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

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GIORDANO BRUNO.



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A. Mc Craehen. Sur. Lt. Colonel M.S.

GIORDANO BRUNO:

✓ 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."

Die Warburg IN TWO VOLUMES. (uno per gli Studi Filosofici,
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Book the Third.—(*Continued.*)

MANHOOD.



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GIORDANO BRUNO.

CHAPTER VII.

A SPIRITUAL PASSION.

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden,
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heedeth not.

SHELLEY.

So Bruno became a permanent resident in the house of Castelnau, seldom leaving it during his visit to England; and both the Ambassador and his wife gradually grew to regard him as a veritable son. Deeply seated and many as had been Castelnau's prejudices against his friend's son, whether it were that his wife's arguments possessed, as they always did for him, a very definite weight; or whether he felt it next to impossible to associate baseness or treachery with one possessing the honest, ingenuous expression of Bruno, certain it is that one glance at

the young Italian had been sufficient to dissipate the prejudices Castelnau had entertained towards him.

Bruno's character at once fascinated and perplexed the Ambassador, who—varied and far-reaching as was his acquaintance with men and manners—had never met with anyone in the least like him. With an intellect that was undoubtedly greatly above the average, there was in Bruno an unworldliness, almost a simplicity, that might be called feminine. With a physical courage that was greater than any Castelnau had ever beheld, was a docility and extreme gentleness of manner to anyone who had shown him kindness. With a dreamy love for metaphysics was joined a vivacity, almost an excitability of manner, and love of disquisition for its own sake; and with an intense spirituality was coupled an innocent gallantry and open, unconcealed admiration for feminine beauty.

Madame Castelnau became as much attracted to Bruno as was her husband. And it seems certain that grateful as was the Italian to the Ambassador, and much as he respected him, the wife had the larger share of his affection. Perhaps this was natural. For though Madame Castelnau called him, half in sport, her adopted son, in point of years she was but twelve years older than himself, and the relation between them was more that of a brother and elder sister than a son and a parent. Castelnau looked on, well pleased that his *protégé* should come under the beneficial influence of his wife. And many were the

hopes and speculations that the Ambassador and his lady interchanged as to the desirability that Bruno should find a wife in some fair damsel about the Court, and thus provide himself with a powerful inducement for settling quietly into domestic life, and learning to disguise from enemies the more dangerous and heretical of his opinions.

For despite Castelnau's resentment with Elizabeth, he had not liked to refuse Bruno's petition to be presented to Her Majesty. And if the warm-hearted Italian had been pleased with the attention that was shown him by the French Court, need it be said how much deeper was his admiration of the higher level of the Court of Elizabeth? The Queen's intellect, the beauty of her ladies, and above all, the grace of a Sidney or a Greville, charmed him. If he had felt it as a compliment to be spoken to in his own tongue by Catherine de Medicis, a countrywoman of his own, how much greater was the compliment, when he heard his language from the lips of a foreigner like Elizabeth? The English Queen's attachment to the Italian school of poetry is too well known to need pointing out; and (probably through her example) reverence for all things Italian was at this time a fashion throughout the English Court. So that Bruno, even had he been less handsome and attractive than he was, would, owing to his nationality, have come in for his full share of homage.

Yet, notwithstanding the warm, enthusiastic manner in which he speaks of Elizabeth and her Court, and his evident gratitude for the kindness he received there, I cannot but think that his visits were very infrequent.* And this may be probably accounted for by Castelnau's indignation and resentment with the Queen just at the time of Bruno's arrival in England, which made him absent himself from the Court as much as was compatible with his positive duties, and refuse to accept favours either for himself or his adopted son.

But notwithstanding this comparative seclusion from courtly life, Bruno seems to have considered his visit to England a singularly happy one. Castelnau assigned him a private sitting-room of his own; and to this period belongs the composition of his larger and more important works. His two greatest friends were Philip Sidney, who had recently received the honour of knighthood, and Fulke Greville, born in the same year as Sidney and connected with him by a remote cousinship. And luckily for the friendship between Sidney and Bruno, Elizabeth's contemplated marriage with the Duke of Anjou—the one subject which might have caused some slight

* Considering how very many histories there are of this period, and how ample are the various chronicles of the Court of Elizabeth, it would be very strange if Bruno were really a frequent guest, that his name should not be occasionally mentioned. Yet in no English contemporary work that I have consulted, do I find this to be the case.

discord between them—had now completely fallen to the ground. Sidney had confided to Bruno soon after the latter's arrival in England, the part he had played in this matter; dwelling upon the repugnance he felt to seeing his sovereign degrade herself by marriage with one like the Duke of Anjou. Bruno, though he had, as we know, little admiration for that prince, would yet have thought it his duty to do all he could to bring the marriage about, after the kindness that had been shown him by the French Court. But on the very evening of Sidney's confidence to him, Castelnau informed him privately (for he never discussed this matter before Sidney) that the Queen Mother so bitterly resented Elizabeth's conduct that she no longer wished for any union between the Courts. On the contrary, she had written to the Duke begging him to discard any liking that he may have formerly felt for the Protestants, adding as an inducement, that if he could only succeed in re-establishing the Catholic religion in the Netherlands he might, she thought, aspire to the hand of the Infanta of Spain.

In addition to his official residence, Castelnau had a small house on the banks of the Thames not very far from Windsor; and to this Sidney and Greville would often come, and when the evenings were fine, stroll about the grounds with Bruno, not unfrequently joined by Castelnau himself, who liked with paternal pride, to watch with what eagerness

the society and friendship of his *protégé* were sought.

It happened to be a singularly fine evening some months after Bruno's arrival in England; and he and Sidney and Castelnau were strolling near the banks of the beautiful river Thames, when Sidney suddenly stopped and, throwing himself under a large spreading tree in the Ambassador's grounds, said, "Let us rest here, Bruno, instead of strolling any longer. I feel in the mood for conversation. I hope thou dost also."

"As thou wilt, *caro mio*; though I see not how strolling can prevent conversation."

"Well, I am tired, lazy—call it what you will. Remember that I have not been inured to labour and exertion, as you have."

"Ah, Sidney," said Bruno, "your bringing up was the best. At an age when you were under a tutor, I was a desultory rambler, industrious at times from necessity, but, more often than not, idle and unsettled."

"Nay, Giordano," said Castelnau, "you have had the lessons of experience, and these are more profitable than any that can be gained from tutors; though," added the Ambassador, as he turned with a courteous air to Sidney, "I willingly grant that Master Languet was the prince of tutors."

Languet had been dead only between two and three years, and his loss was still too recent for any

reference to be made to him without causing Sidney emotion.

"Ah," he said, "whatever I have done worthy of praise now, or may do hereafter, I should not have been enabled to do had not Languet been my tutor."

Then, after a minute's pause, he recited in a low voice full of feeling, the lines he had recently composed in his tutor's honour.

The song I sang old Languet had me taught—

Languet the shepherd, best swift Ister knew
For clerkly reed and hating what is naught,

For faithful heart, clean hands and mouth as true.

With his sweet skill, my skilless youth he drew
To have a feeling taste of Him that sits
Beyond the Heaven, far more beyond our wits.

He said the music best those powers pleased

Was jump accord between our wit and will,
Where highest notes to Godliness are raised,
And lowest sink not down to jot of ill.

With old true tales he wont mine ears to fill,
How shepherds did of yore, how now they thrive,
Spoiling their flock, or while 'twixt them they strive.

"Hearing you recite your verses reminds me of the time we spent together in Venice," said Bruno, with a pleased smile; "only then," he added, a little mischievously, as he glanced at Castelnau, "your verses were all upon love. Have you ceased such compositions now?"

"Oh no," said Sidney. And then he stopped. He had written little love poetry save what was in honour of Stella, and he did not care to recite that

before Castelnau. After a few minutes' pause he repeated, in a low and somewhat mournful manner, lines which were certainly unexceptionable in spirit, though in musical rhythm and poetic expression they were inferior to many other of his verses that he might have selected.

Beauty hath force to catch the human sight ;
Sight doth bewitch the fancy ill-awaked ;
Fancy, we feel, includes all passion's might ;
Passion, rebelled, oft reason's strength hath shaken.

No wonder, then, though sight my sight did taint,
And though thereby my fancy was infected,
Though, yokèd so, my mind with sickness faint,
Had reason's weight for passion's ease rejected.

But now the fit is passed, and time hath given
Leisure to weigh what due desert requireth ;
All thoughts so sprung are from their dwelling driven,
And Wisdom to his wonted seat aspireth,
Crying in me, "Eye-hopes deceitful prove ;
Things rightly prized, love is the band of love."

Castelnau listened with an expression of approval. The evening was fast merging into a night of unsurpassed beauty. The moon had sunk, and the stars were shining with a brilliancy that is rarely seen in England. They were reflected in the river beneath him, and he was forcibly reminded of an evening many years ago, when young Filippo Bruno had had his boyish wonder and enthusiasm excited by hearing him and his father converse upon the Copernican theory. Castelnau glanced at Bruno as he was half

reclining on the grass, with one arm resting on Sidney's knee; and as he saw him through the somewhat indistinct light of the stars, it seemed to him that the intervening years had vanished, and that Bruno was still a lad requiring a father's care. Nay, so strong was the illusion, and so vivid the recollection of that night in Nola, that when he saw the form of Madame Castelnau emerging from the window which opened on to the lawn, he almost thought it was that of Bruno's mother. That fancy, however, was very transient, vanishing as soon as Madame Castelnau came near to him. Save in their height there was no point of similarity between the modest grace of his sweet lady and the stately dignity of Bruno's imperious mother; neither would the latter have been likely to take her husband's hand into hers, with that gesture of caressing tenderness with which he feels his own hand is being touched by Madame Castelnau. A vivid recollection of the elder Bruno's anxiety about the future of his son came across the Ambassador. It seemed as if, at all events, a part of Giovanni's ominous forebodings had been fulfilled, for Bruno had already broken from his monastic vows and adopted opinions that were certainly far from orthodox. And the desire came to him in even stronger measure than usual, that Bruno should wed some true and high-minded woman, who would guide and restrain him, and be to him in all ways the help-meet that his own wife was to himself. He was glad, therefore, to seize

the opportunity afforded him by Bruno's question to Sidney, and asked in a tone apparently of banter, though the inquiry was in reality prompted by extreme earnestness :

"Come now, Giordano, thou art curious to learn about Sir Philip Sidney's love verses. Confess whether thou thyself hast not some like matters to acknowledge. At least, if thou dost not indulge in verse, canst thou not find some fair lady to whom thou canst dedicate thy prose? I can scarcely imagine that thou hast lived more than thirty years in this world without receiving a few strokes from that wicked archer, who spares neither young nor old, man nor woman, peasant nor philosopher, in his too impartial aim."

Bruno's smile was one of perfect unconstraint, as he answered : "I have seen so few ladies."

"Possibly not during thy travels. But thou hast been in England many months, and been introduced to damsels, who alike for intellect and beauty are rarely to be met with. Nay, nay," Castelnau continued, as he saw Bruno colour a little under his keen glance. "Thou art too diffident. Pluck up thy courage. Ladies like to be wooed. And if all I hear be true, more than one regards thee with favour. Come now, instead of dedicating thy works to Sir Philip Sidney, or to me, as thou wishedst to do, dedicate them to the lady who has found favour in thy eyes. Or better still, write some verses. Sir Philip Sidney told

me that when you were together in Venice you did write verses."

During the close of this speech, Bruno had changed his position. The arm that had rested upon Sidney's knee had grown somewhat stiff from being too long in one position. Raising himself, he saw for the first time the exceeding beauty that had spread over the face of the skies since the evening had developed into night. An intense look of mystical rapture came over his face that put Castelnau strongly in mind of Giovanni; though he had never before seen it on the younger Bruno. Giordano listened till the Ambassador had finished; and then answered in a tone that was earnest almost to solemnity:

"I do admire the English ladies. Their beauty charms me; their intellect astonishes me. Nay, whatever her nationality, the sight of a graceful and modest woman fills me with tenderness. But," he added with slow distinctness, very unusual in him, "to devote the whole life to one, to consecrate the whole intelligence to languid songs composed in her honour; this seems to me to be a spectacle worthy at once of pity and ridicule." Then after a pause—employing with a slight alteration the pretty conceit of Plato—he exclaimed as he glanced up at the heavens, "What woman's gaze could be to me as those skies that look down at me from all their thousand eyes? Is it not written, 'Render to Cæsar the

things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's?' Cæsar here is imperfect and perishable beauty; God eternal and perfect beauty. Has not the Psalmist exclaimed, 'As the hart panteth after the water so pants my soul after Thee, O God?' " Bruno now rose, and glancing up again at the skies clasped his hands, as he exclaimed fervently, "So pants the philosopher after the knowledge and wisdom that are in God! What Beatrice was for Dante, Wisdom shall be for me. No earthly beauty shall usurp her place."

Bruno threw himself upon the ground again, though he still kept his gaze fixed upon the wonderful beauty of the heavens, that he had seldom seen surpassed even in his beloved Italy; while Castelnau looked at him in some amazement at the unexpected emotion his question had called forth. There was silence for a few moments; Bruno gazing upon the heavens, Castelnau at his adopted son. And then by some slight change in the posture of Bruno their eyes met. Bruno turned upon Castelnau, his voice still agitated with the depth of his emotion, and said:

"You ask me if I have ever written a sonnet upon love. I have written one, shall I recite it?"

Amor, per cui tant' alto il ver discerno
Ch'apre le porte di diamante e nere
Per gli occhi entra il mio nume, e per vedere
Nasce, vive, si nutre, ha regno eterno
Fa scorgere, quant 'ha il ciel, terra et inferno

Fa presenti d'assenti effigie vere,
 Ripiglia forze, e trando dritto fere,
 E impiaga sempre il cor, scopre ogn' interno
 Oh dunque, volgo vile, al vero attendi
 Porgi l'orecchio al mio dir non fallace,
 Apri, apri, se puoi, gli occhi, insano e bieco !
 Fanciullo il credi, per che poco intendi ;
 Per che ratto ti cangi, ei par fugace ;
 Per esser orbo tu, lo chiami cieco !

Bruno again rose, gazing with a strangely mystical expression of passionate longing in his eyes at those unfathomable heavens which were to him, in moods like these, the outward and visible sign of his religious worship, and were more dearly prized by him than is most passionately beloved mistress by ordinary lover. He clasped his hands again, and then continued :

Causa, Principio, et Uno sempiterno
 Onde l'esser, la vita, il moto pende
 E a lungo, a largo, e profondo si stende
 Quanto si dice in ciel, terra et inferno ;
 Con senso, con ragion, con mente scerno,
 Ch'atto, misura e conto non comprende
 Quel vigor, mole, e numero, che tende
 Oltr' ogn' inferior, mezzo e superno.
 Cieco error, tempo avaro, ria fortuna
 Sorda invidia, vil rabbia, iniquo zelo
 Crudo cor, empio ingegno, strano ardire
 Non basteranno a farmi l'aria bruna
 Non mi porrann' avanti gli occhi il velo
 Non faran mai, ch'il mio bel sol non mire.

Bruno threw himself upon the grass again. But Sidney, who had been listening to Bruno with an expression of the most entire comprehension and

sympathy, now rose, and in a low rich voice that strangely harmonised with the mystical beauty of the night, recited the following lines that he had not long previously composed :

Leave me, O love, which reaches but to dust ;
And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things !
Grow rich in that which never taketh rust ;
Whatever fades, but fading pleasure brings.
Draw in thy beams, and humble all thy might
To that sweet yoke, where lasting freedoms be ;
Which breaks the clouds, and opens forth the light
That doth both shine and give us sight to see.
Oh, take fast hold ; let that light be thy guide
In this small course which birth draws out to death,
And think how ill becometh him to slide
Who seeketh heaven, and comes of heavenly breath.
Then farewell, world, thy uttermost I see ;
Eternal Love, maintain thy life in me.

"Nay, nay, Sir Philip," said Castelnau, by no means pleased with the turn the conversation was taking, "such lines as these are unworthy of the fair lady who has promised to be thy bride. Thou surely dost not think that her love will drag thee to the dust ? I would hope that they were written before thou had'st the happiness of being beloved by her." Then as he thought that he read confirmation of this hope in Sidney's face, Castelnau continued : "Well, then, if you have succeeded in winning a woman whose love will ennoble you rather than drag you to the dust, why should not Giordano hope to be equally fortunate ?"

At that moment Castelnau's little daughter, Maria, ran out to wish her parents good-night; and Bruno with that sudden transition of mood which was one of the strangest qualities in his character, turned playfully to the child, between whom and himself had already grown up a strong attachment, seized her in his arms and placed her on his shoulder, caressed her, pinched her cheeks, tickled her—in a word, charmed her as only a genuine child-lover can charm a child.

What little maid of six years old, however wise and grave, is superior to the proud delight of being seated on a strong man's shoulder? She sat still in her dignity for a few moments, trying not to laugh when she was tickled. Then, suddenly, a remembrance of a former enjoyment came across her mind, and, bending down, she put her little mouth close to Bruno's ear and whispered coaxingly :

"Be my pony."

In a moment Bruno had scampered off, holding his little burden tightly on his shoulder; vaulting and bounding rather than running, while she screamed with delight. Madame Castelnau looked on, pleased with her child's pleasure, yet not a little frightened lest the indistinct light should give rise to an accident. Castelnau waited till Bruno and the child were in sight, and then, as he heard the former pant with the unwonted exertion, he called out :

"Put her down—put her down, Giordano; she

will tire you out. She is far too heavy to be romped with in this way."

But the violence of the exercise had excited the little maid's blood till she was slightly rebellious—a most unusual thing with her—and she exclaimed :

"No, no ; I won't be put down—I won't be put down. More, more."

And off scampered Bruno again. When he came back this time, his little burden again called out : "Go on, go on." But the mother stole up to her, put her hand in hers, and said gently : "My little girl must not be naughty, but must get down when she is told."

"Was I naughty?" said the child in a tone of compunction.

The mother kissed her fondly and said : "Not very. You were only a little excited. But trot off now. It is long past thy bedtime."

As the child ran off, Castelnau turned to Bruno and said :

"And you, Giordano, who are so fond of children, and of whom children are so fond, are you always going to deny yourself domestic joys of your own? Why should you so wrong womanhood as to think that love for a wife would interfere with a higher love? No woman worth having would require you to spend your time in composing love verses to her beauty. I tell you a true woman will encourage rather than hinder you in the prosecution of your higher aims."

"With some men it might be so," answered Bruno, "but not with me."

"Why not with you as much as others?" asked Castelnau.

"Because I can be brave for myself; I am not sure that I could be brave where wife and child are concerned. To marry a woman who did not share my religious beliefs and aspirations would be no marriage in the higher sense of the word. Yet to marry one who did think with me, and who would scorn equivocation or concealment of her views could bring me nothing but misery. I should never know a moment's peace. I can brave torture, perhaps even death for myself, but not for a tender, fragile wife. In spite of myself I believe I should turn traitor to all my higher aims. No, no. St. Paul, you know, discovered long ago that apostles of a persecuted doctrine are better without wives and children. I intend to abide by his advice."

"Then," said Castelnau, in a voice full of meaning, "you think that by the publication of the works you are writing, you do incur danger?"

Castelnau was only too sure of the fact himself; but it was new to him that Bruno was conscious of the danger himself.

"Assuredly," answered Bruno very quietly.

"But," enquired Castelnau anxiously, "you do not really hold views that are subversive of religion and morality?"

"Surely not," answered Bruno very earnestly. "Far be it from me to write anything against what is divine or even what is useful. To love science and wisdom ; to seek for Truth ; to do good to my neighbour ; to adore God and to contemplate His works ; are any of these things subversive of religion or morality ? Yet these are what I inculcate. These form the essence of my philosophy, and the performance of them is the aim of my life."

"But why should you think that the publication of views like these will surround you with danger ?" asked Castelnau.

"Because everyone who ventures to think for himself, and owns that he does so, surrounds himself with danger," answered Bruno. "Moreover, though my opinions are not subversive of true religion, I pretend not that they are in harmony with the conventional religion of the day. And yet, dear Madame Castelnau," continued Bruno, turning affectionately to that lady, as a slight utterance of disappointment broke from her. "Think not that I have wantonly thrown ridicule, or even very strongly controverted religion as you hold it. I war not with religion that brings forth holy fruits. Though there is but one Nature, one Truth, yet there is more than one way or method for discovering it. There is but one health ; yet there are many maladies, many remedies. So one object can be considered under many aspects. But," he continued, turning to Castelnau, "I war with

hypocrisy and shams. Wherever I go I find dishonesty ; especially in Catholic Italy and France. Debauchery of the vilest description, dishonesty and time-serving are cloaked under the guise of religion ; scepticism, comprehension and secret acceptance of scientific truths under assumed disbelief and pretended repudiation. The English Catholics and the Protestants of all countries seem to be more honest. And this is the reason that though the doctrines of the Calvinists are to my mind greatly more revolting and hideous than those of your Church, yet the Calvinists themselves are, I believe, a far nobler set of men than are the majority of Catholics—especially in France.”

“ You are right there,” said Castelnau sorrowfully “ It is of painful rarity now to find a really virtuous Catholic in France. Yet I would fain hope a different explanation. Not the Catholic religion, but the lack of any religion is at the root of it.”

“ It is the knowledge of conscious imposition that is at the root of it,” answered Bruno bitterly. “ Every act of their lives is a living lie. And this it is that makes it so imperative that those who have a hatred to lies shall fearlessly confess the truth. God grant me courage never to yield to bad men, but to go and face them bravely.”

“ But,” said Sir Philip Sidney, “ you say that the religion you hold is not in harmony with either Catholicism or Protestantism even when honestly

held. In what does it differ, and what are its essential characteristics ?”

