing a biography instead of a tale.

The details concerning Bruno's youth that have come down to us are so scanty that I have been forced to eke them out with a little conjecture; but in all essentials, such as the names of his convents, of his early teachers, etc., it will be found that I have strictly followed history. And even in my conjectures I have tried to my utmost to follow the lines of historical probability. Thus, though I would not assert that Bruno's parents were in reality such as I have created them, every reader possessing an intimate acquaintance with the declining years of the Renaissance will readily perceive in Bruno's father a type or representative of the scholarly and somewhat freethinking party of that period, and in his mother of the bigoted Catholic;

* Berti's "*Vita di Bruno*," p. 75.

while Castelnau may be considered, as indeed he actually was, a fitting representative of the more enlightened and large-hearted Catholic of the sixteenth century. Both from the age in which Bruno was born, as well as from his own career, we are justified, I think, in assuming that whether his parents were actually such as I have portrayed them or no, he must certainly have been surrounded during his youth with influences somewhat as I have described them through the medium of these fictitious characters.

Bruno's philosophical career may be said to commence from the year 1576; and, happily for us, the data that have come down to us concerning Bruno's life after this period are sufficiently ample and connected to render it quite unnecessary to borrow imaginary incidents. A comparison between this story and Berti's "Life of Bruno" will show that I have adhered with almost literal fidelity to the text. The philosophical opinions that I have represented Bruno as holding will be found in all their essentials, and very often even in the same form scattered through his various works; and the words that I have put into his mouth when brought before his accusers are little more than free, or occasionally condensed, translations of his actual answers on those occasions.

In dealing with Bruno's sojourn in England, there was, of course, a certain temptation—especially to an English writer—to make him and our great poet, Shakespeare, personally acquainted with each other. There would be required, at the outside, an anachronism of such a very few years! Yet, upon consideration, I thought it better to resist the temptation. The silence of Bruno's biographers upon this point is, I think, a sufficient proof that no such intimacy existed. It is difficult to imagine that either

English or Italian writers would have allowed an occasion so interesting to pass without comment. Moreover, the date of Bruno's sojourn in England makes it a matter of extremest improbability that they should have been personally acquainted. Shakespeare was but twenty years old, and not even the most discriminating of his acquaintances perceived in him his future greatness. To them, as to all, he was but a play-actor, not even of very remarkable eminence. Was it likely that such an one would be introduced to the guest and bosom friend of the great French Ambassador to England? But the absence of personal acquaintance does not militate against the theory lately put forward by a German writer that Shakespeare, in creating his "Hamlet," was to a certain extent under the influence of Bruno's philosophy. Doubtless the youth Shakespeare was then sowing the seed that was afterwards to bring forth so wonderful a crop. His plays show how diligent was his study of foreign writers; and even if he never heard Bruno lecture, it is, I think, quite probable that he was acquainted with his philosophy. The name of Bruno was probably a familiar one with Shakespeare, though that of Shakespeare was almost certainly unknown to Bruno.

The materials out of which this story is constructed have been chiefly taken from the interesting French work, "*Jordano Bruno*," by Bartholemèss, published in 1846; and from the still more interesting Italian works, "*Vita di G. Bruno da Nola*," by Domenico Berti, published in 1868, and "*Documenti intorno a Giordano Bruno*," by the same author, published in 1880; and from Bruno's own works, published in a collected form by Wagner in 1830. The greater part of this story was completed before I had the

pleasure of becoming acquainted with Signor Raffaele Mariano's interesting little work, "Giordano Bruno: La Vita e L'Uomo," published in 1881. I have also consulted the account of Bruno and abridged translation of one of his philosophical works to be found in the "Miscellaneous Works of John Toland," published in 1747.

The sketch of the great French Ambassador, Michel de Castelnau de la Mauvissière, is partly taken from M. Hubault's little work entitled, "M. Castelnau en Angleterre," published in 1856; but my chief source of information has been the Ambassador's own ample chronicles.

Mr. Fox Bourne's "Life of Sir Philip Sidney" has been of some use to me in my slight sketch of that distinguished ornament of the sixteenth century, as has also the older work of Thomas Zouch, entitled, "Memoirs of Sir Philip Sidney," published in 1808. I have also consulted with some advantage "The Complete Poems of Sir P. Sidney," edited, with memorial-introduction and notes, by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, published in 1877.

I believe that there is a German novel relating to Bruno by Leopold Scheffer; but this I have purposely refrained from reading, so that if there is any similarity in our mode of treatment, it can only be such as incidental to the subject-matter of each being the same.

October, 1883.

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I am indebted to Mr. Garnett, of the British Museum, for pointing out to me the following translation, by Mr. J. A. Symonds, of a sonnet occurring in Bruno's "Dialogues on Heroic Love." As Mr. Symonds thinks that Tansillo was actually the author of it, and not Bruno, I prefer to insert it by itself, instead of putting it into the mouth of Bruno in the course of my story :

Now that these wings to speed my wish ascend,
The more I feel vast air beneath my feet,
The more towards boundless air on pinions fleet,
Spurning the earth, soaring to Heaven, I tend :
Nor makes them stoop their flight the direful end
Of Dædal's son ; but upward still they beat :—
What life the while with my life can compete,
Though dead to earth at last I shall descend ?
My own heart's voice in the void air I hear :
"Where wilt thou bear me, O rash man ? Recall
Thy darling will ! This boldness waits on fear !"
"Dread not," I answer, "that tremendous fall !
Strike through the clouds, and smile when death is near
If death so glorious be our doom at all !"

—J. A. S.



GIORDANO BRUNO.

Book the First.

BOYHOOD.

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GIORDANO BRUNO.

CHAPTER I.

A WELCOME GUEST.

“It will appear that it was a sparing speech of the ancients to say, that a friend is another himself ; for that a friend is far more than himself.”—LORD BACON.

“CASTELNAU ! Hast thou returned ! Welcome to Nola a thousand times. As the sight of food to a hungry man, even so is a visit from Signor Castelnau to his old friends Giovanni and Fraulissa Bruno.”

As the speaker arose from the supper-table where he had been seated with his wife, his young son and a guest, the poet Tansillo, he drew his wife's arm within his own and said :

“I speak for you also, *mia cara*, is it not so ?” And the lady, a somewhat stately dame, smiled and bowed in acquiescence.

He whose unexpected arrival had met with so flattering a reception was Michel de Castelnau de la

Mauvissière, subsequently ambassador of the French king Henry III. to the Court of Queen Elizabeth. Though he had not attained that distinction at the time of which we are speaking, he was already known in his own circle as a man who had made his mark. He had travelled throughout the greater part of Europe, and had penetrated most of the questions of his time.

As soon as the first salutations were over and the new-comer had duly taken his place at the table, Giovanni said :

"Now tell us of thy travels. From what quarter of the globe hast thou flown last, O man of many pilgrimages?"

"Nay, nay, thou flatterest me. I have only acquaintance with one quarter of the globe, and that our own."

"Well, at what part of that wert thou most recently?"

"England."

"What news there?"

"None of great importance," answered Castelnau (for he was not apt to be communicative about State matters), "save the astonishing and almost miraculous spread of the Lutheran movement."

"Astonishing indeed!" exclaimed Giovanni. "As if the ideas that mad monk endeavoured to introduce were not infinitely more absurd than those he wished to displace. *Uno sciocco*, a madman, a——"

"Nay," interrupted Castelnau, who, though a good

Catholic himself, by no means shared the contempt with which the majority of the gay Italians regarded the great Reformer. "Thou dost not sufficient justice to the significance of that movement. Not only the English, but the Swiss, the Germans, in increasing numbers enrol themselves under his banner or those of his brother Reformers, as they are styled."

"Holy Virgin! What can the northern barbarians see in Luther, save a mad apostate monk who, if he may be believed, had a perilously intimate acquaintance with the Devil? No! If the doctrines of our Holy Church be ever subverted, which," he added, in a somewhat stricken tone, as he saw a look of horrified rebuke in his wife's eyes, "God forbid, it will not be by Luther or such as he, but by learning, and liberty, and"—with a caressing stress upon the last words—"*le belle arti*. Luther! Why, I hardly know which I despise the most, his bad doctrines or his worse Latin."

"Well, well," answered Castelnau, in a tone of ready admission, as if he were glad to be able to agree at last with his host, "there I grant you are right. Whatever be the worth of Luther's opinions, he certainly knew not how to clothe them with elegant apparel."

"Elegant apparel!" exclaimed Giovanni, almost wrathfully. "As if it were not a part of his general madness to dream he could write in a language he knew so ill!"

“*Gnàffe!*” said Tansillo, who had not yet spoken, “there was method in his madness, since he longed to take unto himself a wife; and what”—turning gallantly to the lady of the house—“what greater proof of sanity can a man give than that?”

Tansillo was a poet of some distinction; he was of noble family, and still, though verging towards old age, a professed worshipper of the fair sex. The lady, a beautiful woman of about thirty-eight, received this little act of homage with that air of proud indifference, whether real or assumed, with which acknowledged beauties always receive what they believe to be but their due.

Castelnau was somewhat glad at this little interruption. He dreaded religious discussions, and he hoped that the poet's gallantry had averted what seemed like the approach of one. He was mistaken, however. After a brief silence, the lady began, with an air which, though she addressed her husband alone, evidently showed that she included the whole company:

“It seems to me that thou hast been dealing far too lightly with that apostate monk. He was more than a *sciocco*, more than an ignorant fool. How can his small acquaintance with Latin even dwell in thy memory when he betrayed his Church, apostatised from his vows, drew thousands of souls to their own perdition by his damnable heresy? May the saints forgive me! but it has always seemed to

me to be one of the most inscrutable dealings of Providence that this arch-heretic should have been allowed to die in his bed, when Servetus, for heresies much less rank, and Etienne Dolet, for a too great love of profane learning, were—deservedly enough—burnt alive. Doubtless, however, the leniency with which he was treated in this world will be amply atoned by his punishment in the next.” Then, after a moment’s silence, she resumed with increased indignation, confining her attention solely to her husband this time: “The Holy Church subverted by learning, and liberty, and” (with a contemptuous imitation of her husband’s tone) “*le belle arti!*” What had become of any of the fine arts had not the Holy Church taken them under her protection? Look at painting and sculpture alone. Divorce them from sacred subjects, and they might as well have been strangled in their birth. From Cimabue, the founder of modern painting, through Giotto, Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, Donatello, up to those so recently given to us, the great Leonardo da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Raphael, Titian, Correggio, where can you name one who has not shown himself at his best when his subjects were taken from our sacred history?”

“Well, well,” answered her husband, evidently a little awed at this outburst, “I cannot deny that painting has always been a loyal daughter of the Church.”

“She is not alone on this wise,” answered the

lady imperiously. Then, assuming, after the fashion of her sex, a more positive tone as she felt less sure of her proofs, she continued: "There is not an art or science that the Church has not aided in bringing into existence. Music, poetry, astronomy—nay, learning itself—all have been entrusted to the Church, and faithfully has she performed her office."

There was a comical look of mischievous enjoyment in Tansillo's eyes as he regarded the husband, who was obviously going through a conflict of opposing motives, divided between an evident desire to exhibit to his friends the small opinion he had of the peculiar faithfulness with which the Church had performed her trust, and an equally evident apprehension of offending his wife.

Castelnau, who disliked conjugal altercations even more than religious discussions, again hoped to change the subject. Turning to Giovanni, he said:

"Thou hast been eager to learn about England and her affairs. Now tell me in thy turn of Naples. Still somewhat unsettled, I fear me, if rumour be true."

A cloud passed over the face of the Italian—a face that, were it not for a somewhat retreating chin, would have been very fine; for his brow was broad and open, and his eyes, though somewhat restless in their expression, were at once kindly and honest.

"*Lásso!* I have little of good to tell thee concerning Naples. Doubtless thou hast heard of the

Turkish attacks, and of that accursed bandit, Marco Bernadi."

"I have heard nothing definite, only vague rumour. Tell me more, I entreat you."

The Italian drew his son to him, and then said :

"This *bambino* knows nothing. These fearful tales are hardly fit for such young ears."

The boy, a tall and strikingly handsome lad, shook himself free from his father's embrace, and said somewhat indignantly :

"Nay, father, I am no *bambino* now ; and what have you seen in me to think I shall be scared by tales of the *banditi* ?"

"Truly," said Castelnau, as he cast an admiring glance upon the handsome stripling, "the boy is right. He is certainly no *bambino*." Then turning to the lad, he inquired : "How old art thou, Filippo mio ?"

"Nearly fifteen, signore."

"And thou lookest even older. We shall soon hear of thy breaking thy heart about some cruel damsel ; and he who is old enough for love, should be old enough for war also, is it not so ?"

The boy looked up gratefully to Castelnau ; and Giovanni, seeing that his wife was conversing at some little distance with Tansillo, again drew his son to him, who did not this time repulse him, and began in a voice low enough to be heard only by Castelnau and the lad :

“Well, then, Marco Bernadi, at the head of numerous ruffians, only less wicked than himself, has infested Calabria, usurped the royal insegna, and calls himself *Il Re Marconi*. The unhappy *Valdesi*, who, flying from Piedmont, had, as ill-hap would have it, sought shelter in Calabria, have been murdered in a way so horrible that I shudder to describe it. They were seized one by one; each taken from his retreat; a bandage tied before his eyes and led to a spacious place some little distance from the house, when he was made to kneel, and with a knife his throat was cut. Then his corpse being left where it was, the bandage was removed, and taken by the executioner to the shelter where lay his unhappy comrades awaiting their doom. The bandage, reeking with the blood of the first victim, was then tied across the eyes of another. He too was taken to the place where one corpse was already lying. As soon as he had suffered a like fate, the bandage was again removed and placed across the eyes of a third; and in this manner were served eighty-eight of the *Valdesi*. Ah, my friend! What with earthquakes, pestilence, famine, and these hideous outrages, I sometimes wonder whether I shall ever live to see my boy grow up!”

“Nay, nay,” said Castelnau, in a voice full of feeling. “Thou must not speak thus gloomily. Pestilence and outrage cannot last for ever. It is not like thee to indulge in forebodings.”

"It is only for Filippo's sake I fear. To me, death has no terrors. It is as natural to die as to be born, and could I but leave my son in proper guardianship, I could face death with equanimity," replied Giovanni.

"Old friend," said Castelnau, very solemnly, "Heaven grant that there may be no occasion for the proof of my oath, since I would as soon die myself as lose thee, Giovanni; nevertheless, if it will make thy life more free from foreboding, hear now the vow I make to thee. If thou shouldst die while thy son is yet a lad, I will be a father to him. We have been friends too long for me to allow any evil to happen to thy son that I can avert." Then, clearing his throat, with a somewhat lame attempt at a slight laugh, Castelnau continued: "I have been unfortunate in my choice of subjects this evening. Let us turn to something brighter. Filippo mio," laying his hand on the boy's shoulder, "I hear nothing but good of thee and thy progress. A friend of mine is acquainted with both thy teachers in philosophy, with Sarnese, who lectures publicly, and Teofilo da Varrano, who teaches thee in private, and both unite in giving thee the palm above thy fellows. What is thy father going to do with thee when thy school is over? Not send thee to Toulouse, I hope?"

The boy looked interrogatively at his father, who answered somewhat hastily:

“Toulouse! No, indeed—a city famous only for vulgarity, cruelty, barbarism, and total lack of culture, given over to superstitions worthy of the Turks, and imbued with such savage tastes as to take no pleasure in aught but what is totally opposed to the faintest semblance of humanity! No, he will not go to Toulouse; but to Padua, that refuge for all cultured minds. Whatever talents the lad possesses now, or that may subsequently disclose themselves in him, whether poetry, philosophy, or science, he is sure to meet with encouragement there; and, what is even of more importance, will have a tolerably safe refuge from that cruel bigotry which dogs the footsteps of every votary of learning.”

“He will go neither to Toulouse nor Padua,” said an imperious voice close to him. “He will be a Dominican monk.”

Giovanni turned as he heard his wife’s voice. He would have spoken; but at that moment another guest was announced, and the husband felt that this was no time for a conjugal altercation.

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CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH THE STORY PAUSES A LITTLE TO DISCUSS CHARACTER IN GENERAL, AND ITS OWN CHARACTERS IN PARTICULAR.

“Justice we hold to be higher generosity.”—HERBERT SPENCER.

MICHEL DE CASTELNAU DE LA MAUVISSIÈRE was, as I have said, one of the most distinguished men of his age. He was born in 1520, and was consequently, at the time of which I am speaking, still in the earlier half of his forties. In appearance he looked, perhaps, a little older than his real age; but then his life had been one of incessant care and labour. He was somewhat stout, with a broad forehead and shrewd eyes. He wore short whiskers, a short peaked beard, and a moustache curled up at the ends. Altogether, the predominant expression in his face was certainly that of shrewdness; and Giovanni Bruno, who knew him best, used to say that his appearance did not do justice to himself, for that though he was remarkable for

the acuteness of his intellect, he was no less remarkable for the nobility of his heart. He was the grandson of Pierre de Castelnau, one of the equerries of Louis XII., and was the eldest of nine children, so that he had early to make his own way in the world. As soon as his studies were over, his father sent him into Italy; and it was there that his acquaintance with Giovanni Bruno began—an acquaintance that was soon to ripen into a friendship which only terminated with life. From Italy Castelnau went to the Island of Malta; and while there solicited service in the French army at Piedmont. The courage he showed on various occasions earned for him the notice of Cardinal de Lorraine, who took him under his protection. Castelnau showed such dexterity and prudence in the various commissions with which he was charged, that Henri II. sent him into Scotland with despatches for Mary Stuart, betrothed to the Dauphin; and from Scotland to England to Elizabeth, who had pretensions to Calais. He was afterwards sent with the title of ambassador to Germany, to prevent the princes from favouring Protestants.

In his own religious belief Castelnau was what might be called a moderate Catholic. For notwithstanding the contrary assertion of Rome, there have always been parties in the Catholic Church, some of which were more moderate than others; some insisting upon the duty of persecution, others more desirous of peace; and in the latter half of the

sixteenth century especially, the essential ideas of the Italian system had undergone unavoidable modifications. Perhaps no better proof of this could be given than the extraordinary popularity of the little book entitled "The Imitation of Christ." Whether it were the work of Thomas à Kempis, its reputed author, or as some seem to think, of Gersen, it appears certainly to have been written about this century, and was from the pen of a Catholic; yet its essential aim was to enable the pious to cultivate their devotional feelings without the assistance of the priest.

I have sometimes permitted myself to compare the moderate Catholic of the sixteenth century with the moderate Broad Church clergyman of our own. Unconsciously to themselves, their theoretical belief is not quite the same as their practical. Though the Broad Churchman has subscribed to the Articles, and holds as essential the doctrine of the Trinity; though he affirms when questioned that his own faith is necessary to salvation, he confines his teaching almost entirely to the inculcation of moral duties; and with the exception perhaps of Trinity Sunday, on no occasion does he enter into a discussion of difficult dogmas. His acceptance of controversial points, such as vicarious punishment or of the Trinity, almost resolves itself into simply abstaining from preaching against them. In his own teaching as well as in his practical life he shows

that he thinks that far more important than the worship of Trinity or Unity is the worship of goodness ; and how little he really believes that an acceptance of the doctrine of the Atonement is the one thing necessary to salvation, is betrayed by his honest and ready admiration for such of those of a different faith from himself as lead a life of earnest goodness. Socinian, Catholic, Buddhist, he dwells in amity with all, provided they live up to his own high moral ideal. And, though doubtless it may be said in response, that he does not necessarily admire those upon whom he bestows his friendship, since he may live with them hoping to convert them ; or he may compassionate them for their intellectual doubts, and so on ; I reply that the difference in his behaviour to unbelievers and sinners shows that he does not really at bottom condemn unbelief as sin. He may compassionate sinners, yet he does not live on terms of friendly intimacy with unrepentant adulterers or thieves ; and however tender his heart, he is not without a righteous hate of hate, and scorn of scorn, for even to those who are not great criminals, but only selfish, frivolous, and worldly, he behaves in such a manner as to show that before they can gain his approbation or friendship they must learn to lead a higher life. Yet while tolerant of sects long established, he strongly deprecates the formation of new sects, entreating their would-be founders to sink their small differences of opinion, and join the One

Fold ; for that union, and not disunion, is the bond of peace. And in the event of any open attack on his Church, he acquits himself manfully enough, holding his own side, though not indignant with others for holding theirs also.

Allowing for the difference of the times, all men being less mild three centuries ago than they are now, what has been said of the Broad Churchman of our own age may be applied to the moderate Catholic of the sixteenth century, and to Castelnau in particular. When the civil religious wars of 1562 commenced, he played a part worthy of study between the soldiers of the two parties. He preserved the generous sentiment of the citizen, and joined to it the firm though conciliatory conceptions of a man of the State. At once active and energetic, he yet awaited quietly an hour propitious for moderation. He openly declared himself a Catholic, "for," said he, "they are little esteemed, and cannot avoid the name of traitors and spies, who have not the courage to declare themselves of one party or the other ; from such as these there is more need to preserve oneself than from declared enemies." Yet the Catholic faith was held by him with many reservations. Though he wished the Pope to be the head of the Church, it is, I think, more than probable that he disbelieved in papal infallibility, and he was by no means disposed to allow too much interference from the priest. He, too, worshipped goodness more than doctrinal opinion. He was

perfectly aware that there had been scandals in the Church, and that the majority of the Popes were not remarkable for the purity of their lives. Yet he did not side with the Reformers. He believed that the scandals of the Church were an accident, not a consequent of Catholicism; and thought it would have been better had the Reformers sought to conciliate and build up rather than destroy. Why had not Luther, for instance, contented himself with insisting upon the beauty of holiness, the necessity of goodness, instead of thundering against indulgences? Let everyone strive after an ideally moral life, then the demand for indulgences would cease, and with the demand the infamous custom itself. At the time of which I am speaking, Castelnau preferred heresy to persecution; but later on, as will be shown in the course of this story, though he always disliked persecution, of the two evils he thought heresy the greater. In justice to him, and indeed to the whole moderate party of Catholics, it must be remembered that it was not heresy, but the aggression of heresy, that was resented. Castelnau acted as a peace-loving politician of our own day will act, who allows certain disinfectants and skirmishers to go unharmed so long as their number is small; but when they have infected large multitudes with their opinions, dreading an open rebellion, he proceeds to strong measures. Sincere Christian though Castelnau was, he yet set a higher value upon peace and love to one's fellows than

upon Catholicism or Protestantism; and, at all events in the early part of his career, he did not hold opinion to be a crime.

“It is held by many politicians,” he says, “that let the posture of affairs be what it will, peace ought to be purchased at any rate. For as a mariner, who sees his ship in danger, shifts his sails and takes all advantages to stand the storm and come safe to land, so a wise legislature ought to accommodate themselves to the times, suspend or execute laws as the juncture requires, and proceed in such a manner as to preserve if possible the public peace; which the old maxim so often repeated by the Chancellor contains in a few words, *Salus populi, suprema lex*. For the chief end of laws is not only the observation of them, but the good of the people. All the laws of God tend to this very point. And though all our actions ought to have no other end but His honour and glory, yet it is certain that His power—which is altogether perfect and unchangeable in itself—can never receive the least addition from the sacrifices and praises even of the greatest saints, nor the least diminution from the blasphemies of the most flagrant sinners, which can never annoy Him though they may destroy themselves; so that all the good or evil which mankind can do regards themselves only, and can never affect Almighty God, as we may see in the Holy Scriptures, wherein we are often commanded to do this or that because it will tend to our own

good ; and if all States were destroyed, there would be no further occasion for any laws either human or divine."

It need scarcely be pointed out that in a country and in a century where zeal was carried to an extent certainly without knowledge, to have a Minister with opinions such as were held by Castelnau was a boon too great to be expressed in words. He compared the State to the human body, and pointed out that ailments which were very small and trifling would, if left alone, speedily cure themselves. But that when an important portion of the body had become infected, severe measures must be used, so long as care was taken that in order to save the limb we do not destroy the life.

"I am very sensible," he says, "that several persons who are knowing in State affairs, will allege that to save the body all rotten and useless members should be cut off. This is true when only a leg, an arm, or some other member of less consequence becomes so putrefied that it will infect the whole body, except it be cut off. But when the disease has reached the heart, lungs, brain, or other noble parts, incisions in such a case can be of no use ; and to cure a distempered brain, we must not cut off the head, tear out the heart or lungs, or destroy the whole body. But, on the contrary, we ought to adapt our prescription to the patient's condition, and proceed by emulsions, gentle diets, and other lenitives,

which may rather defer than hasten death. And since the Protestants were not to be reduced by faggots, executions, and other punishments which were practised for thirty years before, it became necessary to try other means and see what those of lenity would do."

Yet it was only his desire for peace and his high sense of justice, that made him so often insist that mercy should be shown to Protestants. He had no sympathy with the movement itself ; on the contrary, he regarded it as a schism always attended with miseries, and if he could have crushed it without injuring some of the best and highest intellects in France, he would willingly have done so. It seemed to him that wherever the heresy was rife, disasters followed in its train. Parent was set against child, husband against wife, subject against sovereign ; and the improvement in the morals of the clergy was as yet too slight to atone in any way for the political and domestic miseries brought about by religious discords.

In justice to the Catholic Church it must be remembered, that horrible as was her system of persecution, it was almost forced upon her. She must have either acted as she did, or have submitted to be extinguished altogether. The northern part of Europe was in open revolt against her ; the southern regarded her with silent contempt—a feeling perhaps even more dangerous than open rebellion, because

it is for the most part hidden. In this ominous condition, the Papal government was forced to acts against which the instructed judgment even of its own officials revolted. No part of Europe was so full of irreligion as Italy. It amounted to a philosophical infidelity amongst the intellectual few, while the less instructed many divided Arianism and utter carelessness of religion between them. The paganism of the Renaissance was the natural outcome of the condition of the Catholic Church. The revival of letters had produced a contempt for mediæval ideas, a disgust for the theological legends of the middle ages, and with the better minds, a longing not only for a wider culture, but a higher moral ideal. Whilst with many of the gay Italians, the movement simply took the form of a reaction against asceticism.

Giovanni Bruno was a typical child of the Renaissance, save that he was wholly free from the coarseness and impurity that too often stained the men of that period. A bright, easy-going, joyous being, with an ardent love for every kind of beauty, and an equally ardent thirst for every species of learning, he should be termed not so much *irreligious* as *non-religious*. He was quite willing, for instance, that his wife should go to mass, if she would not force him to attend it likewise. A portion of his youth had been spent in the army, but he was by nature much more prone to study than to war, and he left his profession when he was still in early

maturity. He was now about forty-eight ; and there were certain of his friends—notably Castelnau—who thought that his manhood had scarcely fulfilled the promise of his youth. Brilliant rather than profound, he could never have been an original thinker, but he ought at least to have been a successful commentator or scholiast ; and though it is improbable under any circumstances that he would have materially influenced future generations, he ought certainly to have left his mark upon his own. He would have done so, but—he had married a wife who was a bigoted Catholic, and who loathed all learning that was not in perfect harmony with the teaching of the Church.

A certain distinguished logician and philosopher, not so very long taken from us, has remarked (after having previously pointed to the fact that wives are as a rule intellectually and morally inferior to their husbands) : “From a man of twenty-five or thirty, after he is married, an experienced observer seldom expects any further progress in mind or feelings.” Permit me to echo this assertion. It is sometimes thought that the higher nature draws the lower up to its own standard. But, my masculine readers, look among your married acquaintances, and see if you do not find many more cases where an intellectual husband has been deteriorated by marriage with a narrow-minded woman, than where he has raised his wife to his own level. Why it should be so is

not easy to determine, unless it be through the proverbial growth of evil weeds. Union and solidity are good things, yet is it not Lucretius who has remarked that "Things are easier far dissolved than oined"? Discretion is surely what should bring forth good fruit; yet Lord Bacon has remarked: "One futile person that maketh it his glory to tell, will do more hurt than many that know it their duty to conceal." But why go to Lucretius or Bacon? Does not all history show that Ignorance can break down in a day what it has taken Wisdom ages to build up? And so, my good friend, if you wed with a foolish woman, you will find it easier to be brought down to her level than to raise her up to your own. However successful you may be in your professional career, the growth or decay of your mind and feelings depends largely upon your domestic environment; and what that will consist of lies far more in the choice of your wife, than of yourself. If your wife be intellectual and cultured, your guests will be intellectual and cultured. If, on the contrary, she be addicted to flunkeyism and snobbishness, your acquaintances will be chosen for wealth and station, rather than for worth. If she be a gossip and scandalmonger, you will be surrounded with characters of a like description, and instead of your former interest in philosophy or art, you will, in no very long period, find yourself gravely discussing Mrs. A.'s propensity to spend too much upon her dress, or

Mrs. B.'s repugnance to spending enough. If she delight in the society of priests, though I will not affirm that your masculine mind will ever wholly share her enthusiasm for these, they will at least come to be tolerated by you. If she be quarrelsome, your friends will quarrel with you as much as with her; and if she be stingy and parsimonious, why, you will e'en have no guests at all.

I do not, indeed, insist upon this law as wholly invariable. Every rule has its exceptions. In all cases of strong individuality, the power of the organism has an advantage over the environment. But Giovanni Bruno had not a strong individuality; and his easy, kind-hearted nature was just one to which a gradually deteriorating domestic environment proves a far stronger "adverse circumstance" than mere poverty or even the fear of persecution. Moreover, his very studies tended to encourage rather than check the too great pliancy of his nature. As with most men of the Renaissance, with him Cicero was the great idol. He cared neither for Greek literature nor for Greek philosophy, save as presented through a Latin dress. The charm of Cicero's style, his sensible but somewhat shallow philosophy, his scholarly contempt for the ignorant, all touched a responsive chord in Giovanni's breast. And there were times—notably when he had inadvertently incurred his wife's displeasure—when in addition to Cicero, he would turn to the great Roman

philosophers, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. These grand old writers have met with such ample recognition in this latter half of our century, that it is scarcely necessary for me to enter into a detailed account of their philosophy to readers of this book. Only be it remembered that in mental, as in physical nature, there are certain constitutions to which rich and generous food proves enervating rather than invigorating. To passionate, anxious temperaments, who both hate and love too keenly; to noble, ardent souls, who have such an exalted ideal of virtue that they are apt to feel indignation towards such as fall short of it, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius calm, soothe, chasten. But Giovanni Bruno and such as he require to be stimulated rather than soothed; to be taught to care, not less, but more, for the behaviour of their fellows. They want to be roused to an indignant sense of wrong-doing in others, not to be lulled into a sort of amused, contemptuous acquiescence in it. For instance, if his wife had been more trying than usual, Giovanni would turn to that passage in "Epictetus," where he bids his readers remember how nobly Socrates bore the insults of his wife, when she would sometimes, out of mere wantonness, throw dirty water upon his head; and how on one occasion especially, when a cake having been presented to him, his wife seized it and trampled it under foot, whereat he merely laughed good-humouredly. Or Giovanni would turn to Marcus

Aurelius, where he quotes with especial approval the conduct of Socrates when, his wife having gone out and taken his cloak with her, he without more ado calmly dressed himself in a skin.

"Well, well," Giovanni would say to himself, "all women are whimsical—made to be looked at, not reasoned with!"

It would have been better for him if, instead of reading Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus, he could have turned to some author (only I fear me that no such author existed in his day) who would have pointed out to him that it would have been well had Socrates not borne his wife's tempers quite so philosophically, for that if she were not capable of being touched by forbearance nor amenable to reason, she might at least have learnt self-control had her husband given vent to some of that indignation naturally excited by wanton aggression. It would have been better if Giovanni had mastered the knowledge that there is no greater cruelty than standing between a sin and its consequences. For Nature will not be baulked of her penalty; only with that strange mixture of justice and injustice that she delights in, she cares not from whom she exacts it so long as it is paid. Lamprocles, for instance, Socrates' son, had to suffer for his father's leniency and his mother's folly. He declares that his mother was so ill-tempered that his life was almost past endurance, and he turned out anything but brilliantly himself.

Yet pray do not mistake me, and jump to the conclusion that Fraulissa Bruno was a second Xanthippe. She was far too well-bred, and had much too dignified a sense of propriety, to behave to her husband as Xanthippe to Socrates. But she had been a spoilt child before her marriage and a spoilt wife after it. She was imperious, selfish, and extremely bigoted, but she seldom gave way to passionate words, never to insolent actions. If her husband displeased her in any way, she left the room and refused to speak to him till he had humbled himself to her—which he always did. He would follow her, and overwhelm her with penitent caresses; and if these proved ineffectual, he would go out and return laden with presents. Doubtless a noble-minded woman would have been disgusted at such offerings; grieved to see her husband so servile—indignant that she should have been insulted with what was after all a bribe to good conduct. But Fraulissa Bruno was not a noble-minded woman. Yet do not think her wholly ignoble. She had no base love for the trinkets themselves. She only valued them as the outward and visible sign of her husband's subjection to herself. And in justice to Giovanni it must be explained, that mixed with all this servility and cowardice, there was a certain vein of tenderness and poetry in his character, that had something to do with the extravagance of his leniency towards his wife. She

had been one of the most beautiful women of her day, and he had wooed her silently five years before he had ventured to ask for her hand. He still regarded her with something of the feelings of the lover. Their sixteen years of married life had not prevented him from remembering vividly the thrill of delight which ran through him when he first thought she looked tenderly upon him. He could not quarrel with her without experiencing something of the feeling a religious nature experiences when a rebellious or blasphemous thought arises ; and to have angry words pass between them before lookers-on was little less than desecration to him. Fraulissa was fully aware of this trait in her husband's character ; and whenever she had determined upon anything she knew that he greatly disliked, she invariably chose the moment for her demand when guests were present. It was for this reason that she had first notified, as we have seen, her decision that her son was to be a Dominican monk ; for she was aware that she would have greater difficulty in winning her husband's consent to this than to anything she had as yet set her heart upon. Yet on the whole it was not an unhappy marriage. There can scarcely be quarrels where one side always yields. Friends, indeed, thought it a singularly happy one. They saw that the husband of sixteen years was still the somewhat diffident lover ; they saw that he was always overwhelming his wife with

caressing speeches and numerous presents. Only Castelnau quietly observed that the husband never paid the wife the compliment of dissenting from her, still less of reasoning with her. Yet if Giovanni could have lived his life over again, he would still have married the same woman. An optimist by nature, he was apt to be contented with the good the gods had given him.

“Why should I complain because my wife likes to have her way?” he would sometimes say to himself. “Am I not more fortunate than most husbands? I have married a beautiful woman, and she is chaste and true to me!” And in this he did her but justice. There was not even coquetry in her, much less lightness; and dearly as she loved homage, she exacted it from men only in the same kind and degree that she did from her own sex.

It may seem strange that the boy Filippo loved this imperious mother more than his gentle, yielding father. But has anyone ever considered how much the object of a child’s worship and love is influenced by the example of its elders? From his infancy upwards Filippo had seen his beautiful mother the object of adulation from his father, and from all the guests that visited the house. He had seen the servants far more in awe of her than of their master; and he had come to prize one of her rare caresses far more than those of his father, which, perhaps, by their very frequency, had come to be thought of little

value. Then, as he grew older, he really entertained a higher respect for her than for his father. He was of an eager, inquiring disposition, perpetually asking: "Why is this? Whence is that?" And the father would answer:

"Nay, nay, *bambino mio*. Thou must wait till thou art older before I can answer thee."

Sometimes when the childish questions really did not admit of an answer, he would reply with his characteristic honesty:

"I cannot answer thee, Filippo, for I do not know myself."

But the mother had no such diffidence. She was really not an ill-educated woman. Indeed, it was the fashion for Italian ladies of the sixteenth century to pride themselves on their learning. And she had—what even if Giovanni possessed he would have controlled—an aptitude (to employ a happy phrase of one of our living philosophers) for *accounting* for everything while she *explained* nothing. What child can discriminate between the two? Nay, how few children of a larger growth do? And so it came to pass as Filippo emerged from childhood and approached boyhood, his mother, who cared little for him in comparison with his father, was his authority in all matters that interested him. Moreover, his father had of late somewhat alienated him by seeming to forget his advancing years, and still speaking to him and thinking of him as a child.