“The most important distinction is this,” answered Bruno. “Christian religion conceives God without the Universe. I conceive Him within. That which the Magians, Plato, Empedocles and Plotinus called respectively the Impregnator, the Fabricator of the World, the Distinguisher, the Father or Progenitor, ought in reality to be called the Internal Artificer; seeing it forms the matter and the figure from within. From within the seed or root it gives forth, or unfolds the stem; from within the stem it forces out the boughs; from within the boughs it forces out the branches; from within these it pushes out the buds; from within it forms, shapes, and interlaces, as with nerves, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits; and from within, at appointed times, it recalls its moisture from the leaves and fruits to the branches, from the branches to the boughs, from the boughs to the stem, from the stem to the root. And there is a like method in the production of animals. Be the thing—vegetable or animal—as little or great as it may, it has in it a portion of spiritual substance; which, if it finds the fitting subject, may develop itself into a plant, into an animal—may acquire the members of any kind of body which in its totality is called animated; seeing that spirit is found in all things and that there is not the smallest corpuscle which does not

contain within it that which animates it. Everything therefore is in each thing. Not only is Life found in all things, but the Soul is that which is the substantial form of all things. It presides over the matter; it holds its lordship in those things that are compounded; it effectuates the composition and consistency of their parts. This I understand to be the One in all things which according to the diversity of the dispositions of matter, and according to the faculty of the material principle, active and passive, produces divers configurations, and works out divers faculties; one while showing the effect of life without sense; one while the effect of life and sense without intellect; one while showing how it may have all the faculties kept down and repressed by the imbecility or by some other condition of the matter. Whatever changes, then, of time or place anything may undergo it cannot cease to be; the spiritual substance being not less in it than the material. The exterior forms alone are altered and annulled, because they are not things but only appertain to things; they are not substances, but merely the accidents and circumstances of substances. The Sophists say that that is truly man which is the result of composition, that that is truly soul which is either the perfection or act of a living body, or the result of a certain symmetry of complexion and numbers. Wherefore it is no marvel if they regard with such terror death and dissolution, seeing therein

the overthrow of their being. Against which folly Nature cries with a loud voice, affirming that neither bodies nor souls ought to fear death, seeing that matter and form are both most constant principles."

Bruno paused for a few moments. From the time that the little girl Maria had left him he had been reclining on the grass; but now he was getting excited with his thoughts, and whenever he was excited, action was a necessity to him. He rose, therefore, and paced up and down before the tree under which the others were resting. There was an intense stillness in the air, and the summer lightning lit up from time to time the form of Bruno. Castelnau had never been so interested in him as now. He had never heard him speak so fluently or clearly upon an abstruse subject before. But I think most of us speak well upon a subject that we have warmly at heart. And this doctrine of a unity in variety was very precious to Bruno. It was, as we know, by no means a new belief with him, but had been silently growing up within him ever since he had first become acquainted with the works of Lully. Even the words with which he was now clothing his thoughts were by no means born upon his lips at the moment of utterance, but were a repetition, almost verbal, of writings that had occupied him for months. Many and many a time had he read over the sentences that he had penned till he had them almost by heart, so eager was he that his writing should

not be obscure to any reader. And he was anxious, with almost a feverish anxiety, to see what effect they would have upon his hearers. And upon them they had an effect greater than they will have upon any reader, because there was a subtle magnetic influence about the person, voice, and manner of Bruno that it is difficult to describe. He continued to pace up and down, looking with eager, restless gaze, now at his hearers, now at the summer lightning, now at the clouds that were gathering in the distance; and then, after the few minutes were over, he remained still for an instant, and looked up into the heavens. That portion of the sky immediately above where he was standing was still clear and cloudless, and the stars shone forth from their depths with even a greater brilliancy than before, because of the surrounding darkness. Then he broke the stillness with an earnestness that thrilled his listeners.

“This glorious universe, then, is One and Infinite. Within this One are found multitude and number. Yet all the modes and multiformity of being, whereby we are enabled to distinguish thing from thing, do not cause the being itself to be more than One. For, if we reflect earnestly with the natural philosophers, leaving the logicians to their fancies, we shall find that whatever causes differences or number is mere accident, mere figure, mere combination. Every production, of whatever sort it be, is an alteration, the substance ever remaining the same; for that

is only One—one Being, divine, immortal. Pythagoras was able to understand that, instead of fearing death, he need only contemplate a change. All philosophers—commonly called physical—have perceived the same truth, when they say that in respect of substance there is neither generation nor corruption, unless under these names we mean to signify alteration. Solomon understood this when he said that there was no new thing under the sun; but that which has been already. Understand, then, that all things are in the Universe, and the Universe in all things; we in that, that in us; and so all meet in one perfect unity. See, then, how vain a thing it is to torment the spirit with anxieties; see how impossible it is that there should be anything about us of which we ought to be fearful. For this unity is alone and stable, and ever remaineth; this One is eternal. Every appearance, every other thing, is vanity—is, as it were, nothing; yea, all that is nothing which is outside of this One. These philosophers have found again their mistress—Sophia, or Wisdom—who have found this Unity. Verily and indeed, wisdom, truth, and unity is the same.”

“Your doctrines put me strangely in mind of those contained in a work in which I was greatly interested a year or two since,” remarked Sidney. “It is the treatise, ‘*De Veritate Christianâ*,’ written by my friend Philip du Plessis Mornay. At one time, I thought of making an English translation of

it myself; but my approaching marriage and other matters will, I fear, render this out of the question. I shall, therefore, probably entrust it to Arthur Golding, uncle to the Earl of Oxford. He makes a trade of translating books; and being a practised hand at it, will doubtless do it far better than I could."

"It is strange," said Bruno, "how ancient and widely spread is the doctrine I hold; so that one often comes upon it where one least expects to find it. When we began this discussion I implied, perhaps too strongly, that my doctrine was not in harmony with Christianity. I did it injustice; it is only out of harmony with the accretions and after-growths of Christianity. In Christianity in its purity and originality, as in all other religions in their purity and originality, this doctrine of Unity in Variety will be found to occupy a place that is by no means unimportant or contemptible. But describe your friend's work."

"Being a work confessedly in defence of Christianity, it is of course written more entirely from the Christian standpoint than you would write; yet there is certainly considerable similarity in the doctrines. The book opens with proof of the primary doctrine that there is a God; and then follows a demonstration that He is One, and that He is One in Three Persons. God is the essence pervading all things; He is action. As the Grecian poets said,

and as St. Paul repeated, we are His offspring; in Him we live and move and have our being. From Him we come, by Him we exist, to Him we tend. But in His Unity there is Trinity. First of all there is an active Power—Ability, the basis of all Action, the principle without which nothing can exist. Secondly, there is Understanding, Reason, Voice, the utterance of the Divine Thought, the principle without which no action can be intelligent. Thirdly, there is Will, the principle without which no action can be wisely and successfully completed. This doctrine, Mornay declares, was darkly presented in all the old systems of philosophy; it was developed by Zoroaster, by Plato, and by every other wise teacher among the ancients. Moreover, he adds, it is clearly imaged in all the ordering of nature. And he gives this as an example: ‘In waters we have the head of them in the earth, and the spring boiling out of it, and the stream, which is made of them both, sheddeth itself out far from thence. It is but one self-same, continual essence, which hath neither foreness nor afterness, save only in order and not in time; that is to say according to our considering of it, having respect to causes, not according to truth. For the well-head is not a head but in respect of the spring, nor the spring a spring but in respect of the well-head, nor a stream a stream but in respect of them both; and so all three be but one water, and can scarcely be considered one without the other, how-

beit that the one is not the other. It is an express mark of the original relations and persons co-essential in the only one essence of God. From this doctrine," continued Sidney, "Mornay considers that it follows necessarily that nothing can be which is not appointed by God; good and evil are alike of his ordaining; the good to be wisely cultivated, and the evil to be made good by the wholesome use of its discipline. It is next shown that man's soul is immortal; furthermore that man's nature is corrupt, and in need of regeneration. God is the sovereign welfare of man, and therefore the chief sheet-anchor of man ought to be to return to God. But," concluded Sidney, suddenly breaking off, "you ought to read the work yourself. It is not easy to me to give a concise and comprehensible abstract of a subject so abstruse as this."

"Nay, you do yourself injustice," answered Bruno, who had been listening attentively to Sidney's description. "How I regret that you will be unable to translate it yourself. I sometimes doubt whether subjects of this kind can ever be as efficiently translated by one who makes a trade of translating books, as by one who is prompted to do it by genuine interest in the original."

"I did begin a translation," answered Sidney, "but in verse, not in prose. You know I can always write better in the former."

"Did you?" said Bruno, in a tone of eager inte-

rest ; "how I wish you could remember it and let me hear it."

"I am afraid I can but remember the first verse," said Sydney.

All things that are, or ever were, or shall hereafter be,
Both man and woman, beast and bird, fish, worm, herb, grass,
and tree,
And every other thing ; yea, even the ancient gods, each one,
Whom we so highly honour here, come all of One alone.

During the last quarter of an hour the clouds had been increasing with ominous rapidity. Thunder, long and angry, though at present indistinct, was, heard in the distance, and the summer lightning was changing into lightning of a more dangerous description. At the first drop of rain, Madame Castelnau, fearing a chill, turned and directed her steps towards the house. But her husband, believing from the signs in the skies, that the storm would be but of brief duration, took refuge with Sidney in a summer-house, not far from the spreading tree under which they had been reclining. Bruno followed them as far as the summer-house, but remained outside. Always heedless of danger, and eager and excited now with the thoughts that were surging within him, he liked to feel the large drops of rain, coming, as they did at present, at slow intervals, fall upon his face and uncovered head.

Castelnau, nearly throughout the evening had been suffering from a depression of spirits, a dim

foreboding of coming evil that he tried to conceal, but could not shake off. Probably the thunder that was in the air had something to do with the depression ; for our mental moods, more often than not, may be traced to a physical or natural cause. But Castelnau did not account for it to himself in this way. Though singularly free, for the age in which he lived, from belief in omens and other outward signs held to be of such importance by the superstitious, he was not without a certain belief in the prophetic character of those presentiments and forebodings that assault the soul. There are few of us who have not some personal experience of moods like this. And as on our bodies when a certain part has become inflamed or sore, we cannot allow an insect or bird to tread where ordinarily we could permit a cat or small dog, so in our moods of extreme sensitiveness or apprehensions of undefined danger, however free we are from superstitions, slight external sounds and incidents have an effect upon us that is not explicable by reason ; nay, that we scornfully refuse to accept through our reason ; but that, nevertheless, penetrate, pierce to our very souls through some subtle magnetic influence that is stronger than any reason. Castelnau was an old man, and care and anxiety had made him older than his years. He was no pessimist in the atheistic sense of the word, because he was a Christian, believing in a future life where all apparent injustice would be remedied and reconciled. But as

far as this earth was concerned he was entirely, wholly pessimistic. All the circumstances of his life had combined to make him so. Wherever he went he found vice prospering, ignorance flourishing. The simple-minded, the unworldly, the honest, the seekers after wisdom, invariably, as it seemed to him, failed in the struggle for existence with their less scrupulous brethren. And when, to this unworldliness and sincerity were joined a heedlessness of danger and positive imprudence, how could such a one hope to escape? Just now Castelnau's fears for Bruno (for all his present forebodings and apprehensions were connected with his adopted son), seemed to be beyond power of endurance, much less power of concealment. It was with the greatest difficulty that he could keep from giving utterance to them. Yet after all there had been little more in Giordano's conversation than in Sidney's to call for rebuke; and he knew not what to lay hold of.

There had been silence in the summer-house since he and Sidney had entered it, and this silence, coupled with the gloom of the skies, increased his depression. And just at the moment when his sensitiveness had grown to that extreme point where every sight and sound had power to make him start and wince, a vivid flash of lightning occurred immediately where Bruno stood, appearing for the moment to encircle the Italian in its light. To Castelnau's morbid mood it seemed like the fulfilment of his worst forebodings;

he felt that Bruno was already surrounded with the flames of the Inquisition. He had no power to keep silence longer; but spoke with an intensity that not only astonished Sidney and Bruno, but even himself:

"Come in. Come in, Giordano. I cannot endure to see you out there. Come in, I say. I implore! I command!"

And Bruno, always obedient and yielding to those he loved, unless when asked to do anything against his conscience, or when carried away by uncontrollable excitement, came in; not a little wondering at the apparently uncalled-for emotion of his adopted father. Castelnau paused for a few moments; and then said, half tremulously, half entreatingly:

"Filippo, my son," (he never called him thus save when strongly moved), "think not that I have no sympathy nor comprehension of thy aspirations and speculations. Few thoughtful minds can pass through youth wholly unassailed by doubts. Assuredly I did not. But, my son, why should you publish these views? Why cannot you keep them to yourself? You say that you are aware that their publication must bring you into danger. Life and liberty, my son, are gifts from God, and should not be lightly endangered. Thou art no longer a youth. Throw away thy heedlessness; and remember that prudence when not carried to excess is almost as great a virtue as courage."

"Nay, *mio padre*," said Bruno affectionately.

"You should be the last to inculcate caution ; for in so doing you preach what you certainly have not practised. All France rings with the sacrifices you have made for your country's weal. Once you have been imprisoned, and if you have not been disgraced, it is from no caution or time-serving on your own part. But, *padre mio*," he continued half playfully, "you are a proof in your own person of what I was saying just now : that a man can be brave for himself, but not for his wife or his children, or those whom he regards as his children, as I am happy to believe you do me. And therefore it is that I will have no wife or child to tempt me from my duty."

"Not so, not so, Filippo, you misconceive me. I do indeed love thee dearly—only less than my own sons. It is a surprise to myself how thou shouldst have crept into my heart in so short a time. Yet, dear as thou art to me, I tell thee I would with much purer joy see thee with thy head upon the block like noble Thomas More, rather than risen to place and honour through pandering to the vices of a ruler. I am the last to forbid thee to endanger thy life for some noble object. But, my son," he continued somewhat diffidently, for he knew that he was treading on tender ground, "it appears to me that in the publication of your writings you are endangering life and liberty for no tangible result. I quarrel not with your views. If you feel that they ennoble you and elevate you, keep fast to

them, but keep them to yourself. What good can it do anyone to scatter them broadcast? Again, with the Copernican theory, that exercises so strong a power over thy imagination; I quarrel not with thee for holding it. Nay, as far as I am able to form an opinion, I am inclined to that theory myself. But why risk thy life for it? Will knowledge that the earth is round instead of flat, or that the universe is infinite, make the world one whit happier or better?"

"It will, it must!" answered Bruno impetuously. "Oh, my father, think what my life would be without it! And if it has given me so much happiness, must I not dispense this happiness to others?"

At that moment a breeze suddenly arose, and dispersed a heavy cloud that seemed a minute before as if it must fall in raindrops; so that again in this strangely changeable night the stars shone out for a time with their former brilliancy. Bruno looked up at them with an impassioned gaze, and exclaimed:

"These magnificent stars and shining bodies, which are so many inhabited worlds and grand living creatures and excellent divinities, could not be what they are—could not have any permanent relation to each other—if there were not some cause or principle which they set forth in their operations, and the infinite excellence and majesty of which they with innumerable voices proclaim. And what is this Cause or Principle? Is it not God Himself, the

Infinite All—that Divine Essence which is in all things, from the freshly-unfolded leaf up to that vast expanse before us? Does not this belief ennoble, sanctify to us the whole of Nature? And then to think,” Bruno continued, with a certain indignation and contempt in his tone, “that men have believed these stars to be little twinkling lights created for the benefit of themselves, and have called them either after the implements of their own handicraft, or, what is more degrading still, after heathen gods and goddesses, whose only qualities are that they are murderers, traitors, and unchaste. Ah, if we must call them by human names at all, why not after the abstract virtues, such as Truth, Wisdom, Purity——”

Bruno stopped short. He saw no responsive feeling on Castelnau’s face, only despairing impatience. To say that the Neapolitan was offended, would be exaggeration; but he was chilled. His ardent impetuous nature required sympathy; and when he saw that he was not winning the Ambassador over to his views, but only increasing his evident anxiety, he walked away to the house, leaving Castelnau and Sidney in their place of refuge from the storm.

It was the old antagonism that will always exist, I think, between what, for want of a better distinction, I must call the man of business and the true artist. I mean the former title in no invidious sense, For though, doubtless, it includes the mere pursuer after

personal distinction, or hunter after wealth, it also includes the statesman, the warrior, the true patriot, the self-sacrificing philanthropist. Yet there is this in common between them all. Their endeavours are prompted by desire of a result that is always definite and tangible, and in most cases immediate. Their work apart from the hoped-for result would have no meaning to them. Whereas the true artist, inasmuch as he fully deserves the title (and by this I include not only the poet, musician, and painter, but the philosopher, the author, the man of science) works for no definite and tangible object beyond his work, the prosecution of which is an entire and all-sufficient end in itself. All honour be to our statesmen and warriors, our patriots and philanthropists ! Yet if, as has lately been defined, the ideally moral man is he who dispenses the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest number of people, it may be that at the end of the world, were some recording angel to strike the balance, the palm of having provided the greater amount of pure, unalloyed joy would belong, not to our Bismarcks and Gladstones ; not to our Marlboroughs and Wellingtons ; not even to our Howards and Wilberforces—though doubtless these latter have a higher claim ; but to our Shakespeares and Goethes ; our Beethovens and Wagners ; our Michael Angelos and Raphaels ; our Newtons and Darwins ; to those who work—not as their more practical brethren, from conscious and self-sacrificing

desire to serve their fellow creatures—but from unconscious obedience to an inner impulse or spirit that compels them to give spontaneous utterance or definite embodiment to thoughts that are surging within them !

But Castelnau knew nothing of this. He only felt that the son of his dearest friend to whom he had vowed to be as a father, was throwing away all his worldly prospects and endangering his life for a purpose utterly insufficient. His ominous forebodings increased upon him ; and the silence and darkness of the summer-house was too oppressive to be borne. He turned to Sidney and said :

“ Let us get to the house before another storm.”

As they rose the old man took Sidney’s arm. They walked in silence for a few moments, and then Castelnau said :

“ It is no use arguing with Bruno, Sir Philip. His impetuosity and imprudence are past reason. Well, well ! It only remains then that we try and save him from the consequences of his imprudence.”

“ How can that be done ? ” inquired Sidney eagerly. He had been accustomed of late to find that Castelnau often consulted with him about Bruno, and discussed the character of the latter as if he, Sidney, were greatly Bruno’s senior, instead of being, as was in reality the case, six years his junior. But there was a gravity, a self-possession, a quiet dignity about Sidney that made most persons treat him as if he

were much older than his years, just as Bruno's excitability and heedlessness made people imagine him to be, notwithstanding his more than average ability, little beyond boyhood.

"How can it be?" repeated Castlenau, "Well, I believe a great deal may be done by the mere fact of our permitting him to dedicate his works to us."

"Most willingly will I accord him my permission," answered Sidney. "Yet I fail to see what good that can do. If his works are heretical they will not appear less heretical to his readers because they are dedicated to us."

"They will to his *non-readers*," answered Castlenau, with a certain statesman-like craft in his manner. "Experience leads me to believe that at least fifty out of every hundred persons who condemn a book for its want of orthodoxy, have never read it. But even to his readers it will have an effect by no means contemptible. Of the fifty who do read a book before they condemn it, how many among them, think you, understand it?" Then, as Sidney answered not, but looked at him in some surprise, Castelnau gave a French shrug to his shoulders, blew through his lips, and said, with a waive of his hand, "*Ouf!* their number is not large! No, no; let an unorthodox book be dedicated to persons who are known to be orthodox, and you will find that it will meet with little condemnation. Not," added Castelnau, for he saw that Sidney was still looking at him with a

little surprise, if not disapprobation, on his face, for his younger and more ardent nature had little sympathy with the tendency to tactics that is inseparable from every statesman's character. "Not that I would allow Bruno's books to be dedicated to me if they were really subversive of religion and morality. No; dearly as I love him, even anxiety for him would not tempt me to double dealing such as that. But from what we have heard him confess to-night, as well as from certain passages he has read to me from his manuscripts, I know that his books will be occupied far more in defence of the Copernican theory than in attack upon Christianity. I do not mean to say that I wholly approve of what he has written. If I could find any other way of helping him I would prefer it, but I cannot." Then with a sigh he continued, more to himself than to Sidney: "After all, even the sacred writings do not forbid dealings of this sort. 'Treat a fool according to his folly,' says the wise man. Well, the religious world just now is not only very foolish but very cruel. And so I think I may be justified in allowing my name to appear as a guarantee of works of which, if I do not actually approve, at least I do not very strongly disapprove."

"Well," said Sidney. "I, at least, can permit the book to be dedicated to me with a perfectly free conscience; because, notwithstanding that I hold myself to be an orthodox Protestant, I yet share in

many ways Bruno's philosophical opinions; especially that doctrine of his of the unity that runs through variety. I cannot tell you how greatly I have been interested in his conversation this evening."

"Dreams, Sir Philip, dreams," answered Castelnau sadly; "cobwebs spun from Bruno's own brain. How can he tell that there is a Unity? Or how can he tell that God works from within, instead of from without? How can he know how God works? If a man has once renounced his belief in Revelation, he must renounce all hope of knowing anything about God."

"I do not think that," answered Sidney. "The whole of Nature speaks to me of God. I do reverence revelation. There is no book comparable, to me, to the Holy Scriptures; yet is not Nature a revelation? Can I not adore a God in Nature? Every leaf, every blade of grass fills me with love for the Creator of Nature. Nay; if, as Bruno seems to think, God works from within instead of without, that would fill me with a still greater love for Nature."

"Dreams, boy, dreams! How can Bruno know anything about the method of God or of Nature? When you are my age you will have learnt that there are but two standpoints for any logical mind: Catholicism, or humble trust in authority, or——"

"Or what?" asked Sidney, surprised at Castelnau's abrupt termination.

The Ambassador gave a despairing shrug to his

shoulders as he answered: "Dreary recognition of our complete ignorance."

Castelnau removed his arm from Sidney's, and walked rapidly to the house. He was annoyed with himself for having divulged so much.

But it was through this conversation that the three or four of Bruno's works that brought upon him the most blame were dedicated to Castelnau or Sidney, both of whom were considered, both by themselves and others, to be sincere Christians.



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CHAPTER VIII.

BRUNO BECOMES EXCITED.

Where the heart is full it seeks for a thousand reasons, in a thousand ways, to impart itself.

CARLYLE.

AS was not difficult to foresee, the only effect of Castelnau's appeal to his adopted son was that it rendered it almost an impossibility to the latter to confide further any of his peculiar opinions and aspirations to the Ambassador. Not that Bruno resented Castelnau's advice. He perceived clearly that it had been given through fatherly anxiety for his safety; but he was warm-hearted and sensitive, and, like most sympathetic people, easily repulsed. He could brook contradiction, and he was one not to desire that everybody to whom he confided his doctrines must immediately accept them. On the contrary, he liked nothing better than to hear an opponent argue on a side opposed to his own. If anything, he carried his love for disquisition too far. But it is one thing to

listen patiently to an opponent dissenting from us upon a subject in which he is as greatly interested as we are ; another to have the subject itself dismissed as vague ; if not altogether illusory, and as certainly undeserving of risk or self-sacrifice.

But with his generous disposition the fact that his doctrines had as yet found so few supporters, made Bruno cling to them the more ardently. Then just about this time he happened to come across a work that interested him even more than the works of Lully—the poem of Lucretius. It was with a sort of rapture that the Neapolitan discovered that even so far back as the time of Lucretius his own favourite doctrine of the eternity of matter had been mooted. He read through those wonderful six books again and again, never wearying of them. There was scarcely a detail from which he dissented ; and those of my readers who are familiar with that great poem, and who have observed how marvellously Lucretius anticipated the discoveries of this century, will have no difficulty in believing that Bruno, in accepting the doctrines of the Roman thinker, approached with singular closeness those accepted by the more thoughtful of our own time. But though Bruno acquiesced in all the scientific details of Lucretius, the doctrines of the infinity of forms, of atoms, the denial of annihilation, the explanation of the genesis of things, etc., he did not accept the atheistic con-

clusions that are supposed to be inherent in Lucretius* because he was by nature of a far more deeply religious spirit than was (as far as we may judge by his poem) the Latin poet. And lest this assertion on my part may startle such of my readers as believe that the truly religious man can be he only who accepts certain dogmas of Christianity, I will, even at the risk of a digression, define in what I believe the truly religious spirit to consist.

When a word has been used in a variety of different ways by different writers, it is well for its better comprehension to try and discover its primary signification. This is to be done, I think, not so much by going to its etymology as by tracing it through all its various guises and seeing if there be not one permanent form that has never changed. This word Religion, for instance; has it any substratum of agreement by which we may identify it, in spite of the strangely contradictory guises it has assumed? It has been made to signify the worship of unity, duality, trinity. It has prostrated itself before virtue and vice; and has transformed men into angels of light at one time, into monsters of darkness at another. Yet since a thing cannot at once be and not be, the question forces itself upon us: is there any

* I say *supposed*, because at no time does Lucretius deny the existence of gods; he only asserts that they do not occupy themselves with the processes of Nature.

indissoluble connection between religion and monotheism or polytheism ; between religion and virtue and vice ? I believe not. I believe that monotheism and polytheism are subjects that pertain to theologies, of which there are many ; while virtue and vice pertain solely to ethics.

Most readers of Mr. Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy" will remember that the greater part of that portion of his "First Principles," called the "Unknowable," is devoted to an exhaustive analysis of what he believes to be the one Truth underlying the many fleeting forms Religion has assumed. This Truth in brief is this : *That the existence of the world with all that it contains and all which surrounds it, is a Mystery ever pressing for interpretation.* Mr. Spencer is not alone in this definition. Carlyle referred the germ of all religions to "transcendent wonder." Max Muller in tracing the origin of Hindoo religion, says : "Man begins to lift up his eyes. He stares at the tent of Heaven, and asks who supports it ? He opens his ears to the wind and rain, and asks them whence and whither ? He is awakened from darkness and slumber by the light of the sun, and Him whom his eyes cannot behold . . . he calls his life, his breath, his brilliant lord and protector. He gives names to all the powers of Nature. . . . He invokes them ; he praises them ; he worships them. But still with all these gods around him, beneath him, above him, he yet seems ill at rest within himself. There too,

within his own breast, he has discovered a power that wants a name, a power nearer to him than all the gods of Nature ; a power that is never mute when he prays, never absent when he fears or trembles. It seems to inspire his prayers and yet to listen to them ; it seems to live in him and yet to support him and all around him. The only name he can find for this mysterious power is Brâhman, for Brâhman meant originally force, will, wish, and the propulsive power of creation. . . . But still the power within him has no real name ; that power which is nothing but itself, which supports the gods, the heavens and every living being floats before his mind, conceived but not expressed."

The Hindoo is not alone in this feeling. I believe that the origin of all great religions, the pervading influence of every deeply religious nature, can be traced to the consciousness that there is a mystery in existence which transcends all interpretation. And no one most certainly can read attentively the works of Giordano Bruno without seeing that he was pervaded by this consciousness to an extent that is very unusual.

Doubtless this definition of religion may deserve the epithet of *vague*, since the object of it is incapable of being defined in words. But in this sense all our higher feelings are vague. They are beyond, not beneath expression. Can anyone rightly define that mysterious feeling of elevation that comes over

him when he is listening to a fine symphony? As says George Eliot:

Speech is but broken light upon the depth
Of the unspoken.

It will be answered perhaps that the greater number of persons who have passed for eminently religious, have never troubled themselves about the mystery of the world, would scarcely comprehend what such an expression implied. Then they have but a very small portion of the religious instinct. Prayers, fastings, church-going, arise from a variety of causes, and are not in themselves religion. We are most of us familiar with the more unworthy motives that lead to these. Dread of reproach in this world, of punishment in the next, even simple following of the fashion. But there is also a much worthier motive, though it, too, is not a religious one. The nearest sentiment to which I can compare it is *loyalty*. Not, of course, in the restricted sense of devotion to the sovereign; but unhesitating, unquestioning obedience to external authority. No thought of self mingles with this feeling. Whether it bring upon such as are pervaded with it contumely or reward, what they have been commanded to do that they will do, even to the death. A feeling, not without elements of danger, since it is the germ of all superstition; but possessing also elements of grandeur and nobility. Poets have seized upon it and written themes upon

it. The boy Casabianca who "stood on the burning deck" till he perished in the flames, rather than disobey his father; the "Six Hundred," who felt that it was:

Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die,

were each and all pervaded by it. And Castelnau de la Mauvissière (though having *reasoned out* to himself the necessity of loyalty in all relations of life, he could be scarcely described as holding it in a superstitious sense) was strongly pervaded by it also.

These loyal natures are quite incapable of originating any theology for themselves; they only obey with manful homage what has been already instituted for them. For they are without that yearning for some knowledge of the Absolute and Real which is the origin of all theologies, and are quite content with the phenomenal and temporal. It appears to me that this consciousness of mystery, this knowledge of some One thing that endures through all the forms that pass away, may be termed the *demand* man's nature makes upon him; of which the various theologies are the attempted answers. One man prefers this, another invents that; yet I cannot but think that in him who has once been fully penetrated by this sense of mystery, there will be always at bottom a half-acknowledged consciousness that all interpretations are but relative and provisional, leaving

the essential Mystery as far away as ever, and utterly incapable of solution.

Certainly Bruno made no attempt to form a ritual or theology as an embodiment of his religious feelings. Neither did he let this mystical consciousness of something higher and beyond himself interfere with morality or his duties to his fellows. He was no ascetic, no recluse. He was a grateful and obliging son to Castelnau and his wife; a merry playmate to the children; diligent and conscientious in the prosecution of his scientific studies. But the moments that he welcomed the most eagerly were those in which, when his studies being over or Castelnau's guests gone, he felt himself at liberty to steal away of an evening and watch the ripples on the river, or gaze upon the vast expanse of heaven, or, perhaps, only to ponder upon the mystery of the spreading oak in the Ambassador's grounds arising from an acorn. Times like these were veritable Sabbaths to him; his only ritual being vague communion with Nature. But always and invariable was the lesson he received from this communion. Humility, half admiring, half despairing, was the one lesson Nature always inculcated. In other words, he was filled with a vivid consciousness that man and his duties, and his interests, are but a very small portion of the mystery that was pressing upon him for interpretation, for that Great Mystery was in existence long before man was in existence, and will endure long after he has passed away.

So the months passed on ; and in course of time, Bruno published the work entitled "Del Infinito Universo e Mondi," or, Of the Infinite Universe and Innumerable Worlds ; a sequel to the work "De la Causa, Principio ed Uno." It was dedicated :

To the Most Illustrious Lord, Michel de Castelnau, Lord of Mauvissière, Concressault and Joinville ; Knight of the Order of His Most Christian Majesty ; one of the Members of His Privy Council, Captain of fifty Men-at-Arms, and Ambassador to the Most Serene Queen of England.

Bruno presented his volume to the Ambassador, with that feeling of diffidence which we all experience when we offer a gift that we are not quite sure will be welcome. As he put it into Castelnau's hands, he said somewhat timidly :

"Will you read the Dedication now ? You will at least see that there will be found nothing in it, that can bring upon you the slightest suspicion ; indeed, *padre mio*, I do not believe that I have written anything through the whole volume, that can be very greatly condemned."

And the Ambassador read as follows :

"If I had held the plough, Most Illustrious Lord, or fed a flock, or cultivated a garden, or mended old clothes, none would distinguish and few would regard me ; fewer yet would reprehend me, and I might easily become agreeable to everybody. But now for describing the field of Nature, for being solicitous

about the pasture of the Soul, for being curious about the improvement of the Understanding, and for showing some skill about the faculties of the Mind : one man, as if I had an eye to himself, does menace me ; another, for being only observed, does assault me ; for coming near this man, he bites me ; and for laying hold of that other, he devours me.

“If you would know whence this does proceed, my Lord, the true reason is, that I am displeased with the bulk of mankind. I hate the vulgar rout ; I despise the authority of the multitude, and am enamoured of one particular Lady. It is for her that I am free in servitude, content in pain, rich in necessity, and alive in death ; and therefore it is likewise for her, that I envy not those who are slaves in the midst of liberty, who suffer pain in their enjoyment of pleasure, who are poor though overflowing with riches, and dead when they are reputed to live ; for in their body they have the chain that pinches them, in their mind the hell that overwhelms them, in their soul the error that makes them sick, and in their judgment the lethargy that kills them ; having neither the generosity to undertake, nor perseverance to succeed, nor splendour to illustrate their works, nor learning to perpetuate their names. Hence it is, even from my passion for this beauty, that as being weary, I draw not back my feet from the difficult road ; nor, as being lazy, hang down my hands from the work that is before me ; I turn

not my shoulders, as grown desperate to the enemy that contends with me ; nor as dazzled, divert my eyes from the divine object.

“In the meantime, I know myself to be accounted for the most part a sophister, more desirous to appear subtle than to be really solid ; an ambitious fellow, that studies rather to set up a new and false sect than to confirm the ancient and true doctrine ; a deceiver that aims at purchasing brightness to his own fame, by engaging others in the darkness of error ; a restless spirit that overturns the edifice of sound discipline, and makes himself a founder to some hurt of perversity. But, my Lord, so may all the Holy Deities deliver me from those that unjustly hate me, so may my own God be ever propitious to me, so may the Governors of this globe show me their favour, so may the stars furnish me with such a seed for the field and such a field for the seed, that the world may reap the useful and glorious fruit of my labour, by awakening the genius and opening the understanding of such as are deprived of light. So may all these things happen I say, as it is most certain that I neither feign nor pretend. If I err, I am far from thinking that I do, and whether I speak or write, I dispute not for the mere love of victory (for I look upon all reputation and conquest to be hateful to God, to be most vile and dishonourable without Truth) but it is for the love of true Wisdom, and by the studious admiration of this

mistress, that I fatigue, that I disquiet, that I torment myself.

“This will be made evident by the demonstrative arguments I offer, drawn from lively reasons; as these are derived from regulated sense, which is informed by positive ideas, that like so many ambassadresses are sent abroad from the subjects of Nature; being obvious to those that seek for them, clear to those that conceive them, distinct to those that consider them, and certain to those that comprehend them. But it is time that I present you, my Lord, with my contemplations about the ‘Infinite Universe and Innumerable Worlds.’”*

Castelnau read to the end gravely, but not impatiently. There was nothing certainly in the dedication to justify much anxiety; though many of its statements displayed a certain tendency to exaggeration and inaccuracy; but this was not unusual with Bruno. For instance, so far as Castelnau had seen during the English sojourn of his adopted son, it was entirely Bruno’s own imagination that made him believe himself to be menaced by one man and assaulted by another. But when the Ambassador came to that portion of the dedication, a feeling of foreboding came over him. The accusations were not true now, but they seemed to him to bear an ominous resemblance to prophecy.

* In this dedication I have availed myself of Mr. Toland’s translation.

He made no remark, however, beyond thanking the author, both for the volume and for the honour he had paid him in dedicating it to him. But in spite of himself, his voice was cold and his manner formal. He dreaded too much the disastrous results the publication of the book might have upon Bruno to be able to show any real pleasure in it.

But the work excited little hostility at the time. As Castelnau had partly foreseen, the fact that it was dedicated to himself was a great protection to it. For though England was Protestant and the Ambassador Catholic, Castelnau had ever shown such ready courtesy to the English Protestants, had been so mindful not to insult or attack their doctrines, that it was felt impossible that he should lend his name to any book likely to bring Protestantism into ridicule. And still less likely if it were in antagonism to the Romish doctrines, or to those larger doctrines accepted by both forms of faith.

Perhaps Bruno would have been better pleased if it had excited a little more notice. He was ambitious ; if not for himself, at least for the doctrines he loved so well ; and he was at once disappointed and impatient that he had as yet done so little in furtherance of his aim.

It was now that the longing to recommence public lecturing came to Bruno ; and he resolved to see if he could gain permission to lecture before the University of Oxford. He felt, however, that in his position as

guest and adopted son at the house of Castelnau, it would be impossible to take any active steps in the matter without first confiding his intention to the Ambassador. It was not without real difficulty that he summoned up sufficient resolution to enter into the subject with Castelnau; for to Bruno, as to most of us, a repulse from one whom he admired and loved was much harder to bear than from those who excited in him only indifference or dislike.

As he slowly and somewhat hesitatingly unfolded his plans to Castelnau, he noticed a look of intense pain pass across the Ambassador's features, that smote him far more than a look of anger would have done.

"Giordano, Giordano!" exclaimed the Ambassador, "what relentless fate is it that is drawing you to your own destruction?"

"Nay, dear M. Castelnau," answered Bruno affectionately, "indeed you exaggerate the danger I run. I believe that so long as I do not attack Protestantism I am perfectly safe in England. And I am not going to attack Protestantism."

"Remember Calvin's conduct to Servetus," answered Castelnau. "Some of that poor Spaniard's metaphysical speculations bear a perilous resemblance to your own."

"Yes, but there are few Englishmen who do not condemn Calvin for his part in this matter. Besides, I will take care not to indulge in what you call my metaphysical speculations to any dangerous extent."

"On what, then, do you intend to lecture?" asked the Ambassador.

"On the Copernican theory, or doctrine of the sphere," answered Bruno.

"You will do no good," said Castelnau decisively. "If all I hear be true, the professors at Oxford are a set of bigoted, ignorant pedants, refusing to listen to any new doctrine."

"The more reason that it should be forced upon them," replied Bruno.

"What good will that do? If you can force them to listen, you cannot force them into conviction. There is no university in Europe where you would be less likely to succeed. Both by students and professors the Copernican theory is despised—Aristotle reigns supreme. You will be irritated beyond endurance. You will make enemies. And what benefit will you bestow upon anyone? You will endanger not only your own life, but even the doctrines for which you are willing to sacrifice so much. Alas, Giordano! why will you throw away good seed upon such barren soil?"

"Because," exclaimed Bruno enthusiastically, "perchance the birds may here and there pick up a single grain, and drop it in ground that will be congenial."

The Ambassador shrugged his shoulders despairingly, and was silent. Even had Bruno been his actual son, he would have felt that at the Italian's

present age he could have no right to interfere ; and in the position they really stood to each other—totally unconnected by blood—it was of course impossible.

So Bruno applied for permission to lecture before the University of Oxford ; and, owing to his personal acquaintance with Queen Elizabeth, and the Earl of Leicester, then Chancellor of Oxford, found that permission not at all difficult to gain.

The grand old city, with its grey buildings and picturesque river, excited in him a quiet admiration that had something of affection in it. And as he entered it he thought to himself that here, surrounded by a happy mixture of the beauties of Nature and of Art, he might be very content, could he only find some few friends to share with him his convictions. Sidney had lately married ; and the festivities consequent upon the marriage had interrupted the intimacy of his friendship with Bruno. Fulke Greville was now his only intimate friend. Yet, much as the latter was esteemed by Bruno, he seems to have taken not quite the same place in the Italian's affection as Sidney. Yet even Sidney was scarcely the ideal friend that Bruno indulged himself in believing he might find. Sidney would discuss with him on his beloved subjects ; would sympathise, would admire ; but even he thought at times that Bruno overrated the importance of these subjects ; he was eager as Castelnau in pressing upon him the necessity for prudence.

Poor Bruno ! There is a certain element of pain inseparable from a character that is at once strongly intellectual, given over to profound speculations and investigations, but at the same time highly emotional, loving, ardent, craving for sympathy. Sooner or later such a thinker has to recognise the fact that he must be *alone* ; that in his inner life it is the rarest exception to find one who can understand him—perhaps because he understands himself too vaguely to interpret himself in words. But Bruno knew not this as yet ; even if he ever fully grasped it at all. As he gazed at the crumbling stone of the colleges and halls, he tried to bring before him in imagination the number of students who had studied here ; wondering if any among them had been stirred by the hopes and aspirations that now agitated him, of the number who were studying still. Surely, among the more thoughtful of them he might find one who would be a disciple to him in the widest sense of the word ; one, that is to say, who would accept his teaching not only with his intellect but with his heart, who would have the courage of his convictions ; nay, who would feel that he could joyfully lay down his life in their defence.

It was not so to be. Castelnau, accurate as with very few exceptions he ever was in gauging the tendencies of individuals and nations, proved himself to be but too accurate in his estimation of the intellectual character of Oxford.

Ancient buildings, ancient institutions, are naturally, perhaps, inevitably Conservative. They would lose half their beauty were they not Conservative. But there is a difference wholly immeasurable between normal and abnormal Conservatism; between that which is natural and that which is so overgrown as to be altogether deformed. It was the difference between Oxford of Bruno's day and Oxford of our own. We scarcely yet have learnt to look for great philosophers, for ardent discoverers, among her children. Even her most advanced sons, with exceptions so rare as but to prove the rule, content themselves with being a bond of union between the Old and New; conciliators rather than innovators. We can hardly wish it otherwise. Universities, as individuals, must have the defects of their qualities. We cannot at once have the dignity of age and the freshness of youth; but both, when each is healthy, have not only a poetry and beauty of their own, but a use. It is only when the dignity of age has deteriorated into second infancy; when the language of wisdom and caution has degenerated into a mixture of querulousness and unmeaning gibberish, that age becomes a thing altogether unlovely; worthy of much compassion, perhaps, but no reverence. It is so with all Conservatism that has lost its dignity, that is half asleep, content with things as they are, so long as it will be allowed to snore away in peace while others do the work of the world; that resents all

innovation, not so much from love of the Old, as from hatred of the New ; and which, when forced to listen to doctrines unsuspected before, takes refuge in sneers, because sneering necessitates less labour than comprehension.

Bruno had travelled much, and possessed a tolerably wide acquaintance with European universities ; but none that he knew excited in him the dislike and contempt that did the University of Oxford. He declared that he knew not which ought to be condemned the most, the beer-drinking propensities of the undergraduates, or the hopeless pedantry of their seniors. The Copernican theory was now nearly forty years old, but it might as well never have been put forth so far as Oxford was concerned ; and great were the consternation and dismay when it gradually became whispered about that a young foreign teacher of philosophy was amongst them who was ardently devoted to the new theory, and intended to make the promulgation of it the object of his life.

Perhaps the University would not even have paid him the compliment of being indignant with him, had not an event occurred a few weeks after Bruno's arrival, which, for the time being, roused the heads of the colleges from their wonted apathy.

It happened that just about this time, a prince from Poland, by name Alberto di Alasco, having heard of the fame and wealth of Elizabeth, visited England, and expressed a great desire to become

acquainted with Oxford in particular. Hearing this, Oxford determined to rouse herself for once; and prepared for the Prince a more splendid reception than he had anticipated.

He was met on his arrival in the city by the doctors, Matthew, Colepeper, and others, who honoured him with a Latin oration, and the Prince replied in Latin, after which each of the suite was offered a gift of a pair of gloves. Shortly after this the Vice-Chancellor received him in one of the principal churches, and gave him a Bible of great price, and the suite were offered more gloves. The day was spent in orations; in medical, judicial, philosophical, and theological discussions; while in the evening there was a comedy. The next day was passed in a somewhat similar manner; on the third the Prince visited all the various colleges; listened at each, either to a short oration, the recitation of verse, or, as at the more important colleges, to a philosophical discussion; and it was on this day that to Bruno's intense satisfaction it had been arranged (probably owing to some influence secretly exercised by the Queen, who was ever ready to show her appreciation of Italians) that he, notwithstanding his comparative obscurity, should take a prominent part in at least one discussion; and that this discussion should have reference to the Copernican theory he loved so well.

Behold Bruno, then, as eager for the battle and

impatient of delay as a spirited horse to commence the race ; arrived before the time in the Hall, which was already crowded to overflowing ; awaiting the arrival of the Prince and his suite, with other illustrious guests, besides the doctors of the university. Punctually at the time appointed the procession entered ; and as each went silently to his seat, one Doctor, of the name of Leyson, a little, sleepy-looking man, dressed in the black velvet gown worn by the doctors of the university at that period, removed himself from the others, and went to a seat almost immediately opposite to that to which Bruno had been shown. He was the appointed opponent to the Italian in the discussion.

He was not a cruel, nor a base-looking man, but there was about his whole aspect—his smile, his voice, nay, his very walk—an air of complacent self-satisfaction, and a mixture of patronage and pedantry, that was more offensive to Bruno than even actual cruelty.

Leyson rose, and in a tone probably assumed which expressed at once forbearance and raillery, he began :

“Oh, illustrious Prince, you have honoured our venerable university with a presence that, for the last three days, has been almost constant. You have deigned to listen to discussions upon philosophy, upon medicine, upon jurisprudence ; to various lectures delivered by the wisest among our body ;

may, last evening your Highness even condescended to be present at a comedy." Here the Doctor paused, and gave a little cough, and regarded Bruno placidly, nodding his head and half-smiling at him, very much as a grave scholar will shake his head and smile at a pretty little woman who is talking foolishly. He waited for a few minutes, during which time Bruno was chafing with the irritation that he could scarcely conceal, and then resumed: "Yes, yes; last evening your Highness even condescended to be present at a comedy. It was thought that at the intellectual feast at which your Highness graciously consented to form our chiefest guest, the substantial meats had been sufficiently represented. It was believed that a few light trifles would not be displeasing to your Grace. Well, well"—(with an air of increased forbearance)—"it is hoped that the discussion of this morning will not be wholly displeasing either. Here before us is a young foreigner, whom we will call, if it please you, a philosopher, and I am appointed to be his opponent in the discussion. In accordance with this arrangement, I herewith announce the title of my part of the discussion." Here Leyson dropped his tone of forbearing raillery, and said, in a clear, distinct voice, "It is this: The earth is stationary, the universe is finite, and is in motion."