The five years between forty-three and forty-eight pass to an idle man so imperceptibly that he is apt to forget that they have turned the little boy of ten to a youth of fifteen. And then perhaps the strongest reason of all for the little reverence with which Filippo regarded his father, was that he had never seen him at his best. He was never in congenial society. With the exception of Tansillo, who was tolerated both by husband and wife on account of an old family friendship rather than actually liked, none visited at the house frequently, save friars and various orders of the clergy. For the visits of Castelnau were at long intervals. It was more than six years since his last sojourn; and the young Bruno was now to see for the first time what his father could be in the society of a congenial man of about his own age. It may seem surprising that Fraulissa admitted of the friendship of her husband and a cultivated man like Castelnau; but it must be remembered that he was a sincere Catholic; and had moreover that singular power of adapting himself to persons wholly different in their aims and feelings, which, as it now led him to be equally welcome both to Giovanni Bruno and his wife, made him later in life prized equally by Elizabeth of England and her rival, Mary Queen of Scots.



CHAPTER III.

A MEMORABLE EVENING.

Waters on a starry night,
Are beautiful and fair.

WORDSWORTH.

ALL that night—succeeding the day of Castelnau's arrival—Giovanni lay awake, tossing on his bed ; longing for sleep, but unable to attain it. His wife's voice, uttering imperiously, "He shall be a Dominican monk," kept ringing in his ears ; and a vivid picture of the bright face of his boy dressed in the white robe and black pointed hood of the Dominican brotherhood, persistently presented itself before his imagination. For the first time since his marriage, he formed a notion of contesting his wife's decision ; but it would be difficult to do full justice in words to the struggle he went through before he came to this determination.

Perhaps some of my readers may exclaim, that in every man, however submissive—unless he be so weak as to be almost a fool, which certainly

was not Giovanni's case—there lies latent a sense of masculine predominance, a knowledge that he can master his wife if he so choose; a consciousness that the autocratic position his wife fills in the domestic household has been gracefully yielded up to her by him, not conquered for herself. Doubtless, there is some truth in the objection; only be it remembered that Habit creates another nature, and that if a man has submitted to play a second part for sixteen years, whatever be his consciousness of masculine predominance, he will not without an immense struggle suddenly be able to resume a first position. I suppose if there is a law more in accordance with nature than any other, it is that the mature human being shall walk upright; yet if a person, afflicted with religious or other mania, has thought it his duty to go on all-fours for sixteen years, he would find it a not easy task suddenly to resume his natural gait. Nothing less than his great love for his son would have been sufficient to nerve Giovanni, even to the contemplation of contesting what his wife had already determined on. As he lay tossing on his bed, arranging in his own mind how best to commence the altercation he knew he would have to go through, he almost determined to seize the moment when his wife should first awake, and there and then command her to dismiss from her mind the idea that their son should be a Dominican monk. Yet when she did awake his courage failed him. He

began to think that he would put it off till breakfast-time. Greatly as he disliked conjugal altercations before third persons, he found himself beginning to wish for Castelnau's support. He thought that the dignified sense of propriety his wife possessed would at least make her control some of the more evident signs of wrath in the presence of his friend. Yet when breakfast really came, he did not find himself a whit more ready for his task ; and when noon had arrived, he had almost decided to approach the subject indirectly—not openly to set his wife at defiance, but to create, by some adroit means or other, a disinclination in Fraulissa herself for her son's adoption of the Dominican frock. Then as evening drew nigh, he began to say to himself that such a hope was thoroughly futile ; his wife never gave up what she had once determined to have. No, he must leave her alone—work upon the lad himself, and create in him such a distaste for monastic life that he would flatly refuse to comply with his mother's wish—in which case he should at least have his father's support.

And as chance fell out, a sort of opportunity did really arrive towards the close of that same day. The evening meal was nearly over, when Giovanni suddenly arose and went to the window to gaze on the scene before him. His house, though modest and unpretentious in itself, had the advantage of commanding one of the most beautiful views of the

many that the strikingly beautiful town of Nola presented. The window of the room in which he was seated had an eastern aspect. Straight before him, not much more than a mile off, lay the hills of Cecala. On the south towered above him Vesuvius, while towards the north were to be seen the mountains of Avella and Roccaramola. Immediately below his window lay a beautiful sheet of clear water. Vivid as was the Italian's appreciation of every species of natural beauty, there was no single feature of nature he so much delighted in as clear water. Whatever the hour of the day, or whether the aspect of nature were gloomy or smiling, it was almost the same to him. He would watch the sunbeams dancing in the water on a bright day with scarcely more rapture than he would gaze on the lake when blackened by the reflection of ominous clouds on a stormy night. Or when, as now, the waters received a roseate hue from the reflection of the setting sun; or when, as an hour or two later, the moon and stars were reflected in it—at all times clear water had a singular power over him, filling him with a sort of mystical consciousness of his oneness with nature. He loved to fancy that he saw in it a miniature representation of the universe. Sometimes he would not content himself with merely gazing at it from a window, but would steal to the water's edge itself, and watch his own reflection side by side with the stars and sailing clouds and waving trees. And if

a breeze arose, the murmur of the little wavelets created by it had that lulling, soothing effect upon his otherwise restless nature that exquisite harmonies have upon musical souls. He would stand riveted, lost to sense and outward things, feeling in dream-land; asking himself whether he were a reality or only a dream; whether the fish that were actually swimming about in the water had a more real existence than this singularly vivid reflection of himself, or of the stars and clouds. He was not now by the water's edge, and could see neither the actual fish nor the semblance of himself; but the sunset happened to be peculiarly gorgeous. He had seen it indistinctly when seated at the table, and could not resist the impulse to rise and go to the window, and watch the reflection in the water. As he stood there, a singularly peaceful expression stole over his countenance. He was so penetrated with the mystical consciousness of the beauty of the evening that, for the time, he had forgotten both his dread of his wife and his anxiety for his son. He was only aroused from his abstraction by feeling Castelnau's arm upon his shoulder, and hearing him say half-jestingly:

"Still faithful to thy first love, Giovanni! I wonder how many times I have seen thee gaze on that pool as if it contained the very apple of thine eye. I question whether the most beauteous damsel ever attracted impassioned lover in the way that

yon senseless piece of water fascinates thee." Then turning to the wife, Castelnau continued gaily: "Signora, long before my friend here had the good fortune to set eyes on thy fair face, I forewarned him that if ever he married, his wife would have to reconcile herself to one rival. Was I not a true prophet?"

The lady smiled graciously. She was not jealous of her innocent rival. Moreover she held Castelnau in high respect, and her self-esteem was flattered by his perception that she had no other rival in her husband's heart than this. So she answered that she could partly understand and sympathise with her husband in his love for water—and this indeed was true. For after all, was she not an Italian, with an Italian's appreciation of beauty? The magnificence of the evening, as they were sitting in the gloaming, touched and softened her. She raised her exquisite eyes and shot a tender glance towards her husband—for notwithstanding her imperiousness, she did love him as well as she could love anything except herself. Giovanni coloured with delight at receiving one of those rare glances.

"Surely," he thought to himself, "there could be no more unfitting moment than this for touching upon anything likely to annoy my wife."

Truly, just now it appeared as if Giovanni's fulfilment of his determination were further off than ever.

The four sat on, talking little, but feeling a diffused consciousness of union and vague happiness as they sat gazing; watching the sun disappear and night close in. Then, when the servant brought in lights, the mother and her son moved to the table; but the two men remained at the open window, watching the reflection of the stars in the water, discoursing on astronomy, and especially on the Copernican theory, which at that time was just beginning to be known. As they were conversing, Filippo stole up to them, and heard, with rapt gaze and clasped hands, these topics touched upon before him for the first time; and in after life he remembered it as an evening that he was never to forget, and from which may be dated, in large measure, the future events of his life.

Most persons of any originality or genius can recall the moment when the bent of their minds was first vaguely revealed to themselves. For, however strong their individuality, none are independent of special circumstance. The future musician who for the first time in his childhood listens to fine harmonies, the future artist who for the first time holds a pencil in his hand, could not have felt more suddenly the consciousness of a new interest than did Filippo as he listened to his father descanting upon the Copernican theory to his friend Castelnau. The whole world suddenly assumed to him a different aspect when he heard put before him for the

first time a succinct description of the heliocentric theory, and his father's probable inference that each of the planets was a world with a certain similarity to our own. Then from this the elder Bruno was gradually led by an easy passage to ponder upon the probable service of that instrument which we now call by the name of telescope. For though it did not attain any scientific worth before the time of Galileo, from Roger Bacon upwards, there had been men wonderfully near the discovery of the instrument, though never actually attaining it. The boy was too engrossed to notice that Castelnau was regarding his eager face with interest, his father with a paternal pride not altogether unmingled with sadness, and his mother, who had joined them, with a certain severity. He was too engrossed also to consciously notice, though he afterwards recalled it with vivid remembrance, how superior, how altogether different was his father with a cultivated friend such as Castelnau, and when dilating upon a subject he knew well, from what he appeared in his ordinary domestic life. Giovanni had not noticed that his wife was within hearing; and as he finished representing by his fingers the difference between convex and concave to his son, he passed his hand quickly across his brow, and said with something of a sigh: "Ah! if I had been less idle, this hypothetical instrument might have attained reality by this time."

"And do you really think, my father," said the

boy, with eager wonder, "that this instrument would enable us to see the moon and stars more clearly?"

"I more than think it, my boy. I feel convinced of it; nay, it may even reveal to us that there are other stars in the heavens than are visible to the naked eye!"

"Filippo," said his mother sternly, "remember that there is no greater crime than prying into what our Holy Church itself has not had revealed to her. If this much-dreamt-of instrument should ever be invented, I caution thee, as thou hopest for heaven, to refrain from looking through it."

"But, my mother, if other stars are really in the skies, why should we fear to look upon them?"

"Boy," answered his mother imperiously, and with true feminine inconsistency, "I tell thee that there are no such stars. If they are invisible they are useless, and if useless they would not have been created."

"Then, *madre mia*," answered the lad meekly, though with a certain humorous twinkle in his eye and a shrug of his shoulders, "whence is the harm of looking through two pieces of glass at what is not in existence?"

Was he mocking his mother—was the meekness assumed, as he answered her thus? Did he speak seriously, as if for information, or was he amusing himself with trapping her in her contradictory statements? Probably he could not have told himself.

There are certain complex natures where different feelings succeed each other so rapidly, that it is difficult even for the subject of them to discover which particular feeling has been the cause of the particular action or speech. Certainly the most lasting sentiment in young Bruno was one of contrition for having ventured to question anything his mother had chosen to lay down. He had idolised her too long to be able suddenly to dissent from her without keen self-reproach. He felt somewhat as reverent natures feel when a ludicrous thought occurs to them in church or at prayer-time. His mother had left the window at her son's words, and seated herself in an arm-chair at the further end of the room, evidently animated with that silent anger which is so much more effective than noisy passion. Her son stole up to her gently, seated himself at her feet, and taking her hand in his, reverently raised it to his lips. His mother did not return the pressure; and Filippo, partly to please her, partly because since the previous evening, when his mother had settled his future for him by declaring he was to be a Dominican monk, he was really curious for information, asked her, still holding her hand in his :

“Mother, will you tell me all you know of San Domenico? I know of him as I do of the other holy saints, but I would fain know more. Was he more divinely gifted than were the others? Was his birth foretold, and did he perform miracles?”

His mother would not have allowed her sullenness to be so soon dissipated had she not felt the whole day, with that intuition few women are without, the strong feeling of opposition her husband entertained about this very subject ; and she welcomed the lad's question as presenting the opportunity she was longing for, enabling her to show both to her husband and Castelnau the lofty character and high qualities of her favourite saint. She replied softly, still allowing her hand to remain in the caressing pressure of her son :

“ My child, I will tell thee willingly all I know of the blessed San Domenico. His birth was foretold. An angel stood by his mother one night in a dream, and revealed to her that she was to bring forth a son destined to exercise a powerful and holy influence over his fellows. Even when he was a young child, his fervour was so great that he would rise in the middle of the night and pray. Sometimes he would sleep on bare boards. As he grew up it was given unto him to perform miracles. He exorcised three matrons, from whom Satan issued forth under the form of a huge black cat, which ran up a bell-rope and vanished. A beautiful nun resolved to leave her convent. Happening to blow her nose, it dropped off into her handkerchief, but at the fervent prayer of San Domenico it was replaced, and in gratitude, tempered by fear, she resolved to remain. Many are the dead also which he mercifully restored

to life. He wrote a book, which was commanded to be burnt. Three times was it thrown into the flames, and three times did the flames reject it. And it was he," she added in a deep tone of awe, "who instituted the rosary."

Here the lady paused for a few moments. Hitherto she had addressed herself solely to her son, believing that the miraculous portion of the saint's life would most impress her young listener. But now she raised her head and looked direct at the window where Castelnau and her husband were standing. Her cheek was flushed, her lustrous eyes were even more lustrous than usual, and at that moment she looked so beautiful, that not only Giovanni, but Castelnau, thought they had seldom seen any woman, even in the full glory of her first youth, equal in loveliness this matured lady of thirty-eight years. She continued, not imperiously, but in a tone of enthusiasm occasionally mingled with a certain gentle reproach :

"Surely, surely, even those who refuse to believe in miracles—even those who laugh to scorn aught that passeth man's understanding—will not refuse their admiration to San Domenico's private character. What Christian saint or heathen philosopher hath ever excelled it? He was still in early manhood when the famine of Palencia raged. He was not content with praying for the victims. For days he lived upon bread and water so as to help them. He deprived himself of money, lands, nay, his very

books. One day a poor woman, bathed in tears, approached him, soliciting from him alms to enable her to ransom her brother, whom the Moors had taken prisoner. 'My poor woman,' he answered, with tender compassion, 'I have nothing left to give thee—neither gold nor silver, nor goods of any kind. Yet grieve no more. I will offer myself to the Turks in thy brother's stead.' Such actions on the saint's part caused him to be almost worshipped by his disciples; yet nothing could fill him with vanity. He never spoke of himself or of his success. He always regarded himself as the servant of his disciples. Energetic as he was in preaching to sinners, he set a still higher value on the effect of example, and never inculcated a virtue that he had not already attained himself. His favourite maxim was, 'He who is master of his own passions is master of the world.' Yet he pitied—he did not despise—those who could not reach unto his own perfection. One day when he was preaching he was asked what books he studied most to enable him to produce so fine a sermon. 'The only book I study,' he answered, 'is charity.'"

The lady paused again for a moment; then rising, she advanced slightly, and said in a tone of intense feeling: "Surely, surely, we could not wish our son to have a nobler exemplar before him than such a saint as this!"

Castelnau, who had listened with grave admiration

to the whole of this latter part of the lady's discourse, and who at the aphorism, "He who is master of his own passions is master of the world," had gently stroked his beard—a trick that was with him a sign of intense approbation—said :

"Truly, lady, I wonder not at thy veneration for this holy man ; and thou judgest rightly that we should be more impressed at the latter than the former portion of thy discourse. Not that I deny miracles. How should I, being a good Catholic ? Yet I have lived long enough in the world and travelled too far to be able to accept miraculous tales till I have investigated them for myself. One has to allow not only for conscious but unconscious imposition. But this nobler part of your saint's private life seems to bear upon its face the impress of truth. Men have not yet learnt to value goodness so greatly as to pay it the unconscious compliment of assuming it, of inventing it as a necessary dress for their great men to be clothed in. They would rather have signs and wonders and improbabilities. But when I hear of anyone, be he Christian or heathen, who will deny himself for the sake of others, who will conquer his own passions, and be charitable alike to friends and foes, why then he shall have my esteem, whether he be a miracle-worker or no. What say you, Giovanni ? "

In his own heart Giovanni thoroughly agreed with his friend ; but just at that moment the father was uppermost in him. He felt that if he joined in

the admiration for Domenico now, he would have greater difficulty than ever in preventing his son becoming a Dominican monk. Yet he scarcely knew what to say. The conversation had taken an altogether different direction from what he had hoped. He answered his friend with a shrug of the shoulders and a scornful little laugh that was assumed rather than sincere.

"*Gnàffe! mio amico.* We Italians have an ungracious proverb: *Tanto buon che val niente* (So good that he is good for nothing). And so, when I hear of any man being over-much righteous, I doubt him, half-suspecting that he is less, not more, moral than his fellows; that we shall suddenly hear of him tempting his neighbour's wife, or abstracting his neighbour's goods."

The wife looked up with a glance of indignant surprise, and would have answered her husband, had she not seen that Castelnau was about to speak; and, woman of tact that she was, she knew that though she might awe her husband more, she would not convince him as would his friend. She waited, therefore, till Castelnau began in a tone of incredulity:

"Giovanni! how comest thou to utter a speech so unlike thyself? Art thou jesting, or has anyone angered thee? Of all men living, if I had been asked who of my many friends would be the least likely to scoff at goodness or to disbelieve in it, I should have said Giovanni Bruno."

And in this Castelnau did his friend but justice. The bright-hearted Italian was wholly removed from that littleness which, out of envy, denies or detracts from the goodness it cannot attain unto. But he had at last determined to nerve himself to do his best to prevent his son joining the Dominican brotherhood. He had not the courage to proceed to his task forthwith and straight. But being by nature and habit honest and open, and having no experience in adroit equivocation, now that he attempted it for the first time, he was like a sailor trying an unknown sea, often foundering upon rocks and shoals, though sometimes, as luck would have it, enjoying for a few moments a fair and safe sail. He answered his friend somewhat sullenly :

“I judge of a man by his more lasting works. Add to the other moral endowments of this righteous San Domenico that he was the originator of the Inquisition — that infernal institution, against the introduction of which we Neapolitans made such a desperate resistance a few years ago — and what becomes of his holy example then?”

“Nay,” answered his friend, “on my soul, I believe that to be a libel, though, I am aware, a widely spread one. I do not believe that there is any historical proof that he had anything to do with that iniquitous institution. He had been dead fully twelve years before it was established.”

“Whether he were the originator of it or no,”

answered Giovanni, "at least you must allow that the whole Dominican brotherhood have acquired such an unenviable notoriety for their eagerness in hunting for victims to send to the Inquisition, that they have rightfully earned the name of *Domini Canes—the dogs of the Lord.*"

"Yes, yes," answered Castelnau sorrowfully, "I am but too well aware of that fact. Yet, surely, it is neither just nor logical to judge of a mild apostle because he has had the misfortune to have ferocious disciples."

"Even if San Domenico were the founder of the Inquisition," interposed the lady, carefully addressing her words to Castelnau alone, for she intended to punish her husband by not speaking to him, "I cannot see that such a fact should detract from the holiness of his character. I have no sympathy with that mistaken tolerance which would stamp out all persecution. Not only is it against the teaching of our Church, but of the Holy Writ itself. Did not Samuel command Saul to slay and spare not, to exterminate not only men, but woman and child, infant and suckling, even to the very horses and oxen; and did not the Prophet represent God as far more angry with the preservation of Agag than with the slaughter of the rest? Nay, doth not our blessed Redeemer Himself prophesy that He is to send not peace on the earth, but a sword?"

Castelnau mused for a few moments before

replying. He was not sure of his own opinions about persecution. By nature he shrank from it with a sensation of sickening horror; yet there were times when he viewed it as a necessary evil, to be no more got rid of than imprisonment or scourging in a code of criminal law.

“At least, honoured lady, I will not believe that the blessed San Domenico was the author of the Inquisition till I have better proof. Great men are sure to have libellous stories invented about them. Do you think, for instance, that I believe all the falsehoods the Catholics have invented about Martin Luther?”

The lady looked up with an expression of carefully restrained indignation, as she answered: “How can the Signor de Castelnau name San Domenico and the apostate Luther in the same breath? I shall begin to think that there is some truth in the rumour that has arisen from the leniency of his dealings with the Lutherans, and that he is at heart a Lutheran himself.”

“Nay, fair lady, I am no Lutheran. Has not my country, France, been Catholic for twelve centuries? Has not she prospered under that rule? And shall one of her most patriotic subjects—as I venture to call myself—lightly go over to a faith which I would fain hope is only of mushroom growth? I like neither the Lutheran doctrines nor the dress in which they are clothed. Nay, I view that fast-

spreading opinion of Luther's, that faith should take the place of works—coming, as it does, at a time when both clergy and laity require to be braced to a sense of the necessity of good works and a higher life—as nothing less than a wide calamity. And if the doctrines themselves are dangerous, the dress in which they are clothed is infamous; so foully coarse that no man, much less a woman, could read them without disgust. Nay, nay, I love not the Lutheran doctrine. Yet I believe that Luther was a good man. However he exalted faith at the expense of works, he lived a holy life himself, and as for that unlikely story that he only apostatised from his vows because he had fallen in love, I regard it as a spiteful invention of a vulgar mind. No passion, however strong, would have been able to tempt Luther into marriage, if it had really been against his conscience.”

All this time the husband had been pacing the room in an indecision bordering on torture. From the moment when his wife had sternly rebuked her son for desiring to look at the stars, he had felt jarred. Even the exquisite beauty of the approaching night had not prevented him from feeling somewhat as a lover of music feels during the performance of a grand oratorio when a penny whistle from the outside has uttered its discordant note, not only paining him for the moment, but making him dread the repetition of it. Nay, of the two, Giovanni felt

much more the interruption of his peace, for the lover of music can sometimes, by mere power of will, close his ears to the unwelcome outside distraction and concentrate his whole attention upon the music. But from the moment when Filippo had approached the subject of San Domenico, the father had felt that the occasion was too opportune to be allowed to pass by; that it would be nothing less than a gross dereliction of paternal duty if he did not seize the opportunity that had thus so suddenly presented itself, and make the most of it. Yet he did not in the least know what to say. He had not the courage to forbid all further discussion, and peremptorily assert his determination that his son should not be a Dominican. So he beat about the bush; in reality angering his wife quite as much as if he had proceeded openly to his task, yet doing no good; while he filled both his son and Castelnau, neither of whom knew what was his drift, with amazement at behaviour so unlike himself. His wife, indignant as she was, understood his conduct better, for with woman's keenness she had partly divined his object. Like most men who are naturally good-tempered, and prone to take the world too easily, now that an insuperable difficulty had forced itself upon him, Giovanni was irritated, not only with himself, but with the world in general; and was ready to vent his wrath upon the first-

comer. As Castelnau finished his defence of Luther, he interposed irritably :

“*Perdio*, Castelnau ! I believe with that super-fine sense of justice of thine thou wouldst whiten the Evil One himself.” Then, turning to his son, as the hope suddenly occurred to him that if he could not lessen Filippo’s enthusiasm for the saint, he might at least heighten his admiration for men of science, he said : “After all, *mio figlio*, when all is said that can be in their favour, neither San Domenico, nor Martin Luther, nor any religious worthy that thou canst name, will compare—whether it be in nobility of character or in the beneficence of their works—with those who have made the pursuit of knowledge their one aim in life. Unselfish, working for no reward, either here or hereafter, and, what is more than all, leaving behind them no persecuting disciples, distorting what they had taught, so that men should curse the very days upon which they were born. Look, for instance, at two of the most recent examples, Christopher Columbus and Magellan !”

“Tell me, tell me !” exclaimed the boy eagerly, “all about them—first of one, and then of the other. Who was Christopher Columbus ?”

Strange, how during that evening had unconsciously been altered Filippo’s opinion of his father’s abilities ! Twenty-four hours previously he would

not have dreamt of appealing to him when he could have gone to his mother.

Before Giovanni could reply, Fraulissa interposed very scornfully :

“Who was Christopher Columbus? Why, a Genoese sailor, the son of a common wool-comber.”

“A Genoese sailor, truly,” said the father, “and the son of a wool-comber, but assuredly of no common sort. In an age when it was even more difficult to procure a good education upon small means than it is now, he managed that his son should acquire a knowledge of arithmetic, drawing, and painting. Nay, he even sent him to the University of Pavia for a time, though from his poverty he was forced to let him go to sea when he was but fourteen; and in return the son not only supported his father, but provided for the education of his brothers.”

“Yes, yes,” interrupted Filippo, somewhat impatiently, “but tell me of his expedition. I have heard so few details, and those more by chance than otherwise.”

And Giovanni did tell it; commencing at first slowly, in short disconnected sentences, as if not certain of his own memory. Then gradually warming to his subject, he spoke eagerly, enthusiastically, rising at last to such real, though perfectly unconscious eloquence, not untouched with poetry, that Castelnau more than ever regretted that his friend

had made so little use of abilities that were certainly of no mean order.

“Softly, softly, *figliolino*, not so fast. Let me first see whether I remember all about the expedition myself. My memory is not so good as it should be. Where was I when thou interruptedst me? Ah, I know—where he went to sea. Yes, yes, I begin to remember. He was engaged in the Syrian trade during the earlier part of his life, and made several voyages to Guinea; but luckily for him, this occupation did not leave him without leisure for other pursuits, and when not at sea, he occupied his spare time in the construction of charts for sale; and that gave him a knowledge of geography. This knowledge, combined with his many voyages, led him to the belief that the sea is everywhere navigable; that the earth is round, and not flat; that there are antipodes; that the torrid zone is habitable; and that there is a proportionate distribution of land in the northern and southern hemispheres. Pondering these things, my son, and glancing up at the stars, and the sun, and the moon, and remembering how their presence raised him, ennobled him, filled him with sublime thoughts and holy aspirations, he was led to ask himself: ‘Do these celestial objects shine upon nothing? Are the sun and that multitude of stars wasting their beauty on trackless seas and desert lands? Surely the surface of the earth is not too largely covered with water; surely there are

unknown lands which I will explore, and which I shall find as much inhabited by man as my own country?' Yet he did not content himself with this kind of reasoning alone. His religious instincts and reverent sense of beauty were but one side of his character. Keen practical energy, and a determination to take nothing for granted till it was proved, was the other. He commenced a correspondence with Toscanelli, the Florentine astronomer, who held the same doctrine as himself, and who sent him a chart constructed on the travels of Marco Polo. Presently an illness attacks him, and in the middle of the night he thinks an unknown voice whispers to him: 'God will give thee the keys of the gates of the ocean, which are closed with strong chains.' Doubtless it was a sick man's fancy, yet through the whole expedition the effect of it remained with him, cheering him and nerving him to his task."

By this time the Italian had become so absorbed in his narrative, that he had almost forgotten the cause that had led to it. He proceeded eagerly, almost excitedly, engrossing the attention not only of his son and Castelnau, but of his wife, in spite of herself; describing the wonderful career of Columbus, the narrow escape he ran with the Grand Cardinal of Spain, who, instead of aiding him as a discoverer, as Columbus fondly anticipated, would have persecuted him as a heretic. In vivid, dramatic sentences Giovanni depicted the eighteen years'

struggle with difficulties of many kinds, the mutiny of his men when he thought he had at last nearly attained his purpose, terminating with the discoverer's final victory. Then, before the concluding words were scarcely out of his mouth, and not allowing time for his son to thank him, or to express his sympathy and admiration, Giovanni proceeded: "But, after all, my son, the career of Christopher Columbus is dwarfed before that of Ferdinand Magellan. What is the discovery of a new continent to the circumnavigation of the whole earth? How much less, then, should the trials of a Domenico or a Luther be compared with his? For three months and twenty days Magellan sailed on the Pacific, and never saw inhabited land. He was compelled by famine to strip off the pieces of skin and leather wherewith his rigging was here and there bound, to soak them in the sea, and then soften them with warm water, so as to make a wretched food; to eat the sweepings of the ship and other loathsome matter; to drink water that had become putrid by keeping; and then, what he dreaded more than aught else, mutiny broke out among his men. Notwithstanding all his watchfulness, one ship deserted him and stole back to Spain. Yet in spite of all he quailed not, but resolutely held on his course. The Church has not dubbed him a saint, yet may he rightfully be called a martyr, since he lost his life through his devotion to his work. Ferocious disciples

have not thought it necessary to persecute and torture men into believing that the earth is round, since their master's proof of it. They know that it is but a matter of at most a few years, and none will be found to deny it. Truth conquers for itself, it needs not the assistance of persecution. No calamities, therefore, have followed upon the discoveries either of Columbus or Magellan; and men have not been found to curse the day on which they were born, as, almost without exception, has been the case with religious reformers."

"Alas, my friend," said Castelnau, "I would to God I need not join issue with thee there; but surely, after the discovery of the new lands by Columbus, their inhabitants must, for many years at least, have cursed the day on which the discoverer was born."

A fierce light suddenly burnt in the Italian's eyes. "Ah!" he cried passionately, "I had forgotten. Yet have I thought of it too long, too bitterly, for the forgetfulness to be more than transitory. Filippo, I tell thee now, what I should have told thee when I completed my narrative of the discovery of Columbus, that no sooner did the Catholic Church learn of these new lands, than, by apostolic authority, they were taken from the rightful owners. But this was not enough. The cursed bloodhounds must next seize the unfortunate inhabitants themselves. It was one unspeakable outrage; one unutterable ruin, without discrimination of age or sex."

"Nay, nay, Giovanni!" interrupted Castelnau. "Be not so bitter. That the perpetrators of what I grant you were sickening barbarities were Catholics, is an unhappy accident, not a cause. Lust of gold was the real origin of the atrocities. Religion had little to do with them."

"At least, they were sanctioned by apostolic authority. I tell thee, Filippo, that by thousands, nay, by millions, whole races were cut off. From Mexico and Peru a civilisation that might have instructed Europe was crushed out. Ah, my son, pity them, feel for them—dying under the lash, the torture, their only crime being that they were dwellers on the soil on which they were born. From the depths of their misery they sent up a cry to Almighty God to help them, but——"

"He did help them?" interposed the lad tremblingly, "surely He helped them?" Then, seeing that neither his father nor Castelnau answered, but looked at each other in mute agitation, unprepared for the question, he turned to his mother and said imploringly: "Ah, my mother, tell me that they were at last helped. The Blessed Redeemer; the Holy Virgin, our Pitying Mother, surely They would succour them?"

"Nay, my son," replied the mother, never at a loss for an answer. "Our Blessed Church has known from of old that the heathen are given her as an inheritance, and the uttermost part of the

earth for a possession. Shall not the Lord of All do rightly? The inhabitants of the lands were not helped; therefore be satisfied that it was not ordained that they should be so." Then after a moment's pause she said, for she wished to put a stop to conversation which by no means pleased her: "But come, my son; it is past thy bed-time and mine also. Wish Signor Castelnau good-night and follow me." So saying, she made her own salutations to Castelnau, carefully ignored the presence of her husband, and left the room. Her son followed her; and, perhaps, no better proof could be given of the awe in which he held his mother than the fact that on this occasion, when he was intensely interested in the conversation, this tall lad of fifteen, with the down already upon his lip, quietly wished Castelnau good-night, and with that habitual obedience which by this time had become nearly instinctive, went to his room as humbly and obediently as if he had been a child of five.

B He went to his room, but not to his bed. C He did not even attempt to undress, for he felt so restless and excited that he knew he should be unable to sleep. That evening had been an epoch in his life, and he paced up and down trying to recall each incident. How was it that hitherto he had so under-rated his father? How was it that he had lived fifteen years in the same house with him, and never before discovered how great was his

knowledge? Then his mother—she too had been a surprise to him that evening. He had never heard her speak pleadingly to his father before. Yet, when she was relating the life of San Domenico, there was an under-current of entreaty in her voice during the whole narrative. And then, more surprising than all, how was it that this husband, usually so submissive, instead of seeming touched by the unaccustomed gentleness in his wife, should have turned so contemptuous and sarcastic, so wholly unlike himself? For Filippo had not the faintest idea that he himself was the cause of his father's change in behaviour. He had heard his mother, the night previously, imperiously inform her husband that their son was to be a Dominican monk; and judging of the future by the past, he had naturally inferred that what his mother considered best for her boy, the father would immediately agree to. Filippo paced up and down his room, trying to account for what had passed; and then, as if he gave up the attempt as beyond him, he shrugged his shoulders and made a sound with his lips resembling, though not quite like, the Englishman's whistle. A certain humorous twinkle, which we have before noticed, sparkled in his eyes; but this was quickly followed by another expression of grave sadness. He walked to the window, evidently occupied with his own thoughts, for his eyes had a far-away expression as if he saw nothing.

He remained thus for some minutes, and then happened to raise his eyes. He stood riveted by the marvellous beauty of what he saw. His bedroom window had nearly the same eastern aspect as the room he had so lately left. But the scene before him had wonderfully increased in grandeur since he had last looked out on it. The moon had sunk, and the greater darkness consequent upon that showed the skies to be literally thronged with myriads of stars and planets. He did not know then how to distinguish the one from the other, much less did he conceive that each star was a sun; yet the whole conversation of that evening upon the Copernican theory and the telescope suddenly recurred to him. His mother need not have feared that the knowledge of the heliocentric theory would have lowered her son's religious feelings; they were greatly increased by it. Largely as he inherited his father's love for beauty, he was never wholly absorbed by beauty as was Giovanni. His eager, inquiring nature was always prompting the question, How comes it so? That exquisite sky of Nola was never to him merely a beautiful picture gratifying his artist's sense; from his early childhood he had found himself pondering upon how it came to be so beautiful. Why did the moon shine at one time and not another? What made the rainbow, and whence came lightning and thunder? Sometimes he would speak of these things to his mother

in the presence of his father ; but before the latter could interpose, the mother would give an orthodox solution, either culled from the Church, or, as was more frequently the case, born at the moment upon her own lips. Nevertheless, though the father interfered not, he secretly rejoiced that the boy possessed these tastes, and determined as soon as he should be a little older to send him to Padua, where his natural talents would be cultivated to the utmost. Just now no one could have looked at the boy without feeling keen interest in him. There is always something touching in very young faces when absorbed in thought. He had inherited a good deal of his mother's beauty, and especially the same lustrous eyes. For hours he stood gazing there, trying to imagine this earth travelling round the sun ; trying to picture whereabouts those stars would be that the telescope might reveal to him. How much grander was the Copernican conception than what he had hitherto been taught, namely, that the sun and moon and stars were but greater and lesser lights to give light to man by night and day ! How great must be the Creator of this glorious universe ! A sense of the wonderful Mystery underlying everything—that basis of all religion—stole upon him. He watched in silent worship till the stars gradually faded, a roseate hue tinged the valley, and the sun majestically rose from behind the eastern hills ; then, when the last star could no

longer be seen, the boy threw himself, still dressed, upon his bed, and quickly fell asleep.

But his sleep was disturbed by a foolish dream, for too often our dreams are vulgar caricatures and parodies of the nobler thoughts that have occupied us during the day. He dreamt that he blew his nose so violently that he thought he had blown it off; and when looking about for it, behold, there suddenly appeared before him San Domenico and Martin Luther, with wings as angels, and they asked him if he would like to visit the worlds he so longed to see. He answered eagerly that he would; whereat they told him to put one arm round the neck of each of them, and then, twining their own arms about each other's waist, they spread their wings, and flew first to one world and then the other. But they flew so rapidly, and stayed such a brief space at each world, that Filippo was breathless, and could see nothing that he desired to see, so he implored them humbly to slacken their pace a little. But at this request they grew angry, and told him he should be thrown back upon the earth, for which alone he was fit. So they untwined his arms from their necks, and he fell down, down to the earth; and with the violence of the shock he woke—woke to find the day rainy, as so often happens when the previous night has been one of exceeding beauty; and his own thoughts quite

altered from what they were before he had fallen asleep. Vainly did he endeavour to recall them. That vivid perception of the beauty of nature ; that diffused consciousness of reverent worship ; all had vanished. He even knelt down and prayed the saints mercifully to restore some of those emotions that had filled him with a delicious rapture the previous night. But his prayer received no answer. He did not know then that even our noblest thoughts largely depend upon our environment. How should a boy of fifteen apprehend this, when it is undiscerned even by wise and matured intellects ; for is it not true that not only the somewhat narrow-minded Protestant, but the more tolerant philosopher, scoffs at the Catholic for being unable to pray unless he have an image of the saint or virgin to whom he is to address his prayers ? “What similitude,” they ask, “is there between that painted doll and the Christ or Virgin Mother of his adoration ?” Well, those images cannot be more unlike, nay, they are far less unlike, the realities they are meant to represent, than are the twinkling lights in the firmament above to the glorious suns and systems of suns we know them to be in truth. Yet even our colder northern natures—much less the southern—experience a totally different feeling in gazing on the heavens on a brilliant, star-lit evening, from what they have on a day of rain and fog. What

though the reverent worshipper of nature *knows* the stars to be there? Not seeing them, he does not *feel* them to be there; and even in our higher lives, we poor mortals have to live by sight, I think, as well as faith.



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CHAPTER IV.

GIOVANNI CONSULTS WITH HIS FRIEND.

Let the counsel of thine own heart stand. . . . For a man's mind is sometimes wont to tell him more than seven watchmen that sit above in an high tower.—ECCLESIASTICUS.

EARLY in the afternoon of the next day, Castelnau took advantage of finding himself alone, for the first time since the previous evening, with his friend, by saying :

“What made thee so unlike thyself last night, Giovanni? Thy fair wife is evidently offended with thee; and not undeservedly so, as it appears to me.”

“Rather, what made thee so dense, Castelnau? Hast thou known me so short a time, that thou hast yet to learn my hatred of monks and convents, and that I would rather see Filippo in his coffin than in the dress of the Dominican brotherhood?”

A look of intelligence, not unmixed with commiseration, stole over Castelnau's face as he answered :

"Ah! I see; Filippo wishes to be a monk; and thou, with thy love of learning, wouldst have him a scholar. Well, the two professions are not incompatible one with the other; though not perhaps seen together quite so often as they should be."

"Not so often as they should be! Rather say, never seen together. When is a priest ever other than an ignorant, fanatical bigot, laughing to scorn the learning that is beyond his comprehension? Learning not incompatible with priestcraft! Shall I tell thee the only qualities that are ever to be found joined with priestcraft? Hypocrisy, meanness, cruelty——"

"Giovanni!" interrupted Castelnau, not altogether free from indignation in his turn. "Many are the times I have heard thee enlarge upon the bigotry of the religious. If thou indulgest in conversation so unusual in thee, I shall think that the non-religious are not a whit more free from bigotry than the religious. Why shouldst thou denounce the whole priesthood as alone wanting in the virtues of humanity? Good and bad, ignorant and learned, are to be found alike in all professions."

Giovanni shrugged his shoulders as he answered, a little contemptuously: "Cite one learned monk, if thou canst."

"A dozen, if thou likest," answered Castelnau. "First and foremost, one for whom thou professedst supreme admiration—Roger Bacon. Was not he a

friar? and when his learning would have brought upon him the accusation of magic, who was his best protector, exceeding in kindness any layman, either English or foreign? Why, Pope Clement the Fourth. Again, who was it that first introduced the learning of the Arabians into Europe, but Gerbert, afterwards Pope Sylvester the Second? Thou art intensely interested in the Copernican theory. Well, a century before Copernicus, that doctrine, as taught in the old times by Pythagoras and Archimedes, had been partially adopted by Cardinal Cusa. Contemporary with the Cardinal, and his great friend, where wilt thou find a more genuinely learned man than Pope Nicholas the Fifth? Again——”

“Enough, enough, dear Castelnau,” interrupted the Italian. “I submit; I own myself defeated. Still, the essential point remains. Rightly or wrongly, I do not wish my son to be a monk! I shall have to undergo a struggle before I can attain my object. At least, my friend,” he added, somewhat entreatingly, “be thou for me, not against me.”

“That will I,” answered Castelnau cordially. “But how is all this? I should not have thought Filippo a lad to be so strongly wedded to the idea of a monastic life.”

“Oh,” said the father indifferently, “I do not imagine Filippo has as yet any strong feeling for or against it. He is little more than a child. It is

his mother who is so bent upon it; and what she wishes is always performed by the boy."

"Well," answered Castelnau, in a tone of approval, "I am glad to hear thee say that. There is no more healthy or holy feeling in nature than a lad's reverence for his mother. But dost thou think that the boy himself dislikes the idea of a monastic life?"

"How should he know what he likes or dislikes at his age?" said the father. "He is only fourteen."

"Fifteen in two months," replied Castelnau. Then, after a few moments' hesitation, he continued, a little diffidently: "Pardon me, my friend, but dost thou not think of thy son a little too much as if he were still a child? His vivid interest in listening to thy description of the Copernican theory last evening, and his intelligent questions in all our discussions, show him at least to be no child in intellect."

"Ah," said the father, with a gratified air, "from five years old he was always an inquiring little *bambino*. Still, he is too young to be allowed to decide his own future. Perhaps, if he showed any innate and unmistakable predilection for a monastic life, great as would be my grief, I would not cross him; but I feel convinced that he has no such predilection."

"Still," observed Castelnau, "if he does not dislike it, and if his mother wishes it for him, I cannot see why the notion should so agitate thee. Believe me, my friend, mothers know more of their

children than do their fathers. Hast thou discussed the subject with thy wife? She would probably be able to tell thee that she has reasonable grounds for believing that a monastic life is suited to the disposition of your son."

Castelnau had no idea how matters really stood between Giovanni and his wife; no notion that the lady's imperiousness entirely hindered the possibility of a placable discussion upon any subject; he was wholly ignorant that from the commencement of their married life there had been only two courses open to the husband, namely, to tell his wife brutally that he would be master, or (which course Giovanni had always hitherto taken) to submit in silence. Castelnau had indeed observed that the lady was somewhat bigoted in matters of religion; but bigotry or extreme conviction in religion in a woman was, in his opinion, a fault so natural and excusable, that it almost approached a virtue. It is true that he had more than once noticed how much more prone was the husband to caress and flatter his wife than to reason with her, and this he thought a weakness on Giovanni's part, partaking somewhat of the same spirit that prompted him to treat Filippo as if he were still a young child. Castelnau thought that so well-informed a woman as Fraulissa showed herself to be should not be treated by her husband as if she were nothing more than a pretty fool. He had never, before the previous night, seen her in

any strong indignation; for Giovanni, partly out of love for his wife, partly out of that innate delicacy which made him shrink, as from torture, from a third person discovering any breach in the sacredness of his wedded life, had always carefully avoided any subject that might irritate his wife when Castelnau or any other guest was in the room. The previous evening had been the first occasion that Castelnau had seen the lady imperious or haughty to her husband. From the time that Giovanni had scoffed at San Domenico, she had not spoken a word to him. Not only last night, but as far as this day had as yet gone, all her conversation was carefully directed either to Castelnau or to her son; and Castelnau was experiencing in consequence that peculiar sense of discomfort and awkwardness that few persons are without when they are the unwilling witnesses of conjugal estrangements or quarrels. Still, he thought the lady's indignation was not altogether without excuse. No gentleman, much less a loving husband, should scoff at or ridicule what is held by a woman in reverence; and until Giovanni had a little enlightened him as to his drift, he had found himself at a loss to conjecture what could make his bright-hearted friend so strangely unlike himself. He little thought, when suggesting the advisability of the parents discussing between themselves their son's future before coming to any decision, that he was suggesting what Giovanni

felt to be an utter impracticability. The Italian paused a few moments before he answered, half longing, half shrinking from unburdening himself to his friend. When he did reply, it was with a certain air of hesitation, as if he were uncertain what his own lips would utter :

“I am not sure, Castelnau, that I agree with you when you pronounce mothers to be more cognisant of their children’s characters than fathers. Women—even the wisest of them—think only of the present ; men of the future. A son is best taken care of by his mother in his infancy, by his father in his youth. A mother knows what her child is ; a father thinks of what he will be, watches certain actions and words, and regards them as seeds from which will grow other actions and words as inevitably and perhaps as unlike as is the oak from the acorn. Nay, nay, Castelnau, thou needest not to be told how I love and reverence my wife, and yet—I say it with all humility—I feel convinced I am a better judge of the lad’s future than is his mother.”

“At least thou mightest discuss the subject with her.”

Giovanni again paused a few minutes before he replied.

“My wife—may the saints bless her—is a little sensitive upon religious matters. She is devout, pious—perhaps, by men of learning, she might even be called a little superstitious. I have already told thee

of the violence and outrage that have assailed our country. These have not been unaccompanied by famine and even slight earthquakes. My wife regards these as visitations sent from God as a punishment for the growing infidelity of our people. For years I have known that she has destined Filippo for the priesthood; partly from the hints that she has dropped, partly also from the school she has chosen for him. Yet she never actually expressed her intention to me till the night before last, when——”

“But,” interrupted Castelnau, in a tone of surprise, “why didst thou allow thy wife to send the lad to a religious school, if it met not with thy approval?”

“The school was a good one, the lecturers upon philosophy able and fairly conscientious men. What though they taught principally scholastic theology and religious philosophy? The dulness and incomprehensibility of such subjects would but render Filippo all the more ready to appreciate the clearness of science and true logic when he should come to years of discretion.”

“Well, then,” answered his friend, “it only remains that thou shouldst let him continue at his present school till he is advanced enough to go to Padua. Indeed, he appears to me to be fully capable of proceeding there at once.”

“Yes,” said Giovanni hesitatingly, “but — but what will his mother say?”

"Well," said Castelnau sympathetically, "I feel for the lady's disappointment deeply. I feel also for the pain thou wilt suffer in causing her disappointment. Still, my friend, I think thy agitation somewhat excessive. Why not go at once to thy wife, and discuss the subject with her?"

"Impossible!" said the Italian, for the moment breaking through his reserve, "impossible. She would not listen to me. I never attempt discussions with her. Castelnau, *amico mio*," he added entreatingly, "canst thou not think of some other method? Advise me, help me."

"My friend, I will do anything thou carest to ask me; I will go to thy wife myself, if thou thinkest it would lead to good results. But for my advice—that is a different matter. My advice would be to take no steps till thou hast consulted thy son; and then, if he is anxious to obey his mother's wishes, not to interfere with him for a mere whim of thy own. I tell thee again, a man can be a scholar in the Church as easily as out of it."

"No, no," answered the father impetuously. "Thou know'st not the lad as I know him. If he enter the Church, I foresee misery, torture, perhaps even death. His restless, inquiring nature will render it impossible for him to accept all the dogmas of the Church. His honesty will render it equally impossible for him to assume belief if he have it not. What will be the end then? Apostasy, or——"

"Apostasy!" interrupted Castelnau severely; "then indeed had he better not lend himself to a sacred pledge. There is no vice I so utterly abhor as breaking through a contract, whether secular or religious, that one has once faithfully promised to keep. But I hope thou dost thy son injustice in this. There is nothing in his countenance that would lead me to think he could be so treacherous."

"Castelnau *mio*," said the father, "I know, with that loyal nature of thine, what a paramount duty thou holdest to be the keeping of pledges. Sometimes I think thou over-ratest that duty. I am not sure that breaking an unworthy vow is not a lesser evil than keeping it. Still, it is, doubtless, best of all never to have made the pledge. That is one of the many reasons I have for wishing to prevent Filippo from making a vow I feel sure he will never keep."

"Why shouldst thou imagine Filippo will be unable to accept dogmas so many wise and honest men have accepted before him?"

"I judge of him by myself. Little as we are alike in personal appearance (for the lad gets his beauty from his mother), we are sufficiently alike in our characters for me to be able to make a proximate conjecture as to his future. He is, in many things, what may be called an intensified likeness of myself. I am naturally restless; he

is far more so. I am fond of study, craving for knowledge; in this also he resembles me; yet I think his intellectual gifts of a far higher order than mine. Then, in addition, despite the marvellous discipline in which his mother holds him, there is in him a certain imperiousness and wilfulness which—which he does not get from me. This will enable him to overcome any obstacles in his surroundings. He will, under no circumstances, allow his talents to dwindle away to mere mediocrity as I have done. Nay, I fancy obstacles may, with him, actually spur him on—act as an impetus, instead of an obstruction. In none of his childish and boyish pleasures has he shown interest unless there was difficulty to be encountered.”

“Well,” said Castelnau, as the door opened and Filippo entered, “here he comes. Let him answer for himself. It appears to me, that at his age, he should at least be allowed to take some part in a discussion that concerns him more than anyone else.”

“And then,” continued the father, in a low voice, before the boy was fully in hearing, “he inherits a sceptical tendency from me, joined to a certain proneness to superstition, in which he resembles his mother. He is devout, yet he dislikes authority. He must always have a reason for everything he is taught. Reasons that have satisfied him hitherto must, in the nature of things, cease to satisfy him

soon. Then will the sceptical element swallow up the superstitious, and——”

By this time Filippo had approached, and, after listening to the last few words, which, as they were only whispered, he could hear but indistinctly, and thinking that his father and his friend were engaged upon some private matters, he interrupted his father, saying :

“ Shall I leave, my father? Shall I hinder thee in thy conversation with Signor de Castelnau? ”

“ No, Filippo,” said Giovanni, a little sadly ; “ I think all has been said that can be said.”

Castelnau looked for permission in the father’s eyes before he turned to the son, and said :

“ We have been talking of thee and thy future, Filippo. Thy father is somewhat distressed at the notion of thy becoming a Dominican monk. What is thine own wish in the matter? Be not afraid, but speak out openly and fully.”

“ My mother wishes it,” replied the boy, in a tone that clearly implied, “ What more will you have? ”

The father looked at Castelnau with an expression that, though his lips uttered no words, clearly said : “ You see I was right in my conjecture as to how the lad would reply.”

Castelnau turned to Filippo, and answered him in a voice full of cordial approval :

“ Well answered, my boy. A son can seldom do

wiser than gratify his mother's wishes. And yet, Filippo, the decision of what your future life shall be is so grave an occasion, that I think it should not be decided either by her or you without deliberate and careful consideration. You have a father as well as a mother. Should not he be taken into your counsels?"

"But my father always wishes what my mother desires. Is it not so?" said Filippo, turning to his father, evidently thinking the fact too obvious to require an answer. Then, perceiving that his father coloured and hesitated, a remembrance of last night's discussions came across him. He turned to his father affectionately, and said: "Do you really dislike the idea of my becoming a monk, *padre mio*?"

"I dread it, Filippo, I dread it. I am apprehensive that thou wilt discover, when too late, that thou art unfitted for the monastic life."

"What is there in it you think me so unfitted for, my father?"

Giovanni thought his son too young as yet to comprehend all his fears on that score, so he answered somewhat evasively:

"There is the discipline, my son. Thou wilt not like to be subject to the authority of those who know little better than thyself—perchance, indeed, not so well."

"But I shall have to undergo discipline, my father, and must get used to it, whatever profession

I embrace. If I were to enter the army, as thou didst in thy youth, or occupy myself with State matters, as Signor de Castelnau, I should have to begin at the beginning, and must obey those set in authority over me."

"Rightly answered," said Castelnau. "He who wishes to rule must first learn to obey. For, as says Thomas à Kempis, 'Son, thou hast many things which thou must yet learn, which as yet thou knowest not as thou shouldest.' Nay, Giovanni," he continued, turning to his friend, "heathen philosophers as well as Christian writers have insisted upon the necessity of discipline."

"Upon self-discipline, rather than submission to authority," replied Giovanni. "Nevertheless, I deny not that it is good for the young to obey the aged, for the ignorant to learn from the wise. But this kind of discipline is wholly different from that enforced by the Church. I fail to see what good can be gained from fastings and penances, and from the whole dreary routine of asceticism. Let a man restrain himself from doing harm to his neighbours, nay, let him constrain himself into doing actual good, and after he has done this let him innocently enjoy himself; gratefully use, without abusing, the pleasures of the world——"

At that moment the door opened, and his wife entered. Failing to find her son in his room, where she had been to seek for him, she had concluded that

he was with his father and Castelnau. She did not choose that Filippo should be subjected to anything like a repetition of the discussions of the former evening, so she stole up to her son, and, without looking at her husband, put her hand on the boy's shoulder, told him she wished him to do an errand for her, and the two left the room together.

"*Oimè! Castelnau mio,*" said Giovanni, as soon as his wife was out of hearing, "what shall I do? Thou seest the boy wishes to obey his mother. And yet, how can I allow him—a mere lad—to take irrevocable vows, feeling as I do the difficulty, the impossibility it will be to him to keep them?"

"But he will not have to take irrevocable vows for a year or two," answered Castelnau. "Every intending monk has to go through a period of probation."

An expression of intense relief suddenly stole over the father's face.

"Ah," he exclaimed, "I had forgotten that. A year at his time of life would make an immense difference in his capacity for judging for himself——"

Giovanni stopped short and mused for a few minutes. The sudden appearance of his wife had almost checked his determination to have his own will in this matter. Her haughtiness and coldness brought before him with renewed vividness the difficulty of the struggle he would have to undergo; and he was only too ready to catch at any reasonable

explanation that his friend might give to serve as a salve to his paternal conscience.

"Yes, yes," he added, half to himself, half to his friend. "Of course, a year or two's probation alters the case." Then, suddenly clasping his friend's hand, he exclaimed: "Castelnau, from our boyhood thou hast always been the wiser. I have always yielded to thy judgment, and found myself benefited by so doing. Advise me in this. Whatever thou thinkest right for the boy, that will I do."

"It is always a responsible office to advise a man what he shall do with his own son," answered Castelnau, very gravely. "Yet, since thou desirest my judgment, I say, though not without diffidence, let thy son enter the Dominican brotherhood. His mother wishes it; he himself has evidently no disinclination for it; and he will have to take no binding vows for some time to come. Then, in addition to this, the Dominican convent in Naples, to which, I presume, thou wilt send him, is singularly fortunate in its prior. A courteous, upright man, full of faith and good works; nor is he wanting in tolerance, for without being exceptionally intellectual, he is both cultivated and intelligent. Even if Filippo should not ultimately become a monk, he ought to derive no small benefit from being under the guidance of such an one as Ambrogio Pasqua."

"Ah, my friend!" exclaimed Giovanni joyfully; "thou makest all things seem easy. How glad I

am now that I consulted with thee before coming to a decision. I will go and make my peace with my wife for the uncourteous way in which I have argued with her."

Was Giovanni right in thus yielding his judgment to his friend? Doubtless there is much truth in the saying that "in the multitude of counsellors there is safety;" yet it seems to me that there are occasions when it is the higher safety to follow the promptings of our own judgment. Giovanni was a firm believer in the doctrine that a man has a right to exercise his judgment on any subject that may occur to him; yet he did not know that there are times when to follow his own judgment becomes not only a man's *right*, but a *duty*; when he not only *may*, but *ought* to act for himself. Perhaps even in our own day this duty is scarcely sufficiently recognised. Yet surely, if it be laziness to allow another to carry us when we have legs of our own wherewith we can walk; or meanness to allow another to work for us when we have brains and hands of our own to work for ourselves; much more is it cowardice to shift the responsibility of our actions upon another, who, by the very circumstances, should be less competent to decide for us than ourselves. Greatly as Castelnau deserved the reliance his friend placed in his judgment, surely a father who has watched his son with anxious paternal love for fifteen years, should be a better

judge of that son's future than a friend who, after an interval of six years, had only seen him for three days. Certain it is that much of the misery of Filippo's later life might have been spared had Giovanni followed the promptings of his own heart, and peremptorily forbidden his son to enter the Dominican brotherhood.

And so it came to pass within a few months from the time this story commenced, Filippo duly entered the convent at Naples. Those few months had done much in developing his character. Castelnau was his father's guest for a certain portion of the time ; and whether it were that the strong imitative tendency that in Filippo's character was so strangely mingled with rebellion against authority, made him reverence his father because he saw that Castelnau honoured him with all respect ; or whether it were that only since the arrival of Castelnau had Giovanni shown himself at his best ; certain it is that the boy was learning to reverence his father far more than his mother, though he never felt the awe and fear for him that he did for her. Such feelings sown in the mind in its earliest childhood had taken too deep root to admit of easy eradication.

It was real pain to Filippo to leave his parents and Nola, his beloved birthplace ; and yet, boylike, the pain was at times almost balanced by his delight in novelty. The morning of his departure he raised his mother's hand to his lips with tender reverence ;

but he clung round his father's neck, distressed to see how pale and agitated was the elder Bruno, filled with forebodings he could not dissipate, filled also with a sensation of angry loathing at the idea of the bright boy of whom he was so proud becoming one of the "black and white hounds," as he loved to call the Dominican order.

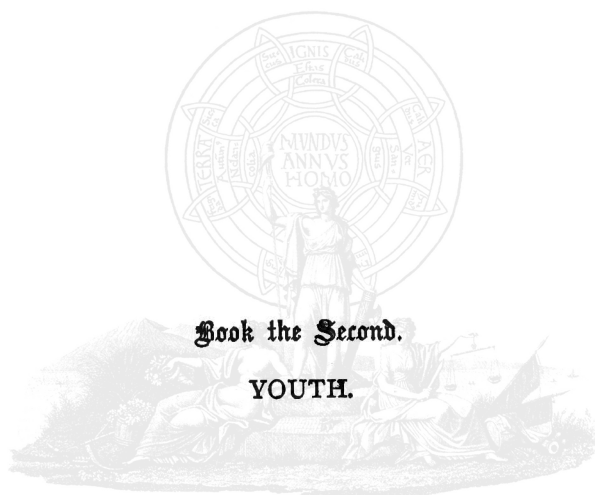
"Cheer up, *padre mio*," Filippo whispered ; then, clasping his father's neck again, he called him by the childish name of *Babbo*. "Cheer up! I shall see you again so soon! And after all I am but going to Naples!"

Poor boy! How little he thought that this would be his final farewell! Within six weeks from that time a terrible fever broke out in Nola, and amongst its first victims were Giovanni Bruno and his wife.

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CHAPTER I.

BRUNO IN THE CONVENT OF S. DOMENICO MAGGIORE.

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies ;—
Hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

TENNYSON.

A YEAR had passed since Filippo had entered the Convent of S. Domenico Maggiore, and in a few days he was to make his solemn profession before the Prior. Despite his great bereavement, that year had not passed unhappily. And if, as some would fondly think, the dead have power to look down upon those that they have loved in life, perhaps Giovanni Bruno was smiling to himself at the non-fulfilment of his own forebodings, and was more than ever grateful that he had suffered himself to be guided by his friend. For as yet, certainly, there

had been nothing in his conventual life that had jarred upon young Bruno ; and, despite the rigorous fasts and total abstinence from meat, never had he rejoiced in more vigorous health. The convent itself enjoyed an exceedingly healthy situation, built as it was on a high hill, exposed to fresh breezes on every side, and commanding a most extensive view. The building was one, not only of the most considerable and vast, but of the most ancient in Naples. It was built about the eighth century ; and both the crumbling walls of the edifice itself, and the grand old trees in the surrounding grounds, bespoke immense antiquity.

Despite the somewhat revolutionary and lawless vein there was in young Bruno's nature, he was fully open to the majesty and poetry—even though it be somewhat sad poetry—that belongs to venerable age. And, as he wandered through the cloisters, he loved to recall the fact that in that very spot had wandered the angelic doctor, Thomas Aquinas, perplexed perhaps by the same difficulties as himself, at least sustained by the same hopes.

For doubts of the truth of his religion had already begun to press upon the lad, though not as yet to any very distressing extent. Giovanni had been only too accurate in judging that there was in his son's character a sceptical element lying latent, that must sooner or later make itself felt. Perhaps there is no single year in a boy's life when

his mind makes such a rapid stride, as between fifteen and sixteen. And this natural change had been augmented in young Bruno by Castelnau's sudden and unexpected visit. Giovanni's eager discussions on various scientific theories; Castelnau's comprehensive views concerning the religious enmities of the period; Fraulissa's conviction of the infallibility of her own faith; were so many seeds sown in the lad's mind, which could scarcely have a better soil for developing them than the quiet leisure of a conventual home. Time after time, he would wander in the grounds recalling the discussions between his father and Castelnau; wondering how it was that his mother's interpretations of various problems should have ever satisfied him, when now they seemed so wholly beside the point. And yet, as I have said, these doubts did not press upon him to any distressing extent. The belief of fifteen years could not be entirely changed by causes so slight as these. It required a stronger soil to develop the blossom into fruit.

It was difficult for young Bruno to realise that only a year had elapsed since he had left his old home. It was even greater difficulty to believe that that home was now no more; and that he would never behold his parents again. Though he *knew* that he was now almost alone in the world (for he had only very distant relations), he did not *feel* that he was alone. One day in his old home would

have brought back his loss more vividly than any reflections upon the subject could possibly have done. A glimpse into his mother's sitting-room, with the vacant chair; a glance into the sheet of clear water, with no father looking down upon it; nay, the very entrance-hall, with no parents eager to welcome him, would have brought the tears into his eyes, and made him shrink with utter desolation. But in the quiet routine of his conventual home no such thoughts intruded themselves upon him. The weeks succeeding his loss flowed so evenly and peacefully, so exactly as they had before; he seemed so thoroughly to have grown to the life; to have so completely settled down and become identified with its laws and customs, and even with his companions, that it was difficult for him to realise that he had been there so short a time. The difference in dress; nay—surprising as it may seem to those who are ignorant how many of the effects of our life spring from very small causes—the mere fact that on entering the convent he had exchanged the name of Filippo for Giordano, both aided in making him regard his former self of only a year ago as a far-away vision in his fast-fading recollection.

Then the Prior, Ambrogio Pasqua, fully deserved all that Castelnau had said of him. Upon Bruno he exercised a sort of magnetic attraction, and seemed to supply to him the place at once both

of father and mother, possessing, as he did, in a certain measure, the qualities of each. He had the same sense of personal dignity, joined to not a little imperiousness and wilfulness when anything crossed him, as had his mother; but to all those in the convent who behaved themselves submissively to him (and who did not?), he had the easy tolerance and caressing gentleness of the elder Bruno. He had quickly perceived the superior abilities of Giordano, and fondly hoped that in after life he would add to the already long list of eminent names of those who had adopted the Dominican frock. He loved to unbend to Bruno, and hear him pour forth his fresh young hopes and aspirations; nay, he was even tolerant and patient when he ventured to lay before him his doubts and difficulties, prompted, as they evidently were, by a reverent longing to comprehend. For Bruno always showed himself at his best to the Prior. He was never restless, never sarcastic, never capricious in his presence; and Ambrogio would have been indignant had anyone told him that there was another side to his young *protégé's* character, not quite so exalted. Not that Bruno was prompted thus to show himself from any conscious feelings of dishonesty. Considering the age in which he lived, when to be honest implied the possession of an extreme amount of courage, Bruno throughout the whole of his career was always open and unreserved.

He did not *assume* the virtues of humility and reverence in the presence of the Prior ; but he really had them. Do we not all, save those who are wholly brutalised, feel better in the presence of those who are morally superior to ourselves ? Does not an irreverent nature not only refrain from uttering an irreverent jest before a reverent soul, but actually, for the time being, feel more reverent ? Do not the impure and coarse-minded not only refrain from sullyng their lips before the innocent and pure, but actually feel less foul themselves ? I think we all become better in the companionship of better persons. And Bruno was singularly susceptible to the subtle influence that springs from personal character. With the exception of the slight imperiousness and wilfulness, almost inseparable from the autocratic position he filled in the convent, Ambrogio's character was wholly without taint. His tolerance did not flow from indifference, nor even from an unconscious fellow scepticism ; but from that comprehensive sympathy that springs from the personal knowledge of the misery that doubt entails. He was one of the few honest men who have really known what it is to doubt in their youth, and yet thoroughly mastered and silenced their doubts in maturity. If ever the good old man were assailed by a little nervous longing for secrecy and evasiveness, it was when Bruno, forgetful of prudence, would venture to disclose his thoughts to

him when others were within hearing. He dreaded lest the lad should come to harm; and what was even more, he was quite a sufficient judge of character to have discovered that any authority unduly exercised would lead Bruno into flat rebellion.

One day, about a week before the time of which I am speaking, the Prior had been seated on a bench under a large spreading tree in the garden, while Bruno was kneeling on the grass at his feet, confessing the many doubts that assailed him, and wandered by degrees into that subject that has perplexed so many before and since himself:

"My father, how can the Son be equal to the Father? Surely, in the very nature of things, the Father must have had a longer beginning in time than the Son; else how could He be a father? Surely there can be but one God; and the Son, though partaking of the Divine Nature, is yet not co-equal with the Father."

"Hush, hush!" said the old man nervously, for he had observed that two friars were walking together, and were almost within hearing. "For no less an opinion than that did Arius suffer banishment."

"I know that," answered the boy, lowering his voice a little. "But if all the Persons in the Blessed Trinity are equal, then must there be three Gods."

"Alas, alas, my son, that is even a more dangerous doctrine! Not ten years ago did Valentilis

Gentilis suffer imprisonment for this very belief, and would have suffered death had he not recanted."

Giordano paused a few moments, and then said :

"Holy father, is it wicked—I do not ask if it is dangerous, for I know it is, but is it wicked—not to believe what one cannot understand?"

"For the adult, yes," answered the Prior decisively; "but," with a certain air of hesitation, "for the young—why," putting his hand somewhat caressingly under the boy's beardless chin, "why, they are but fledglings, and must discover for themselves what a little way their wings can carry them. One must learn by personal experience the impossibility of knowledge before one can fully estimate the immense necessity of faith."

"Is knowledge really so impossible?" said the boy sadly.

The old man bent, and pulled a flower that was growing close to him up by the roots, and pointing to the seed that was already formed in one of the blossoms, said :

"A few weeks ago, my son, this full-grown plant, with its root, its leaves, its blossoms, its sweet perfume and fair form, was a seed such as this. Canst thou tell why the union of warmth and moisture should develop it into the flower? Canst thou tell why it decays and leaves a seed to come up in its place? Canst thou tell when the first flower commenced to be, or the last shall cease to

exist? Even if thou couldst tell, would it help thee to understand why there should thus be a succession of various flowers, instead of one that endures? Canst thou explain why heat should develop the egg into the chick? Dost thou understand the mysteries of life and death? Look around, look around, my son, as far as thou canst see—on that golden sun, so nearly sinking from thy view; on the fleecy clouds; listen to the song of the birds ere they go to rest; hearken to the murmur of the insect life around thee; and ask thyself how much thou understandest of it all!”

“And yet, holy father,” answered the boy tremulously, for he had never ventured to argue with the Prior before, “men are beginning to discover knowledge for themselves. It has been discovered, for instance, that the world is round and not flat. Is it wicked to believe this?”

“Nay, my son,” said the Prior, not without a certain hesitation, “I will not pronounce it wicked. Two of the fathers have partly accepted this doctrine, and I am not wholly prepared to deny it. But whether it be true or false, whether the world be round or flat, does it become a whit more comprehensible to thee? I tell thee, there is not a blade of grass that in its essence is not incomprehensible. If, therefore, thou canst never comprehend the essential nature of things created, how is it likely thou wilt understand the essential nature of the Creator?”

"That is just where it is," answered the boy dubiously. "I do not understand."

"And therefore has the Church had a special message revealed unto her to deliver to her children. If by any mental effort of thine own, thou wert capable of comprehending, even in the faintest degree, the Divine Nature, the ineffable mystery of the Trinity in Unity, it would be not faith but knowledge. Thou art not asked to understand, but to believe."

The old man spoke with that earnestness that only arises from intense conviction. The confession of his faith and the reasons for it, though uttered aloud now for the first time, were by no means born upon his lip at that moment, but were the outward expression of thoughts that had occupied him for years; of inward arguments wherewith he had silenced his own doubts and difficulties when he was about Bruno's age.

Giordano, with his impressionable nature, caught for the time somewhat of the Prior's intense conviction. He clasped his hands passionately, and exclaimed: "My father, I believe; help thou mine unbelief!"

CHAPTER II.

GIOVANNI BRUNO'S FOREBODINGS ARE PARTLY FULFILLED.

For he is gracious if he be observed ;
He hath a tear for pity, and a hand
Open as day for melting charity :
Yet notwithstanding, being incensed, he's flint ;
As humorous as winter, and as sudden
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.

King Henry IV.

AND so, Bruno's doubts being thus temporarily lulled, he made his solemn confession before the Prior, and dwelt quietly and happily in the Convent of San Domenico Maggiore ; living on terms of filial affection with the good Ambrogio, and occupying himself obediently with such duties as were laid down for him.

But, as his evil fate would have it, when he had been living in this way about two years from his open profession, it was ordained that he should leave the Convent of San Domenico Maggiore and proceed

to that of San Bartolomeo, in the city of Campagna. In this convent he sang his first mass; the Bishop of Campagna being a distant relation of his own, Gerolamo Scarampo.

For two convents that belonged to the same Order, there could have scarcely been a greater contrast in the mode in which they were conducted, than between that under the rule of Ambrogio Pasqua and that governed by the Prior of San Bartolomeo. Not that the latter convent had fallen into the dissolute state that unhappily so many of the convents of this period were in. Had this been so, both Ambrogio and Castelnau (who, though now occupied at a far distance upon diplomatic matters, still did his best to watch over his friend's son) would have endeavoured to select some other convent in its stead for Giordano's residence. But this monastery was not below the conventional standard of outward respectability, and its shortcomings were only such as could be discovered by a resident of some weeks.

The Abbot was a short, sleek man, with small eyes looking lazily out of a sleepy fat face, fulfilling the letter of his duties punctually enough, but always with that air of going through a stated routine that is the unmistakable sign of total absence of spirit. Conceive a lad, such as Bruno, impressionable, restless, sarcastic, seething still with doubts that had been temporarily allayed, rather than extinguished

—consciously suppressed out of genuine admiration for the character of his superior—transported from the convent where everything was pervaded with a genuine spirit of fervent faith to one where the very meaning of fervour was unknown; where each service was gabbled through, as if the essential aim was to discover by practice how short a time it could be made to embrace. To one of Bruno's character, who, despite his many doubts and subsequent heresies, was yet peculiarly susceptible to that basis of all religion—the consciousness of something greater and beyond finite things, a perception of the mystery underlying the whole of nature—it would have been far less jarring, and appeared far less irreverent, to have listened to a fierce attack made upon Catholicism, nay, to have listened to an open expression of naked atheism made by an unbeliever, than to have sacred words and solemn services treated so lightly; to hear, day after day, week after week, saints, the Holy Virgin, nay, the Blessed Redeemer Himself, implored by those who fully believed in them, to intercede with the Father for incalculable blessings, with no more diffidence and reverence, and far less earnestness, than they would request a scullion to wash a plate. Now, for the first time, when he saw the slovenly way mass was performed, did he begin to doubt of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Images—which in his former convent he had regarded, if not with

the intense reverence of the other brothers, at least with the loving interest with which we all regard the portraits of great men who have gone before us—now seemed to lose all their former meaning for him. The petty exacting rules of the institution maddened him beyond endurance. As is well known, no conversation is allowed in a Dominican convent without the express permission of the superior—permission won so easily from the good Ambrogio that the rule had never been felt to be unreasonable; but the Abbot of San Bartolomeo, partly out of that petty tyranny inherent in small minds, but chiefly because, being of a very somnolent nature himself, he really did not understand the necessity conversation and friendly intercourse are to the young, very seldom allowed the rule to be relaxed.

Thus thrown upon himself, his time divided between the dreary routine of ceremonies and services which had lost all reality for him, and brooding in silence upon his own thoughts, Bruno became by no means a pleasant addition to the sleepy monastery that he had entered. Time after time did his boyish question to his father and his father's reply recur to him. "What is there in the monastic life thou thinkest me so unfitted for, my father?" "There is the discipline, my son. Thou wilt not like to be subject to the authority of those who know little better than thyself—perchance, indeed, not so well."

"Surely," thought poor Bruno to himself, "it is not vanity to think I know better than this mumbling abbot, who when he is not asleep or crawling through his dreary routine, has all his thoughts devoted to his refectory! . . . And yet what do I know? How can I help being ignorant, leading the life I do?"

This was the greatest misery of all. How could he gain knowledge, living as he did? Was he to spend the whole of his life thus, in vain repetitions of unmeaning words; in foolish gesticulations; in slavish obedience? And then he would wander in the grounds, and think of the discoverers Columbus and Magellan, or of that greater discoverer Copernicus—he who had scaled the heavens instead of the earth. Had they ever been oppressed in their youth with the thoughts that were maddening him? Was he too born to add, if only a very little, to the knowledge of the world? Or was he to go on as he had of late, in the same prosaic way, for weeks and months and years, till youth and maturity were passed, and the capacity for thought gone, and he himself as corpulent and somnolent as his own Abbot? He smiled bitterly to himself. Was there no way of escaping from it all? The only change that, in the natural course of things, he could look forward to, was that he would soon take his part and office as a Preaching Brother, as were other Dominican monks. But though he welcomed this as affording a little relief in the tedium of his life,

he yet shrank with characteristic honesty from preaching tenets he was fast losing all belief in. Moreover, the Dominicans, above all other sects, were bound to hunt out heresy, to crush and stamp out the first appearance of profane learning. How could he assist in extinguishing the only thing capable of regenerating the world! Then if the stars were out, he would look up on the immensity of the heavens with feelings that were by turns of exultation and humiliation. Should he ever be another Copernicus? And yet, even if he were to be, would he not still be surrounded on all sides with vast seas of ignorance? Was not the good old Ambrogio right when he told him that knowledge was unattainable by man? He thought of that memorable evening years ago, when his father described to him the discovery of Columbus, and how the sailor was led to his quest by asking himself, Are those multitudes of exquisite lights in the heavens wasting their beauty upon deserts, and trackless waters? That argument no longer satisfied Bruno, as in his boyhood. If each of those twinkling lights was a world, were they not created for other purpose than to gratify the sight of man? If this world were only one among many, had not men arrogated to themselves a far too great importance? Was not the Psalmist right when he cried: "Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him: and the son of man, that thou regardest him?"