"And the title of my part of the discussion," said Bruno, in a voice that he endeavoured in vain to keep

from trembling, with his suppressed rage, "is, 'the earth moves and the universe is infinite.'"

"And so," said the Doctor with his former air of patronising forbearance, as he bestowed upon his audience a smile, intended to show them the complete absurdity of Bruno's title for his discussion, "and so the earth moves? Does it, really? Well, well; I should have scarcely fancied this! And the universe is infinite? Dear, dear! And who is this that asserts these peculiar ideas? Perhaps it is one of our wisest doctors; or, suppose it should be our revered Vice-Chancellor himself." Then as Leyson saw, in the faces of the Vice-Chancellor and doctors, a gratified look of comprehension as they shook their heads with an air of malicious humility, intimating that such discoveries were entirely beyond their poor ability, he continued, with an air of sarcastic interrogation, "No? Can it be that I am mistaken? Have our greatest doctors no part in this matter? Do they repudiate all sympathy with our young friend's doctrine? This is news to me indeed. I am amazed. Surely our grave philosopher, of perhaps some thirty years of age, does not aspire to teach our Vice-Chancellor and doctors to distrust the evidence of their own senses! Well, well; wonders will never cease. And so it appears, your Highness, my lords, and gentlemen," he continued in his natural voice, "that we are to distrust in future, not only our senses, not only

the authority of our wisest doctors, but of Aristotle and Ptolemy ; and who is to replace our hitherto unquestioned authorities?—Messer Giordano Bruno, an apostate monk of the Dominican Brotherhood ?”

Here Leyson sat down, leaned back in his chair, shut his eyes, and folded his arms. He had played his part more cunningly than Bruno had given him credit for. The Italian felt himself at a thorough disadvantage ; not only because of the novelty of his own doctrine, but because Leyson had been cool and calm throughout ; whereas Bruno felt his blood to be boiling. Naturally excitable, naturally irritable, it is easy to imagine how keenly he was affected by insolence that would have bitterly wounded persons far less sensitive than himself. He remained still for a few minutes, painfully endeavouring to get his brain into working order and recall the arguments that half-an-hour before he had had at his finger's end.

Leyson glanced up at him from his half-shut eyes and said, without taking the trouble to rise from his seat : “ Our young friend is silent. Does he still wish to push his own authority above that of Aristotle and Ptolemy ; or, is he beginning to learn some little deference to age ? ”

“ I will give you authority for authority,” answered Bruno at last. “ You have quoted Ptolemy and Aristotle against me ; I will give you in my support Archimedes, Pythagoras, Epicurus, and Lucretius. But why should I go so far back ? Is not the world

many centuries older now than it was then? Should not our philosophers be more worthy of trust than those of ancient times? If they had but the courage of their convictions, every scientific man whose opinion is worth having would tell you that he sides with Copernicus. Nay, timid as they are, they do not yet deny it. They content themselves with equivocation, not denial. It is easy to see that they do not reject it."

"Do they not indeed?" answered Leyson. "How about Francis Bacon?"

At the name of Francis Bacon there was a murmur of approval among the Vice-Chancellor and professors. Leyson saw that he had made a hit, and improving on the occasion he continued: "Yes, how about Francis Bacon? How about the young philosopher, who, though he is not yet in his thirties, and though Cambridge, and not our university, has the honour of calling him her son, is yet revered by every member of Oxford? What does he say about the discovery of Copernicus? He ridicules the theory and calls its originator a writer of fiction rather than an investigator of nature. Perhaps, since you are a foreigner, you may not have heard of Francis Bacon? But the time will come when the name of Copernicus will be forgotten. I venture to prophesy that the name of Bacon will be immortal."

"I have heard of Bacon," answered Bruno

bitterly, "and I have also seen him. I do not deny his ability, though it is not comparable to that of Copernicus. . . . But he is the meanest of time servers. . . . Being wholly untruthful himself, he cannot be expected to appreciate one who is devoted to truth."

There was a murmur of indignation in the hall, but it was instantly quelled by Leyson, who, resuming the air of forbearing tolerance that he had for the moment discarded, continued, as he leant back in his chair, with half-shut eyes:

"And how about the evidence of our senses? I suppose we must all distrust our senses, must learn to call black white, and that which is stationary in motion. Yes, yes, my beloved pupils," he said, turning to the undergraduates, "take in future Messer Giordano Bruno as your guide. Do not use your power of sight, for that will teach you that the earth is at rest. Do not use your power of touch, for that will point to the same fact. It was rumoured that our young foreigner had openly protested against our too great love for authority, as he termed it. Surely he must have been wrongfully accused? Our too great love for authority! Our dread of our own reason! Fie! fie! He could never have so taught. On the contrary he encourages these tendencies in us to the utmost. He bids us touch not, look not, read not, but follow obediently the precepts of himself!"

"I do bid you distrust the evidence of your senses," burst out Bruno fiercely. "The greatest dolt need but to use his senses to show him their uncertainty."

"And how about our blessed religion?" asked Leyson; though to do him justice, in a tone of greater seriousness and reverence than when controverting Bruno on the other points. "No one can hold this theory without inflicting an open insult on the honour and glory of God."

"An insult to the honour of God!" ejaculated Bruno. "Hear what Copernicus himself has to say on this wise: 'We find in this arrangement what can be discerned in no other scheme, an admirable symmetry of the universe, an harmonious disposition of the orbits. For who could assign to the lamp of this beautiful temple a better position than the centre, whence alone it can illuminate all parts at once. Here the sun, as from a kingly throne, sways the family of orbs that circle around him.' And did not Copernicus dedicate his work to the Pope?"

"Does the Bible tell you that there are more worlds than one?" asked Leyson. "Does it not on the contrary expressly declare that the sun was created to give man light by day and the moon and stars by night?"

"I deny the authority of the Bible," exclaimed Bruno passionately, his long pent-up rage carrying him, as Castelnau had foreseen, far beyond the

bounds of prudence, forcing him to statements that, even apart from prudence, he would not have used had he been in cool blood. He preferred, even to himself, to pass by, shut his eyes, so to speak, to Genesis, and cling the more reverently and ardently to the book of Job.

"Perhaps," said Leyson fiercely, wholly in earnest now, and with no banter in his tone, "you deny the existence of God himself."

"Does the Copernican theory point to that? Does it not rather confirm more than any other system what the Psalmist long ago discovered, 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork.' Deny the existence of God! By the Copernican theory the excellency of God is magnified, not decreased; and the grandeur of His Empire made manifest. For He is glorified, not in one, but in numberless suns; not in one world, but in ten hundred thousand; in infinite globes; so that this faculty of the intellect is not vain or arbitrary that ever will and can add space to space, quantity to quantity, unity to unity, number to number. By this science we are loosened from the chains of a most narrow dungeon, and set at liberty to wander in an august empire; we are removed from imaginary boundaries, and exalted from extreme poverty to the immeasurable riches of an infinite space."

Bruno paused for a few moments, and as he looked round could not but notice the expression of extreme

interest with which the Prince was regarding him. Few thoughtful persons could have failed to feel interest in him at that moment. As he had at last found relief from his rage in words, his irritation and anger became gradually replaced by the intense spiritual enthusiasm which always animated him when he was engrossed with his beloved theory. How could he remember the littleness of spite amid the grandeur of his speculations?

But Leyson felt no admiration for him; only increased bitterness at seeing that he was gaining ground.

"Thou conceited fool!" he burst out, "who wouldst set up thyself and thy mad theory beyond the Bible, beyond Aristotle, beyond the very senses themselves!" Then, turning to Alberto di Alasco, Leyson continued: "O illustrious Prince, let not the words of a mad Dominican monk, a recusant who could not be true even to his own faith, a mere adventurer and babbler of new doctrines; let not the words of such an one weigh with thee beside those of the divine Aristotle. This earth, I declare unto you, upon Aristotle's authority, is stationary, and is the centre of the world. The seven planets, including as such the sun and moon, move round about it in oblique courses to the left; while the outer heaven, or sphere of the stars—composed not of perishable matter, but of divine ether, move from left to right with a perfect and regular motion, returning on

itself, deriving that motion from the accompanying Godhead—that essence which moves things but does not move itself.”

All Bruno's former rage returned as he listened to the description of the system he so hated thus nakedly set forth. He retorted upon Leyson indignantly, passionately; and Leyson returned back with insolent contempt. The altercation increased to unseemly fury. And the Prince, hoping thereby to put an end to what, if allowed to go on, seemed likely to be confined not to words alone, rose silently and left the room, accompanied by his suite. The Vice-Chancellor and doctors felt themselves obliged to follow, for it was their duty to escort the Prince to the various colleges, and they could not but feel that already a longer time had been spent in one college than was fair to the others. And in this way the discussion that poor Bruno had been looking forward to with such eagerness terminated.

Accompanied by one or two gentlemen of the English Court, Bruno returned to his rooms; maddened with Leyson, with himself, with fate. He cursed the day on which he had set foot in Oxford; bitterly reproaching himself for having disregarded the advice of Castelnau. Vainly his friends tried to soothe him. He declared he would leave Oxford the next day, and never enter it again.

It was nearly nine o'clock in the evening, and

Bruno's friends were thinking of taking their departure when a messenger from the Prince craved admittance, and put a note into Bruno's hand. Bruno opened it, and found to his surprise that it was a letter written by the Prince to himself asking him whether he could afford the time to have a quarter of an hour's interview with him ; and if so, would he accompany the messenger at once.

How eagerly Bruno complied with the request ! "Perhaps," he thought, "I have interested His Highness in the theory of Copernicus, in spite of my despicable lack of self-control."

When he was ushered into Alasco's presence he found, somewhat to his surprise, that the Prince was entirely alone. It was by design that Alasco was so, for he had plainly perceived Bruno's unpopularity with the authorities of the University ; and thought that it would be an ill-compliment to them after the magnificence of their reception of him, if he allowed them to know that he had craved a friendly interview from one evidently considered by them in the light of an enemy. He therefore intended the interview to be kept wholly secret, and immediately on Bruno's entrance pledged him not to divulge it.

When Bruno had given the required pledge, Alasco placed a chair for him, and taking one for himself, said with a courteous air of sympathy :

"I fear, Messer Bruno, that the senseless and

insolent contempt cast this morning upon the theory that I can see is very dear to you, must have caused you great annoyance."

"It did," answered Bruno, "and yet I think I am still more annoyed that I allowed myself to be so angered by it. The Copernican theory could not have a more ardent apostle than I; but I would to God it had a more judicious one. I fear I have injured the cause rather than furthered it."

"Nay," answered the Prince courteously; "you reproach yourself unjustly. We must all have the defects of our qualities; and were you more judicious, you would almost certainly be less ardent. Moreover, you certainly had the best of the argument. But one thing I have discovered even from my three days' residence in Oxford."

"What is that?" asked Bruno.

"That Oxford is wholly unfitted for you. I am not alone in this opinion. Fully a week before I came here, the French Ambassador, Castelnau de Mauvissière was speaking to me of you, bitterly regretting that you had been inspired by such an unconquerable desire to visit Oxford. But this, from the position in which M. Castelnau stands to you, you are probably acquainted with already."

"What place is suited for me?" asked Bruno bitterly.

"Marburg," answered the Prince quickly, "Marburg in Hesse-Cassel."

Bruno was surprised at the sudden decisiveness of the answer.

"Yes, Marburg," repeated the Prince. "You have heard of this University, of course."

"Yes," answered Bruno, "I have heard of her, but I am afraid that I have paid but little attention to what I have heard. At all events I cannot recall anything very distinctly about her."

"No other University is so fitted for you; and this is why I sent for you," answered the Prince. "The Landgrave William IV. is the friend of Tycho Brahe, the well-known Danish astronomer, and indeed he is nearly idolised by all astronomers."

"Ah!" said Bruno as he turned a warm grateful look upon the Prince. "If priests and doctors of the University showed me but half the goodness I have ever experienced at the hands of sovereigns and princes, I should have little cause to complain! But though the Landgrave be all you describe him, how can I tell that I shall not find enemies in the doctors of this University as of others?"

"Because," answered the Prince, "the Landgrave is more openly devoted to science than is any other sovereign—or, perhaps I ought to say, than *was* any other sovereign; for, inspired by his example, many kings and reigning princes, especially the King of Denmark, now almost rival the Landgrave in his enthusiasm. No, no; I do not think you will find many enemies at Marburg. Learning of all kinds,

and especially love for astronomy, have become a fashion throughout the whole of Hesse-Cassel."

"I thank your Highness for the advice you have given me, for the interest you have shown in me. It will pain me to leave England; and especially Monsieur and Madame de Castelnau, who could not have shown more goodness to me had I been actually their son. But what of that? I have denied myself wife and child for this beloved theory; I can more easily separate myself from friends."

The Prince regarded him with curiosity, not unmixed with a certain compassion, as he said kindly:

"Young philosopher, have you counted the cost of all this ardour? Will success in promulgating the Copernican theory compensate to you for lack of wife and child, or loving, self-denying friendship?"

"It will," said Bruno, quickly.

He was mortified at finding that the Prince, like Castelnau, evidently considered that Copernicanism—though worthy of study and interest—was not of such imperative importance as to necessitate a man sacrificing the substantial pleasures of life for it.

But the quarter of an hour was now nearly up; and the Prince—having achieved his purpose in commending the University of Marburg to Bruno's consideration—was evidently anxious now to be relieved from his guest's presence, lest by any

chance his unusual desire to be alone should excite any curiosity among his suite. Bruno therefore withdrew, and returned to his rooms. And the next day, he packed up his goods and bade his final farewell to Oxford, after a sojourn of barely three months.

As he returned to the house of Castelnau, he was received with the most touching and sympathetic kindness, both by the Ambassador and his wife. Each was too kind-hearted, each felt too genuine compassion for his mortification to be inclined either in words, or by the faintest insinuation of manner, to imply that worst of all rebukes, "I told you so."

Bruno was deeply grateful for their forbearance, and unburdened himself to them entirely; describing in full the discussion which had ended so unfortunately; the insolence of Leyson's manner, and his own passionate retorts. When he came to his strange interview with the Prince, and his consequent intention of proceeding to the University of Marburg, he took Madame de Mauvissière's hand into his, as he concluded his narrative, and said:

"Ah, dear lady! How can I thank you for your goodness to me during my residence with you. England through your kindness has become like Naples to me, and London like Nola! It will be as much pain to leave your house as if it had been my father's home."

"I too think of leaving England," remarked the Ambassador, breaking in somewhat suddenly after a pause.

"Leaving England?" exclaimed both his wife and Bruno together.

"Yes," answered the Ambassador in a weary tone, "I have been contemplating it ever since I heard of the Duke of Anjou's death; though (turning to his wife), I would not mention it to you, my beloved, for I know what a disappointment it would be to you did not it come to pass. But I think I have really decided now—that is to say, if I can gain my sovereign's permission to return to France. I am an old man, and in many ways older even than my years. I crave with an intensity that I cannot describe for a sight of my native country after my long exile. Moreover I believe that I shall be actually of more use just now in France than in England. The Duke of Anjou's death has finally and entirely put an end to any hopes Elizabeth's subjects may still have entertained as to a union between the two countries. Then in addition I utterly despair of effecting the release of poor Mary Stuart. No! I feel that I am of little good in England just now. And if an old man's brains be not despised by his sovereign I believe I may still hope to be of some assistance to France in the deplorable state in which she now is."

"Ah!" said Bruno, "in that case I am still more

pleased that I have determined to go to Marburg. England is so thoroughly associated in my mind with you and your goodness to me, that I could not live here without you. It would become unbearable to me."

"But you will not have us at Marburg," said Madame Castelnau sadly.

"No ; but I shall have no associations with you at Marburg," answered Bruno.

"And, therefore," said the lady with a certain mixture of playfulness and sadness, "we shall not be missed by you."

"You will never be forgotten by me !" exclaimed Bruno, as he raised her hand fervently to his lips.

During this little colloquy the Ambassador had been silently buried in thought, evidently listening neither to his wife nor Bruno. An expression of grave anxiety was upon his face, and there was silence for fully five minutes after Bruno had ceased speaking. At last Castelnau broke it by turning to his adopted son, and saying anxiously :

"Repeat to me, as far as you remember, the whole discussion between you and Leyson."

His wife touched him in gentle surprise, and said :

"Why, he has already repeated it to us not half-an-hour ago."

"I know, I know ; but I wish to hear it again."

And Bruno told it, slowly and accurately. When he came to his own passionate exclamation, "I deny

the authority of the Bible!" Castelnau interrupted him.

"You are sure you made use of that expression?"

And as Bruno bowed his head in token of assent, Madame Castelnau, seeing the look of grave anxiety that was upon her husband's face, said, with a cry of alarm:

"Ah! you think he is in danger! He ought to fly immediately!"

"Nay, my beloved," said her husband, "do not distress yourself before there is occasion. Nevertheless," he continued, turning to Bruno, "I will not deny that you should be prepared for sudden flight. If this discussion should get wind—and I cannot doubt that it will—you will become a person of more importance than before. The mere notoriety will make your books become likely to be read. Your enemies—and they will be many so far as Oxford is concerned—will eagerly hunt for any heresy they may contain."

"But do they contain any?" asked Madame Castelnau of Bruno, in evident anxiety.

"Nay, dear lady," answered Bruno, soothingly, "I believe not."

"You have read them," said Madame Castelnau, turning to her husband, and evidently thinking his opinion of greater weight than the Italian's; "you have read them. Do you think that they contain anything capable of being construed into heresy by his enemies?"

"My wife," answered Castelnau, "what an enemy

seeks for eagerly he is tolerably certain to discover. Nevertheless, I see no need for excessive anxiety. In England, or, indeed in any Protestant country, Giordano's life is safer than in a Catholic kingdom, especially Italy. The Protestant's zeal is more excited by Catholicism than by scientific discovery. It is only when personal rancour is added to religious zeal, as in this case, that a man runs much risk by devoting himself to science. In the name of all that is prudent, Giordano," continued the Ambassador, turning to Bruno impressively, "never venture into Italy after the publication of these books. That, joined to the fact that you have cast off the gown of your Order, will form too powerful, too ready an excuse for the greatest exercise of religious ferocity. This is why I am so anxious that you shall not lecture, not publish, not do anything to attract attention. Depend upon it there are Catholics now in Italy, members of your own convents, members of the various universities at which you have studied, in whose breasts has long been smouldering a half-conscious hatred, which one little draught of air, one little spark of fire would quickly kindle into a flame. Bethink you, Giordano, in time. It is not so easy to extinguish a great fire as it is to set it alight."

"But you think he is not in great danger in England?" said Madame Castelnau, half imploringly, as if she were longing to be told that there was no cause for anxiety.

"Not in England," answered her husband. "But for a common cause enemies will sometimes join hands. It is an occurrence by no means rare to find men who hate each other forget for a time even their hatred in order to vent their fury upon an object hated by both more than each is by the other. Thus, Calvin was assisted by certain Catholics in his persecution of Servetus. I am not without fear that in the same manner Leyson may join hands with the various enemies Giordano must have among the Dominicans, and forget their hatred of each other amidst their greater hatred of a common enemy."

Then as a sob burst from Madame Castelnau, the Ambassador said gently :

"Nay, my beloved, do not agitate yourself too much. There is a brighter side to most questions; there certainly is to this. For may we not hope, that after her unwonted excitement, Oxford, including even Leyson, may go to sleep again, and forget, not only the Copernican theory, but even the impetuosity of this hopelessly imprudent young philosopher, for whom we both have such an affection?"

The Ambassador put his hand, half playfully, half affectionately, on Bruno's shoulder. He did not wish to agitate Madame Castelnau, by continuing longer in the same grave strain. But he had felt it a duty to warn Bruno as he had done. He might never have so fitting an opportunity. And the sense that a separation between him and his adopted son

was pending, made him determined to use what influence he had, while there was yet time.

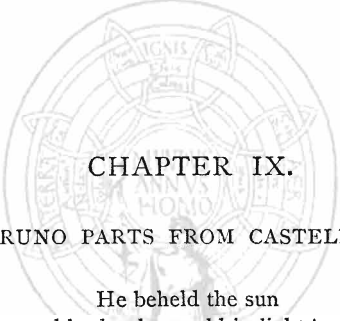
Bruno looked gratefully at the Ambassador, but would not answer. He was quite willing to risk even life itself for his beloved theory; but had sufficient delicacy of feeling to perceive how ungrateful and ill-timed would be any protestations of his devotion to his cause just now. Seeing that Madame Castelnau was still agitated, and rightly judging that the wife would prefer being alone with her husband, he made the excuse that he was tired after his journey, quietly turned away and went to his own room.



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CHAPTER IX.

BRUNO PARTS FROM CASTELNAU.

He beheld the sun
Rise up and bathe the world in light ! He looked—
Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
And ocean's liquid map, beneath him lay
In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
And in their silent faces did he read
Unutterable love.

The Excursion.

WITHIN three months from the conversation related at the close of the last chapter, Castelnau, having received the requisite permission from his sovereign, took his final farewell of England, and once more set forth for Paris, accompanied by his wife and family and the son of his adoption. Bruno intended to remain in France only a few months, and then proceed to Marburg. But as the time of separation drew near, fully conscious though he had always been of the affection he entertained for the Ambassador and his wife, the sorrow he felt at the idea of

parting surprised even himself. His three years' sojourn in England; his greater knowledge of the world; his intimate acquaintance with the flower and chivalry of English society, had all tended to give him a clearer perception of the amazing vice of France. And above the heads of his countrymen, towering like a moral giant over vicious pigmies, was the great Ambassador of England. The more Bruno compared Castelnau with other Frenchmen of this period, the more he wondered at him; so unselfish, so courageous, so entirely sincere.

The return of the Ambassador was an event on every lip. Hated by those whose consciences smote them, and these were many; beloved by those who were lovers of virtue, and these, alas! were very few; he was feared by all. None could afford to despise him. The "War of the three Henrys," as it was called—Henry of France, Henry of Guise, Henry of Navarre—was now at its height; and there was scarcely a Parisian, if indeed a Frenchman, who did not ask himself: "In the event of King Henry's death, which of the two Henrys will Castelnau support?" Once Castelnau was asked the question. He made no hesitation. "Henry of Navarre," he answered.