Perhaps, after all, man was not of such very great importance to God, that He should trouble Himself about him. Had He helped the poor Peruvians when they called unto Him for help, and no help came? Then, as thought after thought assailed Bruno, he shrank abashed at his own temerity. And in the midst of all these questionings, which, whether wicked or no, were certainly not petty nor trivial, perhaps the little convent bell would tinkle, and he would have to go through another of these spiritless services.

So the time passed on, week succeeding week, month succeeding month, till Bruno felt himself growing reckless, wicked, eager to do anything, if only to break the monotony of his life. He disliked his fellow-monks nearly as much as the Abbot. And for one monk in particular, whom we will call Giuseppe, he grew to conceive an intense aversion. It was with difficulty he could prevent himself from being positively rude to him; and the first open exhibition of the contempt that he had long been secretly entertaining, both towards the inmates and customs of the convent, was prompted by this dislike.

It happened to be an afternoon when the monks had gained from their Abbot the unusual privilege of being allowed to hold converse with each other. On such rare occasions, Giuseppe was generally to be seen holding a holy book in his hand—especially

if the Abbot were within sight. Bruno, for nearly a week past, had been even more than usually moody and discontented. On being made acquainted with the Abbot's permission, he felt as if he were almost too miserable to be able to avail himself of it. And yet—for we are seldom reasonable when we are out of temper—he was annoyed and irritated that the monks showed so little eagerness to avail themselves of the permission. He happened, in this mood, to come suddenly across Giuseppe, with his eyes bent on his book, and inwardly cursed him as a hypocrite. Perhaps he was unjust in this. Certainly the Abbot was not present on this occasion, and the whole convent had so completely grown into the somnolent condition of its Prior, that the longing for conversation had partly died away through the little indulgence in it. We are all apt to think that we have discovered faults that we are expecting to find.

"Well, Fra Giuseppe," exclaimed Bruno contemptuously, "art thou so absorbed in thy book that thou canst not take thine eyes from it? What is its name?"

"A meditation on the Seven Joys of the Madonna," replied Giuseppe, a little sanctimoniously. "Wilt thou read it also? I will share it with thee."

"Share it!" burst out Bruno. "*Perdio!* I have something better to do with my time." Then

snatching the book from Giuseppe's hand, he continued, as he cast a contemptuous glance on the open page, "The Seven Joys of the Madonna! Why not call it the Seven Joys of St. Peter, or St. Paul, or the whole sum of the Fathers put together?"

Then, his passion having had vent, he paused, knowing that he had spoken as he should not.

Fra Giuseppe's countenance showed mingled feelings of personal anger and spite, joined—to do him justice—with unfeigned horror at language so unheard-of in the convent. Under circumstances such as these, what could be expected of a poor monk but that he should take counsel with his superior? But about an hour before the communication, that reverend personage had indulged (as was not unusual in Dominican Priors, who ostensibly share with the brotherhood the ascetic meal prescribed by the Order) in a luxurious repast in the privacy of his own room, and at the moment of Giuseppe's entrance was in that delightful state of something between sleeping and waking, enjoying the blissful effects of a well-filled stomach. He felt so thoroughly at peace with all mankind that it was impossible for him at that moment to be angry with anyone. So he passed over the offence with a slight reprimand. Bruno would have been better pleased if he had been visited with a little of the severity he knew he deserved. For he was perfectly aware that the leniency with which he was treated did not arise

from the gentle tolerance and kindly sympathy of an Ambrogio Pasqua. This apathy in a monastic institution was appalling to him; and about a week afterwards he suddenly felt impelled to see to what bounds he might go without rousing the Abbot to righteous indignation. In the midst of one of the most impressive services (if any of the services in that convent could ever be said to be conducted impressively) he suddenly turned, took down an image of one of the saints, and swung it irreverently about as if it were a painted doll. Then abstracting the figure of the saint, he replaced the crucifix alone. Doubtless, many of my readers will deem such conduct on Bruno's part shamefully wicked, and a still larger number pronounce it contemptibly foolish. Only in excuse let it be remembered that he was at the lawless age of twenty, when every lad, though singularly susceptible, I think, to that subtle and hidden authority that lies in moral influence, rebels against all explicit and stereotyped authority; when he is far less tolerant of the weaknesses and faults of his fellows than he will be ten years later, when time and experience have mellowed him a little. Then, more than any mental cause, whether noble or ignoble, that lay at the root of his feelings, was a physical cause—his own vigorous health and bright young blood, which, if it could not find a lawful outlet, would have a lawless one. Happily for him, he was wholly free from vicious propensities. He

would not have harmed one of the brotherhood, could he have done it with perfect impunity; but every vein in his body was tingling with the boisterous blood that must expend itself in action; that makes youths in our own day needlessly knock the ball with the bat long before the cricket begins, or makes the girl dance about the room, with a chair as her partner, long before she has to dress for her ball. The months of stagnation that Giordano had been forced to spend would at last be revenged; and he was really scarcely responsible for the way in which he behaved.

If Bruno had wished to make the Abbot indignant with him, he had, at last, certainly succeeded. Such an act of sacrilege, in the face of the whole community, could not be passed over, and he was peremptorily ordered to his cell till the monastic powers should have come to a decision as to the punishment such an egregious offence deserved.

Poor Bruno submitted in silence; and thus left to himself, was filled with thoughts that were by no means of an enviable description. Foremost among his strangely-mingled emotions was keen self-reproach. For pray do not misconceive him, and imagine him to be one of those low, scurrilous souls that delight in sorry jests against what is held by others in reverence. None of the brotherhood was more scandalised by him than he was at himself; and he endeavoured, in vain, to discover the reason

of his outbursts of the past week. Possessing neither the requisite knowledge of physiology nor psychology, he naturally had recourse to the supposition so prevalent in those days—that he had been directly assailed by the devil. Then he thought of his mother—she who had been so anxious that he should become a Dominican. What would her feelings be, had she power to behold him as he was? Then his gentle, ever-courteous father, would he, unbeliever though he was, sanction behaviour so utterly offensive to every rule of courtesy?—so wholly uncalled-for, too, for the Abbot had never consciously injured him. Like all ardent souls, now that he was once fully awake to his error, he was anxious to acknowledge it, to atone for it, and unburthen his conscience to his Prior. He was still allowed to attend the services, and during one of these, it suddenly occurred to him that as he had sinned before the whole community, so ought he to humiliate himself before them all. And as soon as the service was over, he advanced and, in a boyish, impetuous, but unfeignedly sincere way, acknowledged that he had erred, and implored forgiveness both from the Abbot and Fra Giuseppe.

As he was pouring forth his torrent of self-reproaches he suddenly stopped, irritated beyond control by the way they were received. On Brother Giuseppe's face there was a cold smile of triumphant malice; and the Abbot, drawing himself up with an

air of petty self-importance, crossed himself pompously, as if it were desecration to be spoken to by such an one as Bruno. All the monks immediately did as their superior, and likewise crossed themselves. There was no conscious hypocrisy in this, but neither was there real sincerity. It was as if they were automations, compelled to go through a sort of mechanical stage-play. Bruno swallowed his irritation, trying to take it as part of his punishment, and again commenced, accusing himself bitterly, imploring the forgiveness of the Prior.

"Son," said the latter sternly, "cease thy protestations. They are powerless to lessen the punishment that will be meted to thee."

Bruno returned to his cell in a state of utter rebellion. Why should he be misunderstood like this? As if he should be so mean as to humiliate himself as he had, simply to avoid punishment! And, indeed, the thought of his punishment had scarcely occurred to him. It did so now, however. What would it be like? Something unutterably petty, he was sure; for had there not been an air of insufferable fussiness over the whole convent ever since his conduct had roused it from its accustomed somnolence? He paced up and down his little cell, working himself up into a state of fury. All his nobler thoughts had vanished. He was angry with himself, angry with the convent, most angry of all with Fate—or should he call it Providence?

Remember that he had been brought up in the belief that every trial and blessing is directly sent by the Almighty, always as a recompense or punishment for deeds committed by mankind; that God is perfectly just, and having the power to look into all hearts, His judgments would never err. If man should ever venture to punish the guiltless, express miracles should interfere in their aid. Bruno would have acquiesced in any punishment the Abbot might have thought it right to inflict upon him for his offence; but what filled him with indignation was that he should have had all his penitence misconstrued—that he should have been so insulted as to be thought capable of cringing to the Prior in order to escape punishment. “Doubtless,” he said to himself, “the Prior is so mean by nature himself, that he could not understand genuine disinterested penitence in anyone. Well, then, divine wisdom should have been sent to illuminate him for the occasion.”

Poor Bruno! Certainly one thing is clear to all discerning minds: that this convent was having a most unhealthy effect upon his nature. A kind word, a grieved look, such as his father or Ambrogio would have given him, would have softened him immediately—perhaps, indeed, altered the whole tenor of his future life. Nay, like most ardent, impassioned souls, he was never free from a slight susceptibility to the power that lies in cold, self-

contained, passionless dignity ; and had his mother lived she might, perhaps, have quelled some of his more rebellious thoughts. But the Abbot of San Bartolomeo neither acted as a softening nor subduing power. He simply excited in him an angry contempt.

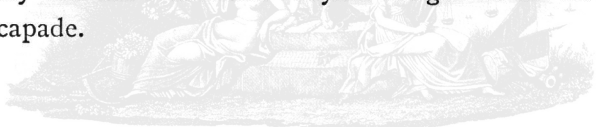
Bruno paced up and down his narrow cell for hours, till he was forced to desist from sheer fatigue. With the cessation of the exercise came by degrees cessation from his violent indignation. Doubts about Providence still assailed him, but they were not the angry personal doubts of a few hours ago, but the intellectual impersonal ones of the previous week. What was he—one human being where there were millions, in one little world where there were multitudes—what was he, that God should interpose and work miracles for him? Was it a whit more likely that a fool would be turned into a wise man for his sake than that a lion should be turned into a lamb? No, no, he must not expect miracles, but must learn to help himself; and with that thought he fell asleep.

Whether his brain had been unconsciously working at the same idea during his sleep, he could not have told. All he knew was that when he awoke, the resolution was already fully formed within him that he would escape. He knew it would not be a difficult matter to carry out, for the brotherhood was wholly unsuspecting. It had been too long in

a state of sleepy security for it to dream of such an act of rebellion as this, even though its walls contained so unruly a member as Bruno. And so, when the Abbot and his monastery had retired to rest, and the grounds were sunk in the obscurity of night, Giordano rose, dressed himself in the usual frock of the Dominican order, but carried his boots in his hand, lest he might be heard. He softly undid the bolts of the door, and walked out—a free man—into the cool night air.

It was not until the outer gate on the extreme limit of the grounds was passed that the thought first occurred to Bruno—where should he go? Not to his grand relative, Gerolamo Scarampo, the Bishop of Campagna. For who does not know that unless we have reason to believe that we are especially dear to them, relations are the last whom we would choose to assist us in any calamity or disgrace? Not to Ambrogio Pasqua, for that monk, kind and good as he was, was far too severe a disciplinarian not to have sent him back immediately to his convent. He walked on, the rapidity of his pace increasing with every step, until he had to slacken a little from very breathlessness. A multitude of thoughts—most of them distressing ones—were whirling in his brain. Were his parents looking down upon him now? What was his mother thinking of him? Even his father, greatly as he disliked the idea of him becoming a monk, would scarcely

approve of him stealing out thus, like a thief in the night. Then Fra Giuseppe and the Abbot would despise him more than ever, believing that his flight only arose from his cowardly dread of punishment. Then he had no money, and how should he support life? Should he write to Castelnau? Not till every other method had been tried, for he knew perfectly well that that high-minded friend of his father's would view his conduct with feelings the reverse of approval. In the midst of these ominous sensations that were besetting him, there was yet another feeling, stronger than the rest combined, and forcing him, in spite of all, to carry out his resolution—boyish delight in his own escapade.



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CHAPTER III.

GIORDANO CONTINUES HIS WANDERINGS.

Here to the houseless child of want
My door is open still ;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

GOLDSMITH.

WITHIN less than three weeks from the time of Bruno's escape from the Convent of San Bartolomeo, he found himself at Rome. How he, without money and without a horse, should have compassed such a distance—roughly speaking, 100 miles—in so brief a space, was a matter of surprise to himself. Doubtless, his Dominican frock had been not without its advantages. In the first place, the somewhat weary and wayworn appearance he naturally presented after the first two or three days excited far less attention from passers-by than had he been in ordinary attire. For the Dominican monks, or Preaching Brothers, as they were often called, were noted for the many miles they would walk in pursuit of their duties ;

and the total abstinence from meat, coupled with severe exertion, naturally told on their frames. Then such of the more religious of the peasantry and simple folk in the neighbourhood thought it an honour to have a monk within their walls, and when Bruno would have been grateful for only a cup of water, insisted upon bestowing upon him a more generous hospitality. Luckily for him, too, Italy was more free from schisms connected with the Reformation than were either England or France. Such as were not Catholics were totally without religion; and where the Protestants from conscientious motives would have repulsed a Dominican monk from their door, the less scrupulous worldlings from prudential motives treated him with little less hospitality than the most fervent Catholic. For Giovanni's description of the evil notoriety the Dominicans had acquired through their persecution for heresy was but too true; and so with very few exceptions, such of the Italians—and they were many—as were no longer Catholics in heart were still so in form, and were careful not to offend or slight the Dominican order in particular. Then—though Bruno, being wholly without vanity, would have been surprised to learn this—his own good looks had not a little to do with the kindness of his various receptions. Italian damsels were not insensible to the pleasure of having so handsome a youth dwelling under the same roof with them, even though he were a monk, and therefore

sworn to celibacy. Then the matrons were little less interested in Bruno than were their daughters. There was an ingenuousness about him, and that indefinable air of youthfulness which seldom endures after the teens have been passed, that always touches the hearts of kindly women who have sons of their own. More than one mother, with the shrewdness of the sex, partly divined the cause of the young monk's apparent homelessness ; but they thought of their own lads, and treated Bruno with the kindness they would have wished their sons to be treated, had one of them committed a similar act of imprudence. Still, Bruno, with greater discreteness than was usual in one who, throughout his career, was heedless of consequences to a degree, resolved within himself never to remain at any one house more than a single night, lest he might be led to divulge more of his private history than was prudent. Only once did he break through this resolution, and this was on an occasion when one of those violent storms of thunder and lightning and almost tropical rains that occasionally visit Italy occurred. Both hostess and daughters insisted that Bruno should stay another night, since the roads were impassable, and the young monk, seeing this to be but too true, complied with their request. Otherwise, it was only when utterly worn out with fatigue and hunger that Giordano accepted shelter or food. Naturally strong, and accustomed to do with little nourishment, on

more than one occasion he would pass twenty-four hours at a stretch with no other relief from incessant walking than an occasional rest under a hedge and a drink of water from a stream would afford.

But by the time he had been wandering in this way for ten days, he felt that he was fast losing strength. He was forced to accept shelter every night, if he could get it, and even during the day he rested far more than he walked. It happened that on one occasion, when he was, as far as he could judge, about forty miles from Rome, he saw overtaking him a horse and its rider. The latter reined in the animal as he approached Bruno, and scanned him keenly.

"Thou seemest to have come a long way, boy," he said curtly, and with less deference than was usual from a layman to a monk, even though the latter be almost in boyhood. Then, seeing Giordano answered not, but coloured in a little confusion before the keen eyes of his questioner, the latter continued: "Dost thou hear me, boy? I say thou seemest to have come a long way, to judge by thy limping gait and dusty clothes. What is thy destination?"

Giordano knew he was on the road to Rome; and although when he first left his convent he had formed no definite purpose where to direct his steps, now that he was so far on the way to that city he intended to continue it, so he answered:

"Rome."

"Well," said the horseman, though without any increase of gentleness in his tone, "I am going part of the way thither myself. Get up behind me, and I will take thee so far with me."

Giordano gratefully accepted the offer, and did as he was commanded. But it was midday, and the sun scorching. Bruno had not been able to procure a bed the previous evening, yet the night had been so clear that he rather enjoyed sleeping in the fields. But the morning dews had given him pains in his limbs, and, what was felt by him to be even a greater trial, nothing had passed his lips, save a little water, for sixteen hours. By the time he had ridden in the sun for about two hours, he felt as if he could no longer keep his seat, and called out faintly :

"Stop, I beseech you, I am ill ; I feel as if I must swoon."

"Tush," said the rider, "thou speakest like a sick girl. Rouse thyself like a man, and keep thy seat."

"Hold me, or I fall !" cried Bruno. Everything was swimming before him, and he was wholly unable to obey his somewhat rough guide.

"Here, put thy arms about my waist, and I will hold thee," said the rider, a little more gently, as he saw, on turning his head, the ghastly pallor of Bruno's face. "In ten minutes we shall be in sight of a dwelling, where I will procure water, or, still better, shelter for thee."

By a great effort of self-control, the young monk kept consciousness till the house was reached, and then, as his guide reined in the horse, swooned away.

"Here, padrone, padrona, or whoever thou art that inhabitest this dwelling," cried the rider, in a tone something between banter and contempt, "wilt thou exercise thy charity and revive a swooning monk, who—whether from devotion or lawlessness is not for me to decide—has wandered too far from his fold, and is now paying the penalty for it."

The person whom he addressed in this vague way—for being naturally short-sighted, he had not at first been able to distinguish whether the figure he saw in the distance was that of a man or woman—now came running out, and showed herself to be a pretty, dark-eyed little woman, still under forty.

"Holy Virgin, the poor young monk! He is cold as ice," and she took one of his hands in hers and rubbed it as violently as she could. "Ah, *Poverino!* But he is a good lad, I am sure, from his face. Fastings and devotion have brought him to this."

"Ah, he is handsome!" said the rider sardonically. "And he who is handsome is sure to be good, is it not so? Well, since he is obviously unable to continue his ride, wilt thou give him shelter?"

"Holy Madonna! I am alone here, and what will my husband say? He has gone on a few days' journey, and may return at any moment. And yet,"

her good heart getting the better of her prudery, "the monk is but a youth, and I cannot let him die in the road."

The rider, seeing the padrona had conquered her scruples, took Giordano in his arms, and brought him into the house. Then mounting again, he galloped off, and in a few minutes was out of sight.

When Bruno recovered consciousness, the first object he saw bending over him was a pretty little woman, with a cup of water in her hand, which she hastened to put to his lips. "Ah," she called to a female attendant, who was standing some distance off, "the saints be praised! He revives!"

"Where am I?" said Bruno faintly.

His pretty little nurse gave him the required information, and asked him in her turn whether he could account for his sudden attack of faintness.

"I was too far off from any habitation last night to procure shelter, and had to sleep on the grass. I think the cold dews must have given me pains in my limbs, and that, coupled with want of food and the rapid ride in the scorching sun, proved too much for my strength."

"Ah, I understand," answered the padrona, in a voice full of sympathy. "I will have a bath heated for thee; and when thou art in thy bed I will send thee some of the wine of our country, hot and spiced; and by to-morrow morning," she continued, with that mixture of tenderness and en-

couragement with which a mother will talk to a sick child, "we shall have thee as well and strong as ever."

The good woman's medical remedies proved as efficacious as she could desire. The hot bath, the warm spiced wine, the bed, softer and more comfortable than any he had slept in since he had left his home, all combined to send him into a profuse perspiration; and when he awoke in the morning he was entirely free from pain, though still feeling somewhat weak. He would willingly have broken through his rule, and remained another day with the padrona. Her house, though small, had an air of comfort and plenty about it which made him think that it would not necessitate such denial on her part to provide him with food, as he feared it must have done to the others who had taken pity on him. Then the padrona herself, though not, he judged, quite of his own station, was evidently removed from the *contadina* class of his other hostesses, and seemed unlikely to wish to pry into anything he might prefer to keep to himself.

He came down the next morning, therefore, resolved to pray her of her goodness to allow him to stay another day, till his strength was more fully restored. But the motherly kindness the little woman had shown him when he was weak and helpless, was changed into an air of distant reserve

now that she saw him apparently strong and well. And when they sat down to their morning meal, she was so deferentially polite to the young monk that he was too discouraged to proffer his request.

For some moments the padrona indulged in rapid incoherent sentences, in which the words "husband," "monk," "jealous," occurred a good many times, but which only bewildered Bruno, he, as I have said, being wholly without vanity. At last the good woman, seeing that Bruno either would not or could not understand her hints, began somewhat nervously :

"I have a husband——"

"Yes?" said Bruno interrogatively.

"He has gone on a journey—may the saints protect him!—but he may return at any moment."

"Yes?" said Bruno, with the same intonation of interrogation, coupled this time with a little indifference.

"Ah, you will not understand! My husband is kind and good to me when he is not jealous, but when he is——" The padrona stopped short, and made her eyes, shoulders, and hands express what she evidently thought did not admit of expression in words. Then she continued: "You are a monk. My husband loathes monks. If he were to discover that I had harboured a monk a whole night—ah, blessed Madonna, what would be the consequence?"

"He would not injure thee?" burst out Bruno indignantly; for his nature was to be tender and chivalrous to women, especially if they were small.

"He might even do that," she answered. "But he would certainly injure thee. Ah, my God," she continued, as she gazed at the spare form of the young monk, and thought of her big husband in the full strength of his forties, "he might even kill thee!"

Bruno, though wholly without vanity, was by no means wanting, as I have before remarked, in a sense of humour. And the first thought that occurred to him was that of amusement at the notion that there could be any ground for jealousy between himself and his kind little nurse. "For, after all," said he to himself, with youthful irreverence, "notwithstanding her good looks, she is fully old enough to be my mother."

But he was of far too generous a nature not to shrink from being the means of bringing trouble upon anyone who had shown kindness to him. So, as soon as their meal was concluded, he rose, thanked the padrona warmly for her goodness to him, and left the house, feeling far more weak than the good woman would have liked to think.

Giordano proceeded on his way with slow, weary steps, compelled to rest frequently, and sadly wondering whether he would have the strength to reach Rome. When he had walked about five miles in

this way, he heard another rider behind him, who, to his surprise, reined in his horse and scanned him keenly, as had the previous rider.

"Where art thou wending thy way, young monk?"

There was a little more natural kindness in the tone of this rider, but no more reverence than with the former one.

"I am going to Rome," answered Bruno, in a faint voice.

"A distance of nearly twenty miles! Thou wilt never get there on foot. I, too, am going to Rome. Get up behind me, and we will go together."

Giordano did as he was told; and though the sun was scorching, as on the previous day, the good night he had had, and the substantial nourishment he had partaken of just before he had started, afforded him sufficient strength to enable him to keep a steady seat on horseback till the close of the journey. As soon as they reached the city, the rider, reining in his horse, said abruptly:

"Here we part, young monk. Dismount." And almost before Bruno, still faint and weary, had time to obey his order, he galloped off, and was out of sight.



CHAPTER IV.

GIORDANO MEETS WITH ANOTHER ADVENTURE.

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him,
While the star of Hope she leaves him?

BURNS.

IT was fast approaching twilight when Giordano reached Rome under the circumstances I have described in the last chapter. But even the Eternal City and its multiplicity of historical associations were unable to excite in Bruno the ardour he had imagined. He was so weak and exhausted that all he could think of was where to procure a night's dwelling. It is always more difficult to ask charity from the inhabitants of a city than from the simple inmates of a village; yet Bruno was absolutely without money.

Now, for the first time since the commencement of his wanderings, did he seriously set himself to think, "What shall I do with my liberty, now that I have attained it?" In his present state of

exhausted nerves the bustle, almost inseparable from a great city, jarred him beyond endurance; and to his surprise, he found himself recalling the peaceful quietude of the cloister, from which he had so gladly escaped, with a mixture of longing and regret. He began to think that he had been premature in thus hastily leaving it.

The more acute pains, both physical and mental, to which human nature is subject, leave behind them so vivid a recollection, as to make the anticipation of their recurrence as much dreaded as the actuality. Who, for instance, can think, without a certain shudder, of the pain they must undergo if they submit to the operation of having a tooth drawn? But the less acute pains, though quite as difficult to bear at the time, do not leave behind them so keen a recollection. A fly constantly buzzing about us for hours will torture us beyond endurance, but with the cessation of the cause, not only ceases in a great measure the annoyance, but there is left behind no vivid recollection of the pain we have undergone. Had Bruno returned to the Convent of San Bartolomeo, he would have been quite as much jarred by its unreality and triviality as he had been before; but now that he was removed from it, he was unable to recall the misery he had experienced, in its distinctness. On the contrary, the more he thought of the convent, and of the behaviour of its inmates, the more he re-

proached himself for his impatience. After all, the poor old Abbot, lazy and somnolent as he was, had never injured him by word nor deed—never thought of injuring him till he had brought it on himself by wanton aggression. Did he ever think of him now? Very unlikely, Bruno thought. More probably the whole convent, after being roused by a temporary excitement, had now fallen asleep again.

Beset by these thoughts, and wandering on almost heedless of where he was going, he suddenly came in sight of a large convent, which he saw at once belonged to his order. A longing came over him to seek admittance there. Despite his failure of strength, he could not help feeling that, on the whole, he had been very fortunate in the hospitality that had been shown him during his wanderings; and we are all of us prone to judge of the future by the past. Hope whispered to him that perhaps the Superior of this convent might be such an one as Ambrogio; in which case, Bruno would confide in him, acknowledge his fault, and humbly submit to any punishment that might be inflicted on him. He stood for some moments hesitating as to what course he had better pursue. Then, as a passer-by approached, he said :

“What is the name of this monastery?”

“The Convent of Minerva.”

“And the name of its director?”

“Sisto di Luca.”

Bruno hesitated for a few moments longer ; then as he remembered that his choice lay between demanding admittance here or wandering all the night, he summoned up courage and knocked at the door. He was answered by a monk with a very sweet expression on his face, and apparently not older than Bruno himself. In the distance, he could faintly discern two other monks, much older, and whom Bruno judged to be the Superior and Sub-Prior. As he began to describe his name and forlorn condition to the young monk, he was surprised to see the sudden expression of intense commiseration that flitted across his features, caused, as Bruno thought, from sympathy with his wanderings. Then, all of a sudden, the two monks whom he saw at a distance strode up to him, and the elder of the two in a tone of great severity exclaimed :

“Thou art Giordano Bruno, a monk, scarce four years out of thy novitiate, escaping from the Convent of San Bartolomeo, in the city of Campagna, in order to flee from the punishment rightfully to be inflicted on thee for gross blasphemy and rebellion. Silence ! Answer not. Excuse not thyself. I have had thy person too well described to me for it to be possible that I can be mistaken in thee.” Then, turning to two officials who had now approached, he continued : “Seize him. You know what to do with him.”

In a moment, and before he had time to collect his thoughts, Bruno found himself seized, put into a cell, and locked in from the outside. His first thought was relief to find that he was not in a dungeon. But it was a cell such as is ordinarily assigned to monks, except that the window was unusually small, even for a monk's cell. On a bench was some dry bread and a cup of water. He drank the latter greedily, but was too bewildered to be able to eat. Twilight was fast merging into night; but there was no light placed for him.

It seemed to him that he must have been there about two hours, when he heard from outside a noise; a commotion, as if some rider of distinction, with many attendants, had arrived. He almost fancied that he heard the sound of a voice like Castelnau's. Then he chided himself for his own folly, and came to the conclusion that he must have been dreaming. Then for some minutes there was perfect silence. He lay down on his hard bed, and tried to compose himself to sleep, but in vain. He had been lying down thus for some ten or fifteen minutes, when he fancied he heard a footstep creeping stealthily. He sat up in bed, and though by no means wanting in courage, he was so weak and exhausted that he lost all nerve. His heart was beating violently, and to his shame and annoyance he found himself trembling like a girl. The footsteps came nearer; a light shone through the chinks; the door was

being unlocked. He sank back in his bed with an air of intense relief. It was only the young monk with the sweet expression of face.

He stole up to Bruno with haste, clasped his hands, as if with entreaty, and murmured :

“Escape, for God’s sake escape ! Thou know’st not the fearful punishment to be inflicted on thee—as secret as it is horrible.”

“Secret ?” exclaimed poor Bruno.

“Yes, secret. No one is to know of it, for no one is to know of thy offence, since it would bring scandal on the order that one of its own members should have so offended. Delay not, delay not, escape for thy life !”

“How can I escape ?” answered Bruno. “Are not the monks sure to be on their guard, and will they not look out warily for any approach on my part to flight, since by some means or other they have learnt of my former escape from the Convent of San Bartolomeo ?”

“Come, come !” implored the young monk. “I will protect thee. Argue not, but only come.”

Bruno sank back on his bed in a sort of despair.

“After all,” he said, “I may as well die through torture as through starvation. I am without money, without friends.”

The young monk threw a purse on Bruno’s bed, and exclaimed still more earnestly :

“Here is money. Take it, oh, take it, and come

with me. Stay. Throw off thy Dominican frock. Thou wilt more easily escape detection."

Bruno thought of the assistance the Dominican frock had been to him, and said :

"Nay, good brother. If I go forth at all, I must wear the gown of my order. It will gain me admittance where a bare shirt would certainly win me refusal."

"As thou wilt," answered the monk. "There is no time for discussion. Take the money, hide it, and follow me."

"And if we are discovered, kind brother, thou wilt be thought as treacherous as myself—wilt have to suffer, perchance, the same punishment. Thou hast, doubtless, heard a bad report of me, but I am not so base as this."

"Hush, hush, I must not divulge it to thee ; but thou hast a friend here, a friend as powerful as he is merciful. This purse is sent by him. Take it. I do not think I shall have to suffer great penance."

Thus urged, Bruno did as his companion directed, feeling as if he were in a dream. They groped along the walls (for the young monk thought it safer, now he was accompanied by Bruno, to blow out the light) till they arrived at the entrance-door, when the monk softly undid the bolts, and Bruno found himself in the streets of Rome for the second time ; only with the addition now of having money in his pocket.

Since it is the privilege of the biographer to know

more of the surroundings and hidden plots affecting the hero of his tale than the subject himself, I will, with the reader's permission, retrace my steps and relate the circumstances that led up to Bruno's detention at and release from the Convent of Minerva—circumstances which, to the day of his death, he only surmised, and never fully discovered.

Giordano had done very insufficient justice to the anxiety of the Convent of San Bartolomeo when he had imagined that it had by this time forgotten all about him, and was now slumbering in utter oblivion of him and his conduct.

When the Abbot first discovered the fact of Bruno's flight, he was filled with absolute dismay. He sent scouts in the neighbourhood, but in vain. Bruno had escaped during the early part of the night, and had walked so rapidly that he was far out of reach before his flight was discovered. To do the Abbot justice, he was filled with unfeigned sorrow when he thought of Bruno. As Ambrogio had only seen him at his best, this Abbot knew but the less worthy side of his character; and as he thought of the impetuous and passionate youth, left alone to his own devices, without guide and without discipline, he could not but think (to use his own expression) that Satan had gained another soul. His first act was to send a messenger to Ambrogio Pasqua; and when he found that Bruno had not, as he faintly hoped, taken refuge at his

former convent, the poor old Abbot sent a full description of the fugitive to various Dominican monasteries in Italy.

Meanwhile Ambrogio's dismay and grief can be imagined. He refused to believe, at first, that the lad whom he had loved as his own son could have been guilty of such actions as the Abbot described. He refused to believe that he could have thus stolen away like a thief in the night. He would rather think that he had met with some accident; and begged the Abbot, if there were any wells or deep streams of water in the grounds of the Convent of San Bartolomeo, to have them dragged.

When this was found to be unavailing, the good old man wrote off to Castelnau; who, being now almost at the full height of his power, would be able, if any one could, to effect the discovery of Bruno. Ambrogio detailed the full account of the young monk and his offences just as he had heard it from the Abbot, hiding nothing and adding nothing. Yet he could not refrain from entreating Castelnau not to allow his opinion of Bruno to be lowered until more had been discovered about him.

"For," concluded the letter, "though I would be the last to impeach his Superior's veracity, yet I would beg thee, my son, to remember that misrepresentations occur quite as frequently from inaccuracy of observation as from wilful intention to deceive. That Bruno was not unassailed by

intellectual doubts about the doctrines of our Holy Church, especially concerning the dogma of the Blessed Trinity, I, alas! must be the last to deny. But that one possessing so deep a sense of reverence for all things infinite, so innate and ready a courtesy to beings finite as himself, whatever their station, should, in less than three years, have fallen so low, have deteriorated so miserably as to be guilty of the gross blasphemy and scurrilous buffoonery imputed to him by his Abbot, is what I will not believe without more positive proof."

Communication being so much more difficult in the sixteenth century than in our own, and Castelnau being in France at that time, it followed that he could take no active steps for Bruno's discovery till a considerable interval had elapsed from the time of the young monk's flight. Castelnau's first act was to proceed himself to the Convent of San Bartolomeo. He saw the Abbot, Fra Giuseppe, and many of the other monks. He examined and cross-examined them; and when he found that their evidence was unshaken, and that there was no conflict of testimony between any of the witnesses, he felt estrangement and indignation growing in his heart against his friend's son. Loyalty to vows was, as Giovanni had hinted, the mainspring of Castelnau's life, the ideal virtue to which all personal inclination must be devoted and submitted. Had Giordano refused to take monastic vows at the termination of

his novitiate, he would have met with no disapproval from Castelnau; that large-minded minister being the first to acknowledge that every man has a right to judge for himself. But having once taken them, to violate them was contrary to all dictates of honour, subversive of every principle of morality. And Castelnau found himself saying: "I will cast him off, I will no longer trouble myself to care for one so worthless." Then the remembrance of his own vow to Bruno's father recurred to him, and he thought: "Nay, to cast him off would be to act as basely as Filippo himself; since did I not vow to Giovanni that, if he died, I would be a father to his son? If Filippo is so wanting in religion, in honour, does he not the more urgently require some one to watch over him?" Castelnau was but too well aware that Italy was as full of licentiousness as of infidelity, and he dreaded to think of what was happening to the fugitive, even now. Perhaps he was being ruined body and soul. He went to Ambrogio, and communicated to him a little of his dread on this wise. He was surprised at the indignation into which he had thrown the good Prior. "I would as soon believe I could fall into foulness myself," he said. "No, Bruno may hereafter become a heretic, but never a knave."

"Yet he has already shown himself capable of vile buffoonery."

"He must have been goaded to it," murmured

the poor Abbot. "I cannot believe that I can be so deceived in a lad who has dwelt night and day in my convent for nearly three years."

Then Castelnau returned to the Monastery of San Bartolomeo, and confided his fears for Bruno's virtue to its Abbot. He was more disposed to trust to this Superior than to Ambrogio; for he saw that the latter was so warm a partisan of the lad's as to make him by no means an impartial judge of his character. It was a real comfort to him, therefore, when the Abbot told him that he had never seen the faintest sign of sensuality in Bruno.

"His temptations will be those of the intellect and heart, not of the senses. Never have I seen monk care so little for animal gratifications. Why," continued the old Abbot, in naïve surprise, "I do believe that he did not care whether it was a fast or feast-day!"

"Then you think," asked Castelnau, "that under no circumstances would he fall a prey to foulness?"

"Nay, I will not say that," answered the Abbot. "When a man is without religious belief, and is utterly rebellious against authority, who can say into what temptation he may not fall? He is without money, and poverty may lead one who has no principle to uphold him, into a very pit of degradation."

"But if he had sufficient money to enable him to follow the dictates of his own taste, what then?"

"Why, then," answered the Abbot, "he would be

led into heresy, into scientific discovery and prosecution of learning, falsely so called, not into lewdness."

Castelnau left the convent much cheered.

"Filippo shall not want for money," he said to himself. "I would to God I could have him with me, but since that is impossible—for as long as these religious wars last I never know where I shall be from one day to another—I will see whether having to learn self-reliance by experience, as I have had to do since I was much under his years, will not be the best discipline for him. When a youth is without vicious propensities, there is no teacher like experience. And he has never had this. He obeyed his imperious mother as if he were an infant or a slave; he was treated by poor Giovanni like a pampered child; and since then he has been under monastic discipline. Nothing can excuse his treachery; nothing will make me think well of him again. Still, the unnatural restraint of his boyhood may perhaps in some measure account for this outburst of rebellion. Yes, yes, he must be past twenty by this time, and shall shift for himself. He shall have money, and I, though he will know it not, will watch over him as far as State duties will permit."