"But he is a Huguenot, and you are a Catholic. What reason have you for favouring an alien religion rather than your own?"

"Two. First, Henry of Navarre is the rightful

heir, the next in succession ; and that—other things being equal—is a circumstance of paramount importance. The other is, that he is really the nobler character, more likely to make a worthy sovereign.”

“And you will take no pains to extirpate this heresy of the Huguenots? Will you give no support to the persecution of the Huguenots at the hands of the Catholics?”

“None. I have seen the powerlessness of persecution: it brings much misery; it does no good. The only sword I would wish to have employed is the spiritual one: that is, the good example of Catholics. Charity, earnest entreaty, pious works, are better means to extirpate heresies and restore such as have erred to the right path, than any temporal sword which destroys and sheds our neighbours’ blood; especially when matters are come to that extremity that the more persons endeavour to remove the evil by violent means, the more they increase it.”

Bruno was present at the interview between Castelnau and his Catholic questioner, and failed not to notice the scowl of hatred with which the latter regarded the late Ambassador as he left the room. Bruno commented upon it, and asked affectionately whether he thought that this interview might lead to disastrous results.

“I can hardly tell,” answered Castelnau. “But what matter if it should? I am an old man; my

term of years has nearly run out. Does it greatly matter if I die to-day or to-morrow; this year or next year?"

But though the neutral part that Castelnau had determined that he would henceforth assume in the religious wars had the effect of embittering the Catholics against him, it by no means conciliated the Huguenots. They had so long experienced cruelty at the hands of the Catholics, that they could not believe in the possibility of being treated with mercy. It seemed to them easier to suppose that Castelnau must be playing some double game.

Henry of Navarre, however, felt full reliance in the faith of Castelnau; and availed himself of every opportunity to bear witness to it. On one occasion in particular, when he was at a meeting of the Huguenots, one old, trusted adviser rose, and said:

"I entreat your Highness to beware of Castelnau de Mauvissière, and should it please God to give you to reign over us, to remember that Castelnau is a Catholic, and therefore a sworn enemy to our faith."

"I have known Castelnau de Mauvissière since I was a child," answered Henry of Navarre, "and, Catholic though he be, I know that there is one thing he holds dearer to his honour than his Catholicism."

"And what is that?"

"Fidelity to his vows! Never fear but that if he swear fealty to me, he will be sure to keep it."

As the inevitable hour of separation drew nigh, Bruno felt more than ever attracted to this man of faithful word and loyal soul. It seemed to him as if he had never fully appreciated him until now. Still the parting was inevitable—or at all events Bruno believed it to be so—and therefore it was of no use to defer it longer.

On the evening preceding the day he had fixed for his departure, Bruno asked Castelnau to take a long walk with him; and the Ambassador consented, for notwithstanding his sixty and odd years of life, he was still fully capable of walking six or eight miles in a day.

As they set forth, it would be difficult to say which was the most depressed. Each felt it to be a solemn moment, for each felt that this was the last walk they would take together. More than this, though nothing was said, each knew that the other felt as himself in the certainty that this parting would be final. Castelnau walked on, saying nothing; looking neither to one side nor the other, absorbed in thoughts that were the reverse of inspiriting. But to Bruno, with that subjective, strongly emotional character of his, there was not a leaf, nor a blade of grass, nor a single feature of Nature that did not seem in sympathy with himself and his grief. It was always so with him. In all his strongly-felt moods, whether of sorrow or happiness, he experienced a subtle intercommunion with Nature which soothed him strangely, though

scarcely consciously. A withered leaf was wafted away from its fellows by the autumn wind, and it spoke to him of his own parting with Castelnau; a bird's feather falling to the ground whispered the same tale; the sobbing of the wind through a thicket they had reached, sobbed as it seemed with him; nay, even the golden sun, sinking in majestic splendour, was symbolic of his own farewell. And yet but partly so. The earth would welcome the sun again; he, Castelnau, never.

They walked in silence for nearly an hour, and then Castelnau, laying his hand on Bruno's arm, said slowly:

"Giordano, this will be our farewell walk. Never again shall we meet. You feel this with me."

"Yes," answered Bruno, in a low tone. He felt more for Castelnau than himself; yet to an outsider it would have certainly seemed that Castelnau, with a wife whom he fondly loved, and children that were dear to him, had a less lonely and sorrowful prospect than Bruno, departing solitary and alone to a country that he had never seen.

But Bruno was a younger man than Castelnau, and by nature a much more sanguine one. He loved his fellows dearly—how could he do otherwise, grateful and warm-hearted as he was?—but he loved Nature more. Just now, as Castelnau had finished speaking, Bruno happened to glance up and see in faint, dim outline the evening star.

"Courage!" he thought to himself; "the stars can be seen at Marburg as well as in Paris."

"Giordano," said the Ambassador, breaking the silence again after another pause, "Giordano, if I had been told, three years ago, the sorrow I should feel to-day in parting with thee, I do not think I should have believed it. Even now, I can hardly account to myself for the extreme affection thou excitest in me. Thou art so much younger than I am, and we have few, if any, tastes we share in common."

"You love me for my father's sake," said Bruno gently.

"I should think it a duty to render you assistance, did you require it, for your father's sake. But my love for you springs from a different cause than this. Indeed, before I saw you, I was actually prejudiced against you. I did not approve of your throwing off the gown of your Order—I thought you by no means a worthy son of my beloved friend; but now, Giordano, I verily believe I love thee better than thy father. What can be the cause of it?"

"Nay," said Bruno, half in sport, half in anxiety; "do not analyse the cause too curiously, or you will assuredly find that I form a most insufficient one. It is enough that you do love me."

"If you loved me half as well, you would not leave me; you would remain with me, and be to

me as a son, till my own sons are old enough to take your place."

"Nay, *padre mio*, if you are ill, send for me ; I will come at once. But while you are well, and happy in the love of wife and child, I feel my duty to call me elsewhere. That," pointing to the sky, "is the object of my devotion."

Bruno, as we know, had almost resolved not again to allude to those deeper feelings which had excited so little interest and sympathy in Castelnau. But in those higher, more solemn moods, such as we all feel in moments of parting, resolutions that are principally the offspring of mortification or vanity are apt to be forgotten. We stand alone, for the last time, with our friend ; soul goes out to soul, and unreal barriers are broken down. Castelnau, too, must speak as he feels, show no interest that was not genuine, but also assume no greater lack of interest than he actually experiences. All he said now, was :

"Nay, Giordano ; something tells me that thou wilt not be with me when I am dying. Either I shall have no time to send, or you will be unable to come. No. Here we shall meet no more. Shall we meet elsewhere ? I believe we may. But perhaps not till centuries are past, and purgatorial fires have cleansed us from the sins we have committed in this world. Then perhaps we may meet in that brighter clime where parting is no more ; up there," added

Castelnau, pointing to the heavens, "beyond, high up above the very stars you love so much." Then, as Bruno made a gesture of utter dissent, Castelnau said: "You do not believe in annihilation?"

"Surely not. I believe in nothing less. Not a particle of matter is ever destroyed. From that withered leaf floating in the air up to the sun itself, nothing is destroyed. I believe in infinite, ever varying change, but in no annihilation."

"But you believe that we shall meet again, in a region of unending bliss—up yonder—above the stars?"

"Whether we shall meet again I know not. But that this region is localised, and above the sky, I entirely deny; it is not only *unbelief* I feel on this wise; it is *disbelief*. As well might you expect those in Heaven to fly to us as we to fly to them. Ascending and descending are all one. This earth is no more circumferential to the other globes than they are to us; nor are they more central to us than we to them. None of them is more above the stars than are we; as they no less than we are covered over or comprehended by the sky. Behold us therefore free from envying them! Behold us delivered from the vain anxiety and foolish care of desiring to enjoy that good afar off, which, in as great a degree, we may possess so near at hand, and even at home. Behold us freed from the terror that they should fall upon us any more than that we should

hope that we might fall upon them ; for this earth keeps to her prescribed course as those worlds do to theirs. All is ruled by One Law—Divine, Eternal.”

“And you can find comfort in this dreary mechanical uniformity, in this dread necessity, changeless in itself, incapable of being touched by solicitation ?”

“How can I help finding comfort ?” answered Bruno. “From this contemplation, this perception of the Unity that runs through everything I am taught never to be dispirited by any sudden or strange accidents through excess of fear or pain, nor ever be elated by any prosperous event through excess of joy or pleasure. Did we but consider and comprehend all this, to so much further consideration and comprehension should we be carried as would enable us to obtain happiness by that science which in other sciences is sought after in vain. This is that philosophy which opens the senses, which satisfies the mind, which enlarges the understanding, and which leads man to the only true beatitude of which he is capable, according to his natural state and constitution ; for it frees him from the solicitous pursuit of pleasure and from anxious apprehension of pain, making him enjoy the good things of the present hour ; and not to fear more than he hopes from the future ; since that same Providence, or Fate, or Fortune which causes the vicissitudes of our

being, will not let us know more of the one than the other."

"Stop, stop, Giordano," exclaimed Castelnau; "I do not think I comprehend thee. Do you really find comfort in this belief, in this certainty of yours that Providence, or Fate, or Fortune, as you call it, is deaf to all solicitation; that Man and Nature are subjected to the same Eternal Law? Is this your belief?"

"It is more than my belief," answered Bruno, with a mixture of simplicity and fervour, "it is my life. I delight to feel that I am a part of Nature, that everything around me is mysteriously related to myself; that animals and plants, and the very air and ocean, are no more created solely for my use than am I for theirs, but that we are mutually dependent one upon the other; and that even if one particle of matter were capable of annihilation, its loss would make itself felt through the entire universe. Both my body and my mind seem to me ennobled when I recall that there is not a particle which is not eternal, changing only its forms and not itself."

"And to me," answered Castelnau, "this belief of yours, so far from being of comfort, is dreary in the extreme. Nay, it is more than dreary; it is wholly hideous. This gigantic machine, the earth, opening itself to give forth seed; to be changed into grain; to be changed into animal; to be changed into man; to be resolved into elements; and then to

start afresh the never-ending cycle. This eternal sum of Matter, changing only in its forms; this Death succeeding Birth, and Birth succeeding Death; what is the meaning of it all? Still more, how can you gain happiness, even less nobility, from such a faith? Compare it with the Christian's belief in a Divine Father watching over us, protecting us, listening to our prayers, answering them when we do not ask amiss; punishing us for our sins here, and then cleansing us from them in Purgatory, so as to prepare us for the pure bliss of His own dwelling."

"But I can see no proof of it. I cannot make myself believe with my heart what to my intellect seems wholly imaginary."

"But you would be glad if you could believe it? It is the comfort you find in this belief that astonishes me; not the belief itself. You would surely be happier could you worship a Heavenly Father whom you could comprehend and love."

"Show me any of the processes of Nature that are like those of a father to his child. I do not see one. No, if anything is certain to me it is that God does not work after the human method. Inscrutable are His ways, wholly beyond our comprehension."

"But you would rejoice could you only believe, with the faithful, that He is your Father."

"I am not sure that I should. He would then be only a greater *man*. A God whom I could comprehend I could not worship."

“But you surely cannot worship what you do not comprehend?”

“On the contrary, it is only by deliberately and intentionally keeping before my eyes the Mystery, the incomprehensible Unity that runs through everything that enables me to keep alive a spirit of worship. How could we reconcile the idea of a Father with that of death, pain, injustice? But it is not difficult to understand these when we remember that we are not in our essence distinct from every other portion of Nature. Moreover, when we remember how infinite is the Universe, how small and insignificant is man, we must clearly perceive that we must not expect to comprehend that Great Mystery which we do but dimly feel. Doubtless at first sight we are apt to be dubious and perplexed; but when we more profoundly consider the essence and the accidents of that matter into which we are mutable, we shall find that there is no death attending ours or the substance of any other thing, since nothing is substantially diminished, but only everything changing form by its perpetual motion in this infinite space. And seeing everything is subjected to a good and most efficient Cause, we ought neither to believe nor hope otherwise than that, as every thing proceeds from what is good, so the whole must needs be good in a good state, and to a good purpose, the contrary of which appears only to them that consider no more than is just before

them, as the beauty of an edifice is not manifest to one who has seen only one small portion of the same. We need fear not, therefore, that what is accumulated in this world should, by the malice of some wandering spirit, or by the wrath of some evil genius, be shaken and scattered as it were into smoke or dust beyond the starry mantle of the firmament; nor that the nature of things can otherwise come to be annihilated in substance than is the air contained in the concavity of a bubble become nothing when the bubble is burst; because we know that in the world one thing ever succeeds another, there being no ends, limits, margins, that keep back or subtract any portion of the infinite abundance of things. Thence it is that the earth and sea are ever equally fertile, and thence the perpetual brightness of the sun; eternal fuel circulating to eternal devouring fires, and a supply of waters being eternally furnished to the evaporated seas, from the infinite and ever-renewing magazine of matter; so that Democritus and Epicurus, who affirmed the infinity of things with their perpetual variableness and restoration, were far more in the light than he who endeavoured to account for the same appearance of the universe, by making homogeneous particles of matter ever and numerically to succeed one another."

Bruno had become absorbed in his subject, as was the fashion with him, and had entirely forgotten that he was speaking to Castelnau; had partly forgotten

indeed how the conversation had arisen. He was recalled to outer consciousness by Castelnau turning homeward.

"I have not angered you?" said Giordano.

"Nay, my son," answered the Ambassador gently. "But, by the time we reach home, I shall have done enough walking. Besides, it is getting dark, and Madame Castelnau will be wondering what has become of us."

They walked on in silence till they reached home. Madame Castelnau received them, and the evening was spent in mournful conversation. Bruno could not shake off the consciousness that he would never see his kind protectors again. The parting was to take place that night; for Bruno had to start very early in the morning, and would not hear that his departure should in any way disturb the regularity of the household.

In the sixteenth century, the forms of deference, from the young to the old, were more carefully observed than with us. After Bruno had taken farewell of Madame Castelnau, he knelt down before her husband.

"Oh, my father's early friend," he said, "who for three years hast been the truest friend and father to me, bless me before I go! If I have not thy sanction for my undertaking, let me at least hear that I do not anger thee by what I do!"

"Heaven and the blessed saints preserve thee,

my son!" said the old man in a broken voice. "No, assuredly, I am not angered with thee. Nay, it may be that thou art impelled to go by some Higher Wisdom than I can fathom. It may be, that what to my poor judgment appears like imprudence and folly, is, in reality, a mission destined for thee by the All-High. Each one of us, I believe, is sent into the world for some special purpose, to do a work that he and none other is to do. It may be that God, in His infinite wisdom, has ordained that Science shall have her martyrs as well as Religion. It may be, that a knowledge that there are more worlds than one, or that the Universe is governed by Law, may have a higher effect upon humanity than mere acquaintance with the doctrines themselves would seem to bestow. It may be that they are destined to interest mankind, to raise them above mere lust and greed; above all, to lessen their brutality, their animosity one against another. It may be that, in the larger subjects of science and metaphysics, men will forget to wrangle upon their petty differences and narrow sects, which can do no good, and assuredly do much harm."

"Heaven bless you for those words!" said Bruno. "If I have no mission, I certainly believe that I have."

They parted; but in the early dawn of the next morning, when Bruno arose and quietly went out at the door, he found Castelnau awaiting him. The

old man had been unable to refrain from taking a last look at his adopted son. They clasped hands and embraced, but neither could speak; and after Bruno left the house, each kept the other in view as long as the distance and the indistinct light would permit:—Bruno, glancing back at the revered head he loved so well in its gray strength and sober wisdom; Castelnau gazing ahead with solicitude and foreboding at the slowly retreating form, which, though it had now nearly attained the middle period of life, belonged to one who in appearance was still in early maturity; and in mind, so far as imprudence, daring, and heedlessness were concerned, little more able to take care of himself, than a lad of eighteen.



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CHAPTER X.

BRUNO IN GERMANY.

He that feeds men serveth few ;
He serves all who dares be true.

EMERSON.

MARBURG, the place of Bruno's destination, is a place of singular interest, not only from the natural beauty of its scenery, but from its historical associations. It is built chiefly on a hill, crowned by a stately burg or castle, the residence of the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel ; and at the base of the hill extends the lovely valley of the Lahn. **It is rich** in its possession of several ecclesiastical edifices of various degrees of grandeur, the most magnificent of which is the fine Gothic church of St. Elizabeth, begun in 1235 and completed in 1283 ; this church was erected in honour of St. Elizabeth of Hungary, wife of a Landgrave of Hesse. The University was founded in 1527, and soon became the most flourishing in Protestant Europe. According to some authorities

it was the work of Philip the Magnanimous, a Landgrave of Hesse; in the opinion of others it originated with a French monk, belonging to the Franciscan order, Lambert d'Avignon. It may be that the latter suggested what the Landgrave carried out. And it was in this university that the famous conference of 1529, between Luther and Zwinglius, took place, on the subject of Transubstantiation. So that, for many reasons, Marburg was a place likely to excite more than usual interest in one so impressionable, both to natural beauty and historical associations as was Bruno.

The Neapolitan had been depressed to an extent very rare with him, during the whole of his journey from Paris to Marburg; and this depression was increased by the news that reached him of the death of his beloved friend, Philip Sidney, at the Battle of Zutphen. To Bruno's impressionable nature, it seemed that this depression augured but ill for any success he had anticipated in his much-looked-for visit to Marburg; and he began to doubt if he had acted wisely in leaving Castelnau. Still, it was too late to return now, or at all events he thought it so; so he braced himself to conquer, if possible, his depression. His efforts were not without reward. Depression was a malady by no means native to him; and, by the time that he had actually arrived in Marburg, he had sufficiently recovered his natural tone to be able to feel real enjoyment at the first view of

the picturesque town with its beautiful surroundings. He slept soundly, and awoke refreshed. And, what was more than all, he found, when presenting on the following day his letter of introduction to the Landgrave, that that Prince fully justified the description given of him by the Polish Prince, Alasco.

William the Fourth of Hesse lavished upon the grateful Neapolitan the most flattering attentions, inviting him to the Court almost every day; discoursing to him upon Astronomy, acquainting him with the conclusions of Tycho Brahe; sympathising with him in his enthusiasm for Copernicus; in a word, proving himself in all ways to be a Prince, "who," (in the words of Bruno himself), "trusted more to his own judgment, than in blind submission to authority; and thus prevented people from following too servilely Aristotle and Ptolemy." It need not be pointed out that higher praise than this from Bruno could not be given.

The Neapolitan had been a resident in Marburg not more than a few days, when the Landgrave suggested that he should introduce himself to Pierre Nigidius, the Rector of the University. Bruno eagerly complied with the suggestion; longing, though scarcely daring to hope, after his previous experiences, that he might find as much favour with the Doctor as with the Prince.

It was not so to be! With scarcely an exception, throughout the whole of his strange career, there was

not a Doctor of a University in whom Bruno did not seem to inspire feelings almost approaching aversion ; as there was not a Royal personage who escaped being drawn towards him, by an attraction that was little short of fascination. The mutual antagonism between Bruno and the doctors of universities may be partly accounted for by the undisguised, and certainly unjust, depreciation of Bruno towards Aristotle ; but the dislike with which he inspired the Rector of the University of Marburg cannot be explained in this way, since Aristotle had no servile worshippers there.

Pierre Nigidius was a starch, formal, pedantic-looking man, such as, unfortunately for Bruno, were the majority of doctors of universities in those days ; and almost before he had opened his lips, the Neapolitan, always too violent in his likes and dislikes, had conceived an aversion for him. Still the interview passed off without any unseemly interruption. And on the 26th of July, 1586, Giordano Bruno was duly matriculated in the quality of Doctor of Theology. He did not however intend to teach theology. His degree was simply a matter of form necessary to be gone through before he could gain the object so dear to his heart ; to be a teacher of science and philosophy, with especial reference to the doctrine of Copernicus. He had dreaded lest some untoward event might interfere with his possession of this much desired title ; but now that it was actually

bestowed upon him, all seemed fair sailing henceforth. At last it appeared to the Neapolitan that his future career was determined. He would pass his days at Marburg, happy in the friendship of its enlightened Landgrave, and earn an honourable competence by lecturing on those theories of Copernicus to which his life was dedicated.

Within a short period from his matriculation, he sent in his petition to be allowed to be one among the other doctors who were to lecture upon philosophy. He regarded this petition as a mere form to which a formal assent seemed a necessary consequence. After he had written it, and sent it by a messenger, he went, as was usual with him, to spend the evening with the Landgrave. That Prince, on hearing from Bruno what he had done, signified his approval, and evidently thought with the latter that the written request for permission was but a necessary formula to be gone through; and that assent was beyond doubt.

Judge then the amazement of both, when, an hour or so afterwards, a letter was handed to Bruno which ran as follows:

"The Rector has received Messer Giordano Bruno's request to be allowed to lecture on philosophy before the members of the University of Marburg, and regrets that he is compelled, through grave reasons, to refuse the requisite permission."

The olive complexion of the Neapolitan was suddenly flushed with a hue so crimson that it bordered on purple. His eyes flashed as he gave the letter to the Prince, who read it in genuine amazement.

"For grave reasons!" he said. "What can these reasons be?"

"Reasons!" echoed Bruno bitterly. "Does your Highness expect to find *reasons* in the breast of a doctor of a university? Have I not told you my former experiences? I have never yet met with any doctor, with any professor, with any lecturer at a university who was not a cruel, tyrannical, ignorant pedant, hating the learning he was too indolent to try and comprehend. Reasons! If he is capable of *reasons* at all—which I doubt—I believe him to be far more governed by prejudice; they can only be because I am an opponent of Aristotle, that pedantic idol of all pedantic fools!"

"You are mistaken, Messer Bruno," remarked the Landgrave in a quiet, though slightly displeased tone. "Our Rector is not the ignorant fool you imagine; if he were, he would he not be at the head of this university. And as for our university herself, she follows no authority—even that of Aristotle—servilely. Are you sure that there is no mistake? May not some enemy have slandered you? Or have you been guilty of any indiscretions in your youth that may be construed into worse than indiscretions, through scarcely intentional exaggeration?"

"Your Highness is acquainted with the whole of my life," Bruno burst out, with a mixture of passion and haughtiness. "The only folly, the only indiscretion I committed in my youth was that of embracing a religious life that I was unfitted for. I threw off the gown of my Order, as I have told you before now; this might justifiably bring odium on me were I in Italy, but cannot surely be considered a crime in Germany."

"I feel sure that there must be some mistake," said the Landgrave. "I should advise you to go to the Rector to-morrow, and entreat him to explain himself more fully; so that, at least, you may have a chance to clear yourself. If he should refuse, tell him that it is my wish that he shall explain himself. I dislike all charges that are couched in language so vague as to leave the accused no possibility of understanding, much less refuting, what is brought against him."

"I will not wait till to-morrow," exclaimed Bruno, with vehemence; "I will force him into explanations to-night." And before the Landgrave could interpose, he was gone.

With eager, rapid strides, Bruno took his way to the private rooms of the Rector, and demanded to see him. He received as answer that it was beyond the official time, and that the Rector was engaged with guests. "Would the Messere call again on the next day, between such and such an hour?"

"My business will not wait," answered Bruno, as he strode past the astonished porter ; and, guided by the sound of voices, entered the room in which sat Pierre Nigidius, surrounded by several guests. Throwing the letter on the ground before the Rector, Bruno cried in a voice unsteady from its passion :

"I come to demand explanations of a refusal as insulting as it is unjust."

"Peace, Messer Bruno," said the Rector in a low tone. "Do you not see that we are not alone? Peace! if not for the sake of my dignity, at least for your own."

"There shall be no peace till you have explained yourself," cried Bruno. Then, taking up the letter, he turned to the assembled guests and said: "Gentlemen, it is known to most of you here, that I am a matriculated Doctor of your University. In that quality I craved permission to lecture upon philosophy, deeming that a request so customary could meet with nothing but the customary permission. Listen to the answer I receive instead, and then judge if my indignation be inexcusable: '*The Rector has received Messer Giordano Bruno's request to be allowed to lecture on philosophy before the members of the University, and regrets that he is compelled through grave reasons to refuse the requisite permission.*' I come now before you all to demand an explanation of a refusal so extraordinary, couched in language so insulting."

There was a murmur among the guests as of a certain hesitating acquiescence in the justice of Bruno's claim. But the Rector, who, in spite of his formality and pedantry, was by no means wanting in dignity, drawing himself up to his full height, said, in that tone of quiet, downward inflection, which carries so much more impressiveness and weight with it than excited passion :

"It is not my custom to treat of official matters out of official hours. If you do not leave now, Messer Bruno, when I request you to do so, I shall be under the painful necessity of having you removed by force."

Poor Bruno ! what could he do ? He felt himself to be one against many. He looked around among the guests, to see if there were any among them who would be inclined to side with him. But the half hesitating sympathy that they had shown towards him had been crushed in the bud by the dignified decisiveness of the Rector ; by the side of which the angry excitability of the passionate Neapolitan had shown to singular disadvantage. Then, were not the guests old and valued friends of the Rector ? Had they ever known him guilty of like harshness before ? And was not the Neapolitan a mere foreigner, possibly an adventurer, of whom little or nothing was known ? Doubtless, the Rector would not have acted thus had not he been veritably guided by the "grave reasons" he alleged.

Bruno saw that unless he left, the Rector would carry out his threat, and have him ignominiously removed from the house. Still trembling with rage and excitement, he said in an unsteady voice which he tried vainly to control :

“I leave, but never to enter your University again. Henceforth my name shall be no more written amongst its members.”

He left and went to his own rooms. He was not only angry, but cruelly, bitterly disappointed. He had expected so much from his connection with the University of Marburg; and to find now that all his expectations were crushed, his hopes vanished like a dream, was too hard to be borne. He could not bear to look at the University. Nay, he took such a dislike to Marburg itself, that even his friendship with the Landgrave could not make it endurable to him, and in a few days he determined to bid it a final adieu.

He wrote, preparatory to his departure, a full account of this unfortunate episode to Castelnau; admitting, with his accustomed honesty, the aversion he had felt for the Rector on first seeing him, which, added Bruno, “I may have, though quite unintentionally, betrayed to him. Beyond this, I cannot conceive what are the ‘grave reasons’ he alleges in excuse for his refusal.” Castelnau wrote back an answer full of generous sympathy. He suggested as a solution that the Oxford Doctor, Leyson, on hearing of Bruno’s intention to visit Marburg, may have put

himself into communication with Pierre Nigidius, who, already unfavourably disposed towards Bruno, was only too ready to discover excuse for evincing his hatred towards him. Bruno accepted this solution as probable; but he never obtained certain evidence on the point. To the day of his death he was in ignorance whether he had been really slandered, or whether the "grave reasons" of the Rector of Marburg were only a convenient cloak for his own personal dislike.

And now, for the next three or four years, we find Bruno wandering through various provinces in Germany, devoting himself to his beloved pursuit, with results that were occasionally pleasant, though for the most part quite otherwise. But, speaking generally, his experiences during these years in the various universities so closely resembled the experiences of previous years, that I should but weary the reader did I attempt any detailed description. Doubtless the anger and malice he excited in so many breasts were partly his own doing. He was not only an ardent and unselfish, but a passionate lover of Truth; and I think a passionless love of Truth is in the long run far more conducive of benefit, as well to the subject as to the object. He was a poet more than a philosopher, and was without that calm philosophic conviction of the omnipotence of Truth that made Galileo—according to the well-known legend—quietly remark, more to himself than aloud,

in answer to the puerile assertions of his tormentors, '*But the earth moves, for all that.*' Truth, with Bruno, was a beloved mistress that must be passionately defended by her worshippers. Insult he retorted to with insult; and even those who have a thorough sympathy with his character and opinions are forced to admit that, if he did much to advance the doctrines of Copernicus, he also did a little to retard them. Then in addition to this love for abstract Truth, he loved with, if possible, even an intenser fervour, truth in the more common concrete sense of the term. He had a hatred of a lie, whether direct or implied. He disliked religious intolerance; but, as I have before pointed out, he disliked conventionalism and hypocrisy far more. Nay, hypocrisy lashed him to fury; and in this sixteenth century, with which we are now dealing, hypocrisy was rife. Bruno declares—and his assertion is fully borne out by the conclusions of the more philosophic historians of our own day—that religious intolerance was far more often than not a mere cloak for that indolent conventionalism which will not exert itself to comprehend unpalatable doctrines, or for that more defined hypocrisy which, from cowardice, is not ashamed to deny or even openly assail what is fully perceived to be incapable of real refutation.

On leaving Marburg, Bruno went to Wittenberg, the home of Luther. He was received here with the greatest cordiality; most probably on account of the

esteem he was known to feel for that Reformer, whose memory, notwithstanding that he had now been dead some forty or fifty years, was still held in sacred and affectionate recollection by the good Wittenbergers. Bruno expressed, of course, no particular sympathy with the religious opinions of the Lutherans. The sole cause of his admiration of Luther lay in the honesty and courage he felt that the Reformer possessed in common with himself, and the dislike they equally and mutually evinced against the teaching of the schoolmen. The two years Bruno passed in Wittenberg seem to have been fairly free from those humiliating episodes, partly the fruit of misfortune, partly that of his own fault, that interrupted his pursuits at other places. There was at Wittenberg a certain freedom of discussion and love of letters that delighted Bruno. In his enthusiastic way he described it as the "Athens of Germany;" and on leaving it addressed the Academy thus :

"You have not questioned me of my faith; you only inquired whether I was of a peaceful and benevolent disposition. You have permitted me to be simply a friend of wisdom, a lover of the Muses. What though with you philosophy has no end, no means; what though in your sober, pure, and primitive piety, you seem to prefer the ancient physics and mathematics; you have for all that allowed me to teach a new system. You have never been irritated with me. You have conducted yourselves like sages,

with humanity and urbanity, with a sincere desire to oblige and assist. Far from restraining liberty of thought, and soiling your reputation for hospitality, you have treated the foreigner, the stranger, the proscribed, as a citizen, as a friend. You have allowed him through the proceeds of his lessons to earn enough to preserve him from poverty, You have refused to listen to all the calumnies spread against me during the two years that I have passed within your walls. You have loaded me with honours. Young and old, you have pressed round me to listen to me. . . . I believe the teaching of the great Luther is now bearing fruit in the free and generous spirit of you, courageous students of Wittenberg."

An expression of admiration for Luther, delivered so publicly and ostentatiously, was a dangerous experiment in the sixteenth century, and one which the Catholics treasured up against him in combination with his other offences.

From Wittenberg, Bruno went to Prague; but the University was Catholic, and even he, imprudent as he was, dared not stay long there. Thence he proceeded to the Court of Brunswick and University of Helmstadt, where he experienced the treatment that almost always fell to his share; that is to say, he was received with the greatest cordiality by the Princes and a few of the principal members of the aristocracy, but was hated by the priests and doctors of the University. In 1589, he was charged with com-

pleting the education of the young Duke Henri Jules, with whom and with the Court in general he was so charmed that he exclaimed : " Surely it must be Providence and not chance that has brought me here."

Nevertheless, to one less ardent and grateful than Bruno it would scarcely appear that Providence favoured him here more than elsewhere. He had not been lecturing three months at Helmstadt, when the chief of the clergy, Boethus, excommunicated him ; and he had scarcely commenced his studies with the heir presumptive when the reigning Duke died, and thus the young Prince, having to devote himself to the duties of his position, had no time for study. Bruno was chosen to pronounce the funeral oration over the late sovereign ; and the extreme praise he pronounced upon him excited in the minds of the various Catholics, who from many countries were now directing their attention to him, almost as much indignation as when he had so ostentatiously expressed his admiration for Luther.

At the end of 1590, we find Bruno at Frankfort, an ancient and free town, and singularly tolerant in all matters of doctrinal opinion, entertaining freely Jews, Catholics, and Protestants. Bruno lodged in a Carmelite monastery, whose prior—a rare exception among priors of those days—had an immense admiration for his genius and learning, though he was somewhat dubious as to his religious opinions. Bruno found employment in the well-known printing

house of Weichels ; and it was during his residence in Frankfort that three of his Latin works were published. His sojourn here, too, gave him opportunity to converse with several travellers from the various countries of Europe ; to acquaint himself with the new books that had been published ; and above all, to introduce himself to many Italians, and subsequently to Venetian booksellers, who assembled at the fairs which were held twice a year. The writers of the time boast, not undeservedly, that these fairs were of European repute, attracting visitors not from Germany alone, but from almost every town in Europe. Merchants and men of letters were equally to be met here. Students from Vienna, Wittenberg, Leipsic, Heidelberg, Strasburg, Padua, Oxford, and Cambridge freely intermingled together. And Bruno, as readily may be imagined, was not behind in haranguing and discoursing upon metaphysics and astronomy.

Amongst Venetian booksellers who were always present at these fairs were Giambattista Ciotto and Giacomo Britanno ; both men of about thirty years of age, and of no ordinary knowledge. Bruno was fast attaining a certain celebrity throughout Europe, and, notwithstanding the many enemies he possessed, was yet gradually growing to be a person whom it was felt to be a distinction to know. And among the many visitors to Frankfort who were eager for his acquaintance, must be particularly mentioned these

two booksellers. For it was through his intercourse with one of these that an incident occurred (which will be related subsequently), that formed one among many other inducements to Bruno to commit the great imprudence of revisiting Italy.

What were these other inducements? For, as will be seen, this little incident was hardly sufficient in itself to account for him committing a step so singularly rash. It would be difficult to say. Perhaps a longing to set foot once more in his beloved Italy; perhaps a reckless love of daring; perhaps—and this I think a more probable explanation—that that restlessness which (with the exception of the time when he was in Geneva, and his first efforts at philosophy had the fascination of novelty to him) had always been his bane, was now fast increasing upon him, and imperatively prevented him from remaining a long time in one place.

Yet, in spite of these superficial faults, which I do not seek to disguise; in spite of his restlessness, his excitability, his passion, I believe that by all impartial students, Bruno must be pronounced to have filled a place in the sixteenth century, that, had it not been for him, would have been empty. In every century, a man who has the courage to be true is a man whom his generation cannot afford to despise. But in this sixteenth century, when honesty was of the extremest rarity, the honest man was like a light set upon a hill,

where all the surrounding country is darkness. Shall the wandering wayfarer refuse to acknowledge the boon of such a light because it occasionally flickers or is unsteady?



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CHAPTER XI.

GIOVANNI MOCENIGO.

Thou art by no means valiant,
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork
Of a poor worm.

Measure for Measure.

IT was a bright afternoon in the early half of January, 1592, when, from a window in one of the largest and handsomest houses in Via S. Samuele—an important street in the beautiful city of Venice—looked out from time to time a signore of the illustrious house of Mocenigo.

The room in which he was seated was a small antechamber, furnished with extreme luxury, though evidently with a certain imitation of the English, rather than the Venetian style. England, under her great sovereign, had become a country attracting at once envy and emulation from her neighbours. Her Queen's unconcealed admiration for all things Italian had rendered the Italians, in especial, inclined to

regard the island with favour ; and it was no uncommon thing, either in England or Italy, to see the nobility and wealthy classes of the one nation emulate the customs and manners of the other. Certainly, the antechamber of which I speak, might have belonged to the Earl of Leicester himself. The carpet was of crimson velvet, fringed with gold. The chief chair was likewise of crimson velvet, the seat and back of which were embroidered in gold, while even the frame was covered in velvet, bound about the edges with gold-lace and studded with gilt nails. There were a footstool and cushion to match. The walls were almost covered by the finest paintings, or by the richest tapestry hangings. Books of rare price, busts, and small statues of finest workmanship, were also to be seen in no small numbers.

The occupier of the room was dressed in a loose flowing robe, and lounged indolently in the spacious velvet chair, save when, from time to time, he rose and looked upon the street beneath him. He was a man of about thirty-four years of age, Giovanni Mocenigo by name, one of a family that for generations had been of distinction, in one way or another, in Venice. Giovanni himself was not without a certain air of distinction—tall and slender, with hair of a pale auburn colour, not very usual, though by no means absolutely unique among Italians. His features had a refined cast, yet he could scarcely be called attractive ; his forehead was high and arched, but his

brow was by no means broad, and certainly the reverse of open; his eyes were long and narrow, and he had a way of peering out suspiciously from them as if he distrusted the motives of those about him. Altogether his bearing gave one the impression of a man who was at once haughty and proudly reserved, yet strangely self-distrustful, lacking in physical as in moral courage.

The scene before him was a busy one; and from time to time he watched it, peering at it from his half-closed eyes with a sort of indolent curiosity. Human nature in different centuries and different countries is, after all, very much the same; and, allowing for slight external divergences⁸ in dress, the scene that Giovanni Mocenigo watched was very similar to that which every dweller in a city may behold. There were men of business—merchants probably, walking in couples, talking rapidly, and evidently with little leisure at their command. There were students in earnest converse, looking neither to the right nor left, but solely occupied with the subject of conversation. There were children laughing merrily. There were fair ladies by the side of gallant lovers. Mocenigo watched them all, indolently endeavouring to imagine the inward drama of each, as one after another passed before him. Then, all of a sudden, there appeared a bier and a funeral procession, wending its way slowly and solemnly. An expression of horror came over the

young man's face. He drew in his head suddenly, and exclaimed almost aloud :

“*Santiddio!* Why will that hideous object always obtrude itself?”

He would not look again till it had passed; but reclined in the luxurious chair, and shut his eyes, as if even to shut out the remembrance of the ghastly object. The soft couch and the closed eyes were naturally conducive to sleep; and he slept, or perhaps it would be more correct to say dozed, for nearly an hour.

When he awoke, he found that it was nearly dusk. He rose, stretched himself, and again went to the window. The street was quieter, and as he stood and watched, he observed in the faint twilight one or two stars gradually reveal themselves. He gazed at them—not abstractedly, not rapturously, but with a strange, beseeching expression on his face, as if he were petitioning them for some particular boon. Then, all of a sudden, he removed from the window. Peering suspiciously about him, as if to be certain no one were within view or hearing, he went to a casket from which he drew a key. Putting this into the keyhole of a door, cunningly hidden by some tapestry, he called up a narrow turreted staircase in a voice that was subdued almost to a whisper :

“Giulio, descend!”

“I come, signore,” was answered, in an old man's voice.

As the Astrologer entered, Giovanni Mocenigo again looked round, as if he dreaded discovery. Astrology in the sixteenth century was an art that with rare exceptions was almost universally believed in, but among men of letters—especially in a Republic devoted to learning, such as Venice—professedly held in scorn. Nay, it may be that with Giovanni Mocenigo, and such as he, by no means wanting in a keen, though somewhat narrow kind of intellect, there were certain moods in which this scorn was actual, and not only professed. What of that? Do not most of us continue to believe with our instincts what our reason has long since rejected? In his bolder moods Mocenigo would argue with a mixture of contempt and real ability on the folly of believing certain omens, held of such importance by the superstitious. Yet, let a particular omen occur while he was discoursing thus sagely, and he would turn ghastly white, quivering with the terror it excited. There are certain among us still who inherit the superstition that their ancestors have held for centuries, as they inherit a love for learning or proneness to frivolity. If their spirit is willing to reject it, their flesh is unable to do so. They feel it in every nerve.

But Mocenigo would not have owned this weakness to his dearest or nearest—not to his father or bosom friend; nay, not even to his wife, had he possessed one. Then, again, he held himself to be a

good Catholic, and was uncertain how far a wish to pry into the secrets of the future, which the Church had not had revealed to her, was reconcileable with his belief. On every account, therefore, it was important that this connection with the Astrologer should be a carefully preserved secret.

Giulio entered: an old man, feeble with the weight of nearly eighty years, lean and wrinkled, and infirm in his gait, but with an expression of benevolence. His long beard was white as the whitest spun silk, as were also his hair and thick eyebrows. Decidedly he did not look like a knave. And it may be—for to what extent may not self-delusion be carried?—that the old Astrologer really believed in the truth of his own interpretations.

Mocenigo pointed to a seat, and then carefully locked the door of the little staircase, arranging the tapestry so that no one could have possibly suspected the existence of the door. In case of any untoward event during the interview, such as the sudden appearance of an intruder, Mocenigo would have explained the presence of the Astrologer by some adroit equivocation, which he instinctively knew how to fabricate whenever occasion required.

"Hast thou cast my horoscope again?" asked Mocenigo, speaking in a voice that was still hushed almost to a whisper.

"I have, signore. All augurs well. Look for yourself. Here, Venus, ascending into the House of

Life, and conjoined with Sol, showers down upon you happiness, wealth, love ! ”

Mocenigo did not look so entranced as the Astrologer had expected. He was in love, but not very deeply ; and his questions to Giulio were in part a blind to extract from him a secret, the longing to learn which had in reality been the cause of his intercourse—still but a few months old—with the Astrologer.

“ Giulio,” said Mocenigo, after a long pause, and speaking with evident hesitation. “ Giulio, dost thou believe in alchemy as well as in astrology ? ”

“ Surely I do,” answered the old man gently.

“ Dost thou,” continued Mocenigo, with increased hesitation, “ believe in an elixir of life ? Dost thou think it possible to find some certain remedy that shall make life endless ? ”

“ I know of none such yet,” answered the Astrologer. “ But yet I see not why such discovery should not be sooner or later alighted on. Every year discoveries hitherto unsuspected are being found to arrest disease ; why not, then, death ? ”

“ Say not that word,” answered Mocenigo, turning ghastly white, and shrinking as with horror.

“ Nay, signore,” replied Giulio compassionately, “ I meant not to frighten thee.”

Mocenigo recovered himself. He could not brook to be thought afraid of death. “ Nothing frightens me,” he said haughtily. “ But I love life. I would

fain prolong it. Moreover, I will not hide from thee that I love things beautiful. I hate things loathsome. And what is more loathsome than the sight of a man when—when he has—ceased to live?”

Mocenigo could not bring his lips to utter the word *dead*.

“I despair not of finding this elixir. Yet, young signore,” continued Giulio gently, “I would fain ask thee what is the good of life when the pleasures of life have departed? Look at me; look at my trembling limbs; think of my failing strength, and ask thyself whether even extinction of life is not preferable to the extinction of all happiness that life in earlier days brought with it?”

“Not so,” answered Mocenigo. “In old age one can at least remember the happiness of youthful years, and in the mind’s eye live over again the joy of youth.”

“That but adds to the misery,” replied the old man with a pathos that was not wanting in quiet dignity. “What says our great poet?

Nessun maggior dolore
Che ricordarsi del tempo felice
Nella miseria.

It is the remembrance of these past joys that adds to the misery of knowing that they are gone. No, no, my son. Live thy life well, and that will, to a certain degree, extend thy youth. Prolongation of youth is to be desired, not eternity of life. To be alone—

alone, as I am—all that I have loved gone before me, with no one to love me, to care for me—is this a state to be desired ? ”

“ And yet,” remarked Mocenigo sardonically, “ thou dost not kill thyself.”

“ Alas, no,” answered the Astrologer ; “ but that is not because I love life, but that I dread death.”

“ That word again ! ” burst out Mocenigo fiercely. “ Have I not forbidden thee to use it ? ” Then, as he saw that the old man slunk back nervously, Mocenigo continued more gently, “ Find me this elixir, and thou shalt be rich, wealthy. Half my fortune—nay, half of hers who you say is to be my bride, will I lavish upon thee. Then thou wilt be no longer alone, uncared for. Riches can buy beauty, as they can buy all things. Bright eyes and laughing lips shall belong to thee, and thine old age shall be happier far than thy youth.”

“ Riches can buy beauty,” said the old man, with a touching pathos ; “ but not love. Grant that I become rich, women by the score would doubtless be glad to marry me ; but those that I would choose would not have me, and those who would have me, Messer Diavolo himself would not have.”

“ *Gnaffè*, good father,” answered Mocenigo, as a smile broke upon his face, “ that is an epigrammatic way of putting it.”

When Mocenigo smiled he was certainly good-looking. The parted lips disclosed a set of teeth

that were of pearly whiteness and perfectly even. He looked at himself complacently as he accidentally saw his reflection in a small polished mirror that was lying on the table. Old age was too far off from him that he should dread it; but death might seize upon him, as it seized upon others in their youth or prime; as it seized upon all, without distinction of age or sex.

There was a few minutes' silence; and then, when Mocenigo glanced up, he noticed the Astrologer gazing at him with a curious expression upon his face. With his suspicious nature, Mocenigo immediately jumped to the conclusion that there was something behind this gaze that he could not divine. Was Giulio mocking him—trifling with him? Or had he any secret purpose in entering into his service?