Having come to this decision, he resolutely set himself to discover the fugitive's whereabouts; and the riders who had rendered such timely, though somewhat rough assistance, were in reality two of the many scouts sent by Castelnau. Then, when the

news of Bruno's capture in the Convent of Minerva was communicated to him, it suddenly occurred to him that his punishment might be so severe that in his state of exhaustion it might terminate fatally.

Accompanied with a certain retinue, he demanded admittance to the Superior, and when shown into his presence, said :

"Reverend father, thou hast within thy walls a fugitive monk, Filippo or Giordano Bruno, fleeing from his convent to escape punishment rightfully deserved for blasphemy and buffoonery."

"I have, son ; but fear not that he will be able to escape here, nor think that his punishment will be so slight that he will care to repeat his offence."

"Nay, holy father," exclaimed Castelnau in horror, for he had heard of the severity of monastic punishments, "he will die under prolonged torture. Remember, he has been wandering with but scanty food for nearly three weeks. And yesterday he fainted from sheer exhaustion."

"If he dies under his punishment it will be the act of God," answered the Superior sternly. "It will not be our intention to kill him."

"Nay, but, father, listen to me. He is the son of my dearest friend, and to him I vowed before his death that I would be a father to his boy. It is partly my fault that Giordano has acted as he has ; for it was by my advice that he adopted the Dominican frock. I overruled the scruples of

his father, who dreaded, above all things, a religious life for his son. I would to God I had held my peace. Nay, nay, father, this punishment must not be."

The Superior drew himself up in his most stately manner.

"Son," he said, with a mixture of reproach and ceremoniousness that had a good deal of power in it, "son, thou art a man set in authority thyself. Thou bearest the character of singular integrity coupled with decision and firmness; as careful to show obedience to those set in authority over thee as to demand submission from such as owe it to thee. What would'st thou say if some outsider demanded of thee in the imperious tone thou hast used to me, that thou shouldest break through a State regulation or a code of law, because he did not wish his friend's son to receive a just punishment? How would my whole community regard me, if for no better cause I were to countermand the orders I have already given?"

"But there is no need of a countermand," answered Castelnau. "Let Giordano escape."

"Escape; and before my very eyes? Escape? When and where? Shall I look quietly on while the malapert steals softly by me?"

"Nay, holy father," answered Castelnau, with a certain dry humour, "what we do not wish to see we need not look at." Then, as he saw an expression

of utter repudiation come over the Superior's face, he continued in a gentler tone of expostulation: "On my honour, reverend father, I am asking thee to do no unworthy or dishonourable action. All rulers, from the humblest mistress of a household to the sovereign on his throne, must have recourse at times to tactics. Exceptional circumstances require exceptional treatment. We can often be secretly lenient where we cannot be openly so, lest our leniency be turned into a precedent."

"But there are no exceptional circumstances in this case to justify exceptional leniency, no provocation on his Superior's part. The monk himself seems to have been suffering from no pain or illness that might perhaps madden him into rudeness, nor does he seem—poor excuse as that would be—to have been under the influence of wine."

"Well, then, reverend father," answered Castelnau, with an air of authority that he knew so well how to assume, "since no arguments from me will move thee, bethink thee that it is Michel de Castelnau de la Mauvissière who pleads before thee, and who is not accustomed to be refused."

Sisto di Luca was not insensible to the implied menace. He was no time-server. On the contrary, he was as honourable and upright as he was harsh and severe. Yet to be wholly single-motived and disinterested implies perhaps a pitch of enthusiasm to which he was a stranger. And the man who

was pleading to him for his friend's son was not only the most powerful nobleman in France, but almost the most powerful nobleman in the whole of the Catholic portion of Europe. He was not only Michel de Castelnau, Lord of Mauvissière and Concressant, Baron de Joinville, Earl of Beaumont le Roger, but—what was far more important to the Superior—he had been already chosen to assist in the selection of one Pope, and might not improbably be called upon to fill the same office again.

The Superior walked up and down his room for some moments in evident indecision, and then said :

“If I grant thee thy request, it must be on the express condition that the boy's escape shall in no wise be associated with my knowledge—much less my sanction.”

“Assuredly,” answered Castelnau readily. “I would be the last to do anything that could bring thee into disrepute with thy community.”

“How wilt thou manage?” asked the Superior. “Dost thou wish to see the monk thyself?”

“No, indeed,” answered Castelnau. “I am as indignant with him as thou canst be. I do not even intend him to know that is to me he will owe his escape. It would too greatly seem like a direct encouragement to his evil conduct.”

“But, then, how wilt thou arrange his escape? His door is fastened from the outside. Even if it

were unlocked, it is little likely that he would a second time attempt escape."

Castelnau mused for a few moments, and then said :

"The young monk who opened the door to me had a singularly sweet expression of face, and looked as if he had been weeping profusely. What was the matter with him ?"

"Foolish boy ! He was weeping about the very subject of our conversation to-night. Ever since Bruno's admittance he has been like one beside himself. He is compassionate to weakness, and can hardly bear to see an insect crushed."

"The very person for me !" exclaimed Castelnau eagerly. "If he is so compassionate, he would not mind running a little risk in order to avert punishment from Bruno."

"Thou would'st not incite one of my own monks to rebellion !" said the Superior, with a return of his indignation.

"Surely not," answered Castelnau gently.

"Tell me what is rebellion, if it be not so to induce a prisoner's escape from punishment a Superior has thought fit to pronounce against him ?"

"Nay, my father," [answered Castelnau. "I promise thee thy name shall not be mentioned between us. If the monk is as compassionate as thou describest him, he will assist Bruno's escape

from unmixed motives of kindness. He will intend no rebellion. He will be so absorbed in preventing suffering to a fellow-creature, that the thought of thee and thy anger will probably not even occur to him. Doubtless, for the sake of upholding thy authority, thou must inflict upon him a slight punishment; only," continued Castelnau, with a certain return to his authoritative manner, "remember it must be very slight. One who errs from a feeling of compassion, carried though it be perhaps too far, must not be visited with severity due only to one who acts from wilful rebellion. An additional *Ave* or *Credo* will be sufficient."

"Son," said the Superior, drawing himself up with stately wrath, "this is too much, that my very punishments must be dictated to me by thee."

"Pardon me, reverend father," answered Castelnau, calling to aid that tact which seldom deserted him in need, "I ought to have remembered that Sisto di Luca's character for integrity and rectitude is so well established, that to deem for one moment that he could be guilty of visiting the sins of the guilty upon the innocent is at once a causeless apprehension on my part, and an undeserved insult to him."

The compliment—as all compliments must be to afford any gratification to those not entirely blinded by vanity—was fully deserved by Sisto di Luca, and was not without its weight. He was too proud and self-contained, however, to evince the gratifica-

tion he felt. He merely answered, in his stately manner :

“Now, son, it is my turn to demand a pledge from thee. Swear to me, before thou leavest, that thou wilt never, either by word or deed, divulge that I know aught of thy *protégé's* escape.”

Castelnau, now, was not wholly free from indignation on his part. “When was Castelnau de la Mauvissière ever suspected of treachery?” sprang to his lips. But he remembered how much the Superior had had to bear from him, and restrained himself. After pausing for a moment, he crossed himself solemnly, and said, with an air of simple gravity :

“On my honour as a knight, and on my faith as a Christian, it shall never be learnt through me that thou hast had aught to do with the escape of Giordano Bruno.”

The Superior bowed, as if in acceptance of the vow, and then turned to leave the room. There was, however, such an expression of indecision on his features, that Castelnau hastened with all speed to seek an interview with the compassionate young monk. He feared what the effect of even a few moments' private communion with himself might have on the Superior. He thought it very probable that after due cogitation Sisto di Luca might come to the conclusion, that it would be better even to run the risk of braving the displeasure of so powerful a noble as Castelnau de la Mauvissière, than to derogate

in the faintest degree from his autocratic position as Superior and sole authority in his convent.

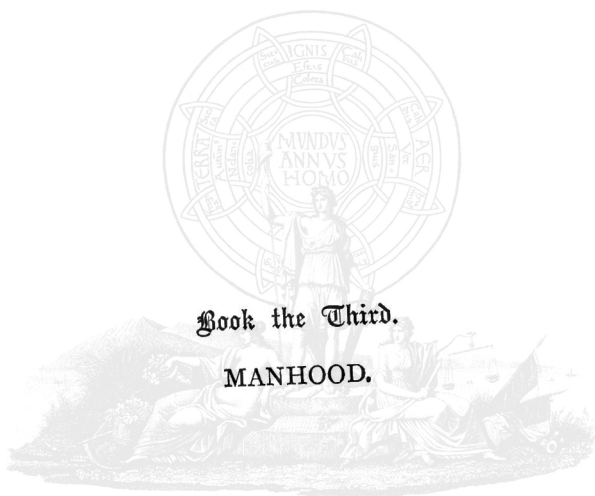
The young monk with the sweet face and compassionate heart listened with a mixture of joy and timidity to Castelnau's plans for Bruno's escape, and proceeded to carry them out with all speed, as I have already related. And (to the Superior's honour be it said) he received no worse punishment for the part he took in effecting Bruno's escape than was inflicted by a two days' diet of bread and water.



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CHAPTER I.

BRUNO IN VENICE.

I loved her from my boyhood ; she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea ;
Of joy the sojourn and of wealth the mart.

BYRON.

SELDOM was gift more opportune than the purse sent by Castelnau to Bruno.

As the gates of the Convent of Minerva closed upon him, and the young monk wished him God speed, Giordano, greatly weak and bewildered, wended his way as rapidly as his strength would permit, to an inn a little distance from Rome. Taught by experience to dread discovery, he gave his baptismal name, *Filippo*, instead of the one assumed by him on entering the Dominican order. And from this time forward, we find him now passing by the former name, and now the latter. But to save confusion, I will continue to distinguish

him as Giordano—the name by which he is certainly best known in history.

On leaving Rome the next morning, Bruno wandered about for some days till he arrived at Genoa, where he made a brief sojourn of under a week. Thence, coasting along the sea by the west, he arrived at a picturesque little town called *Noli*, distant about seven miles from Savonna and four from Finale.

Counting over his little store of money, he found that he had only enough to last him—even with rigid economy—for a few months. For it had been no part of Castelnau's intention to support him in idleness; and he had therefore only provided him with money sufficient for his immediate wants. Yet, on hearing that there was a fairly good school at Noli, Bruno could not resist the temptation to attend some of the classes there. Encouraged by the kindness of one of the principal teachers, between whom and himself a love for the Copernican theory, or Doctrine of the Sphere, as it was called, formed a bond of sympathy, he divulged some of his pecuniary circumstances; and asked whether lessons from him in grammar to some of the younger boys might be given in lieu of payment for his attendance on the lectures. This was granted; and at the close of a few weeks, the teacher told him that his lessons to the boys had met with such thorough appreciation that, in addition to

being allowed to attend the lectures gratuitously, he would thenceforth receive a small remuneration for his labours.

But, unfortunately for Giordano, that restlessness which his father had described as forming so large an ingredient in his character, was now rapidly increasing upon him. Then, in addition, it must be remembered that he was, to all intents and purposes, entirely alone in the world, just at the age when he required some firm, guiding hand to counteract his natural impulses. What wonder, then, that being cursed with a native repugnance to remain long in one place, he threw up his employment at Noli, at the end of five months, in spite of the far greater benefit to him it would have been to remain?

His employers were unfeignedly grieved to part with him. He, too, was a little sorry to part with them; but the love of change was too strong within him to make him repent his resolution, and with a light heart he recommenced his wanderings, carrying with him, however, certificates of his competence as a teacher. For three or four years he travelled about, visiting Savonna, Piedmont, Turin, and other towns and cities of Italy, remaining only a short period in each, always supporting himself by teaching, until, in the year 1573, he arrived at Venice.

Venice, the Queen of the Adriatic, was then at the height of her glory. She was not only one of

the richest and most magnificent cities of the world, but the most orderly. Perfect security for life and property, and an entire absence of those insurrections and civil brawls which but too frequently occurred in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were her especial characteristics. Older than most of the mediæval cities of Italy, she had for hundreds of years quietly worked her own way, caring little for the political struggles that went on around her. Wealth that other nations had squandered in Crusades, she stored in her coffers. Industries and arts flourished. There were schools that could compete with the best in Italy. Men of science and letters found fellow-seekers after knowledge, with whom they could sympathise and from whom they could learn. Students of theology received here more kindly and intelligent attention than could be met with in any other part of the world, and were at liberty, without fear of persecution, to set forth what opinions they liked. And, consequently, in the broad piazzas and splendid mansions of Venice were to be seen representatives of almost every nation in Europe.

To this city Bruno, now on the verge of his twenty-sixth year, came, still clothed in the gown of his order. He boarded with some one in the arsenal; and, to gain a little money, wrote a book *On the Signs of the Times*. As soon as it was finished, he presented it to the Superior of the

Dominican convent at Venice, Father Remigio, noted for his version of the Psalms of David and other works, in order that he might examine it before it went to press. Father Remigio read it, approved of it, and restored it to Bruno. A friendship sprang up between the two, and this indirectly led to another and a greater friendship which was only interrupted by death.

It happened that, one lovely day in the early summer, Remigio and Bruno were seated on the shore, watching the ebb and flow of the waves. By-and-by they grew tired of this occupation, and commenced conversing upon the subject of the tides; for Remigio, though a Dominican, was, as were the majority of the inhabitants of Venice, very fond of science. They became so engrossed in their conversation that they did not notice the appearance of two persons, who were fast coming towards them, till they were almost within touch, when Remigio suddenly sprang up, and cried enthusiastically:

"Sarpi, Paolo Sarpi! my son, my dear son! It seems a thousand years since we met."

"And yet," answered Sarpi quietly, almost as if with a little rebuke to Remigio's enthusiasm, "it is scarcely more than a thousand days."

The new speaker was a little, delicate-looking youth, apparently not more than twenty, dressed as a friar of the Servites, a branch of the Augustine order.

“And who is this young gentleman you have with you?” whispered Remigio to Sarpi, as he pointed to a distinguished-looking youth, singularly unlike Sarpi in appearance, though about his own age; tall and well formed, with hair of a dark amber, and a face which, though if severely criticised might be too feminine in its characteristics, was yet of striking beauty. He was dressed with a richness and extravagance but too common among the higher classes in the sixteenth century; but his whole bearing was that of unaffected, dignified simplicity.

“He is Philip Sidney,” answered Sarpi, in a low tone, “the nephew of the great English nobleman, the Earl of Leicester, who some say is to be King Consort of England. But who is your companion?” continued Sarpi, looking keenly at Bruno. “If you will introduce him to me, I will introduce Master Sidney to you.”

The necessary forms being over, and the two newcomers having seated themselves on the shore with Remigio and Bruno, the former turning to Sarpi with the same air of interest with which he had greeted him, said:

“Well now, my son, tell me of thy travels. If thou hast not been away from me a thousand years, thou hast been long enough to make me hungry for some news of thee. Where hast thou been?”

“Switzerland, Germany, and many parts of Italy, studying and acquainting myself with men and

manners. Learning to think for myself," he added, in a slightly pointed tone to Remigio, "and discovering, in so doing, how much more sin there is in persecution than in tolerance. The event that made the most impression on me—though, the saints be praised, I was not a witness of it—was the infamous execution of Valentilis Gentilis, for some vague notions of his upon the Trinity."

Valentilis Gentilis! What associations the name recalled to Bruno! He seemed to see his former self of ten years ago seated at the feet of the good Ambrogio, in the gardens of the Convent of San Domenico Maggiore, pouring out his boyish difficulties and doubts. In spite of himself, he was conscious that an ominous feeling stole over him. "I thought that he recanted his opinions many years ago," he said.

"So he did," answered Sarpi; "but only to preach them again."

"He was fortunate to be beheaded," said Remigio. "Servetus, for heresies not a whit worse, and indeed strangely similar, was burnt alive!" Though contact with the inhabitants and visitors of Venice had imbued Remigio with a love of science very rare among the Dominicans, he was too consistent a monk not to abhor heresies such as those of Servetus and Gentilis.

"Ah, well," answered Sarpi, "I have little sympathy with Gentilis, much as I condemn the way in which he was treated; wasting his time upon

speculations so mystical: wicked from the Catholic point of view, useless from the scientific. But Servetus, he could less well be spared. I know not when I was so interested as in reading his speculations upon the circulation of the blood." Then, turning to Sidney, Sarpi continued: "That is the greatest blot you Protestants have committed, not to pardon the metaphysical vagaries of Servetus for the sake of his real scientific knowledge."

Sidney coloured a little as he answered, not without haughtiness: "Believe me, there are very few English Protestants who do not condemn Calvin for the part he took in this matter. Yet reproaches from Catholics to Protestants upon the subject of persecution scarcely come with a good grace, methinks, after the atrocious massacre of St. Bartholomew last year, in which I may consider myself fortunate that I was not a victim."

Sarpi paused before he answered, with an air of banter that was probably assumed: "Ah, well, the victims were many in number, but few in intellect; and so their murder did not greatly matter. Ramus seems to have been the only name of any distinction among the victims." Then, with a graver air, he said: "But it has always struck me as remarkable that Elizabeth of England has remained such an unconcerned spectator. Being the head of the Protestant Church, one would imagine that she would have bitterly resented the massacre."

"So would Her Majesty," answered Sidney, "had not the French Government sent Castelnau as Ambassador to mediate. And you know what Castelnau undertakes to perform, he never fails to carry out."

"Castelnau?" exclaimed Bruno, "what Castelnau?"

"Michel de Castelnau de la Mauvissière," answered Sarpi. "Why do you ask? Do you know him?"

"He was my father's dearest friend," answered Bruno, somewhat sadly, as the thought of his parents and Nola, his beloved birthplace, recurred to him.

Sarpi, resuming the conversation, turned to Sidney and said:

"So thou wert in Paris that dreadful night in August? How is it thou hast never told me so before?"

"Because," answered Sidney, "thou art a Catholic, and I could not bear to touch upon a subject that must be, necessarily, painful to the more enlightened Catholics. I should not have told thee of it at all, only I was a little angered at thy accusation against the Protestants."

"Never mind what I said, *mio amico*. My travels have taught me that there are good and bad in all religions. To turn to something more interesting. On that very night in August, I was at Wittemberg. Tempted by the beautiful evening, I strolled out

for a walk, and looking up to the heavens, which were unusually clear, I was surprised to see an extraordinary light in the Constellation of Cassiopeia. I felt certain I had never seen it there before."

"I too have seen this wonderful star," interrupted Bruno quickly. "For eight months have I been watching it whenever opportunity served. Tell me all you know of it."

"Rather let me tell you what Tycho Brahe, the great Danish astronomer, knows of it. Through a mutual friend, I have been enabled to learn how far his experiments have as yet gone. It was not till the 11th of November that he saw it; and distrusting the evidence of his senses, he called out the servants and peasants; and having received their testimony that it was a huge star such as they had never seen before, he hastened to his observatory, adjusted his sextant, and measured its distances from the nearest stars in Cassiopeia. He noted also its form, its magnitude, its light, and its colour, and he waited in great anxiety for the next night, that he might determine the important point, whether it were a fixed star, or a body within or near to our own system."

"Well," asked Bruno eagerly, "and what are his conclusions?"

"He says that, in its appearance, it is exactly like a star, having none of the distinctive marks of a comet. It seems to twinkle. In the first month of

its appearance it seemed less in size than Jupiter; in the second, it equalled him; in the third, it surpassed him in splendour; in the fourth, it was equal to Sirius; but now it seems to be rapidly lessening. Its colour changes with its size. At first it was bright and white. In the third month it began to become yellowish; in the fifth, reddish; now it is bluish. But its place in the heavens is invariable."

"And what is the cause of all these changes?" asked Bruno, intensely interested in Sarpi's account of Tycho Brahe's observations.

"Ah! that were to inquire too curiously," Sarpi replied, with a peculiar smile.

"I will never rest," exclaimed Bruno excitedly, "till I have found out all that can be discovered about this star. What would I not give to be a great astronomer!"

Remigio now rose, and said it was time to be turning home. He and Sarpi walked together, leaving Sidney and Bruno to follow. And in that walk homeward lay the groundwork of a friendship that was nearly equally prized by both. The courteous and chivalrous bearing of Sidney charmed Bruno, always susceptible to grace of manner; his melancholy interested him; his love for poetry touched a responsive chord in Bruno's breast. The two young men never allowed a day to pass without being in each other's society. They confided their

hopes and ambition to each other ; they recited their poems, and swore eternal friendship. Sidney's somewhat fiery temper (his only fault in a character otherwise singularly blameless) never seems to have jarred Bruno—himself, as we know, being somewhat of the same temperament, and consequently able to make allowances. With Sarpi, Bruno did not agree so well.

Paolo Sarpi was the son of an impoverished merchant, long since dead ; and was wholly wanting in those graces of manner that so charmed Bruno in Sidney. He was exceedingly keen in intellect, and in after life he seems, in a vague way, to have anticipated Harvey in the circulation of the blood, and to have preceded his friend and pupil, Galileo, in the invention of the thermometer. When upon the subject of natural science, Sarpi could be communicative enough ; but, otherwise, he was reserved and silent. Plodding, and of a slow, critical judgment himself, he disliked enthusiasm (or, as he termed it, extravagance) in others, and did not seek to disguise his dislike. Bruno, always hasty in his judgments, mentally set Sarpi down as cold and unfeeling ; and on more than one occasion did Sidney have to mediate between the two.

Nevertheless, on the whole that visit to Venice was a pleasurable one to Bruno, and may certainly be considered an epoch in his life. Besides the

friendship with Sidney, it had the effect of reviving within him some of his former passion for learning, which his habits for the last few years had somewhat dulled. Neither the drudgery of teaching grammar to boys, nor constantly flitting from place to place, are particularly favourable to diligent study; and there were times when Bruno regarded Sarpi with a mixture of self-reproach and envy, when he thought of this son of a disappointed trader, a friar like himself, with all its necessary drawbacks, and nearly five years younger than himself, so evidently his superior in knowledge.

When Bruno had been in Venice about two months, the plague broke out; and though he was free from personal fears on this score, so many inhabitants and visitors left in consequence, that he was depressed at the change, and decided that he too would depart.

Strange to say, it was only now for the first time since his father's death that the thought of Padua occurred to him. There flitted across his mind a vivid remembrance of the evening of Castelnau's arrival, and of his father so enthusiastically eulogising the University of Padua, and expressing his hope to his friend that his son might become a student there. His father's forebodings concerning his unfitness for a monastic life seemed to have been so thoroughly justified by the result, that Giordano became anxious

—now that the remembrance had at last occurred to him—to obey his wishes without delay on this wise. And on leaving Venice, to Padua therefore did Giordano Bruno direct his steps.



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CHAPTER II.

BRUNO IN PADUA AND GENEVA.

In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament ?

Merchant of Venice.

WHEN Bruno arrived in Padua, he presented himself at a convent of his Order, and asked permission to read theology and metaphysics with the Fathers Tommaso and Marziale Pelligrino. This was granted him ; and at the same time he entered at the university as a student of philosophy and logic.

But whether he had pitched his expectations too high, or whether the university had really deteriorated since his father's day, certain it is that Bruno was greatly disappointed in it. Perhaps its first glory was beginning to fade, for universities are no more exempt from that stern law of growth and decay than are men and nations ; and from her birth

upwards, the University of Padua had been subject to vicissitudes.

Founded about the thirteenth century, she had enjoyed, for the first two hundred years, a gradually rising reputation, though suffering occasional eclipse when the fortune of war and the change of masters had obliged her to close her lecture-rooms. Early in the fifteenth century she had come into the possession of the Venetians; and under the sheltering wings of the great Republic the studies of the university were encouraged, liberal stipends were assured to the professors, and learned men from all parts of Italy, and even from Greece, Germany, and France, were invited to fill her chairs. From 1509 to 1517 the war of the League of Cambray had caused the lecture-rooms of the university to be closed; but with the peace of Noyon they were again opened, and students and teachers flocked from all parts of Europe. The quarter of a century which followed forms the most brilliant chapter of the literary history of Padua. During this period nearly every scholar of mark among the Italian men of letters passed their time there as students or teachers. And in religious opinion and profession an independence and freedom of thought existed which would have been sought in vain elsewhere.

But liberal as was Padua in her religion and in her government, she had one tutelary saint—or shall I call him god?—to whom she paid a homage that

did not fall short of idolatry. This was Aristotle. Now it is of course needless to say that Aristotle's theory of the universe was that of Ptolemy, not of Copernicus. And so prejudiced was the University of Padua against the Copernican theory, that nearly twenty years later than the time of which I am writing, we learn on the testimony of Galileo himself that he (Galileo) taught at Padua the Ptolemaic system, in compliance with the popular feeling, long after he had convinced himself of the truth of the Copernican doctrines. In a letter to Kepler, dated 1597, he distinctly states that he "*had many years ago adopted the opinions of Copernicus, but that he had not yet dared to publish his arguments in favour of them and his refutation of the opposite opinions.*"

In order fully to comprehend Bruno's position at Padua, it must be remembered that though his historical reputation is that of a philosopher, and his writings are chiefly on philosophical subjects, he possessed in far greater degree the warm, emotional temperament supposed to be characteristic of the poet, than the cool, discriminating judgment considered, rightly or wrongly, to belong to the philosopher and man of science. Bruno had embraced the Copernican system long before he fully comprehended the arguments for and against it. But he did more than accept it—he passionately loved it. What the country is to the patriot, or the gold to the miser, or beloved mistress to impassioned

lover, the Copernican system and the logical conclusions he deduced from it were to Bruno. And as lover resents every imputation against his mistress, or patriot is lashed to fury by any who venture to lift their hand against his country, so did Bruno loathe Aristotle and his supporters.

I do not think that the warmest admirer of Bruno can consider his hatred of Aristotle altogether reasonable. He never seems to have been sensible of the immense service the Stagyrte rendered to philosophy, or to have made any allowance for the mistakes that were almost inseparable from the age in which Aristotle lived; and, above all, he seems to have been only too glad to confuse the foolish speculations of the so-called Aristotelians of the Middle Ages with the doctrines of the great master himself. Had he, as other astronomers,* accepted the

* Galileo's account of the very gradual way in which he accepted this doctrine is so instructive, that, in spite of being perhaps a little out of place in a novel, I will venture to insert it. He says: "I cannot omit this opportunity of relating to you what happened to myself when this opinion (the Copernican system) began to be discussed. I was then a very young man, and had scarcely finished my course of philosophy, which other occupations obliged me to leave off, when there arrived in this country from Rostoch a foreigner, whose name, I believe, was Christian Vurstisius, a follower of Copernicus. He delivered on this subject two or three lectures in a certain academy, and to a numerous audience, several of whom were attracted more by the novelty of the subject than by any other cause. Being firmly persuaded that this opinion was a piece of solemn folly, I was unwilling to be present. Upon interrogating, however, some of those who were there, I found that they all made it a

Copernican theory only after long and careful consideration, with the calm certainty that arises from gradual and deliberate conviction, rather than with the warm glow of enthusiasm, he would have had too much faith in his own cause to think it necessary to expend so much energy upon its opponents; and without descending, as did Galileo, to preach doctrines he no longer believed in, he might at least have refrained from wasting arguments upon those who were incapable of understanding him.

Thus, surrounded on all sides, both in the convent and the university, with persons with whom he had no sympathy; finding the doctrine that lay nearest his heart sneered at by some and condemned by others, Bruno grew moody and discontented; feeling

subject of merriment, with the exception of one, who assured me that it was a thing not wholly ridiculous. As I considered this individual to be both prudent and circumspect, I repented that I had not attended the lectures; and whenever I met any of the followers of Copernicus, I began to inquire if they had always been of the same opinion. I found that there was not one of them who did not declare that he had long maintained the very opposite opinions, and had not gone over to the new doctrines till he was driven by force of argument. I next examined them one by one, to see if they were masters of the arguments on the other side; and such was the readiness of their answers, that I was satisfied they had not embraced this opinion from ignorance or vanity. On the other hand, whenever I interrogated the Peripatetics and the Ptolemeans—and out of curiosity I have interrogated not a few—respecting their perusal of Copernicus' work, I perceived that there were few who had seen the book, and not one who understood it. Nor have I omitted to inquire among the followers of the Peripatetic

almost as embittered and impatient as when, eight years previously, he was a lad in the Convent of San Bartolomeo. And just when he was beginning to ask himself whether flight were not preferable to his present lot, an event, small and unimportant in itself, happened that brought things, as it were, to a culmination.

One morning, on entering the convent at Padua, he found the brotherhood in dire consternation. One of the brothers had become delirious, and was giving utterance to various denunciations against the Church, now in one language and now in another. The fraternity, attributing such conduct in a monk to an evil spirit that had entered into him, had thrown the poor brother into a dungeon; and the question was, who would have the courage to go into the dungeon and exorcise the spirit out of him? Bruno

doctrines if any of them had ever stood on the opposite side, and the result was that there was not one. Considering, then, that nobody followed the Copernican doctrine who had not previously held the contrary opinion, and who was not well acquainted with the arguments of Aristotle and Ptolemy; while, on the other hand, nobody followed Ptolemy and Aristotle who had before adhered to Copernicus, and had gone over from him into the camp of Aristotle; weighing, I say, these things, I began to believe that if anyone who rejects an opinion which he has imbibed with his milk, and which has been embraced by an infinite number, shall take up an opinion held only by a few, condemned by all the schools, and really regarded as a great paradox, it cannot be doubted that he must have been induced, not to say driven, to embrace it by the most cogent arguments. On this account I became very curious to penetrate to the very bottom of the subject."

immediately offered to do so. His own experiences had led him to the belief that prolonged fasting will often make a man see visions and dream dreams, especially if his constitution be naturally weak and excitable. He stood by the afflicted brother, who was lying uneasily on the hard floor of his dungeon, now standing up, uttering strange cries, and anon quiet and subdued for some minutes together. Bruno knelt down by him, and raising his head, bathed it with cold water, and then poured a little wine down his throat. He remained with him thus three or four hours, bathing his head and giving him nourishment; and then when the worse paroxysms of delirium were over, he supported him into his cell and laid him on his bed. In a few minutes the poor monk had sunk into a somewhat restless sleep. Gradually the restlessness abated, the sleep was sounder; and when after some hours he awoke, he was evidently in his right mind, though very feeble from his previous excitement. Bruno called the Abbot to look at him, and afterwards one or two of the superior monks.

"And so," said the Abbot, when they had left the sick monk's cell, and joined the brotherhood, "thou hast really exorcised the evil spirit from our poor brother. What spell didst thou use, and what was the shape of the spirit?"

"Yes, yes," cried many voices together, but evidently with a certain awe and horror, "what was the spirit like?"

"He bore the shape of an ass," said Bruno quietly.

"And where did he go, good brother?" cried the monks.

"He is still in the convent," answered Bruno, in the same dry manner, "and there will he remain. Although I am able to exorcise a spirit such as this out of an individual monk, it is impossible ever to remove him from a convent. He has been an inhabitant of it too long."

Bruno's tone was so quiet and grave, that few of the monks suspected a sarcasm. Not so the Abbot; such a look of indignation and hatred came over his features that Bruno knew he had made another enemy. And indeed, he would certainly have been seized and thrown into a dungeon, had he not had a protection in the superstition of the Superior, who really thought that Bruno could only have cured the afflicted monk by some supernatural agency. Still, the look with which he regarded Bruno as he bade him farewell, was one of such deadly hatred that the latter congratulated himself when he heard the gates of the convent close upon him, and he found himself proceeding unmolested to the university.

Still, this incident, coupled with the fact that there had lately come to Padua some of the brothers he had formerly known when in the Convent of San Bartolomeo, made him think it advisable to remove

from Padua ; and accordingly the next day, without acquainting anyone with his intention, he again set out on his wanderings. He went first to Milan, and then to Turin ; but did not gain admittance into a Dominican convent at either place. And Bruno was probably right in inferring that in some way or other he was gradually becoming a marked character among the Dominican Superiors. Crossing Mount Cenis, he then wended his way to Chambery, where he was permitted to lodge in a convent of his Order ; but the welcome he received was of so exceedingly cold a description, that he thought it prudent to remain there but a very short period.

Bruno spent nearly three years wandering about from place to place, supporting himself in desultory fashion by teaching. The only thing at all worthy of remark during all this time is, that he carefully observed the star in Cassiopeia as long as it was visible ; and afterwards collected not only his own observations, but those of more experienced and scientific observers.

Towards the close of 1576, Bruno, now verging on his thirtieth year, came to Geneva. Clothed still in the habit of his Order, he lodged all alone in an inn. Tired of teaching grammar to boys, he hoped to earn some money by his writings ; and partly for the sake of leisure, but chiefly for fear of molestation, he intended to make as few acquaintances as possible.

He had only been in Geneva three days, however, when suddenly chancing to look up from the table

where he was writing, he saw, on the point of being ushered into his room, two men, whom he judged from their attire to be ministers of the Reformed Faith. He was intensely annoyed at the intrusion, but it was too late to prevent it now. He merely rose and asked stiffly "to what was he indebted for the honour of their visit?"

The shorter and much younger of the two answered, pointing to the habit Bruno wore :

"Thou art a Dominican monk."

Bruno bowed stiffly.

"But," continued the speaker, "it is rumoured that thou hast begun to see the errors of thy faith ; that thou art willing to renounce the doctrines in which thou wert brought up."

"Nay," answered Bruno, but without anger, "that is an exaggeration. I am unfitted for a religious life ; but I have not yet recanted the belief of my childhood."

"Alas ! then," said the speaker, "thou art still a believer in that Dagon of superstition, that stumbling-block, the accursed——" Here the elder minister, who had not yet spoken, bent down his head, evidently thinking it time to restrain the ardour of his younger companion, and whispered a few words which Bruno could not catch ; but the first speaker answered :

"Not so, not so, brother. Am I to think of times and seasons when I am about my Master's business ?

Did not the Apostle command us to be instant in season and out of season?"

Bruno turned to the elder speaker, and said courteously: "Hinder not thy companion, worthy sir. I am not offended by him." And this was true. Beyond the intrusion itself, nothing had as yet jarred upon Bruno. The younger speaker had an honest, open expression, and was evidently sincere. Under the somewhat starch, stiff bearing that all the followers of the Reformed Faith thought it necessary to assume, there was in this young minister a natural vivacity of temperament that was obviously difficult of control. This Bruno could understand and make allowances for. Ardour, even if ill-timed, never grated on him. It was only conscious hypocrisy, or that unconscious species of hypocrisy, conventionalism, that jarred him beyond endurance. He turned to the younger speaker, and said:

"Hearken, reverend sir. I know little or nothing of the doctrines of the Reformed Faith, nor of their practices, save that Calvin burnt Servetus for some misapprehension on his part upon the subject of the Trinity—in which your master showed himself not greatly unlike certain Catholics whom I could name. I am willing, if you so desire, to listen to all you have to say in favour of your religion; only let it be with this condition, that we neither of us pour offensive epithets upon the object of each other's devotion.

Doubtless, I have not that entire conviction in the articles of my faith that you have in yours. Nevertheless, all the associations of my childhood are bound up with the Catholic belief; and what is more," he added, with a certain sweet mournfulness of tone which was not without effect upon his hearers, "my mother was devoted to it."

The young minister promised, sincerely meaning to keep his promise, though, as we shall see, he more than once broke through it. His hatred of the Catholic Faith was intense, his devotion to the Reformed Church equally strong; and being of an ardent, impetuous disposition, it was as impossible to him to listen to a defence of the one, or an exposure of the other, as it would have been to Bruno to listen calmly to the Aristotelians attacking Copernicanism. The young minister, after giving his promise, proceeded with vivacity:

"Now prove to me in what you think the superiority of the Catholic Faith lies."

"Nay, reverend sir," answered Bruno; "prove to me its inferiority. Remember the onus of proof lies upon you; a fact, I think, that most of your body forget. Remember how much older is our faith than yours; that we, to speak a little metaphorically, have been possessors of the land for centuries upon centuries, from which you, intruders or emigrants, as you may care to call yourselves, now wish to oust us. Remember the power and right that there is in

present possession. It is not sufficient to show that you have an equal right ; it must be only an exceptionally strong claim that could justify you in ousting us from ground that has been ours so long."

"Your religion older than ours!" exclaimed the minister. "Ours is much older than yours. Ours is true primitive Christianity, as it was before it became corrupted by the Catholic Church ; founded upon the Holy Scripture, not upon councils and powers of this world."

"And what do you mean by Holy Writ?" asked Bruno.

"Mean?" echoed the young minister. "Why, the whole of the Sacred Scriptures; or, in other words," he added ardently, "our Protestant Bible, in which are written the words of life and death. Ah, my brother, turn not away from it ; let it dwell with thee in sickness and health ; in thy going out and coming in. Let it be a refuge in trouble, and a haven of rest when thou art weary. Not older than the Church ! The Bible is God's making ; the Catholic Church but man's."

"How dost thou know that the Bible is God's Word?"

The minister stared in amazement. "Why," he said, "I thought that was a point the Catholics accepted equally with the Protestants."

"So they do ; but only because their Church has commanded them to accept it. Was it not the

Church which collected all the books together, and, accepting some as true, rejected others as spurious? How would you have possessed your Bible without our Church? What right or what justice, then, have you in accepting the miracles of the Bible which our Church has pronounced to be true, and rejecting the miracles of the later saints, which our Church has equally pronounced to be true?"

The young minister, not knowing how to answer this question, felt anger rising up within him; though to do him justice, he tried his utmost to control it.

"Let us waive that point for the time," he said, a little peremptorily. "Let us assume, as I confess I have always hitherto assumed, that the Bible and the Catholic Church have two totally different existences, and are in no wise dependent on each other. Let us look at the articles of faith in each, and compare one with the other the doctrines each considers necessary to salvation. Then, surely you will not fail to perceive how much purer are the doctrines of the Scriptures, than of your Church. Where, for instance, in our Bible will you find any allusion to that abhorred and idolatrous superstition, Transubstantiation? Does it not bear on its face the impress of falsehood? Why, even the natural man—much less the child of grace—must reject it as unworthy a sane man's acceptance."

"It is not a very comprehensible doctrine, I admit," answered Bruno. "But yet it does not seem

to me more difficult of comprehension than the doctrine of the Trinity, which you insist upon as strenuously as any Catholic."

"Thou dost not deny the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity?" said the young minister, in unfeigned horror.

"Nay," answered Bruno gravely, "I said not I denied it. How can I deny or assert that of which I know nothing? But I do not comprehend it. I feel that I know it not."

"That must be sad," remarked the elder preacher, with a slight approach to sanctimoniousness, "not to know."

"That may be, reverend sir," answered Bruno, a little curtly. "Yet not so sad, it seems to me, as to fancy one knows when one is really ignorant."

"But yet," said the younger preacher, again, as it would seem, anxious to waive this point also, "what I say is that there is no mention of Transubstantiation in our Bible. It is an idol-worship of the priesthood, and the priesthood alone."

"I am not wholly unversed in your Scriptures," said Bruno, "and it seems to me that there is as much for the doctrine of Transubstantiation as there is for the Trinity. That is to say, that in the whole Bible there are about two or three verses which might be said to lead to each of these articles of faith. But it is difficult to me, I confess, to understand how they should have attained so important a position

as Transubstantiation has in the Catholic Church, and the doctrine of the Trinity in both our Churches. In the Bible they are certainly treated as if they were not of very great importance."

"But worship of images, intercession of saints, and all those idolatrous and accursed superstitions of the Catholics ; you will not deny that these have no foundation in Holy Writ?"

"I am not even sure upon that point," answered Bruno, with a slight hesitation, for his remembrance of the Scriptures was not distinct on this wise. "Yet I am willing to grant you that, in the course of centuries, corruptions may have imperceptibly crept into our Church, from which it may be the mission of the Reformed Church to purify it. Yet I cannot see that such slight differences should make the Protestant and Catholic so antagonistic. But there is one tenet of your Church which I would fain hope is unjustly attributed to it, which if you can deny, will remove to me what I have hitherto felt to be the one insuperable obstacle in Calvinism—the doctrine of exclusive salvation. Heaven knows, even in our Church this fearful doctrine has assumed a position of sufficiently sickening prominence. Yet she believes in purgatory. There is at least the hope of ultimate reconciliation. But you have no such hope. Tell me, tell me you do not hold so dreary a belief as that."

"How can I tell thee that," asked the young

minister gravely, "when our great teacher himself, John Calvin, has laid it down as an axiom beyond refutation, or even contradiction? 'Beyond the bosom of the Church,' he says, meaning thereby our Reformed Church, 'no remission of sins is to be hoped for, nor any salvation.'"

"And you can live, can eat, and drink, and enjoy life, holding a belief like this," said Bruno, in strong indignation; "can think of all your friends and relations who were born and died before the Reformed Faith? Am I to picture my mother—may the saints guard her!—now writhing in torture because she was a bigoted Catholic, as she would have been a bigoted Protestant if she had been brought up in a Protestant country, or a bigoted Mahometan had she been born in the East? Is a mere accident of birth to condemn one person to eternal misery, while another, from a like accident, is to enjoy unending bliss? Or my father, again, so good and gentle to all, so upright, and courteous, and generous, is he too lingering in torments because he could not master the metaphysical difficulties of Protestantism or Catholicism? And little children, too, who die before they are baptized, are they to endure endless torments?"

The two ministers bowed their heads in silent acquiescence.

"And you of the Reformed Faith are fathers, like other men," cried Bruno, his whole soul shaken within him, "and your Church does not forbid

marriage. Yet if, as you believe, it is the many who are to perish and the few to be saved, it seems to me that the child-murderer is a tyro in vice in comparison with the child-breeder. Have you hearts of stone, or, which I would hope, do you not realise the enormity of your own acts?"

"No act of ours," said the younger preacher, "can alter the eternal fiat of Almighty God. From time immemorial it has been ordained how many children will be brought into the world; how many will perish everlastingly; how many will rejoice in unending bliss. Your own St. Augustine on this wise agrees with Luther and Calvin. He gives in illustration a case of two infants. Each of these is but a lump of perdition; neither has ever performed a moral act. The mother overlies one, and it perishes unbaptized; the other is baptized, and is saved. But from time immemorial it was ordained that those two children should be born, and it was equally decided which of them should be saved and which perish. But your Church, though her greatest teachers have invariably preached this doctrine of exclusive salvation, has allowed the doctrine to fall into abeyance, has seldom pushed it before the thoughts of her children. We of the Reformed Faith, perceiving its immense significance, have restored it to its original place."

"And this Being," exclaimed Bruno, "this God, Who creates little children for the pleasure of eternally

torturing them ; Who has ordained that millions shall live in heathen lands, where they shall be unable to learn a line of the sole condition of their salvation ; Who creates others who are wholly unable to comprehend this condition when they have learnt it ; am I to worship the Author of all this misery, and call Him just and tender, full of long-suffering and compassion ? How can I call evil good, unless I have lost my moral sense, or my mental perception ? ”

“ Young monk,” said the elder preacher solemnly, “ hear the words of Martin Luther, who, though he differs from our master in minor points, is yet at one with him in all essentials : ‘ This is the acme of faith, to believe that He is merciful Who saves so few and condemns so many ; that He is just Who at His own pleasure has made us necessarily doomed to damnation ; so that, as Erasmus says, He seems to delight in the tortures of the wretched, and to be more deserving of hatred than of love. If by any effort of reason I could conceive how God could be merciful and just, Who shows so much anger and iniquity, there would be no need for faith.’ ” But,” added the preacher, “ thou art not asked to understand, but to believe.”

“ I will not believe it,” cried Bruno passionately, shrinking as in horror from the preacher. Beneath all his levity, and sarcasm, and restlessness, there was a tenderness and compassion that might have been called feminine ; save that I think many men fully

equal the tenderest woman in sympathetic devotion and feeling for others. Moreover, Bruno, with his Italian, excitable blood, possessed (what we Northerners have in a much slighter degree) a power of vivid representation, or picturing in their reality scenes and persons of whom he was thinking. There suddenly seemed to arise before him, as if it were a definite, actual object, this Eternal Hell of undying fire; his mother—she who had been guarded so tenderly from every pain and ache during her life—was writhing and shrieking, imploring death to come and end her sufferings. He saw his father in agony, too, from his own physical torments, but in far greater agony from being the spectator of those of his wife. And then he seemed to see his comrades of his childhood, and the servants around whose knees he had played; all, all alike in this supreme agony which was to be never-ending. Then a little distance off seemed to arise a picture of Heaven, and God—the Author of this misery—sitting calmly in unending bliss, while angels and saints were adoring Him and praising Him for His justice, and mercy, and truth. Most persons must have noticed that habit very young children have of drawing in their breath, while a convulsive tremor runs through their frames, after they have had a long fit of passionate sobbing. Bruno had indulged in no actual sobs, but a convulsive tremor ran through him, and he drew in his breath just in this way. “I will not believe it,” he

repeated again. Then echoing bitterly the last words of the preacher, he continued :

“‘Thou art not asked to understand, but to believe!’ It is not the first time that that easy answer has been given me. The prior of my first convent answered thus when I questioned him upon the Trinity. And—I partly believed him. I saw what he meant when he said that a finite nature could not understand the Infinite. Nay, I do not utterly disbelieve him now; for my own studies are showing me in some vague way that there is a Unity in Plurality. Even the doctrine of Transubstantiation—difficult as it is—is not wholly denied by me; for do I not see how wonderfully substances are transformed one into another? But mercy, justice, these are human epithets—epithets that must be used in a human way, or they become meaningless. To have metaphysical subtleties concerning the Divine nature forced upon my acceptance from principles of faith—since I could never comprehend them from reason—is one thing; to have all my fundamental conceptions of right and wrong confused, is another. It may be, though I hope, I almost feel that it is not—it may be, I say, that all that I have known in life are now in eternal torture; that ages upon ages before Christ was born, heathen were in hell for never having heard of Him, and that they are still there with no hope of escape. It may be that little children are expiating the crime of being born, by their undying

agony. This may be so. But to tell me that the Author of this misery is worthy of adoration, or of love, is what I refuse to believe. No, no," he continued, still more passionately, for the vision seemed to be increasing in vividness before him. "Shall I bless and praise the Author of my parents' misery? Shall I call evil good, and good evil? I will not do it. If this will cause me to perish everlastingly, let me perish everlastingly, rather than fall down before an idol of cruelty, and revenge, and injustice, and worshipping him and adoring him, erect him into a God of love and compassion!"

Bruno was carried away, scarcely knowing to whom he was speaking. All outward perception was swallowed up by the rebellious feelings of horror and loathing excited by the idea of worshipping the Author of that pit of misery he saw so vividly before him. All thought of prudence had vanished.

Luckily for him, the two ministers were better than their horrible creed. They were not harsh and cruel, as was their master. Bruno's arguments and indignation had not lessened in any measure the intensity of their conviction in their faith. But they believed that Bruno was one of those predestined, from the beginning to perdition, and pitied him as beyond human blame or condemnation. Bruno, despite his twenty-eight years, was still very youthful-looking, and the preacher, gazing at him mournfully, said :

“Poor boy, poor boy! Thou art doomed. Is there no way of saving thee? Wilt thou reject every help? Can none of our arguments convince thee? And yet, I would avert thy misery as long as it is in my power. Do not scorn advice that is kindly meant. Throw off thy Dominican frock; and dress, if not as one of us, at least as a layman. The Calvinists have been infuriated with the Catholics ever since the massacre of St. Bartholomew, a few years ago. Be not angry with me. Be not angry for advice that is kindly meant. To perdition thou must go, yet I would not have thee go there before thy natural time.”

When was Bruno ever other than amenable to kindness? “Reverend sir,” he answered, “your advice, kindly meant, shall be kindly received—and what is more, obeyed. Let me, on my part, before you leave, ask thy pardon, if I have said anything to wound thee. Thou art not the inventor of thy creed, and therefore not responsible for it.”

The ministers said farewell; and when they had left the house, Bruno, still agitated by his horrible vision, laid his head upon the table and sobbed like a woman.

CHAPTER III.

BRUNO BEGINS TO DEVELOP HIS PHILOSOPHY.

The scientific spirit is of more value than its products ; and irrationally held truths may be more harmful than reasoned errors.

T. H. HUXLEY.

THE Genevan ministers were not the only members of the Reformed Faith who called upon Bruno. Hearing of the arrival of a stranger, in the garb of a Dominican monk, Caracciolo, Marquis of Vico, a nobleman somewhat celebrated in his time, accompanied by the sister of Pope Paul IV., surprised him one day by honouring him with a call. Their inquiries had led them to suspect that he was by no means an undoubting member of the Romish Church, and they were determined to leave no measures untried to gain him as a convert to their own faith. Longing to discover what there was in Protestantism that exercised such a fascination over its proselytes, Bruno accepted Caracciolo's friendship, and attended the congregation where worshipped the

Marquis and many other Italians who had seceded from the Church of Rome. Caracciolo was as anxious as the two Genevan ministers that Bruno should discard his Dominican frock; and, clad as an ordinary cavalier of the day, the Neapolitan went Sunday after Sunday, for several successive weeks, to various churches belonging to the Reformed Faith; longing to discover truth, if only it might be found. One Sunday he would go to the Italian church, and listen to Balbani, a celebrated Italian Protestant, expound St. Paul and his doctrines; another Sunday he would attend a church belonging to a French pastor. Earnestly and patiently he investigated Protestantism for himself, but to no purpose. And though, as we shall see hereafter, on more than one occasion did Bruno give free praise to Martin Luther, it was the Reformer's courage and sincerity that gained his admiration, not his doctrines. The logical standpoint of Protestantism was wholly incomprehensible to Bruno. He tried in vain to imagine by what kind of argument she had been led to conceive she could have an existence independent of Catholicism; and, much as he disliked certain dogmas of his own Church, he disliked those of the Reformed still more.

Though the doctrine of exclusive salvation has never, I believe, been deliberately repudiated by Protestants, it has, in this nineteenth century, sunk into such insignificance, faded, as it were, almost

from remembrance, that it may be said to be practically repudiated. But at the time of the Reformation, and for at least a hundred years afterwards, this doctrine was brought into greater prominence than any other single doctrine ; nay, than every other combined. And the many atrocities with which the Catholic Church visited the Protestants may be, if not excused, at least palliated, when we remember that every Catholic convert to Protestantism had to acquiesce in the justice of the eternal torture of all whom he held dear—his parents, his brothers and sisters, even such of his children as had died before his conversion. And although, doubtless, it may be replied that the Catholics, too, held this horrible doctrine, they had, as Bruno had pointed out to the Genevan ministers, in their belief in purgatory, a way of escape from it. Moreover, Catholic families had been Catholics for centuries, and, in acquiescing in the eternal torture of those who differed from them, they only acquiesced in the torture of heathen whom they had never seen, hardly indeed heard of ; not of those endeared to them through the sweet ties of blood, of family affection, or of fellowship.

But, besides repelling him from Calvinism, his conversation with the two Genevan ministers had another effect upon Bruno. It made him perceive the fallacy of that much-worn argument : “ *Thou art not asked to understand but believe.*” Here were two Churches, each opposed to the other, hating each

other, and each believing that the followers of the other would be eternally damned, both alike in insisting upon the necessity of accepting certain dogmas from faith alone and not from comprehension. How should he decide between the two? How should he know which to choose, except from some internal evidence; or, in other words, trying to understand something about them? Now for the first time did it fully dawn upon him that he might learn more of God through the investigation of His works, than through the conflicting testimony of human witnesses. This notion, indeed, though only now fully awakened, had been half-consciously slumbering within him for many years. He himself could scarcely determine when it took its date. Perhaps when the good Ambrogio had pulled the flower from its root, and pointed to that as an argument of the fallibility of human knowledge. Then, during his three weeks' wanderings on foot, when he escaped from San Bartolomeo and proceeded to Rome, he had had unusual opportunities for investigating Nature for himself. He had always spent the day out of doors, and not unfrequently the night, and had come to regard nature as the most interesting of companions. The sun, and the moon, and the stars; thunder, and lightning, and rain; cold, and heat, and dews; birds and insects; the rush of waters, or the rustle of breezes amid the leaves; he loved them all. But the heavens certainly had the foremost

place in his affections. Then during his five months' residence in Noli, he had attended lectures upon the Copernican theory. But these lectures *On the Sphere*, as they were called, comprised teaching not only on the movement of the earth, but on that of the whole heavens. They comprehended speculations upon the existence of angelic intelligences, upon the situation of the celestial region ; whether the entire heavens were round, like the earth ; whether they had a circular movement, and whether our earth with the water upon its surface formed a perfect globe. And though Bruno had spent the last ten years in somewhat desultory fashion, he had never lost his love and interest in astronomy. In his scanty intervals of leisure from the dreary occupation of teaching grammar to boys, he seems to have written two little books, which were in all probability connected with Copernicanism ; but these have not descended to posterity.

Yet it was not till after his interview with the Genevan ministers that he seriously determined to try and discover for himself some clue to the mystery of the universe. In so doing, he did not consciously repudiate Catholicism. On the contrary, his previous study of Nature, as far as it had gone, had rendered it less rather than more difficult to him to accept the mysteries of the Catholic Faith. Yet, this determination to discover for himself is alone sufficient to show that Bruno had in reality, though scarcely consciously, wandered far, far away from the Catholic spirit. For,

if I understand aright, no one can be a sincere Catholic save he who humbles himself as a little child, and seeks to enter the kingdom of heaven from principles of simple, confiding faith. Then the change in Bruno's dress may perhaps have assisted in hastening his devotion to his pursuit. Few ardent, impressionable persons are without a certain susceptibility to the hidden meaning that lies in dress. The sudden adoption or laying aside of a religious garment, still more perhaps of the sad trappings of bereavement, carry with them a power and influence that cannot wholly be explained by reason. And Bruno's nature was, as I have already pointed out, more than usually susceptible to every influence, both outward and hidden. Then a stronger circumstance than any I have yet named was, that just about this time, Bruno chanced to come across the works of Raymond Lully, the celebrated metaphysician and (as some have considered him) alchemist of the Middle Ages.

I am not going to inflict upon the reader any longer account of this very obscure philosophy than is absolutely necessary in order to let him understand in what way it came to exert so strong an influence and fascination over Bruno. And to realise Bruno's preparedness for the reception of this philosophy, we must endeavour to bring before us the thoughts and speculations that were seething, in more or less degree, throughout the entire cultivated portion of Europe.

There is so much similarity between our times and those of Bruno—no two other centuries, I think, presenting so close an analogy—that it should not be difficult for thinking men of the latter half of the nineteenth century to have a peculiar comprehension and sympathy with those of the latter half of the sixteenth. To the future historian no subject will occupy so large a place in the philosophical history of this century as Darwinism, by which man learns for the first time his own place in the scale of creation. No subject will occupy so large a place in the practical history of this century as the invention of the steam-engine, by which man has brought to him the means of personal communication with different modes of thought, habits of living, various religions, governments, and customs. In the same way, no subject bears such philosophical importance in the sixteenth century as Copernicanism, by which man learns for the first time the position his dwelling-place, the earth, bears in relation to other bodies in the universe. No subject is of such practical importance as the invention of printing, by which man possesses a vivid, though it is true, not a personal, means of learning the thoughts of other ages and other countries. For though printing was invented slightly prior to this sixteenth century, its practical fruits may be considered, I think, only to date from this time. Grown-up men did not learn to read with ease; moreover, there was the bigotry of ignorance to be overcome—

a bigotry which was only too eagerly encouraged by the clergy, who did not fail to perceive what a powerful rival the printing-press might prove to the pulpit.

Yet, valuable as are the discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin, and important as the inventions of printing and railways, their significance does not stop with themselves ; for by them the thoughts and beliefs of man are entirely revolutionised. He is forced to alter his conceptions of himself ; his place in the universe ; his relations to God ; and in some degree also, his relations to his fellows. To be compelled thus to part with beloved illusions that have been the inheritance of centuries involves to most men so much difficulty, and to many so much pain, that I, for one, wonder, not that these doctrines and discoveries have received so much opposition, but that one of them, and that perhaps the most significant, has received so little. For, once take away from men their fond belief that this earth is the centre of the universe, and that the sun, and moon, and stars are created for her service ; or prove to them that their race differs in degree only, and not in kind, from the beasts that perish ; and you force upon them the unwelcome conviction that they have arrogated to themselves, both as regards their dwelling-place and their race, a far higher position than is theirs by right. Yet, as if by some happy fate, the very centuries that have filled men with dismay at learning the contemptible

place they seem to be relegated to in the system of the universe have been so rich in inventions and scientific discoveries—the fruit entirely of man's brain—that they are forced to believe that they are, after all, not entirely insignificant. And in the younger and more inexperienced century men were peculiarly susceptible to these alternations in feeling, scarcely knowing what they were, or how they should think of themselves as they ought.

Bruno, in many ways a typical representative of the age in which he lived, could not escape the hopes and fears so characteristic of his century. Yet he was by nature sanguine; and, though there were times when he was assailed by depressing doubts concerning Providence, by fears as to whether man—so insignificant a creature—had any right to imagine that God had a peculiar care for him, for the most part his hopes predominated over his fears.

It was in one of his more than usually sanguine moods, and when he had been allowing his thoughts to wander at will, indulging in fond expectations that man's capability for discovery would prove wholly without limit, that Bruno chanced to come across the works of Lully; and a first perusal filled him with an excitement it would be difficult to describe. His heart beat violently, his cheek flushed, his whole being seemed inspired with new hope. For here at last seemed what he had been eagerly longing, though scarcely daring to believe that he should find: one

who seemed to believe that man's power of discovery would be unlimited *could he but find a method* or right means of setting to work. Lully, though a Christian, insisted that philosophy could only be reformed by the aid of reason, unassisted by theology. And in some vague way, he seemed to acknowledge a unity underlying the whole of Nature. He declared that a single body of doctrines ought to be sufficient to embrace every natural fact—which doctrines he likens to a tree, where the principles and faculties are represented by the roots and trunks, the functions and operations by the branches and leaves, effects and results by flowers and fruit.

It would be difficult, as I have said, to describe the immense ardour and enthusiasm that animated Bruno, as he perused the two works of Lully in which his doctrines were best set forth, viz.: *L'Art Général*, and *L'Arbre des Sciences*. Could there indeed be some simple art or method, by which all notions should be reduced to one simple notion, the elements of every species of knowledge subordinated to one supreme knowledge? Why should it not be so? Did not all analogy tend to confirm its possibility? Look at printing, or, indeed, even ordinary manuscript writing, by which men were enabled to become acquainted with the thoughts of those who had lived ages before them, or of those who were still living, but miles away from them. How had this communication become possible? Simply by

means of the alphabet; by discovering that a combination of less than thirty letters is sufficient to represent every word the human mind desired to utter. Was not this a marvel, exceeding in wonder all the tales of enchantment or magic? Then with Number again. How had man been enabled to work out his most difficult numerical calculations? By the discovery that ten signs, 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, when combined one with the other, were sufficient to represent every numerical figure. And then Bruno would look up with longing eyes to the heavens; and as he watched day after day the regular rising and setting of the sun, or month after month the different phases of the moon, and at various times, as far as he could distinguish them, the relative positions of the planets, the hope forced itself with increasing persistence upon him, that he might perhaps find a sort of alphabet, or a set of figures, or at least some general law by which those beautiful heavens, so incomprehensible to him now, should become as easy to be read as a book is to a little child who has once mastered the difficulties of spelling. But until he could discover this method or key, they were sealed to him, as was the simplest book to the ablest man who knows not how to read.

The more Bruno pondered upon the discovery of written language, the more marvellous did it seem to him. He would take, for instance, the Book of Job, for which he had a great admiration, and read there :

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.” How was it that he, Bruno, living in this sixteenth century after Christ, should be able thus to become acquainted with the scientific beliefs of one who had lived so many centuries before the birth of Christ that the precise date could scarcely be decided? Simply through the means of written language; simply through the combination of less than thirty letters. And then, after the fashion of the quasi-theological, quasi-philosophical century, of which he was so true a representative, Bruno would compare the thinker or originator of the thought, the writings or symbols of the thought, and the reader or receiver of the thought, to a veritable trinity; one thought being at once foundation and result of the three factors. The more he speculated upon, and the oftener he actually observed the order of nature, the more certain did he become that Lully was right in his belief that there was a unity that ran through Nature. Forms are many, but surely Nature was but one; even as from a large tree could equally be fashioned a palace and a hut, a ship, or table, or chair. But Bruno, by degrees, went farther even than this. He began to suspect that beneath the multiplicity of forms of life there was one life common to them all. He planted a seed, watched its gradual growth till it had become a herb; considered how animals fed upon herbs, how they in their turn were killed in order to provide

man with food ; which not only served to nourish his body, but was it not also true that only when the bodies of men were sufficiently nourished were they capable of any sustained power of thought ? One day he killed some birds that had been feeding upon some fruit, and when their bodies had become partly decayed he buried them under the fruit-trees upon which they had so recently been feeding. Was it coincidence or cause that made the tree appear so flourishing afterwards ? Perhaps this world was a huge animal, out of whose womb issued life in all its shapes, only to receive them back into her womb after they had acted out their destiny ; from which they would presently issue again, but in shapes so different as to be beyond the possibility of recognition. Was it not true that the earth required nourishment in the form of sunshine and moisture before she could bring forth her fruits, as much as the human mother required nourishment in another form before she could bring forth her children ?

But Bruno could not stop here. Another analogy was pressing upon him with the full force of its significance, rendering him half bewildered before the infinite vista of speculation that opened upon him, half abashed at his own temerity in occupying himself with subjects so vast, apparently so incapable of solution. What if this gigantic animal the earth were but the offspring of a still larger animal, the sun, out of whose body she had been cast, as from

her issued all forms of life that he had ever seen? What if this earth in the same way were to be received back again into the sun, presently to re-issue in a wholly different form? What was this mysterious law which seemed to underlie everything? Oh, if he could but discover a method, an alphabet, by which all would be made plain to him!

It was not given to him to find this method. He was eminently a man of—not before—his time. He never pretended to be greater than he was; and if he could have foreseen the existence of Newton, Laplace, and Darwin, he would have been the first to exclaim with ardour: “These are greater than I; the latchet of their shoes I am not worthy to unloose.” Yet, though to him does not belong, neither with his name can be associated, the glory of any great discovery, he may, I think, rightfully be termed the precursor of our greatest discoverers. His mind was seething with thoughts that were altogether chaotic, tumultuous—so vague and indistinct that he could not describe them; he only felt that they were within him—shadows, so to speak, of the future discoverers that were to come after he had passed away. For this prophetic consciousness of his that there was some simple law, or key, or alphabet that would make the movements of the heavens comprehensible to him, found its entire realisation in the simple discovery of Newton that all bodies tend to approach each other with forces

directly as their masses, and inversely as the square of their distances. His speculations concerning the origin of the universe may be rightfully termed adumbrations of the nebular hypothesis; those concerning the origin of life are dim foreshadowings of the Darwinian theory.*

Doubtless he made some mistakes; but even these mistakes show that there was gradually growing within him the true scientific spirit which compels a man to abstain from taking anything for granted, and insists that he shall learn of Nature only by patiently observing her. What mistakes he made were almost inseparable from the time in which he lived; and even if he did too hastily infer analogies where there were none, he does not lose thereby his title to be called a true man of science. He deserves it just now, when he is devoting his whole life and energies to personal investigation of Nature, far more than when he had so ardently embraced Copernicanism in his youth, simply because it satisfied his love for harmony and beauty.

If, as many seem to believe, Raymond Lully was a believer in alchemy, we cannot doubt that Bruno, who followed his master in everything, though like many disciples, he quickly outran him, should at some time of his life have thought the study of

* Compare Emerson's "Nature," in which he says: "Every known fact in natural science was divined by the presentiment of somebody before it was actually verified."

alchemy, if not worthy belief, at least deserving investigation. Nor, indeed, do I see how he could altogether escape this inference. The wisdom or folly of speculations can only be proved by their results; moreover, if we consider, we shall find that Nature herself may really be pronounced a sort of alchemist. Bruno saw that there was a unity running through Nature. He had observed for himself how the vegetable goes to form the sheep; and sheep in the form of mutton is changed to man. Could he have lived into this century, he would have had his theory, that all things can be changed into each other, strangely confirmed by the doctrine of the Correlation of Force. Was it not natural, that he should deem the notion that a worthless metal can be transmuted into a better one, at least worthy of investigation? Again, Bruno seems to have believed, not only that there are other worlds which are inhabited, but that it was possible man might discover these inhabitants. Well, man has not done so yet; but *à priori*, I can see nothing more wild in such a hope, than in one which would indulge in man's discovery of the metals that are consumed in other worlds. Yet this we know to be discovered. Not he deserves to be called a charlatan who indulges in speculations; only he who falsely declares that his speculations have been verified. Though analogy may have led Bruno to believe that metals are capable of transmutation, he never pre-

tended that he could effect it himself; and though he firmly believed in the probability of other worlds being inhabited, he never pretended that any such inhabitant had been seen by him.

The more Bruno pondered Lully's speculations, the more ardent became his admiration for them. The more he studied and observed Nature, the more magical seemed her operations to him. The little seemed to rival the great in its utter incomprehensibility. How could he account for the mysterious power of the magnet? Common every-day occurrences that had excited no wonder in him before, because familiarity with them had obscured their true significance, now seemed as wonderful as the rarest phenomenon. Speech, for instance—how miraculous was that? The novelty of printing had first drawn his attention to the miracle of written language, but was not speech nearly as wonderful? Suppose that it had been only now when he was in his full maturity that he had first beheld a man who had the gift of speech, what would he have thought of it? Would it not have seemed to him the greatest wonder he had ever seen, that a man should open his mouth, and forthwith should issue words, signs, or symbols, by which he should be able to impart his thoughts to a hearer?

"Yes, yes," Bruno exclaimed one day when alone, "I begin to think that the whole world is a vast collection of signs, features, figures, call it what I

may—a mere copy of that which Is. As I know nothing of the thoughts that are within man till he gives utterance to them, so I can know nothing of God till I have pierced beneath this outward appearance. Yet the whole of creation seems to me to be God's voice, speaking to me in a language which I have yet to learn. But I will try and learn it. I believe that there is no burnt-offering or sacrifice so acceptable in God's sight as endeavour in man to learn something of His works, showing thereby that he has raised himself from the level of the brute."

And then Bruno would steal out from his lodgings, after the sun had set, and wander far beyond the city of Geneva, till he was out of reach of all habitation; and as he gazed up into the heavens in their distant beauty, he seemed to be penetrated with a sort of mystical ecstasy, which he could not describe, but only feel. The mysterious skies with their myriads of apparent gems, which he felt certain were actual worlds, seemed to be showering down upon him a very rain of glory which increased with every moment, till he felt at last as if he were bathing in its floods.

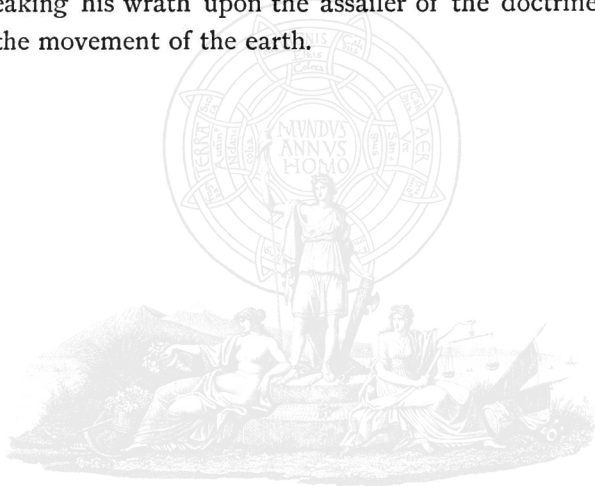
"*God is everywhere!*" he exclaimed aloud. "This is the unity I am seeking. But what am I? Am I too, part of this unity?" And then, with a return of that theologico-philosophical spirit I have already remarked, he continued: "Nature is a trinity in

unity ; God which is ; mind which perceives ; love, or the soul of the world, which lives."

Whether he were right in his belief is not for me to determine ; but it had the effect of ennobling him, as do all ardently-felt beliefs which are not absolutely base or cruel in their details. And it need not be pointed out how wholly free from deleterious intermixture was this highly spiritual philosophy of Bruno. Night after night he would steal out, moved by the same thoughts, penetrated by the same rapture ; not attaining his object, or penetrating beneath the outward appearance of things, it is true, not even approaching attainment. The more ardently did he pursue this unity that he felt sure existed, the more persistently did she elude his grasp ; but he never wearied in his pursuit. He himself describes this *Sophia*, or *Wisdom*—it would be more accurate if he had termed it *Search after Unity*—to be to him what *Beatrice* was for *Dante*, the veritable mistress of his soul.

And as it is no uncommon occurrence in our own day to see a man unsteady in purpose, extravagant in living, perhaps, indeed, not wholly free from licentiousness, purified and ennobled by love for a pure and true woman, so Bruno, always free from temptation of the senses, but restless, sarcastic, contemptuous, became, through devotion to his ideal mistress, earnest in purpose, controlled in temper, unwearying in industry ; gentle and tolerant to all who differed from him, with one exception : his hatred of

Aristotle increased with his increasing years ; his love for his pursuit acting as an incentive rather than a deterrent. And as a knight of old is unwearying in his revenge against any who dare to slander his lady, so Bruno was instant in season and out of season in wreaking his wrath upon the assailer of the doctrine of the movement of the earth.



The Warburg Institute & the Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici,
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CHAPTER IV.

BRUNO IN PARIS.

The skipping King, he ambled up and down,
With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits,
Soon kindled and soon burn'd.

King Henry IV.

AND so Bruno lived peacefully and happily in Geneva for a space of three years, absorbed in his great pursuit. On one occasion, and one only, throughout the whole of this period, did he leave the city; and this was when he proceeded to the University of Toulouse in order to acquire there, through the title of Doctor, the right to teach publicly in various colleges should he care to do so. But he stayed at Toulouse no longer than was absolutely necessary for the attainment of this object, and hastened back with all speed to Geneva.

But even the most ardent lover, whether the object of his devotion be an earthly or a heavenly

mistress, must eat and drink if he wishes to preserve his life; and by the time Bruno had been in Geneva three years, he began to find it an exceedingly difficult matter to obtain employment. Hitherto he had managed to gain enough for his very moderate requirements by correcting proofs, but his earnings had not been sufficient to enable him to lay by. His occupation had always been more or less fluctuating; and there came a time when he had corrected his last proof without seeing any immediate probability that another would be sent to him. He shrank with intense dislike from being obliged to have recourse to his old employment of teaching grammar to boys, even had it been likely that the bigoted inhabitants of Geneva would have entrusted any part of the education of their sons to the charge of one of whose religious opinions so very little was known. Yet something he must do; and it was now that, for many reasons, the idea of going to Paris occurred to him; but, before going to Paris, it was essential that he should write to Castelnau.

Giordano had had no communication with his father's old friend since he had fled from the Convent of San Bartolomeo. Of the immense service Castelnau rendered him just at this juncture he knew nothing. Yet it had not been without keen self-reproach that Bruno found himself alienated, as it were, from the man whom he knew it would have been his father's wish that he should treat, in all

respects, as his guardian and trusted friend, if not, indeed, as a sort of adopted father. The cessation of communication had been entirely his own fault. He knew that he ought to have acquainted Castelnau with the whole circumstances of his flight from his convent; but, even at that early age, he had sufficient penetration to be perfectly aware that Castelnau would view his conduct with extreme disapprobation. Nay, imagining Castelnau's authority over him and his inclination to exert it far greater than it was, he even feared, did he communicate to his self-constituted guardian his whereabouts, he would be sent anew to the convent he so hated. "No, no," Bruno had said to himself; "I will wait a year or two longer, until I am of such an age as to make it impossible for Signor de Castelnau to interfere."

He did not foresee, in his youthful impetuosity, that the postponement of a difficult duty invariably renders its subsequent performance of tenfold more difficulty; and so having at first shrunk from following the promptings of his better judgment, as month after month slipped by he found it almost impossible to renew an intercourse that he had thus allowed to lapse. And his restless wanderings and desultory mode of life, after he had left Noli, were not conducive to the formation of that bracing resolution so necessary to the performance of a painful duty. And thus, as year after year passed, Castelnau's name had almost faded from Bruno's remembrance when it was so

strangely and vividly recalled by the conversation of Sidney and Sarpi at Venice. Again Giordano's better feelings prompted him to write to his father's friend; again he shrank from the difficulty. "He has forgotten me by this time," was Bruno's excuse to himself; "it is too late now."