"Wretch!" he burst out, "if you dare palter with me, I will have thee so tortured that that cessation of life thou art afraid to bring about thyself, will be regarded by thee with passionate longing. If thou darest divulge to anyone what I have commissioned thee to seek for, I will——"

"To whom can I divulge it?" said the old man mildly. "Thou hast me under lock and key."

"Yes; but it may suit my purpose to part with thee. If, then, thou should'st, either accidentally or on purpose, breathe a word of our connection together, beware!—beware! Earth holds torments

as great as poets have imagined to be confined to Hell. Now return to your place."

The poor old Astrologer, suspected of a double dealing of which assuredly he was innocent, turned obediently, and went up the little staircase. Mocenigo softly closed the door behind him, arranged the tapestry hangings with his former care, and replaced the key in the casket. Then he sank down, with an air of weariness, into the velvet chair, and said to himself half bitterly :

"Is he the greater knave for pretending he thinks to discover this elixir, or I the greater fool for believing that he can?"

All his interviews with the Astrologer terminated with him questioning himself thus. He would have given much, could he have extinguished once for all the superstitious or sceptical elements which were perpetually struggling for victory within him. This was the first time that he had fully disclosed to the Astrologer the purpose that he had had in his mind when taking him into his service. All his previous interviews had been simply devoted to interrogating the Astrologer as to his probable success in love, in games of chance, in pursuits after various distinctions or honours. But he was not a very enthusiastic lover, and he had no more than a moderate share of ambition. The chief feeling in his nature was a dread of death, the next a dread of purgatory ; and

to have saved himself a year of the latter, he would have sacrificed both his love and ambition.

He was engaged to a supper-party that night, given by the father of the lady whom he was wooing. He returned from it in high spirits. The lady, a great heiress, and not wanting in personal charms, had singled him out from her many admirers. The old Astrologer had been right then so far, he thought to himself. He was not only exultant, but hopeful. As he went to his bed he thought, with a certain self-reproach :

“Poor Giulio ! I was harsh with him to-day. His interpretations have been quite justified so far. Well, well, who can see into the future ? Yet surely if my Astrologer has been successful in one part of his art, I may rightly infer that he will not be wholly unsuccessful in another. Perhaps, after all, I may escape that loathsome termination of life which is a blot upon the whole of Nature.”

He slept little that night. But lack of sleep on this occasion was scarcely felt as a deprivation. The thoughts that were surging within him were of an extremely pleasant nature, and he had no desire to pass into a state of oblivion. He rose early ; had a slight refreshment, and then resumed his old employment of looking out of the window. But to one in a state of restless excitement this occupation is not very engrossing. “Santa Madonna ! what shall I do ?” was his thought. He dared not go so soon again to

the house of the lady he was wooing. Yet he longed to know his fate. He dared not call the old Astrologer down, for at that hour of the day he was never safe from interruptions, yet he longed to tell him of the progress of his love-suit, longed to ask his forgiveness for his unjust suspicions of the previous evening, above all longed to question him as to the hoped-for discovery. He stood by the window, moving his feet restlessly from time to time. The sun was bright, and the day tempting for a walk.

"Santa Madonna!" he exclaimed aloud, "I cannot remain thus *colle mani alla cintola*. Something I must do. I will go and have a chat with Ciotto. He must be back from Frankfort by this time, and will doubtless have plenty to tell me of interest!"

Strange how the most tragic events of our lives can be traced through links that are almost indefinable! Had the day been less tempting for a walk, or had Giovanni Mocenigo had some pressing occupation, it is probable that Giordano Bruno would have escaped his acquaintance and all the misery that sprang from it.

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CHAPTER XII.

A DESIRED ACQUAINTANCE.

If all the devils of hell be drawn in little and Legion
Himself possessed him, yet I'll speak to him.

Twelfth Night.

THE streets of Venice wind, and are exceedingly narrow, most of them being calculated for foot-passengers alone. The great thoroughfares are the canals, the principal of which, the Canale Grande, extends in a large curve through the heart of the town; and, as Mocenigo came out from his house, the water beneath him looked so lovely with the sunbeams dancing in it, the splash of an oar from a passing gondola sounded so musically in his ears, that he thought that he would abandon the intention of going to the bookseller's on foot, and would proceed by his gondola instead. He was about to call one of the boatmen who were always stationed before his house, ready for their duties, when he

again changed his mind. "No," he said to himself, "I am too restless to be able to enjoy that *dolce far niente* motion just now. A rapid walk will be infinitely preferable."

He went therefore on foot, walking with eager, rapid strides, too much engrossed in his own thoughts to look at the beautiful city, with its magnificent buildings, even had familiarity not somewhat blunted the consciousness of its beauty. He could hardly define to himself what object he had in calling at Ciotto's. "Only that I desire a chat!" he said half aloud; but with one possessing his reserved, uncommunicative nature, this desire was in itself sufficiently surprising. As he approached the shop, he saw that it was already crowded with visitors; and, suspicious of discovery, even when discovery was wholly unimportant, he passed on. He would not enter the shop till he could have Ciotto's attention all to himself.

Booksellers of the sixteenth century—particularly in Venice—occupied a social position altogether different from what they do among ourselves. It was not merely that they were always men of culture, men who had travelled, who could speak several languages, and had good manners—for all these qualities, though not quite so common, are by no means rare among our own booksellers. It was not that distinguished men of all ranks delighted to frequent their shops and converse with them—for

this too is by no means unusual among ourselves; but—what is a very different matter—at the houses of even the greatest nobility booksellers visited on terms more or less of equality. Nor did this indulgence proceed from any democratic spirit peculiar to Venice. Notwithstanding that she was a republic, there were patricians, middle-classes and plebeians, in Venice as in other countries, and the spirit of caste was by no means eradicated from among them. But the nobility of Venice thought it no great condescension to be on terms of familiarity with their distinguished booksellers, who, indeed, occupied a position closely resembling the distinguished author or man of science among ourselves. Nay, it maybe that by the majority the distinguished bookseller was more eagerly welcomed; perhaps because he was—though sufficiently cultivated and intelligent—not of such exalted ability as to make his hosts in awe of him. For the aristocracy of talent equals, if it does not surpass, that of rank in impressing a certain awe and distance upon those belonging to a lower order. If Ciotto was courted by genuine lovers of learning because he could be the means of introducing not only foreign books but foreign writers to their attention, he was still more courted by a commoner order of men who felt it was a more pleasurable thing to be on terms of intimacy with one who was familiar with a distinguished author than with the distinguished author

himself. For did they not thus learn to have a really more intimate acquaintance with him? After all, a solemn introduction to one who was so much above them—or at all events liked to think himself so—was a very shadowy sort of honour; whereas dear Ciotto had always some good story, some spicy jest to retail concerning him and his doings. There are few things more pleasant to minds of a certain order than the denigration of those rightfully held in esteem for their learning and virtue. Venice, in the sixteenth century, was almost as infamous for her vice as famous for her learning. Male gossips who had nothing better to do loved to haunt the shop of the popular bookseller and learn how such a writer was an unfaithful husband; another a gambler; another a lunatic; and so on. And, as may be readily imagined, the woes and misfortunes of the unhappy Torquato Tasso proved an untiring source for comment and anecdote.

Yet Ciotto was a man by no means wanting in kindly feeling, and he had an unfeigned reverence for worth. He instinctively paid more homage to such scholars as frequented his shop from genuine interest in books than to the mere loungers who came in for a gossip. But he loved also his own importance. In a small way he felt himself to be a man whom Venice could scarcely do without. Would any among her citizens be more missed? And he was perfectly aware that did he not descend

occasionally to indulge the taste for scandal his importance would be confined to an extremely narrow area. His habit of visiting the half-yearly fairs at Frankfort was well known, and for days after his return his shop was well-nigh besieged by curious visitors importunate for news.

As Mocenigo paced up and down the piazza close to the street where was the bookseller's shop, he had plenty of time to analyse the motives that brought him there. For, like most suspicious people, he had a tendency to analysis; and he came to the conclusion that the object of his visit was to learn from the popular bookseller whether the marked favour that the fair one, whom he was wooing, had bestowed upon him the previous evening, had excited any envy among his rivals. Few things pleased Mocenigo more than to feel that he was an object of envy.

Once more he approached the bookseller's shop. Free at last!

"Good-day, Messer Ciotto," he said courteously.

"Good-day, *Eccellenza*," replied Ciotto, with a certain sarcastic exaggeration of deference in his tone. He did not care for this distant young signore who so seldom took the trouble to speak to him. Did this scion of his illustrious house, boasting four Doges among its members, really think Giambattista Ciotto not worthy of his acquaintance? Well, then, the coolness should at least be mutual. But in this suspicion the worthy bookseller wronged Mocenigo.

He was haughty, and intensely proud of his race; and he would be peculiarly careful as to whom he allied himself with in marriage. But, like all persons of really old blood, he was free from the petty solitudes of middle-class gentility. And even if booksellers had been held in less consideration than they were in Venice, he would have been affable and courteous to them as he was to every one—save those who crossed his will. He had simply not frequented the bookseller's shop because, being reserved and secret by nature, he had no particular delight in ordinary gossip.

"May I venture to ask," continued the bookseller, after a short pause, "why your nobleness passed my shop about an hour since, and did not come in? You must be tired, waiting about so long; and your business must be important."

"*Gnaffè*, I wanted to see you alone; *da solo a solo*, as we say. And yet I know not that I have much that I can term business. I was out at a party last night, and am feeling a little unsettled in consequence. So having nothing better to do, I thought I would take a walk, and lo! chance has brought me to you."

Mocenigo could never be quite direct, and, even when there was no motive for equivocation, equivocated by instinct.

Adroitly he put his questions; but could get no reply.

The bookseller took no interest in matters not concerned with authors. He had not been at the party the previous evening, and none of his recently-departed visitors had communicated to him any gossip, being only too glad to be listeners rather than talkers after his visit to Frankfort.

Mocenigo saw that he could gain little information concerning the fair damigella and the attention with which she had honoured him ; yet he remained on. He was in a restless mood, and knew not what to do with himself. Moreover, he was really not wanting in a certain love for books, and took one up after another, peeping into each with a mixture of lassitude and real interest. Ciotto, on his part, was a little curious to learn more about this reserved young signore, who was evidently not one of those enthusiastic scholars who frequented his shop for purposes of erudition, yet evidently also far removed from the mere lounge and gossip, desirous of scandal that was not always decent.

The reader is already acquainted with the intimacy that had sprung up between Giordano Bruno and Ciotto during the residence of the latter at Frankfort ; an intimacy which had resulted in Ciotto's taking back with him copies of the works that Bruno had written while in Frankfort.* None of these works

* In Ciotto's deposition he says, that he brought back with him *one* of Bruno's books ; but the name of the book seems to be uncertain. The name ultimately given, "*De Minimo, Magno,*

are written in Bruno's best style. Lully seems again to have exercised a fascination over him, and the three works that were the fruit of this period are, though not wanting in passages of rare beauty, on the whole, mystical, if not absolutely incomprehensible. But Mocenigo was one of those men—belonging, I think, neither to the lowest nor highest order of intellect—who have a certain contempt for books that are written so simply and clearly as to demand little attention in grasping them. Secret and reserved himself, he liked a book the essential meaning of which had to be *discovered*, and not so transparent as to be palpable at all. The book he took up was Bruno's "Monade, Numero et Figura," the first section of which is a commentary on the doctrine of Pythagoras. It is composed of eleven chapters, all of which are occupied in explaining the secret of numbers and figures. They are obscurely, if not fancifully written. Thus, *à propos* of the number two, Bruno observes that man has two souls, or minds, the animal and the intellectual. The number four, according et Mensura," is evidently an interpolation for another. In reality, Bruno wrote three works while he was at Frankfort—"De Imaginum," "De Minimo," and "De Monade, Numero et Figura." "De Imaginum" has many things in common with "Del Infinito," and "De Minimo" with the "Dialogues de la Causa Principio ed Uno;" though the later works are more obscure and mystical than the former. It seems to me not improbable that Ciotto brought with him to Venice a copy of each of the three works—if not a printed copy, at least a manuscript one.

to him, shows that among cultivated nations the name of God is everywhere composed of four letters. Thus—Orsi, with the Magians ; Sire, in Persia ; Deus, among the Latins ; Alla, among the Arabians ; Gott, in Germany ; Dios, with the Spaniards ; and so on.* The other numbers Bruno dealt with in a similar way. Mocenigo read on with interest. Then, as he turned to other pages he saw, or thought he saw, from the hasty glance at the books with which he had to content himself, that Bruno had a peculiar theory with regard to the improvement of the memory. Mocenigo was somewhat deficient in verbal memory, and was anxious to improve it. After he had looked curiously over the pages of the three books, he said, in a slightly interested tone :

“These works seem to me to be decidedly original. Have you had them in your shop long, or have you only just received them ?”

“I brought them with me when I returned from Frankfort about a week ago,” replied Ciotto.

“Do you know their author’s name ?” asked Mocenigo.

* It is a little curious how often in this century, and still more often in the preceding one, scholars indulged in learned vagaries of this sort. Thus, the great Hebrew scholar, Johann Reuchlin, born about the middle of the fifteenth century, seems to boast, with much greater complacency than he boasted of any other of his varied acquirements, of his profound discovery that, in one verse of Exodus, could be found the seventy-two unspeakable names of God !—Quoted by the Rev. Charles Beard in his “Hibbert Lectures,” for 1883, p. 55.

“Giordano Bruno, a native of Nola, in Naples.”

“Giordano Bruno! Where have I heard that name?” remarked Mocenigo, in a tone that showed that he was a little annoyed that his memory should not be able to recall a circumstance that he was certain was by no means of very ancient date.

“Rather say, where have you not heard that name?” answered Ciotto, not a little proud to boast of his distinguished acquaintance. “He is of European fame. With the King of France, with the Queen of England, with many Princes of Germany, he is on terms of affection and intimacy.”

“Does he live by his writings, or does he combine any other trade or profession with authorship?”

“He is a teacher of Philosophy.”

“Of what kind?”

“My own opinion is that he is a distinctly original thinker and writer; that he has a philosophy of his own. Yet, if you were to question him on this wise, he would probably tell you that he is a disciple of Raymond Lully, of whom he has an admiration that certainly seems to me somewhat excessive.”

“Raymond Lully, the Christian Alchemist!” exclaimed Mocenigo, in an eager tone, that showed that the interest he was feeling was becoming vivid, and no longer slight.

“Exactly,” answered the bookseller.

“What are his principal works? How comes it that his reputation is so wide?”

“His principal works are the ‘Cena delle Céneri, or Evening Conversations on Ash Wednesday;’ the ‘Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante;’ ‘Della Causa Principio ed Uno;’ and the ‘Del Infinito Universo e Mondi.’ But he is a prolific writer, and has penned many works of minor importance. I believe, though here I do not speak with certainty, that he has written a work on Astrology.”

The look of vivid interest with which Mocenigo received this last piece of intelligence was not lost upon the bookseller. Indeed, it was more than interest, it was extreme eagerness. The bookseller made no comment, though he, on his part, was becoming a good deal interested in the Venetian nobleman. Penetrating and shrewd by nature, and necessarily brought, through his occupation, into wide communion with men of various characters, Ciotto had readily divined that if he wanted to gain a clue as to the drift of Mocenigo's questions, the last thing to be done was to show anxiety or curiosity. Mocenigo, on his part, was fully aware that the eagerness he was displaying about a foreign writer of philosophy was somewhat excessive. He took up one of the books again, determined not to speak till his excitement had a little abated. But at this moment, with one of those tricks that memory is so fond of playing, there suddenly flashed across him—though he was not now seeking for it—the circumstance of his first association with the name of Bruno.

"Ah! I have it now!" he suddenly exclaimed.

"What have you now?" asked the bookseller mildly.

"I mean I remember when and where I first heard Giordano Bruno's name. About a year or so ago, a friend of mine, who is also a friend of Prince Alasco, of Poland, wrote to me a long account of Alasco and his doings. It appears that two or three years previously Alasco had visited England, had made acquaintance with the great Elizabeth, with her distinguished ministers, with her gallant sailors; but that, strange to say, the person who had excited in him strongest interest was an Italian philosopher, whom he had met at Oxford, Giordano Bruno by name."

"Ah!" said Ciotto. "A Polish Prince! I can well believe that. Few countries know better how to appreciate learning than Poland. I am not sure that Frankfort exceeds her."

"What sort of man is this Neapolitan in appearance?" asked Mocenigo, in a tone that he vainly endeavoured to make one, if not of indifference, at least of very moderate interest.

"I believe he is in reality a year or so over forty; but he is slight, and not very tall; and it may perhaps be owing to this youthful build of his figure that he looks very much under his real age. To look at him I do not think anyone would take him for more than thirty. He has magnificent eyes, a short

black beard, clear olive complexion, and manners that are attractive even to fascination. Notwithstanding his slight deficiency in height, he is a man," continued the bookseller, with a certain significance in his voice, "whom the ladies, I think, would pronounce exceedingly handsome."

It was not without a certain design that the bookseller described in such admiring terms the person and manner of Bruno. He knew enough through repute of Mocenigo to be aware that, like all men who are at once haughty and yet self-distrustful, he was envious, and his vanity easily alarmed. The same tendencies that made him love to be envied, made him also very susceptible to envy himself. But he had a more overmastering passion than even his vanity, and this was his dread of death. To the bookseller's surprise, Mocenigo's face showed no symptoms of being clouded by vexation on hearing the person of another so warmly eulogised. On the contrary, he listened attentively, and then seemed suddenly to fall into such a state of abstraction, as to be wholly unconscious that he was not alone ; but that he was being attentively, curiously, watched by another.

A new and tempting idea had suddenly occurred to Mocenigo. What if this renowned philosopher on terms of intimacy with so many Courts in Europe ; what if this thinker in the full prime of his forties—that decade more than any other in which man is at

his height of mental vigour ; what if this admiring disciple of Raymond Lully, and therefore himself doubtless learned in astrology and alchemy ; what if this Giordano Bruno could be induced to come to Venice ; to be to him, Mocenigo, in place of that obscure old astrologer, Giulio, weak and feeble with his eighty years, if not, indeed, approaching already his second infancy ? The idea quickly grew to a hope, the hope to a determination that his purpose should not be frustrated.

"Messer Ciotto," he said at last, "do you know this Messer Bruno's address ? Is he still in Frankfort, think you ?"

"I have only left Frankfort a few days, and he seemed to have no intention of leaving it then."

"But he would leave it, I imagine, if sufficient inducement were offered ?"

The bookseller did not answer for a few moments. Then, suddenly raising his head, he said, somewhat abruptly, as he looked at him from his keen eyes :

"What is your drift ?"

The Venetian shrank back, a little abashed at the direct question. His purpose was too strong within him, however, for him to be easily thwarted.

"To be plain with you, then, I am interested in this Giordano Bruno. I—I should be glad to know him. I should be still more glad if I could induce him to live here altogether."

"Here ! In Venice ?" exclaimed the bookseller.

"Why not?" Then, as Mocenigo saw that Ciotto answered not, but still looked somewhat keenly at him, he continued in a tone of enthusiasm that he did not now seek to disguise: "Introduce him to me, *messere mio*. You will make me your everlasting debtor; nay, you will add to your own popularity, great as that already is. What favour will you not be conferring on our scholars, to be the means of introducing to them one so distinguished as this Neapolitan?"

The keen-witted bookseller had not needed to be reminded of this inducement; but knowing that it would enhance the value of Bruno, as well as add to his own importance, to assume some difficulty, he answered:

"If I were to introduce you to him, it would lead to no result. He is too much courted in Frankfort to care to leave it!"

"He shall be still more courted here."

"Besides, he is a holder of the Copernican theory, and would, I suspect, be afraid to enter Italy. Germany, you know, is much more tolerant of scholars."

"He will be safe in Venice. Tell him that Mocenigo—if he does not know me, he must at least have heard of my house—tell him that the Mocenigos will protect him. But," added Mocenigo, suddenly breaking off, "he is no heretic really."

"*Gnaffè*," replied the bookseller. "He has certain

reservations in his belief that I suspect all scholars have. But that his heresy is not very great may be proved, I think, from the fact that he dwells in a Carmelite Monastery and that its Prior is enthusiastic in his affection and admiration for him !”

“Write to him, write to him, messere. Tell him how he will be welcomed by our scholars. Philosopher though he is, he cannot be so wholly free from ordinary feelings as not to be gratified at being sought by those whom he may well consider his intellectual equals. Write to him. You will find it for his interest, and even more perhaps for your own. Then, all Italians love their country. Surely he will come !”

“And your own object in this, signore ?” asked the bookseller.

Mocenigo hesitated a little. Not to a soul, as I have already stated, would he reveal his predilection for astrology. After a few minutes’ silence, he said :

“I have a bad memory. Perhaps this Neapolitan might be able to improve it.”

There was silence for another interval. Then Mocenigo, rising and taking one of Bruno’s books into his hands, said :

“I must be going now. You will allow me to purchase this book ?”

“I am afraid I must refuse,” said the bookseller shortly. “I have but one copy of it ; and, at all events, for some weeks I wish to have it in my shop.

Messer Bruno, as I have already told you, is of wide reputation. Rare scholars will be eager to see his works. To show a rare book to a rare scholar is a rare pleasure ; and so, if you please, I will not sell this book till I have enjoyed this pleasure, till it ceases to be an enjoyment."

The haughty face of Mocenigo clouded over. He was not used to refusals, and would have liked to threaten the bookseller as he had the astrologer. He knew, however, it would be unavailing. The bookseller, on his part, was somewhat touched by the extreme chagrin depicted on the young nobleman's countenance. As I have before said, he was a man by no means wanting in kindly feelings. He dropped his former tone of something between sarcasm and epigram, and said more gently :

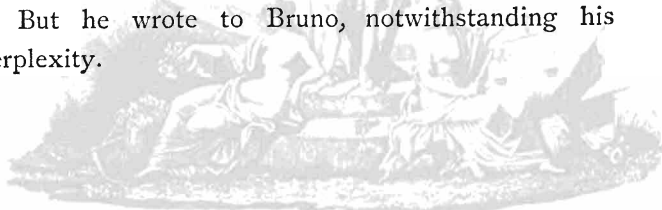
"Nevertheless, signore, my visitors are probably over for to-day. If you will promise faithfully to return it the first thing to-morrow, you may take it with you. I will lend it, though I will not at present sell it."

Mocenigo took it eagerly. "A thousand thanks, Messer Ciotto," he exclaimed, in genuine gratitude. "I will return it faithfully. You have already made me your debtor ; but how greatly will that debt be increased if you will write to this distinguished author telling him of the admiration I have conceived for him, of the longing I have to become acquainted with him."