But his three years' residence in Geneva had had a most beneficial influence upon his moral character. A steadiness of purpose had grown up within him which had been wholly absent before; and he found it as difficult now to refuse the promptings of his conscience, as it had previously been to obey them. He would have written to Castelnau before the period I describe, had it not been whispered to him by Hope that he might shortly be the author of some great discovery which would bring him distinction; and then Castelnau would at least know that his letter of self-reproach and penitence would not spring from interested motives.

But Hope flattered him on this wise. And instead of the fame and distinction he had looked for, he was as poor and as little known at the close of the three years as he was at its commencement.

Now for the first time did he think of going to Paris.

In a great capital like that he would have greater chance of employment. Moreover, his title of Doctor would bestow upon him the privilege to lecture at the university, if he could but get an introduction. But in his present state of better feeling he felt that

it would be impossible to go to Paris, till he had gained Castelnau's pardon. How would he feel should he accidentally come across him? He was in constant communication with Philip Sidney, and knew from him that Castelnau was now in England. Still, the Ambassador might at any moment run over to see his relatives in Paris; and then the probabilities were all in favour of his meeting with the ungrateful son of his old friend.

Bruno's resolution was at last taken. He sat down and penned the letter he had so long postponed. In it, without going fully into the change of his inner life, he roughly sketched the outward circumstances of the last twelve years, frankly confessing that his behaviour to the Abbot of San Bartolomeo had been without justification. "But," he added, "my father knew me better than I knew myself. I am wholly unfitted for the religious life, and three years ago I cast off even the outward attire of my order. I now dress as an ordinary cavalier of the age. I am still less suited for the life of a soldier; yet in these days the Church and the Army seem to share between them the various entrances, not only to distinction and promotion, but even to the means of earning a bare livelihood. I have lately been subsisting on the narrow gainings of a proof corrector, but even this employment has now come to a standstill. I have some thoughts of going to Paris. I have taken my degree as

Doctor at the University of Toulouse, and hope, when in Paris, to become one of the lecturers at its university. I trust the time is not far distant when I may behold you again, and learn from your own lips that you have forgiven the coldness and apparent ingratitude of your old friend's son,

“FILIPPO (now GIORDANO) BRUNO.”

Having penned this letter, he sent it to Sidney, asking him to forward it without delay to M. de Castelnau de la Mauvissière. And in about three weeks' time he received back the answer, which, though somewhat frigid, was not unkind. It contained information and advice as to the best place for him to go on his arrival in Paris, adding that if he could not get employment at once, he, Castelnau, would be responsible for all the necessary debts he might incur. It gave him letters of introduction to various persons who might prove serviceable to him ; and, what was more than all, it offered him a letter of introduction to the King, did Bruno so desire it.

“The King,” said Castelnau in his letter, “will, I know, show you every attention in his power, if I petition him to do so. Yet I would pray you to be on your guard, and prevent, if possible, it coming to His Majesty's ears that you have once been a monk and have now renounced the gown of your Order. His Majesty is devout, and suffers no irreligion to be shown in his presence.”

Amongst the distinguished and influential men to whom Castelnau had sent letters of introduction for Bruno to deliver were the Rector of the Sorbonne; Henri d'Angoulême, Governor of Provence; and J. Moro, Ambassador of Venice.

Bruno had not been in Paris a week before he gladly availed himself of the letter of introduction to the Rector. He went to the Sorbonne and delivered it in person to the servant to give to the Principal. After a few minutes' interval he was shown into a large room set apart for visitors. At the end of this room was a distinguished-looking man with a benign cast of expression, holding Castelnau's letter in his hand. On Bruno's entrance he stepped forward, and said courteously:

"Welcome, messere! What is your pleasure? A friend of M. de Castelnau de la Mauvissière will not be readily refused anything he may desire."

"I seek employment, monsieur," answered Bruno. "The University of Toulouse has already bestowed upon me the title of Doctor, and it is my hope that, should you have a vacancy, you will allow me to become one of your lecturers on philosophy."

"There is a vacancy," answered the Rector. "Doubtless you know that there is one condition attached to the office of each of our regular professors, namely, that he must always attend mass with the other members."

Bruno's face fell.

"I cannot do that," he answered.

To his surprise, the Rector looked neither as inquisitive nor indignant as he apprehended, for the Sorbonne was known to be very rigid and severe in matters of faith. He could only imagine that Castelnau had revealed a certain portion of his private history in his letter to the Rector, and that the Ambassador was a personage too important and too powerful to risk offending ; for, after a pause, the Rector said :

"What kind of philosophy do you teach ?"

"The art of Lully," replied Bruno unhesitatingly.

Raymond Lully, though not a member of a religious order himself, was yet known to have been zealous for religion ; and beyond that fact the Rector knew little of him or his philosophy. Evidently he thought it politic not to inquire too curiously, for he merely answered :

"I have not the power to appoint you one of our regular salaried professors if you refuse to comply with the irreversible condition attached to the office. But you have permission to lecture on the art of Lully within these premises, at certain times and seasons, of which you shall learn hereafter."

Bruno thanked him and withdrew. But as his evil fate would have it, the plague broke out about this time, and the university was closed. Nevertheless, Castelnau's various letters of introduction brought him a few private pupils, sufficient to enable him to

earn a bare means of subsistence, while leaving him enough leisure to prepare for publication four works, principally on the art of Lully, which he had been slowly meditating while at Geneva.

But when the plague ceased, he gladly availed himself of the privilege accorded him by the Rector, and lectured upon Lully to numerous pupils, who he hoped might one day succeed him as apostles of the philosophy to which he was so devoted. His manner was vivacious, his choice of language good, and, above all, his evident earnestness in his work brought him more fame and repute than might be imagined from the very obscure and difficult subject-matter of his teaching. But still his lectures were only given at long intervals. His slight success—for he was ambitious, if not for his own fame, certainly for the fame of the master he loved so well—only made him long for a greater amount of it; and by the time he had been in Paris a year, he thought he would avail himself of Castelnau's offer to introduce him to the King.

Of the King himself, or of the Court in general, he knew little. There were no Society journals in those days, and, had there been, Bruno would have been the last to have been attracted by them. He had a hatred of gossip of all kinds, and, beyond learning through Castelnau that His Majesty was devout, he knew little else about him. Like most men absorbed in the larger question of metaphysics, Bruno had little

comprehension or love for politics. Yet his natural predilections led him to anticipate not only benefit, but actual pleasure, in his introduction to courtly life. He was no revolutionary, in our sense of the word. Even in religious and philosophical matters his tendencies were constructive rather than destructive—with one exception, the destruction of Aristotelianism. Those by whom his works are unknown, and who are only familiar with his name as that of a dangerous and lawless heretic, would be surprised were they told how seldom did Bruno either lecture or write against Protestant or Catholic Christianity. And with thrones and governments he was even less destructive in his feelings. He was gently born himself, and was proud of being so. He would have been very glad could he have called himself nobly born. He would have liked to have believed himself to be descended from generations of men distinguished for valour and worth; and he was too thoroughly single-minded and unworldly even so much as to suspect that titles were too often the reward of cunning rather than the patent of nobility. And so, though wholly free from any vulgar worship of wealth or title, he yet had a sort of naïve belief that he who is descended from a race of kings must be kingly in mind and conduct; and it was with feelings of unmingled satisfaction, therefore, that Bruno looked forward to a personal acquaintance with His Majesty, King Henry III. of France.

And at last there came a day, about a month after Castelnau's letter concerning Bruno had reached the King, that Bruno received for the first time the honour of a summons to attend His Majesty's Court—that Court of which he, Bruno, knew so little, but which had already reached the unenviable distinction of being the most infamous in Europe.

It was with a certain feeling of trepidation that Bruno prepared to obey the summons. Not only was he wholly unacquainted with the manners and customs of courts, but he had never stayed at the houses of any of the great nobility. Castelnau was the only nobleman of distinction among his father's acquaintance; and Giordano, as we know, was barely fifteen when he had last seen him. It was natural, therefore, that he should experience some of those feelings of nervousness and apprehension from which philosophers are no more exempt than are other men, on their first introduction into scenes with which they feel themselves to be wholly unfamiliar.

Strikingly handsome did Bruno look in the rich dress so imperative to be worn in that century and on such an occasion. His poverty, as also his natural taste, had prompted him to procure a costume as simple as might be. But the simplicity of one age is the extravagance of another; and Bruno's dark, lustrous eyes, olive complexion, and slight, spare figure showed to unusual advantage in his crimson velvet tunic, slashed with white satin. As he passed

through an outer room leading to the drawing-room, he was conscious that he was being regarded by the crowd of courtiers and servants that surrounded him with looks of surprise, mingled, though he knew it not, with something at once of envy and ridicule. His bearing had that grace which is seldom separated from absence of affectation. His freedom from painting and padding, and above all, the honest, open expression of his eyes, showed very clearly that though he was within the Court, he was certainly not of it.

As he is being ushered into the presence of the King, let us take a hasty glance at the appearance and characters of the royal personages seated in the room.

That contemptible-looking being, half ambling, half skipping up to him to welcome him, dressed in such a strange motley of man's and woman's attire that it was not till he was quite close to Bruno that the latter could decide to which sex he belonged, is His Majesty King Henry III. Round his bare neck hangs a gold necklace, so curiously fashioned that its three chains or divisions resembled three flounces of a lady's dress more than any other likeness to which I can compare it. Bruno regarded his host with a sensation of loathing not unmingled with ludicrousness; for he had never lost the sense of the ridiculous we know him to have possessed when a boy.

That unhealthy, pock-marked dwarf, apparently

about two-and-twenty years of age, standing a little apart from the King, is Francis of Alençon, Duke of Anjou, younger brother and heir presumptive of His Majesty. His repelling expression ; his narrow, un-intellectual forehead ; his eyes, in which gleam an unsavoury mixture of sensuality and low cunning, alike bear witness to the fact that it was simple truth and no exaggeration when he was described by his own sister, Margaret of Navarre, as one so wicked, that "if fraud and cruelty were to be banished from the world, there was in him a sufficient stock from which it could be replenished." And as if to make his hideous person still more repulsive, he wore a costume as grotesque in itself as it was unsuitable to the wearer. The gallants of the Court of Paris at this time generally affected a great variety of colours in their dress, but the Duke of Anjou took a fancy to attire himself from head to foot in green. His short, tight breeches were green ; his long stockings, fastened by *aiguillettes*, were green ; his doublet was green ; and when he went abroad, his cap and the plume with which it was decorated were likewise green. As Bruno entered the room, an expression passed over the Duke's face that partook at once of envy and affected contempt.

Seated at some distance, and dressed in a garb that was in no way remarkable, either for its splendour or the reverse, was Prince Henry of Navarre, brother-in-law to the King, and after Alençon of Anjou, the

next heir to the throne. By the side of his royal kinsmen, he may certainly be said to compare advantageously; though no one, to look at him now, would believe that his character was one of such honesty, bravery, and in many ways nobility, as was in reality the case; for his natural expression is obscured by a mixture of resentment, humiliation, and irresolution, not unnatural to a proud man who feels himself to be entirely in the hands of a king wholly unscrupulous in his use of the enormous power that so unhappily belonged to him. For, in reality, though not nominally, both the Duke of Anjou and the Prince of Navarre were the King's prisoners. In those days, the position of heir presumptive was not only unpleasant, but actually dangerous; and more than one historian has believed that Henry's jealousy and hatred of his brother were so intense, that only fear of his mother prevented him having the Duke of Anjou secretly poisoned or assassinated; and the Guises, who hoped eventually to supersede the House of Valois, so eagerly inflamed the already too easily excited jealousy of the King, that Henry had actually, a short time prior to the day of which I am speaking, signed an order for the Duke's committal to the Bastille. Alençon, cunning and quick at outwitting his brother, discovered Henry's intention before it had time to be effected. He escaped, and put himself at the head of an army. Henry, as cowardly as he was cruel,

became frightened, and entreated his mother to intercede for him; so that, at the time of Bruno's introduction to the royal family, there was a temporary reconciliation between the brothers.

Seated at the further end of the room, with her ladies standing about her, is a woman who, though long past her prime, is not without a strange sort of beauty that repels far more than attracts. This is the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medicis; one who, if all said of her be true, is so unutterably wicked, that the vices of her sons dwindle into insignificance beside her own. She it is who may be considered the sole originator and chief mover in the horrible massacre of unhappy fame—St. Bartholomew. Yet it is, perhaps, in her character of mother that she—with her fair, smiling outside, her brilliant epigrams, and sparkling repartees—appears like a very personification of unimaginable evil; for she pursued a system, carrying it to its most rigid conclusion, which no other mother has ever heard of without shrinking in horror. For the sole purpose of retaining the management of affairs, she deliberately and persistently sank her sons in vices of the lowest and most degrading character. She surrounded them with the worst specimens of both sexes; so that, bad as they were, we may almost regard them with compassion rather than indignation, when we remember that the very atmosphere in which they breathed was saturated, so to speak, with

drunkenness, gambling, and the foulest debauchery. At home and abroad the wily Italian was equally unscrupulous in the means she employed in attaining any object on which she had set her heart ; and, as other potentates send forth a gray-haired Ambassador to unravel a knotty point, this infamous libel on her own sex sent forth a maid of honour beaming with youth and beauty. All her ladies were chosen for their power of captivation and their utter absence of principle. Even her secretaries were the most beautiful women in France ; and it was generally found, that when she sent out either her maids of honour or her secretaries upon any mission, it was seldom that they were unsuccessful.

Why, it may be asked, had Castelnau given his friend's son an introduction into a society so vile as this ? Well, in the first place, Giordano was now over thirty years of age, and had no longer the excuse of youth, if he yielded to temptation. Moreover, though his father's friend had been unable to watch over him as he would if Bruno had been less restless and changeable, he knew quite enough of him to be convinced that the Abbot of San Bartolomeo had been right in his assertion, that Bruno's temptations would be those of the intellect, not of the senses. But Castelnau's principal excuse for being the means of introducing him to the French Court was, that the Ambassador, intimate as he was there, did not know how horribly wicked it was. He thought it possible,

indeed, that frail beauties were to be found there as elsewhere; but he was wholly ignorant of the deliberate and systematic manner in which wickedness was erected into an art. For the Queen Mother, wily as she was unscrupulous, was an adept in discovering what different artifices were most expedient to be played upon different characters. She never allowed any of her fair and unprincipled diplomatists to come into communication with her high-minded Ambassador, of whom she herself was in as much awe as it was possible for her to be of anyone. No; she always received him into her own presence, assuming the *rôle* of a sovereign distracted between her anxiety for her country and the natural love of a mother, yearning to shield from her minister the incapacity of her sons. That astute but generous politician—gullible by few persons—was gulled by Catherine de Medicis. He never left, at the termination of an interview with her, without feeling a glow of enthusiasm at her high-minded rectitude and unselfish devotion to her duty; and at the same time—wrought into his consciousness by like subtle art—possessing a deepened conviction, though scarcely acknowledged even to himself, of the utter incapacity of her sons. So that during the reigns, both of Charles IX. and Henry III., the Queen Mother was the actual, though not the nominal sovereign; and may rightfully be held responsible for the larger portion of the abominations of the Court at this time.

Few persons, I believe, could read the lengthy chronicles of M. de Castelnau de la Mauvissière—chronicles, be it remembered, written originally for the private perusal of his son, and free, therefore, from the faintest suspicion of dishonesty or servility, even had the Ambassador been less high-minded than all history represents him to be—few persons, I say, can read these chronicles, and observe there what genuine warmth of admiration the very name of the Queen Mother elicits from her Ambassador, without experiencing a consciousness at once greatly tragic and slightly comic, of the ease with which even an exceptionally astute man can be gulled by a woman, if she be as cunning and unprincipled as Catherine de Medicis. For the man who could thus naïvely give utterance to his admiration for the moral qualities of the vilest of her sex, was no simple, inexperienced philosopher, absorbed in the study of the stars, such as Giordano Bruno; but a man of the world, astute, cautious, not disdaining, as we have seen, an occasional recourse to harmless tactics—in short, a statesman, not only by experience, but by natural disposition.

Was it strange that Bruno should look out of place in a company such as this? His first impulse was to leave; but before he had time to recover his presence of mind, he found himself being led by the King to be introduced to the Queen Mother. Catherine, anxious as her son to show Bruno every

attention for the sake of obliging Castelnau, had, in addition, a peculiar reason of her own for wishing to gain Giordano's ear. She received him with all the grace of which she was mistress; spoke to him in Italian; and laid stress upon the pleasure it was to her to meet with one of her own nation. She could not have found a means that would more readily gratify Bruno; for, after his studies, there was nothing he loved so dearly as his country.

"Ah, Madame!" he cried, colouring with delight, "I had forgotten that your Majesty too is an Italian. It is four years since I have left my country; four years, with but very few exceptions, that I have had the happiness of hearing my own language."

Catherine, smiling at his ardour, asked him of his parentage, his age, his birthplace; and when she heard that he was born at Nola, only a few miles from Naples, told him that, vivid as was her admiration for every part of Italy, no part, in her opinion, equalled in beauty the Bay of Naples. Her ladies, who always took a hint from their mistress's behaviour as to their own, saw that she did not intend them to play any of their arts upon Bruno—to-night, at all events. They remained, therefore, modestly silent, while Catherine honoured her guest with her attention; so that when he left he reproached himself for the feeling of repulsion he had experienced on his entrance.

Within three days he received another flattering

command to visit at the Palace ; and from this time seldom a week passed without him being received there as a guest. The only member of the royal family who welcomed him with feelings of pleasure that were entirely genuine and unassumed was the King himself, whose evident liking for Bruno—so wholly dissimilar in character and pursuits—is not easy to explain. Such of my readers as do not refuse to believe in the existence of that capricious lady, Fortune, whose stepchild it was Bruno's misfortune to be, may perhaps be content, without seeking further solution, with the simple assertion that it was Bruno's fate always to be in favour with sovereigns and princes who could do little for him, and always out of favour with priests and members of universities who could do much against him. Such, however, as believe that every effect must have a cause, and are not satisfied with so nebulous an interpretation, may be better pleased with being reminded that Bruno had the gift of exceedingly attractive manners. Vivacious, humorous, accomplished ; possessing an innocent desire to please, united to thorough honesty and directness in purpose ; ardent and enthusiastic as when he was eighteen ; the novelty and freshness of his character at once astonished and charmed the King, who, though little older than Bruno in reality, was, through the viciousness of his life, already in mind and feelings a sated, worn-out old man. Perhaps, too,

the King, contemptible though he was now, was by nature not so wholly vicious as the Queen Mother and Alençon. When in the inferior position of heir-presumptive during the life-time of Charles IX., he seems to have shown occasional gleams of something like courage and love of refinement. It was only since his accession, when his mother had thought him important enough to surround him with the vicious associates with which she had surrounded his elder brother, that he had sunk into the contemptible object I have described.

Whatever the cause, the effect was undoubted. The King formed a real attachment for Bruno; and Bruno, though he could not wholly reciprocate the attachment, was of too grateful and warm-hearted a nature not to be touched by it. He was one of those who could never wholly dislike and despise anyone who evidently liked and respected him. Moreover, Henry was careful not to display in Bruno's presence, to their full extent, either his superstition or licentiousness. Their conversation, when they were alone together, was chiefly on alchemy and astrology. The King's love for gold made him take an interest in the former, and his superstition and cowardice in the other. Bruno, though he did not, as we have seen, wholly repudiate all belief in these arts, seldom lectured upon them, because he felt that at present nothing was really known about them; and he approached, perhaps, nearer something like innocent

cunning than he practised before or since in his life, when he indulged the King in his love for alchemy and astrology, hoping thereby gradually to instil into him a love for astronomy and philosophy.

Catherine's attention to Giordano had a more interested motive. He was the *protégé* and adopted son of Castelnau; and there was just now an object very dear both to her ambition and heart, in which her Ambassador alone could assist her. This was the marriage of her young son, Francis d'Alençon, Duke of Anjou, to Elizabeth, Queen of England. Quick at penetrating the motives and intentions of others, she had divined the King's hatred and jealousy of his brother, even before it had been shown beyond the power of contradiction by the discovery of his order to have his brother committed to the Bastille. Whether the Queen Mother feared that the death of this feeble prince would be the death-blow to her own authority and power (for Alençon's death would render Henry of Navarre the next heir, and, should he come to the throne—an event that the present King's intemperance and sensuality rendered of no distant probability—Catherine foresaw that his vigorous and masculine mind would never submit to her authority); or whether—for let us hope that even the worst characters have some faint glimmerings of good—Catherine really had some feelings of maternal compassion towards this ill-shaped son of her womb, certain it is that she seemed more anxious concerning

the safety of Alençon's life than she had appeared about the lives of her other sons. She was too sure of her own authority to fear any repetition of open harshness to the Duke ; but what she felt was not to be guarded against was secret assassination or poison. Only as the powerful Elizabeth's husband did there seem to be safety for her son ; for England, under this great sovereign, had grown into a country so mighty and important that neither the King nor his minions would venture to injure the consort of its Queen. Catherine had wished this marriage night and day almost since the present King's accession ; and she was impatient with Castelnau that he had not already brought it about. On receiving her Ambassador's letter, petitioning that kindness might be shown to the son of his dearest friend, Catherine immediately thought that in complying with this request, she might have a means of more readily effecting her purpose concerning her son's marriage. She determined so to entangle and ensnare Bruno that he should act as a sort of unofficial ambassador himself in the cause she had at heart. She had too often made a tool of goodness to be a disbeliever in it ; and Bruno's appearance, on his first introduction to her, was sufficient to assure her that he was one not likely to be won by a bribe, or those far baser arts that she was so wholly unscrupulous in employing. His naïve delight when she had praised Naples, his evident pleasure in the predilection which, to the

Queen's intense satisfaction, Henry showed towards him, all combined to make Her Majesty convinced that it would not be difficult to render Bruno warmly attached to the French Court. She had only to shield from his not too observant eyes its grosser abominations, and to surround him on all sides with kindness, which the warm-hearted Italian—even had he been much less unsuspicious than he was—could not but regard as disinterested ; for what benefit could a Queen Mother of France expect from an obscure teacher of philosophy?—and she had won him to her will. She confided to Alençon her hopes on this wise. The Duke was fully as anxious for the marriage as she was. Perhaps even more so ; for he wished it not only as affording protection to his life, but he really seems to have had a strong admiration for Elizabeth herself. Love, we know, is supposed to go by contrasts ; and Her English Majesty's commanding stature, masculine courage, and powerful intellect, seem to have possessed a keen attraction for the feeble, deformed Prince. Even had King Henry not possessed so real a liking for Bruno, he, owing to his mother's arts, would certainly have assumed it. Alençon had lately shown some disposition to join the Huguenots, which brought him into great favour with them. They were now a very powerful body, and the King, more jealous and cowardly than ever, was afraid the Huguenots might assassinate him so as to make room for his brother ; and he began to think that if he could

not succeed in putting Alençon out of the world, the next best thing would be to send him out of the kingdom. Catherine, it is needless to say, did not allow this feeling to grow cold for lack of fuel ; and so it came to pass that for once the Queen Mother and her sons were united in their aims, and were determined that Bruno should proceed to England, and do his best in assisting Castelnau to bring about the alliance between the two countries.

When Bruno had first entered France he had not the faintest intention of proceeding to England. How or when the idea first entered into his mind he could not have told. Catherine played her game far too well for that. He only knew that he did become possessed of so vivid a longing to proceed there that he could not conquer it. He first mentioned this longing timidly and confidentially to the King, who, somewhat to his surprise, did not discourage him. He then mentioned it to Catherine, who said, with a sigh :

"You will leave us, then. Have we displeased you ?"

"Displeased me ?" answered Bruno. "Your Majesty has been too good to me. How can I ever requite you for your kindness and condescension ?"

"Why, then, do you wish to leave ?" asked the Queen, as if in innocent wonder.

"I can hardly tell," answered Bruno. "Perhaps it is that I wish to see M. de Castelnau de la Mauvissière.

Your Majesty knows that he and my father were bosom friends ; but perhaps your Majesty does not know that he and I have not met for more than fifteen years."

"You will stay with M. Castelnau ?" asked the Queen, half carelessly, as if she only inquired out of politeness.

"I hardly know that ; but I shall certainly frequently see him," answered Bruno.

"He will doubtless introduce you to Her Majesty of England," said the Queen Mother, in the same tone of assumed carelessness. Then, as if it was quite an after-thought, she said, after a long pause : "You know a marriage has long been contemplated between Her English Majesty and my son, the Duke of Anjou. My son is devotedly attached to her. Oh ! Messer Bruno," continued Catherine in maternal solicitude, her naturally silvery voice taking on a tone of pathetic entreaty, "if you honestly can speak well of us and our Court to one whom I would fain call my daughter, I implore you to do so. You have been intimate with us now for many months ; have you ever seen the Duke other than a loving son, a kind brother ? You can see for yourself how such an one will surely make a tender husband. Plead for my son to Her English Majesty. He loves her to distraction."

Catherine put her soft white hand into his ; and Bruno raising it to his lips, said ardently :

"I were base and ungrateful indeed, could I

“speak anything but praise of your Majesty or of your royal sons.”

In less than a fortnight he had made all necessary arrangements for his departure. The King, unfeignedly sorry to lose him, wrote a long letter to Castelnau full of praise for his Neapolitan *protégé*, which he showed to Bruno before sending.

Giordano was intensely touched by it. What had he done that His Majesty should be so good to him? was his thought. Remember, that since his boyhood he had met with so little kindness and affection, that it made a far greater impression upon his warm, grateful nature, than if he had not been living so wandering and lonely a life. He sat down and penned a letter—the essential contents of which have been inserted in another form in the dedication to one of his works—so wholly exaggerated in praise of the King, that even after making all due allowance for the greater effusiveness of that century compared with our own, one can scarcely read it without wonder that it should have been penned by one like Bruno. We know him too well to believe that he could ever condescend to servility or hypocrisy. Yet could he really have believed this contemptible being to be the paragon of virtue and learning he has described? Certainly not. So far as I understand his character, he was one not to be so wholly deceived as this. He did not, indeed, know the full

extent of the wickedness of the Court, for it had been carefully hidden from him. But he had never wholly lost the instinctive repugnance he had felt on his first introduction to it. He was angry with himself for this feeling. Time after time he reproached himself for not being able to respond more fully to the exceeding kindness of the King to him. What had there been in the King's conduct to deserve in any way this instinctive distrust? And when he read the warm expressions towards himself in His Majesty's letter to Castelnau, his remorse reached temporarily that height where it has ceased to have any connection with reason. In this spirit of compunction he penned that laudatory description of the King which has excited so much surprise. He did not show it to His Majesty, as the cunning King had to him. He had too innate a sense of delicacy to be able to flatter to the face. It was entirely for his own satisfaction that he wrote this letter; seeking, as the more warm-hearted and emotional among ourselves do under similar circumstances, to atone by greater warmth of outward expression for the poverty of his actual feeling.

As the door closed behind him, and he had bidden the King his final farewell, he felt a touch on his shoulder, and there stood before him the Duke of Anjou.

"You will say all you can of me to cause

Elizabeth to look upon me with favour?" said the Prince entreatingly, as he dropped a jewelled ring into Bruno's hand.

Bruno had had very little personal communication with the Duke; but as he now saw him thus standing before him, looking so deformed and hideous, there darted across him a sense of incongruity at the association of the "Frog-faced Prince," as he was called, with the character of a lover. Though wholly free from sensuality, Bruno had inherited from his father a certain poetic susceptibility to the power of beauty. "Surely," he thought to himself, "it could only be exceptional qualities of heart and brain that could atone for such physical deformities; and these I do not think this Prince possesses." But as he felt the ring dropped into his hand, he merely said, almost in the words with which he had answered the Queen Mother :

"I should be base indeed did I not speak well of your Royal Highness and this Court."

He would have gladly refused the ring, could he have done so without absolute rudeness; but this being next to impossible, he accepted it almost in silence. He wished the Prince farewell somewhat hastily; and in this way ended Bruno's first visit to Paris.



CHAPTER V.

M. DE CASTELNAU DE LA MAUVISSIÈRE IN ENGLAND..

A rarer spirit never
Did steer humanity : but you gods will give us
Some faults to make us men.

Antony and Cleopatra.

IT is many years since we have seen M. de Castelnau. He is now over sixty years of age. His hair is quite white, and his beard is rapidly turning so. He is hale and strong ; but the deep lines and furrows on his face are such that even his sixty years will scarcely sufficiently account for, and may be more truly traced to the terrible anxiety and bitterness with which he view'd the deplorable condition of his country. These years had tended to harden rather than to soften him. It was inevitable that they should do so, for never was there period when stern decisiveness was more peremptorily required. He has still the same high ideal of duty ; but whereas in his earlier manhood he confined this ideal to himself alone, and

looked with something like tolerance on others who held a less exalted one, now he exacted from others the same scrupulous standard as from himself, and woe to them if they fell short of it.

We have seen that when he began his political career, he started with the intention of making moderation the aim and principle of his life; but he had found the times too turbulent and grossly wicked to admit of this. His country was divided into two apparently irreconcilable camps, both of them stained with the lowest vices. Time after time had Castelnau tried conciliatory measures, only to find himself baffled, and both Catholics and Reformers, encouraged as it were by his very patience and moderation, more rampant than ever. Well, then, if their joint existence was impossible, one of them must be utterly stamped out. And what wonder that Castelnau, himself a Catholic, and by nature somewhat of a Conservative in his love of order and obedience to rule, should decide upon the destruction of the newer, and consequently the aggressive party—the Huguenots? Not that he had any real love or sympathy for Catholics as they now were. He saw but too plainly that both parties cared little for the things in whose name they fought, and that their so-called beliefs were little other than instruments of political and personal ambition. Nay, there were times when the greed, lust, horrible mutilations, and atrocious tortures that were perpetrated under the

name of religion, made it imperative for him to call to his aid all his rigid sense of justice, in order to save himself from that error to which even the greatest minds are sometimes prone—the hatred of a cause because the supporters of that cause are intolerably foolish and wicked. Still, France had been comparatively happy and innocent before the dawn of the Reformation; and Castelnau found himself at times looking back to those days with regretful longing. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that greatly as his humane heart had been moved at the atrocities of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, he did not refuse the office of peacemaker to the naturally indignant Elizabeth, for he was in hopes that from the ashes of the unhappy victims might at least spring some peace and quiet for the future of France.

He was greatly mistaken. To his own surprise, the many thousand corpses spread over the face of the country in this atrocious massacre took little away from the strength of the Huguenot party; and in two or three years they seemed nearly as powerful as ever. Poor Castelnau was almost in despair. Odious as persecution always was, it seemed doubly odious when not justified by the result. Not, it is of course needless to say, that Castelnau had had any part in the massacre himself. He was in perfect ignorance of it till it was over; and Catherine de Medicis had cunningly hidden from him her own active share in its contrivance. But, feeling severity

to be necessary to quell the religious discords, he had controlled himself from giving full vent to the horror and repugnance he really felt.

But when he saw that severe measures had had so futile a result, he determined in future that, so far as he could prevent them, they should never be practised again. He would, instead, try what renewed conciliation would do. If this failed, why, things were only about as they were before; but if persecution was tried and failed, things were very much worse. So that when Catherine de Medicis broached to him her desire for a marriage between the English Queen and Francis of Alençon, Castelnau welcomed it as eagerly as the Queen Mother could desire, and willingly undertook to be negotiator in the cause. He had no insuperable dislike to the doctrines of the Reformed Faith. He only hated the French Huguenots because of the misery they had brought on France. But, so far as he could see, both Genevan and British Protestants were conscientious and earnest men; and if unhappily somewhat harsh and bigoted, at least scrupulously honest and sincere. Were Protestant England once united to France, the Catholics would not dare to injure the Huguenots; and if these were left in peace, perhaps they in their turn would be content to let the Catholics worship as they would. Either way, the great Elizabeth would be a tower of force to turn to, did occasion need. Like most men brought into personal knowledge of

the English Queen, Castelnau seems to have had a profound conviction of her immense ability ; and as time went on he worked himself up into such a feverish desire for this marriage, that, as he told Walsingham, "he could not sleep at night for his desire to bring about a matter so much for the peace of Christendom."

Charles IX. and his brother, the present King of France, had been successively suitors for the hand of Elizabeth, but both had been rejected by her ; and there seems to have been little pressure put upon Elizabeth, either from France or England, to bring the alliance between the two countries about. But with the Duke of Alençon the case was somewhat different. England wished this marriage because the Queen was now past the meridian of life, and it was imperative that she should not postpone her marriage many years longer, if she wished to have an heir. She had lately declared her resolution that she would neither wed an English subject nor a Catholic Prince ; and Alençon, who, as we know, had already shown signs of sympathy with the Huguenots, seemed desirable, as possessing neither of these disqualifications to the possibility of being that capricious lady's spouse. France wished this marriage for the reasons we have already given. Nothing remained, then, but the consent of the royal devotee to virginity, the Maiden Queen herself. And for a time she really seemed to favour this marriage more than others.

How she played with the unfortunate Duke of Anjou, readers of English history do not require to be told. She allowed him to come over to her country, and fêted him as if she really wished her people to understand that she intended him for their King Consort; and then, under one plea or another, he was sent back to his own country, or else to the Netherlands, over which he had been invited to reign, apparently as far off from the attainment of his marriage projects as ever.

Perhaps the only way to justify or excuse Elizabeth's conduct on this wise, is to remember that she was torn between conflicting motives. On one side were her people so solicitous for her marriage that even the Queen, courageous and self-reliant as she was, was almost afraid to disappoint them; on the other side was her intense and very natural dislike to the Duke himself. For the Queen's admiration of physical beauty in both sexes, and especially in the masculine, is well known, and it can be imagined, therefore, with what repugnance she must have viewed the prospect of marriage with so hideous a suitor as Alençon. Castelnau had not taken this sufficiently into consideration. Indeed, not only he, but many among the elder generation of her own subjects, seem, in their admiration of Elizabeth in the character of sovereign, quite to have forgotten that she was also a woman very little past the full prime of her life. Perhaps Elizabeth herself may be con-

sidered responsible for this ; for owing to what really seems like an instinctive and unconquerable dislike to the marriage state, she had from the completion of her thirtieth year always referred to herself as an "old woman," trusting thereby that she would cease to be annoyed with projects for her marriage.

But if her elder subjects, in their eagerness that their sovereign should take unto herself a husband simply as the means of bestowing upon her country an heir to the throne, had forgotten the natural likes or dislikes of the woman, not so had her younger subjects. To them it seemed nothing less than sacrilege that this great Queen—adored for her intellectual and masculine abilities ; adored still more because she was a woman ; adored most of all because of her maidenhood—should be forced into a marriage so repugnant to natural feeling. And Philip Sidney—most romantic and chivalrous among many of a like disposition—could not restrain his expressions of loathing at the idea that this Royal Lady, at whose feet had sighed suitor after suitor distinguished for valour, moral worth, and personal beauty, now consenting to a marriage with one so odious in person and vicious in life as Francis d'Alençon, Duke of Anjou. Young, ardent, and extremely unworldly, Sidney at length conceived the bold notion of writing to Her Majesty and imploring her not to yield to a marriage so unworthy and repulsive.

The letter, though deeply interesting, is too long to be given here *in extenso*, but its chief points are these: In it Sidney points out that though Her Majesty may know it not, everyone else, including even the very common people, are aware that the Duke of Anjou "is the son of a Jezebel of our age; that his brother made oblation of his own sister's marriage, the easier to make massacres of our brethren in belief; that he himself, contrary to his promise and all gratefulness, having his liberty and principal estate by the Huguenots' means, did sack *La Charité* and utterly spoil them with fire and sword. . . . Besides the French disposition and his own education, his inconstant temper against his brother, his thrusting himself into the Low Country matters, his sometimes seeking the King of Spain's daughter, sometimes your Majesty, are evident testimonies of his being carried away with every wind of hope. Taught to love greatness any way gotten, and having for the motioners and ministers of the mind only such young men as have showed they think evil contentment a ground of any rebellion, who have seen no commonwealth but in faction, and divers of which have defiled their hands in odious murders, what is to be hoped for? . . . Nothing can it [that is, this marriage] add unto you but the bliss of children, which, I confess, were a most unspeakable comfort; but yet no more appertaining unto him than to any other to whom the height of all good haps were allotted, to be your

husband; and therefore I may assuredly affirm that what good soever can follow marriage is no more his than anybody's; but the evils and dangers are peculiarly annexed to his person and condition."

The Queen, in her own heart, was probably touched by the ardour of her young subject; but the liberty—for it was nothing less—that a gentleman about the Court, not yet even a knight, and only twenty-five years of age, should venture to express his disapproval of her projected marriage to his Sovereign Mistress, so many years older than himself, was too great to be passed by; and Philip Sidney was banished from the Queen's favour for eight months. But his temerity was not without its results. The Queen was probably strengthened in her determination not finally to accept the Duke in marriage by this indirect proof that, much as she might offend her elder subjects by her persistence in this refusal, she was yet sure of the assistance and approval of the younger and more chivalrous of her people. But more than this, one or two even of her older advisers began to doubt the expediency of this marriage. Burghley declared his suspicion that the Duke's sympathy with the doctrines of the Reformed Faith was feigned, in order to win Elizabeth's favour. And though no doubt as long as the Queen lived her immense ability and powerful will would have the mastery over the feeble Prince, still, should Her Majesty die in childbirth—a contingency that, from

the late period to which she had postponed her marriage, was with her more probable than with younger mothers—the infant heir to the throne would almost certainly have instilled into him the abhorred doctrines of the Catholic Faith.

Castelnau, however, as in duty bound to his country, longed for this marriage with increasing eagerness, and spent large sums of his own money in welcoming and honouring the Duke during his various visits to England; and despite his great admiration for the character and ability of the Queen, he was beginning to feel, for the first time since he had known her, real irritation and discontent with her vacillation. He told her, with something like a menace in his voice, that if she again threw over Alençon, the Duke, for his own character's sake, would have to publish the letters she had written to him. Alençon himself seems to have been not without a certain pertinacity. He told Elizabeth that he had her word, her letter, and her ring, and he would not leave till she was his wife. The poor Queen, conscious of a greater repugnance to the Frog Prince than ever now that he was before her, clung to Burghley as her chief counsellor. Secretly, she confided to him that she would not be Alençon's wife to be mistress of the universe; openly, she made use of the plausible pretext that the Duke was at heart a Catholic, and that her duty to her subjects prohibited her from marrying one who was not a declared Pro-

testant. The Prince swore he loved her so much that he would turn Protestant openly at once. He had already for her sake dared the ill opinions of all Catholics throughout Europe. Alternately worried and cajoled, the unfortunate Duke promised he would return to his country if the Queen would only consent to marry him as soon as circumstances allowed. Elizabeth, anxious with a feverish anxiety to get rid of him, gave the pledge; and the Duke returned to Paris shortly before Bruno's introduction to the French Court, related in the last chapter.

Elizabeth seemed little inclined to keep her promise; or, perhaps, that elastic phrase, "as soon as circumstances allowed," admitted of a great deal of stretching. But the French Court, and Catherine de Medicis in particular, were determined to keep her to her word. Little as Henry really cared for the honour of his brother, his mother imbued him with a strong indignation at Elizabeth's behaviour, and told him that an insult of this kind struck at once not only at the Duke, but at the throne and at France. And she was irritated with Castelnau that he had been able to effect so little to bring about the object nearest her heart.

The greater part of the English Ministers, dreading an open rupture with France, determined within themselves that their sovereign should be forced to keep her word; and so greatly harassed was the Queen by them, that even she, with all her masculine

will, seemed afraid to refuse them. She sent for Castelnau, and assured him that if he would only induce the Duke to return to her country, she would pledge herself to become his wife. Castelnau, like her own ministers, had heard the same song sung too often to be deluded further. To herself he answered stiffly, that she had made him write what she did not mean so often that he must decline to take any further part. To others he said, that if she intended to continue her tricks she must use pen and paper of her own. The Queen swore by every oath she could think of, that she would marry the Duke this time. So tremendous were the oaths that this true daughter of Bluff King Harry employed, that, says the historian, Castelnau turned pale at hearing them. He believed that she could never venture to break them, and consented to call his Prince back. The courtiers whispered among themselves, that if Her Majesty broke oaths so tremendous, to hell she certainly would go. Walsingham, however, alone remained incredulous, and refused to believe that she would really become the Duke's wife.

Such, in brief, is a hasty sketch of Castelnau's political life since we last saw him. And when, in addition, we remind the reader that for many years past the unfortunate Mary Stuart had been a prisoner, and that Castelnau, partly from her connection with the French Court, but chiefly out of natural humanity, had made it an object to sweeten her captivity as far

as he could without offending the English Queen, it will not be difficult to believe that seldom had minister a more arduous position than had Castelnau de la Mauvissière during the last fifteen or twenty years.

Few men are wholly independent of their environment, and though Castelnau could never have been other than scrupulously honourable and just, he might have become harsh and severe had there not come into his life, some years before the time I am now describing, one softening influence in the shape of his wife.

I have already commented upon the great similarity the sixteenth century presents to our own. Not least among many points of resemblance was the superiority of its women. Among the learned women of the time were the Queen herself; Lady Jane Grey and her sisters; Mary, the learned Countess of Arundel; the four daughters of Sir Anthony Coke; the Ladies Ann, Margaret, and Jane Seymour; and the eldest daughter of Sir Thomas More. The sixteenth century seems to have been peculiarly happy in the possession of women who, though devoted to learning, would not allow that devotion to deprive them of feminine refinement or aptitude for practical work. Lady Jane Grey, whose name is almost typical of feminine grace and refinement, had acquired a degree of learning rare in matured men. "At fifteen," says Froude, "she was

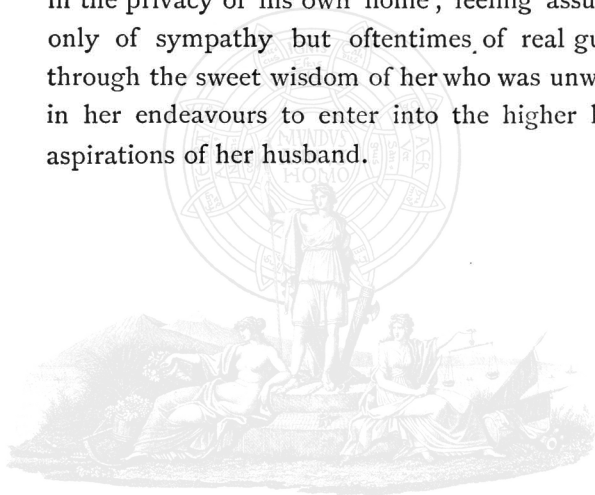
learning Hebrew ; at sixteen she corresponded with Bullinger in Latin at least equal to his own ; but the matter of her letters is more striking than the language, and speaks more for her than the most elaborate panegyrics of admiring courtiers." Queen Elizabeth spoke five languages. She could discourse on Plato ; she had translated Isocrates, Sallust, Seneca, Cicero. She corresponded in Latin. In English she was a composer both of prose and verse. Her French composition is said to be a model of energy and expression. And her capabilities of judgment and foresight are too well known to need pointing out. Italian ladies of the upper classes (for it is needless to say in the sixteenth century, learning, neither in men nor women, had penetrated to the masses) nearly equalled their English sisters in their intellectual attainments without in any way losing feminine gentleness and charm. And foremost among these capable women seems to have been the lady whom Castelnau was fortunate enough to win as his wife.

Maria de Bochetel, wife of Castelnau de Mauvissière, was a daughter of the illustrious house of Giacomo, Signore de la Forest Brouilhamenon. According to Bruno, who, as we shall see, had singular opportunities of judging of her, she was a woman of extraordinary beauty, honesty, and modesty ; and possessed, at the same time, unusual powers of mind. Four children were born of her marriage. And she

was unwearied in the care she bestowed upon their education. Somewhat reversing the usual custom, she paid even more attention to the culture of her daughters than her sons; and one of her little girls, Maria, spoke at the age of six, Italian, French, and English so well that, according to Bruno, it was impossible to say which was her native language. Yet none knew better than Madame de Mauvissière that languages are only the tools of knowledge and not knowledge itself. And though she selected the period of her children's youth as the best for the acquisition of languages and mechanical arts, she was careful to show them as they advanced to maturity that a sound judgment, endurance of contradiction, self-reliance, and a capability of seeing two sides of a question are the essentials of education, languages and arts but its accomplishments.

What wonder that to a wife like this, as discreet as she was loving, Castelnau should turn in his troubled career as to a very haven of refuge? Few kind-hearted women are incapable of understanding and sympathising with the physical aches of their husbands. Madame de Mauvissière was one of those rarer women who have comprehension and sympathy for mental aches. And as many another husband who has borne a racking headache bravely enough in society will indulge in moans and complaints on return to his home, not that his patience is really exhausted, but because it affords him inexpressible

relief to feel the sweet cool hand of his wife placed lovingly on his brow; so Castelnau, fretted and worried by the severe check and self-restraint he was obliged to put upon his temper during his official life, would give free vent to his grievances in the privacy of his own home; feeling assured not only of sympathy but oftentimes of real guidance, through the sweet wisdom of her who was unwearying in her endeavours to enter into the higher life and aspirations of her husband.



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CHAPTER VI.

A TRUE HELP-MEET.

Blessed is the man that hath a virtuous wife. . . . If there be kindness, meekness, and comfort in her tongue, then is not her husband like other men.

Ecclesiasticus xxvi. 1 ; xxxvi. 23.

IT was a lovely evening in the early autumn of 1582, and Madame de Mauvissière was seated at home, anxiously awaiting the return of her husband. For the last two hours her solitude had been broken by a visit from Philip Sidney, who had come to confide to her his projected marriage with Mistress Frances Walsingham.

From his first acquaintance with Bruno, Philip Sidney had been a more or less frequent guest at the house of Castelnau and his wife. But the intercourse could be scarcely described as one of actual friendship or great intimacy. Though it is probable that Castelnau was in ignorance of the letter Sidney had written to Elizabeth concerning her marriage with

the Duke of Anjou, he was perfectly aware of the extreme dislike Sidney entertained towards it. Then a stronger reason than this for the very moderate intimacy that existed between Castelnau and Sidney was the latter's passion for Lady Rich, or Stella of poetic fame. Castelnau, as scrupulously honourable in his private life as in his public career, viewed with extreme disapprobation Sidney's conduct on this wise, and did not disguise his feeling. But Madame de Mauvissière, though not less upright and honourable than her husband, was more lenient. She, too, viewed the connection with unfeigned regret, but not with severe condemnation. She was aware of the peculiar circumstances of the case. She knew how Lady Rich had been forced into her marriage, in spite of her previous attachment to Sidney, which the latter only too fully reciprocated. And so Madame de Mauvissière regarded Sidney more with pity than with condemnation. Nevertheless, when he now told her for the first time of his determination to break with his unlawful passion, and of his intention to wed the daughter of Walsingham, Madame de Mauvissière received the intelligence with unfeigned gladness. Even had it been possible for Lady Rich to become the lawful wife of Sidney, Madame de Mauvissière would have regretted the alliance ; for from what she had seen of Lady Rich, both before and after her marriage, she judged her character to be greatly inferior to Sidney's. But

Frances Walsingham, as far as her extreme youth rendered it possible to form an opinion of her character, seemed in every way worthy to become his wife ; and Madame de Mauvissière congratulated him on his choice with an earnestness that was as cordial as it was sincere.

The pleasure of soliciting and receiving sympathy was too great to be needlessly curtailed ; and Sidney indulged in unburthening himself to Madame de Mauvissière for a longer time than was quite acceptable to that somewhat anxious wife, who was momentarily expecting her husband's return, and who knew that he liked to find her alone for the few hours he had at her disposal. She was considering how best to ask Sidney to leave without appearing inhospitable or unsympathetic, when she heard her husband's footstep on the threshold. He strode in, white even to the lips, and more agitated than she had ever beheld him. Evidently he did not see Sidney, who was partly screened from view by some tapestry ; for without waiting to make any salutations, he burst out passionately :

"She has deceived me again. Fool ! fool that I was to be so gulled ! I should have listened to Walsingham ; he knew her better than I did. Yet how could I suspect that after such solemn oaths she would dare to break her faith ? What am I to say to the Queen Mother ? What am I to say ?" Castelnau continued bitterly. "Why should deference to Eliza-

beth's rank make me disguise my opinion? Why should I not call her what I would another who had acted like this—a traitress, a liar!——”

“Nay, nay, my husband,” interposed Madame de Mauvissière somewhat timidly, for she had never seen her husband moved like this. “If not deference to the Queen, at least chivalry to the woman——”

“Chivalry to the woman?” he interrupted. “What is the meaning of chivalry, save protection from the strong to the weak? In what is Her Majesty weaker than I am? In her one brain seem to be the capabilities of both man and woman. She possesses the judgment, foresight, and reason of a man, with the finesse, or tact, or cunning, whatever you may call it, of the woman. She has outwitted everyone save Walsingham. Chivalry, indeed! Her conduct scarcely invites chivalry.”

“She may really have an objection to the Duke of Anjou,” remarked the wife, who had never confessed to her husband how greatly she disliked the Frog-faced Prince herself.

“Then she should have said so at once. I should have deplored her decision, it is true; but I should have submitted to it, loyally and in silence. But now she has made me a laughing-stock to my own country. The Queen Mother was indignant enough at her conduct before; what will she say now? what will she think of me? I pledged my word—my reputation—that this time Elizabeth was in

earnest. I little thought that she would degrade herself and me like this. And all for what? To see how she could play upon my credulity! But," he added, with bitter decisiveness, "it is enough; she shall play fast and loose with me no longer."

"I think you are mistaken, my husband. Call the Queen vacillating if you will; but I feel sure she intends personal insult neither to you nor France. Think what favour she has always shown to you. I am certain that Her Majesty has a regard for you; and, if so, what motive could she have in wilfully deceiving you?"

"Motive!" exclaimed Castelnau very irritably; "instincts require no motives. Where one eats to keep himself in health, a hundred eat simply because they are hungry. Where one lies because he has an object to gain, a hundred lie because it is their nature to do so."

All this time, Sidney had been feeling exceedingly uncomfortable, as the unwilling spectator of a scene he knew was not intended for him to witness. Yet he hardly knew whether he ought to come forward or not. He almost thought that Madame de Mauvissière did not wish him to make his presence known to her husband, fearing in his present excitement it might add to his irritation. But, in reality, Madame de Mauvissière had been so agitated at her husband's abrupt entrance and excited manner

that at first she had completely forgotten that Sidney was still her guest ; and when the remembrance did recur to her, it was too late. Her husband would, of course, be deeply incensed at having given vent to expressions so unguarded and uncourteous before a third person. Nay, he would be more than incensed with himself—he would feel genuine remorse : for, with his law-abiding nature, he held it a sin to speak evil of dignities, especially of a sovereign, before one of the most chivalrous of her subjects. He had never before, during the whole of his political career, been betrayed into the expressions he made use of on this occasion ; and it was so obvious that his great chagrin and disappointment rendered him scarcely responsible for this outburst of passion that even Sidney, devoted subject of Elizabeth as he was, regarded him more with pity than indignation. Moreover, Philip was the last person—as Madame de Mauvissière knew perfectly well—to divulge scenes and expressions that had come to his knowledge inadvertently : and so she thought it better not to agitate her husband still further by disclosing her young guest's presence.

Castelnau continued to pace up and down the room in great agitation ; and Madame de Mauvissière, being one of those rare women who readily perceive when attempts at consolation rather tend to irritate than to attain their object, thought it better to refrain from taking Elizabeth's part any further, at

all events, for the present. She waited for some few moments, and then drawing a large chair to the window, she entreated her husband, more by gesture than by actual words, to rest in it. He obeyed her, and she seated herself on a stool at his feet, and gently touched his hand with her lips. That silent little act of loving sympathy had a more soothing effect upon him than any arguments. He put his arm fondly round her and leant his head upon her shoulder. So the two sat on for some minutes, when the wife, thinking to divert her husband's thoughts, said :

"Have you no other news to tell me, my beloved?"

"Yes," answered Castelnau, with a slight return to his irritable manner. "But not much more pleasant than that other. I have had a letter from young Bruno, which ought to have been delivered some days ago. It is to announce his departure from France, and intended visit to England."

"But it will please you to see the son of your dearest friend," answered his wife gently.

"I am not sure of that. I consider him by no means a worthy son of my dearest friend. Giovanni Bruno would have been the last man in the world to take monastic vows deliberately upon him only to break them. Then his restlessness and desultoriness. And then," continued Castelnau, as he drew a letter from his pocket, "I am very much deceived

if I do not find him a flatterer and hypocrite into the bargain. Read this."

It was poor Bruno's effusive epistle concerning the virtues of the French King. Madame de Mauvissière read it attentively, and then said, as she returned it to her husband :

"This letter does not appear to me to be written by a flatterer or hypocrite."

"Then he must be a fool," said Castelnau, irritably. "No man in his senses could really believe Henri to be the saint and paragon of learning Bruno represents him to be."

Madame de Mauvissière took the letter again, and, as she re-read it, said :

"This letter seems to me to be written by an emotional person, in a moment of gratitude. Perhaps the French King had done him some service."

"It must be peculiar gratitude so to distort his judgment, and to give him so very exalted an opinion of His Majesty's merits," answered Castelnau sardonically.

"I suspect it is only Bruno's transient opinion, not his permanent one. Even self-contained persons are not wholly free from the tendency to judge of their fellows differently in their own different moods. When they are angry with them, they speak more severely of them than they would in cool blood ; when they are grateful to them, for the time being their opinion of them is really exalted. And emotional

people are peculiarly susceptible to these fluctuations of feeling; but they do not deserve to be called hypocrites. Distrust their judgments if you like, but not their intentions."

"You are subtle, my wife."

Castelnau looked down upon her with a pleased expression in his eyes. He was very proud of this gentle lady's penetration, though he never told her so. The look was not lost upon Madame de Mauvissière, and she welcomed it as showing that her husband was losing a little of the extreme bitterness with which he had been animated at the commencement of their interview. She determined, therefore, to continue to interest him in Bruno's projected visit to England. For though Castelnau was evidently a little annoyed at the notion of seeing his friend's son, the annoyance was a very different matter from the extreme agitation excited in him by Elizabeth's conduct. So Madame Castelnau said :

"When do you expect Giordano to arrive?"

"Very shortly," answered her husband. "It might be even to-night. His letter is dated more than three weeks since. He must, of course, reside here. I could not let him go to a lodging when I can offer him a home, after the vow I made to his father."

"Confess now," said Madame de Mauvissière a little playfully, "that you will be pleased to see your old friend's son."

"I am not so sure of that," answered Castelnau.

"There is no man for whom I feel so profound a distrust as one who has deliberately broken his contract."

At this moment the door opened, and his little daughter of six years old ran in, in her nightdress and slippers, to wish her parents good-night. As Castelnau took her on his knee, he continued :

"If this child were even eight years older than she is, Bruno should be no resident in this house. One who is unfaithful in his monastic vow would be equally unfaithful in conjugal vows. There should be no opportunity for love-passages between him and my daughter."

"There, now," said the wife, a little archly. "Even you, faithful keeper of contracts, would think breach of them justifiable under peculiar and exceptional circumstances."

"Breach of contracts is never justifiable. My vow to be a father to my friend's son does not really oblige me to have him in the same house with me, now that he is more than thirty years of age and able to guide himself; though, as no harm can come of it, on account of my children's youth, I am glad to be able to do anything that I know would have pleased Giovanni had he been alive."

Madame Castelnau paused a few moments before she said, half timidly, but very earnestly, as her little daughter ran out of the room :

"My beloved, do you know that I sometimes think

that you exaggerate the duty of keeping faithful to contracts; that your feeling on this wise is almost a superstition? I do not think that it can ever be a duty to keep the letter alive when the spirit has long since died away."

"The spirit should not be allowed to die away."

"But suppose, in spite of all our efforts, it has died away. Suppose Bruno found that he was gaining harm instead of good by being in a religious house, was he not justified in removing from it to some sphere more suited to his disposition? Or take another and even a graver illustration. Suppose an inexperienced young girl has married a man, imagining him, in the innocence of her heart, to be endowed with every perfection, and finds, when too late, that he is thoroughly vicious, base, dishonourable, mean. Is she still to live with him?"

"Yes. She has made her vow, and must keep to it. Your illustration is an argument against youthful and inexperienced marriages—than which none can more strongly disapprove than I do—nothing more."

"But suppose by keeping with her wicked husband she finds she is deteriorating herself?"

"She must not allow herself to be deteriorated."

"Ay, my husband, but we are none of us wholly superior to our surroundings. Suppose I say that in spite of all her efforts she finds she is deteriorating, and by gaining a separation she could marry one

who she knows will encourage her in all goodness and nobleness, is she not justified in removing from an evil to a good influence? Of course I in no way include the plea of a mere passing fancy or transient passion."

Castelnau looked at her half fondly, half reproachfully, as he raised her hand to his lips, and said :

"Such a qualification is not needed from you, my beloved."

The wife gave him a grateful look from her sweet eyes, but, taking no other notice of the interruption, proceeded :

"It seems to me that when we have been induced to take a vow—under an illusion, so to speak, not in the least knowing what that vow involved—we are justified in breaking it, always supposing of course that we feel we shall do more good by the breach than the performance. The vow was made under the impression that the object of the vow was noble and worthy. When it is discovered that it is ignoble and worthless, it appears to me to be a slavish worship of the letter to think it needful still to keep faithful to it."

Castelnau rose and paced the room in some agitation.

"Wife, wife," he said, "you know not how hard you are hitting me. Do you not think that, time after time of late, temptations of this very sort have been assailing me? When I discovered only after a

long interval,—for the Queen Mother in her maternal anxiety at first successfully hid it from me,—the infamous part Charles IX. played in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, do you not think that my first promptings were to break from him altogether? Nay, even with my present sovereign, though his name is not as yet associated with any act so horrible as this, yet when I see him steeped in superstitious bigotry or in pursuits that are utterly contemptible; when he appears before me more like a painted popinjay than the sovereign of his country, do you not think that I sometimes ask myself: Do I owe allegiance to one like this? But quickly my better instincts come to my assistance, and show me how contemptible is that allegiance which is faithful only so long as it is encountered by no difficulty. I have sworn fidelity to my sovereign and country, and they shall have it. If my country is cursed by a wicked or incompetent king, all the more reason that the minister shall be dutiful and capable. If my sovereign surrounds himself with flatterers and panderers to his vices, all the more reason that he shall have one servant upright and beyond corruption."

"But could you not do more good to your country by procuring for it a more worthy sovereign?"

"No good ever came from breach of trust. I have sworn allegiance to Henri, and no vices of his or injury to myself shall make me unfaithful to my

oath. If I had not made the vow—which indeed I sometimes wish had been the case—that of course would have made a difference ; then I should have considered myself quite justified in paying honour only where honour is due.”

“Well, perhaps as regards yourself you are right, because when you took your vow of allegiance you were old enough to know what you were about. But Bruno was so very young. Is he to sacrifice his whole future development because of a vow that was made when he was little past boyhood ? If he felt that his was a disposition that could gain no good from restraint but much harm, it seems to me that it was not only permissible but imperative to him to remove from its baneful influence.”

“Quite so ; if he had made no vow.”

“But he was so young when he made it.”

“He had had his year of probation.”

“But his second convent seems to have been altogether so inferior to the first.”

“That is no excuse,” answered Castelnau, somewhat severely. “If the convent had fallen into the spiritless and lifeless condition Bruno described it to be, all the more reason that he should not leave it. Goodness is contagious ; and one earnest monk might have had a healthy influence upon the whole brotherhood. In the same way, my beloved,” he continued more gently, “with the illustration you cited of the wife of a wicked husband. If a man is wicked, is he

not in the greater need of a good influence? For a good wife to remove herself from him must do him harm; by remaining she may do him good."

"Yes; but she might do so much more good elsewhere. Besides, contracts are reciprocal; and if one party fails to do his part, it seems to me that the contract is at an end."

"Not so, not so," answered Castelnau. "Dishonour in one party is never an excuse for dishonour in another. Be guided in this by me, my wife," he continued very earnestly. "No woman living in the privacy of her own home can know, as a man knows, the paramount necessity of regarding contracts as sacred, even to the extremest letter. Business could not be carried on otherwise. It is failure in this that makes dealings with Mary Stuart and Queen Elizabeth of such paramount difficulty."

Which was right in the discussion? Sidney could scarcely decide; but one thing he observed, and with keen self-reproach when he thought of his own connection with Lady Rich, that neither with the high-minded Ambassador nor his wife did the point in dispute once seem to be, How shall I gain the greatest pleasure or personal benefit? but always, Which is the most right for me to do?

The discussion was continued no further; for at that moment it was evident from the sounds in the hall that a visitor had arrived, requesting to be shown into the presence of M. de Castelnau de la Mauvissière;

and almost before Castelnau could rise from his chair, Giordano Bruno was announced.

“Filippo!” exclaimed Castelnau.

The name by which he had last addressed Bruno rose spontaneously to his lips, notwithstanding that he had lately corresponded with him by his newer and best known name, and had invariably, when speaking of him to a third person, termed him Giordano. But he was totally unprepared for so very slight a change in his appearance. Bruno had been very tall at the age of fifteen, but had grown scarcely at all since that period, so that he was now rather under than over the average height of man. He was very slight and spare, and he had still about him that air of candid ingenuousness which is almost inseparable from the association of extreme youth. Had it not been that he now wore the short peaked beard of the period, Castelnau thought to himself that he still might have passed for a youth in his teens. He was as strikingly handsome as he had promised to be; but Castelnau thought not of that; he only felt that here before him was the earnest enthusiastic youth of nearly eighteen years ago, so little changed that he forgot the interval of time that had elapsed, and almost expected to see Giovanni and his wife also.

“Filippo!” was all Castelnau could say again.

“*Mio padre*,” answered Giordano softly; “may I call you that?”

He, too, was greatly touched at beholding his father's old friend after all these years. If time had stood still with himself, it certainly had not with Castelnau ; who, old and careworn as was his usual aspect, was looking more than usually so after his late agitation. Old age always excited in Bruno's breast a peculiar mixture of compassion and respect ; and he, too, like Castelnau, could do little more than repeat his former expression, and murmur :

"Mio padre."

The two men embraced, in foreign fashion ; and then Castelnau, leading him to his wife, introduced them to each other. Bruno raised Madame de Mauvissière's hand to his lips, and he was about to speak to her when he suddenly caught a glimpse of Sidney.

"Master Sidney !" he exclaimed, "this is indeed a pleasure unlooked for by me. That you should take the trouble to come here to welcome me."

"I can scarcely say that it is for this reason that I am here this evening," answered Sidney ; "because I did not know of your expected arrival. Yet had I known it, I should certainly have craved from Madame Castelnau permission to form one amongst her family circle to welcome you."

Castelnau did not seem to be surprised at Sidney's presence ; and, if he thought of it at all, probably assumed that by a strange coincidence the servant had admitted him at the same time that Bruno arrived.

The four sat on, conversing with vivacity for an hour or more till the evening meal was announced, and Sidney rose to take his departure.

It was not until Sidney had left, that Castelnau considered himself at liberty to question Bruno upon matters relating to the French Court. But when sufficient time had elapsed for Bruno to satisfy the more immediate pangs of hunger, the Ambassador said :

“What made you first think of coming to England?”

“I can hardly tell,” answered Bruno, “unless,” he added, with that pretty courtesy which was instinctive with him, “it was to give myself the pleasure of seeing you.”

“How long ago did the wish form itself in thy mind?”

Bruno coloured a little as, with his usual direct candour, he answered :

“Truly, not very long before I wrote to you, acquainting you with my intention.”

“Well, well, look not so shamefaced. I only asked because I suspect that the wish to come to England was formed within you by the arts of the Queen Mother for purposes of her own.”

Castelnau spoke without any irritation or condemnation in his tone. Harmless tactics for a laudable object never gained disapprobation from him. And nothing seemed more natural than that

the Queen Mother should avail herself of Bruno's assistance in furtherance of her maternal wishes.

"Truly, if it were so formed," answered Giordano, "I had no consciousness of it at the time; though it is true that when I informed Her Majesty of my intention to visit England, she confided to me her anxiety to bring about a marriage with the Duke of Anjou and Elizabeth of England. And the Duke himself solicited my assistance in this matter."

"What think you of the Duke?" asked Castelnau. "I only know him as a State guest, when he visited here in the character of Elizabeth's suitor. I have never seen him in his home life, as I have his brothers; for he was scarcely grown up when I was appointed to come here as Ambassador."

"I, too, have seen less of the Duke of Anjou than of the King and the Prince of Navarre; for he was often away at the Netherlands," answered Bruno, with a slight hesitation of manner. "Yet," he added, as he thought of his promise to the Queen Mother "I have never seen him other than a dutiful son, a loving brother; and if I should have the honour of a personal introduction to her English Majesty, I shall deem it my duty to say all I can to win favour for the Duke in Elizabeth's eyes."

"Too late, too late," answered Castelnau, very bitterly; and he told Bruno of the Queen's final refusal.

Madame de Mauvissière was in some trepidation

at the turn the conversation was taking, for she feared it would have the effect of re-awaking within her husband's breast some of the former agitation she had with difficulty so lately lulled. It was too late to interpose now, however; and she thought it better to allow the conversation to proceed without any interruption from herself, trusting that her husband's sense of duty would prevent him from allowing himself to be betrayed into unguarded expressions.

Bruno listened in silence as Castelnau dwelt upon Elizabeth's conduct towards the Duke of Anjou, and then said:

"England is as anxious for this marriage as France, is she not?"

"Doubtless she is; Elizabeth is no longer young, and it is becoming a matter of paramount importance that she should defer her marriage no longer."

"What can be the reason of Her Majesty's disinclination to marriage?" asked Bruno. "Do you think that she has any secret passion? Rumour has been so busy in coupling her name with the Earl of Leicester's, that even I, who have a peculiar dislike to such tales, could not help them coming to my ears. Nay, scandal has not spared even her fair fame, and would have the world believe that Her Majesty's passion for Leicester is not entirely innocent."

"I have heard these vile tales," answered

Castelnau, with indignation ; for even in his anger he was invariably just, and would have failed in his own eyes had he ever allowed an accusation that he knew to be false to pass by without indignant contradiction from him. "As to the calumny of her amours, I can with truth affirm it to be an invention of her enemies, and contrived in the cabinets of some Ambassadors to give other princes a dislike to her alliance. No, no, I have had singular opportunities of judging of Elizabeth ; and I am convinced that, in all matters pertaining to maidenly modesty and dignity, her virtue is as great as, in the other relations of life, is her wisdom."

"And is her wisdom as great as is generally represented?" asked Bruno.

"Far greater," answered Castelnau, with an air of conviction. "I know not with whose to compare her reign, unless it be with that of Augustus Cæsar. I would to God my own country possessed a sovereign with so clear a head."

"But she is parsimonious, is she not?"

"She has been reproached with avarice, but quite unjustly. She is very economical, which is a quality of surpassing merit in sovereigns ; but she never squeezes her subjects as have her predecessors. On the contrary, she has consulted their peace so much that they have grown rich under her government. She has paid all the debts of her predecessors, and has never sold any employments or offices. She is so

far from imposing any new tax on her subjects, that for eight years she would not receive the Free Gift which is commonly bestowed upon the Crown once in three years. Yet notwithstanding all these acts of self-denial, so keen a sense has she for financial matters, and upon so good a footing has she put her revenues, that no other sovereign has ever so honestly amassed so much wealth."

Madame de Mauvissière regarded her husband with a look of loving admiration, as she observed that not even the sense of personal affront from the Queen, under which he was smarting, would allow him to withhold in any way his testimony, when questioned thereon, to the numerous and great qualities Elizabeth undoubtedly possessed.

Bruno was silent a few minutes, and then said :

"But the Queen, however virtuous she may be, may yet be suffering under an innocent passion for the Earl of Leicester, and it may be on his account that she has refused so many offers from foreign Princes."

"I do not think it," answered Castelnau; "else why should she not wed Leicester? Not only her Parliament, but even some neighbouring Princes have implored her to select anyone she thinks fit."

"But was there not some story about a secret marriage of the Earl? Did not the Queen discover that he had privately wedded some lady considerably beneath him in social rank?"

"Yes-e-s," answered Castelnau with that peculiar elongation of the word that almost implies a negative, "I have heard some tale of this sort, but paid so little attention to it that I hardly know whether the lady was proved to be Leicester's wife or his mistress. Anyway, the unfortunate woman is no longer in existence. She died, or was put to death, shortly after the discovery; so that Elizabeth could lawfully marry Leicester did she so desire. But she has herself assured me many times that she would never marry a subject."

"Do you think that she has a passion for any other, with whom she cannot lawfully wed? It seems so strange that she should be so difficult to please, unless it can be accounted for by some interpretation of this sort."

"Doubtless, her conduct invites hypotheses of this sort," answered Castelnau. "When a woman has many suitors at her selection and rejects them all, it is sure to be assumed that she is prompted thereto by some secret preference. But, in nine times out of ten, I believe it will be found that her conduct arises, not so much from love for a particular individual, as from a general dislike to the marriage relation itself."

"That might be so if Elizabeth were a private individual; but when she knows how ardently her subjects desire her marriage——"

"Well, well," interrupted Castelnau, "it is not

always easy to penetrate into the motives that prompt certain actions. But you must remember that she is wedded to Learning. And the eagerness which she displays to learn several sciences and foreign languages, as well as her great application to public business are plain demonstrations that she has no leisure time for amours. Love and Learning are rare companions; though, doubtless," he added, as he thought of his wife, "there are some exceptions. Nevertheless, you will find it to be the rule that the most intellectual women care little for marriage."

"That seems to be a pity," remarked Bruno.

"It is more than a pity—it is a calamity—that the mothers of our children should so seldom be among the most superior of the sex. But calamity or not, I believe it will be found to be the case. From the earliest times it has been the exception and not the rule for women who are votaries of learning to care for marriage; and, therefore, did the ancients wisely represent Pallas, the Goddess of Wisdom, as a virgin and without a mother, and all the Muses maidens."

"But one would imagine that Elizabeth, so devoted to her people as she seems to be, would put aside all personal feelings and marry, in order to comply with the entreaties of her subjects."

"Nay," answered Castelnau; "I said not that she was perfection. Her powers of mind are indeed excellent beyond description, and she is certainly

not wanting in maidenly modesty and dignity. But she has grave faults, chief among which may be named an insatiable craving for adoration. This may indeed be partly caused by the behaviour of her subjects, who have so heaped adoration upon her that now she cannot do without it, but seems to have an ever-increasing appetite for it. And this, indeed, may have something to do with her persistent refusal to wed. She has too keen a perception not to be perfectly aware that nations adore the rising more than the setting sun. She cannot bear to think of a successor, and will not name one. She delights in keeping, not only her own subjects, but even all Europe, in suspense as to her intentions. I believe she would be jealous of her own son, did she have one. So morbidly sensitive is she on this wise, that a year or two ago the Parliament of England was expressly forbidden, on pain of high treason, to speak of the succession. But come, Giordano," continued Castelnau, as he saw the look of fatigue that his young listener in vain tried to hide, "I must not detain thee longer. Thou art already looking weary, and wilt be glad to go to thy rest after thy travels."

"And are you sure that I am not intruding on your kindness by remaining here for the night?" said Bruno, turning to Madame de Mauvissière.

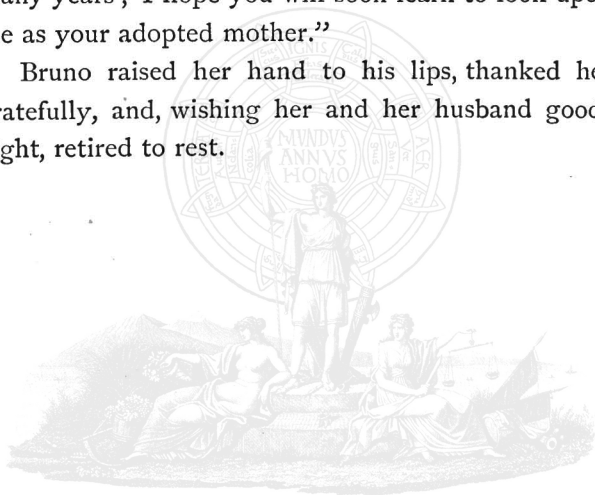
Before the lady could reply, Castelnau interrupted :

"For the night? You must live with us altogether."

Madame de Mauvissière put her hand into Bruno's and said :

"You have been my husband's adopted son for many years ; I hope you will soon learn to look upon me as your adopted mother."

Bruno raised her hand to his lips, thanked her gratefully, and, wishing her and her husband good-night, retired to rest.



END OF VOL. I.

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