He turned and left the shop, while the bookseller watched his retiring form with a certain expression of dubiousness. When Mocenigo was fairly out of sight, Ciotto exclaimed aloud :

“Now, by all the blessed saints, I would give much to divine your object, my reserved signore. Why, were you one of our most ardent scholars, such enthusiasm would be extreme.” Then, after a moment’s silence, the bookseller continued in a tone of sarcastic incredulity: “Want to improve your memory. Do you think to take me in by so obvious an evasion? Nay, nay, Giambattista, Ciotto has not lived thirty years in the world for nothing. He knows how to find *il pelo dell’uovo*, as the saying is.”

But he wrote to Bruno, notwithstanding his perplexity.



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CHAPTER XIII.

BRUNO BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH MOCENIGO.

One of the most singular gifts, or, if abused, most singular weaknesses, of the human mind, is its power of persuading itself to see whatever it chooses.

RUSKIN.

BRUNO was destined to receive another letter besides the bookseller's, and which reached him almost at the same time. It was from Signor Giovanni Mocenigo himself. That young nobleman, finding in one of Bruno's works entitled "*De Minimo, Magno, et Mensura*," very much what he wanted, conceived the notion that it was wholly occupied with what was occult and hidden, and became in consequence more than ever convinced that Bruno could impart to him secrets that were as valuable as they were mysterious. Dubious as to whether the somewhat absolute bookseller really intended to try and arrange the much desired interview, he thought it would be but becoming precaution to do his best to bring it about himself. And so it came

to pass that one day, towards the close of January, Bruno, to his great surprise received two letters beseeching him to pay a visit to Venice.

The reader is already aware that Bruno accepted the invitation with little or no hesitation, and that the motives which impelled him to act thus were of a mixed character. The most important events of our lives are more frequently caused, not by one isolated circumstance, but by a combination of several small ones. The bookseller's letter was business-like and to the point. Mocenigo's was couched in language that was at once adroit and flattering. Bruno was wholly free from vanity; but he had that warm emotional nature that led to results almost the same as if he were so influenced. Thus, when he read Mocenigo's description of his admiration for his books, of his eagerness to become acquainted with the author, of his certainty that did Bruno become an inhabitant of Venice he would be surrounded with marks of appreciation from her most distinguished scholars, Bruno accepted the invitation with eagerness; deliberately refusing to listen to those warnings, that, in spite of himself, prudence whispered. Not because he was greedy for adulation; but that it seemed to him the height of churlishness to refuse to accede to a request that was couched in terms of such courtesy and evident sincerity. Then, in addition, we must remember that Bruno had already very pleasant associations with Venice, brief as had been his visit. For,

if for nothing else, was it not remarkable as being the place where he had first met Philip Sidney? Never free from a certain consciousness of inner loneliness, and apt to trace curious coincidences, he felt, on reading Mocenigo's letter, what a strange and happy coincidence it would be if Venice were a second time to be the birthplace of a similar friendship—perhaps, indeed, of a greater one? For, other things equal, would not one of his own race—an Italian, like himself—be a nearer and dearer friend than it was possible for any foreigner to be? These sentiments, combined with his love for his country and his natural restlessness, made him almost as eager to be in Venice as Mocenigo was to have him there. And in a quicker time than that nobleman had imagined, Bruno, after an interval of more than ten years, entered Venice for a second occasion.

Immediately on his arrival, he drove to a lodging close to the bookseller's shop, which had been recommended to him by Ciotto, who knew the people to whom the rooms belonged. The bookseller was already there. Indeed, he had been there over an hour, awaiting with impatience the Neapolitan's arrival. For he could seldom leave his shop during business hours for more than a few minutes; yet he did not like Bruno to have the dreariness of entering into a new place with no one to welcome him.

"Ah, Messer Ciotto!" exclaimed Bruno gratefully, as he entered, somewhat dusty and fatigued

after his journey, "this is good of you to take the trouble to receive and welcome me thus."

"The warmest welcome to you, Messer Bruno!" answered the bookseller. "How little we thought, when we parted at Frankfort, that we should meet so soon again!"

"And here too, of all places in the world!" replied Bruno. "It seemed to me far more probable that you would return to Frankfort than I depart for Venice."

"May your stay here be as happy as I doubt not it will be profitable!" said Ciotto. "Venice is very nearly, if not, indeed, altogether as devoted to learning as Frankfort. And then, does not Venice belong to Italy, and are not you an Italian?"

"Indeed I am!" answered Bruno enthusiastically. "And not only by birth, but by feeling. Ah! you know not the joy I feel to be in Italy again, and to hear my own language spoken! But," he continued, suddenly breaking off in his rapture, as he saw the bookseller rise, "you are not going to leave? You will stay and join me at my meal?"

"Nay," answered the bookseller. "Business before everything, even before friendship; that is my motto."

"A churlish motto," answered Bruno, half in sport, half in earnest.

"Well, change the terms, so long as you grant the result," answered the bookseller in his epigram-

matic way. "Say that if I neglect my business, my business will neglect me, which means that I shall hang upon my friends, which means that friendship will know me no more. *Addio*."

Bruno smiled, but let the bookseller go without further comment. He had known enough of him at Frankfort to be perfectly aware that it would be time wasted to attempt to turn him from anything that he had once decided to do; and he saw, through all his quaint manner, that the bookseller had fully decided not to stay.

He went, therefore, to his room to refresh himself with a wash and change of apparel; but in less than five minutes he heard a knock at the door, and on opening it found, to his surprise, the form of Messer Ciotto, who said hurriedly: "Pardon me for interrupting you; but I had omitted to tell what I had nevertheless promised you should know, namely, that you will have a visit from Signor Giovanni Mocenigo very shortly, if not, indeed, immediately. You will remember that in the letter I wrote to you, proposing to you to visit Venice, I mentioned among other inducements that this young signore was desirous of your acquaintance."

"I remember his name perfectly," answered Bruno. "I received a letter from him the same day and almost the same hour that I received yours."

"Oh! you did?" exclaimed Ciotto, not without dubiousness. This was the first intimation he had

had of Mocenigo's correspondence; and the thought again occurred to him—as it had indeed many times before: “What can be the cause of this extreme eagerness?”

Bruno noticed the look of dubiousness on the bookseller's face, and said in some surprise: “Yes, I heard from him; what of that?”

“Oh, nothing!” answered the bookseller. He had too native a sense of integrity and justice to give form to suspicions that had (at all events as yet) no substantial basis; even had his worldly prudence allowed him to hint at anything, which if repeated, might bring him into disfavour with the illustrious house of Mocenigo. So he merely continued: “Well, I only came back to pray you to change your apparel and have some refreshment as quickly as may be. He is certain to be with you very soon, for he is all eagerness to behold you. He bade me tell you that he feels it a thousand years till he meets you.”

“And it is a thousand years till I see him,” answered Bruno in his courteous way. “Be sure I will not keep him waiting.”

And the bookseller hurried out of the room, to make up by extra speed the time that had been lost through his previous forgetfulness.

The notice had not been given a whit too soon. Bruno had scarcely finished his light repast, when there was a knock. The door opened and in walked Signor Giovanni Mocenigo. Bruno rose, and the men

clasped hands. It was a strange moment ; each hoped so much from the acquaintance ; each had looked forward to this meeting with such intensity of expectation.

They were strangely unlike each other in outward seeming, these two. Mocenigo, tall and fair, with slightly sloping shoulders ; with long narrow eyes, which even now, in spite of his unfeigned delight in meeting Bruno, looked out with a suspicious glance that on this occasion proceeded from habit rather than distrust ; with manners that for an Italian were strangely reserved, and yet with an air about his whole bearing of aristocratic distinction, not unfrequently to be met with in persons who from their childhood upwards have been accustomed to obedience and even homage. Bruno, on the other hand, slight and spare, but singularly well-formed in spite of his want of height ; with dark hair and beard, vivacious mobile features, and eyes that looked out with clear confiding glance, seldom seen apart from early youth—which glance had certainly much to do with his still appearing younger by some years than he was in reality. His manners, like Mocenigo's, had a certain distinction, though of a wholly different kind. Bruno had that air of high breeding, which is almost always to be found, I think, where there is a total absence of self-consciousness, and a mind occupied with things the reverse of vulgar. The reader will not require to be told that they were as unlike in mental qualities as in outward form.

Yet the meeting passed off to the satisfaction of both. Bruno appeared to Mocenigo very much what he had imagined him to be from Ciotto's description, for he had not failed to question that bookseller minutely as to his manners and person. In one particular Mocenigo was agreeably surprised with the Neapolitan; for Ciotto had represented him as heedless and imprudent to a degree; and this lack of proper precaution and reserve seemed to Mocenigo not without its drawbacks to an intercourse that, with that exception, he viewed with feelings of entire satisfaction. Yet during their present interview, which lasted some two hours, Bruno had not once alluded to the subject of astrology. It never occurred to Mocenigo that this might be because the subject was one with which his mind was at the time not greatly occupied. Mocenigo had become so thoroughly imbued with the idea that Bruno's philosophy was entirely based on astrology and occult matters that nothing less than a flat denial would have dissipated his preconceived notion. Bruno's silence on the subject merely proved to Mocenigo that he did not openly acknowledge himself to be a believer in astrology—a reserve regarded by Mocenigo with unfeigned relief.

Bruno was equally pleased with Mocenigo. Like most introspective persons he was not a good observer. He was a shrewd judge of physiognomy whenever his attention was drawn to it; but it never

occurred to him to exercise any careful scrutiny unless he had some definite motive to do so. He was trustful and confiding, apt to infer goodness in his fellows unless he had special cause to think otherwise. And what cause had he to think other than cordially of this Venetian nobleman? He was, as we know, almost morbidly susceptible to certain defects of manner. But Mocenigo's bearing was characterised not only by an air of distinction and high-breeding, but was entirely free from the faintest tinge of pedantry or sanctimoniousness—those two qualities that always excited in Bruno an antagonism that he could not control. Even had Mocenigo's looks and manner been much more defective than they were, the absence of these two qualities would more than have atoned in Bruno's eyes for any other deficiency.

Twilight was fast approaching when Mocenigo rose and said :

"I fear I have intruded upon you beyond your patience, Messer Bruno. But it has been a rare pleasure to me to talk with you."

"Indeed, signore, the pleasure has been mutual," answered Bruno. "But what is that?" he said suddenly, as there was a tap at the door.

It was a messenger bearing a letter from Signor Andrea Morosini, requesting the pleasure of Messer Bruno's company to a party to be given the following evening. Bruno read it, and then,

placing it in Mocenigo's hands, said, "Shall I accept it?"

Mocenigo had thought it probable that, owing to Ciotto, Bruno's fame would precede him, and that he would be honoured with many invitations. He had scarcely expected, however, that his acquaintance would be sought quite so speedily as this. He was the more pleased that he had taken the precaution to allow no time to be lost in calling upon him. He was flattered, too, that Bruno asked his advice before accepting the invitation. It was a sign that he already regarded him to some extent as his protector.

"By all means," he answered. "Morosini is a very learned man, and has the most charming assemblies in Venice—at least, in my opinion—though there are some who give the preference to Bernado Secchini, a wealthy merchant."

"Shall you be at Signor Morosini's?" asked Bruno.

"Doubtless I shall. If for no other reason, at least for the pleasure of meeting you."

Bruno gave a well-pleased smile. It seemed to him that this Venetian nobleman, with his courtly bearing and love of his works, would really fill the place so long empty in his heart. He merely answered in reply:

"To-morrow, then!"

"To-morrow! Farewell till then."



CHAPTER XIV.

AN ASSEMBLY IN VENICE.

O noble Venise, reine de l'Adriatique, si les prisons et les fers attendent les hommes qui t'annoncent la vérité, dans quelles cités, dans quelles campagnes, la vérité pourra-t-elle encore se faire entendre !

"OCCHINO," quoted by Bartholemess, in *Jordano Bruno*, p. 196.

SELDOM was scene more adapted to excite admiration in one, who was at once a scholar and a lover of beauty, than that presented to Bruno's view as he entered the assembly rooms of Andrea Morosini.

The many years of peace that Italy had now enjoyed were greatly favourable to the growth of arts and learning. Love of destruction had been replaced by love of acquisition. Among the costly works of art that adorned the houses of the wealthy, every relic of antiquity found its place. It is said that in Italy there were in all 380 collections of gems and medals. Marbles and bronzes were not less in request ; and the well-known word *virtuosi*—applied to these lovers of what was rare and beautiful in art

or nature—bespoke the honour in which their pursuits were held. The luxury of literature displayed itself in scarce books, elegant impressions, and sumptuous bindings. And a remarkable feature in the social progress of Italy were the brilliant parties or assemblies given by the more wealthy devotees of learning, in order to facilitate the mutual intercourse of author and reader, artist and purchaser of his works. Scholars of all descriptions deemed themselves a distinct caste, not ashamed of poverty when they were poor; but holding it to be at once a privilege and duty to devote their wealth for the good of their caste when they were rich. Friendships were formed in this way which were made enduring by correspondence, when distance prevented frequent meetings. Epistolary intercourse of this description was a usage much more common with the sixteenth century than in more modern times and before the introduction of the newspaper press. Doubtless these assemblies possessed some drawbacks. To be invited to them was an honour; and all honours attract parasites. Men were to be found among Morosini's guests who cared greatly for the title of scholar, though they had little love for scholarship. Still, for the most part, he chose his acquaintances with discrimination. He took care to admit only such dabblers into knowledge as were rich; for though he was perfectly aware that they had little genuine love for scholarship or art, he was equally aware that they

would spend freely in order to gain a reputation for it. His house was frequented by the learned of all nations. And he himself, by his erudition, and what might be termed, without exaggeration, absolute enthusiasm for learning, was a fitting host of such guests. Almost from the time of his earliest youth he had divided his time between learning and cares of state. He permitted no other relaxations from his incessant duties than was to be found in these assemblies, where he could enjoy free conversation with men of letters. He carried this enthusiasm so far that he even denied himself the pleasures of domestic life, believing that the cares of a family would interfere with his devotion to his work. To this day, his "History of Venice" is remembered with respect. It is in eighteen books, and represents an immense deal of learning and research. The dignity of "historian," however, scarcely belonged to him at the time of which I speak. For his "History of Venice" was not published till 1623, when he himself had been dead five years. But we may well believe that he had already collected a large portion of the facts to be afterwards inserted in his "History."

Still, it must be remembered that, passionate as was the love for learning in this latter half of the sixteenth century, learning itself was, with very rare exceptions, composed of materials that were the reverse of substantial. Style was deemed of more importance than accuracy. Science was by no means

too eagerly welcomed. Reverence for ancient writers was carried to a superstitious extent. To be able to write like Cicero was considered a far higher gift than to be capable of comprehending Copernicus. And perhaps Giordano Bruno was one of the very few scientific philosophers that even Morosini, liberal and cultured as he was, admitted into his presence.

As the Neapolitan passed the entrance hall of the magnificent mansion—or, indeed, palace, as it well deserved to be called—he felt almost dazzled at the brilliantly lighted suite of rooms, with their profusion of flowers, the exquisite busts and statues, the grand paintings by men who have now come to be recognised as masters. Bruno had arrived early, and the rooms were not as yet crowded. Ciotto, however was already there, somewhat to Bruno's relief; for, amongst those as yet present, the bookseller was the only person known to him, and he was welcomed accordingly with eagerness. The suite of rooms consisted of five, and, owing to so few of the guests having as yet arrived, was sufficiently free from undue crowding to allow of Bruno seeing to the furthest room. Ladies were admitted to these assemblies, though they were far outnumbered by the men. For Morosini only invited such ladies as were distinguished for their talent, or were the wives of very distinguished men. But as Bruno had time to observe more closely, and as the first thrill of astonishment and admiration subsided, these ladies

seemed to the Neapolitan, with his artistic appreciation of feminine beauty, the only blot upon a scene of otherwise unsurpassed loveliness. The first thing he noticed about these ladies was their extraordinary height; the next, the peculiar ungracefulness of their movements.

Feminine caprice in fashion has been a subject for masculine satire for centuries, but the female mind proceeds on her way with calm unconcern, oblivious of scorn, oblivious of comfort, oblivious of sense. Yet fashion had perhaps seldom led to an act of greater insanity than when, one fine morning in the year 1590, the fair ladies of Venice seemed suddenly inspired with a whim to equal, if not excel, their masculine admirers in height. In vain lovers expostulated, or brothers and husbands sneered. In dress no man yet has been able to influence his womankind. The first means tried in pursuit of this new ambition, was the erection of the hair into two long horns drawn away from the forehead into two points at the top. When it was found that this arrangement did not altogether effect the desired aim, they actually had recourse to the extraordinary adoption of stilts in aid of their height. Every woman who aspired to be a leader of fashion wore—or, perhaps, it would be more accurate to say stood upon—a pair of *chioppines*, pieces of wood that, in length and breadth, were only slightly larger than their feet, but in depth varied according to the fair

lady's ambition;* it being generally found that the tiniest women were stilted on the tallest *chioppines*. The immense trains worn at this period sufficiently hid from the ignorant the extraordinary cause of their remarkable height. Bruno was some days at Venice before he became acquainted with the custom; and, therefore, with his admiration for feminine beauty and artistic love of proportion, he felt, as may be imagined, disgust unmingled with amusement at the sight of a damsel with *mignonne* features, exquisite little hands and feet, and tiny perfect throat, united with a figure that equalled in height, if it did not surpass, the man with the most powerful frame in the room. Yet these ladies aspired to be votaries of learning! Perhaps it would have been better had they been followers of common sense.

The bookseller conversed with Bruno for a few minutes, pointing out to him the more distinguished among the guests who had as yet arrived, and then said: "Now you must let me introduce you to the master of the house."

Suiting the action to the word, the bookseller

* This extraordinary custom called forth the ridicule of English travellers, one of whom described a Venetian lady as being composed of three portions; one of which was wood, another apparel, and the third woman. This fashion, begun in 1590, seems to have lasted till 1670. It is supposed that Shakespeare makes Hamlet allude to them when addressing one of the Players, "Your ladyship is nearer heaven than when I saw you last by the altitude of a chopine."—*Act II., Scene 2.*

proceeded to the room at the further end of the suite, where sat Andrea Morosini amid a circle of friends, to whom he was talking eagerly, and having on his right hand his mother, who generally appeared as hostess on these occasions—a sweet-looking old lady, apparently about sixty-five, and one of the very few women in those rooms who had not yielded to the absurd customs I have mentioned. She was beautifully, nay, magnificently attired; but she had no false substitutes for any deficiencies age had made in her, or advantages that Nature had denied her. She wore her own white hair; and her height, which was only slightly above the average woman's height, was not increased even by torture of the hair into undue elevation. Her dress consisted of a richly embroidered bodice and skirt; the bodice being drawn over and entirely covering her finely-formed bust—a great contrast to the *décolletée* condition of the other ladies; while the sleeves, which were moderately tight, reached to the wrist. Over this bodice she wore what was called a *zimarra*, or over-bodice of stamped velvet, ornamented with gold lace, and having large sleeves open from the shoulders. Round the neck was a ruff of moderate dimensions. From her head-dress of jewels hung at the back a veil of transparent silk, striped with gold, one corner of which was brought up under the left arm, and fastened on the breast by a gold ornament in the form of a lion's head.

As Ciotto made his way, closely followed by

Bruno, Morosini glanced up, saw the bookseller, and immediately concluded that the slight spare form that followed belonged to Giordano Bruno.

"A thousand pardons!" he exclaimed, as he led Bruno to introduce him to his mother, who received him with a natural dignity and grace that charmed him. "I had scarcely expected you so soon, yet the sooner the happier for me. I shall be able to enjoy your conversation before my other guests arrive to monopolise your attention. For you must know, Messer Bruno, that you are the guest of the evening. Your fame has preceded you; and if, as I expect, my rooms will be more than usually crowded to-night, it will be that the attraction of expecting you as my guest has proved greater than could be resisted. Is it not true?" Morosini added, turning to Ciotto.

"Doubtless it is," answered the bookseller, with a certain self-assertion in his tone; for he did not intend it to be forgotten that had it not been for him, Bruno would have been little heard of in Venice. "There is hardly a scholar in Venice to whom I have not conveyed the intelligence of the distinguished philosopher and poet with whom they are, we will hope, so soon to be on terms of intimacy—the author," Ciotto continued, with a certain dry humour in his voice, "of the sonnet 'In Lode de L'Asino.'

Oh sant' asinità, sant' ignoranza
Santa stoltizia, e pia divozione

Qual sola puoi far l'anime sì buone
Ch'uman ingegno e studio non l'avanza!
Non gionge faticosa vigilanza
D'arte, qualunque sia, o invenzione
Nè di sofossi contemplazione
Al ciel, dove t'edifichi la stanza
Che vi val, curiosi, il studiare
Voler saper quel che fa la natura
Se gli astri son pur terra, fuoco e mare?
La santa asinità di ciò non cura
Ma con man gionte e'n ginocchion vuol stare
Aspettando da Dio la sua ventura.
Nessuna cosa dura
Eccetto il frutto de l'eterna requie
La qual ne done dio dopo l'esequie.'

The bookseller recited the lines in a loud, but not unmusical voice, which had the effect, as he intended it should, of arresting the attention of all near enough to hear him. He had not read carefully any of Bruno's works, but while at Frankfort he had heard him repeat these lines, and therefore committed them to heart. He knew perfectly well that in an assembly like this they would give no offence; and to recite what he had learnt was a habit by no means uncommon with the bookseller when introducing a distinguished guest to a distinguished host. It was at once a delicate compliment to the author and an occasion for displaying his own learning.

Morosini smiled courteously; but feeling the difficulty of conversing with an author upon works that he had not as yet read, he preferred to direct the conversation to his guest's travels—a subject upon

which the bookseller had in a measure enlightened him. Bruno described them in the vivid way natural to him; dwelling in particular upon Elizabeth, and England, and the great kindness of Castelnau. When he came to his sojourn in Oxford, Morosini interrupted him, saying :

“Ah, then, you studied at Oxford. Happy man ! You have enjoyed a privilege. Oxford, the mother of sound learning !”

“Call her rather the *widow* of sound learning,” answered Bruno bitterly. “Her undergraduates love to imbibe beer better than knowledge, and her doctors are so sunk in sloth and pedantry that learning cannot breathe in an atmosphere so pestilential and confined.”

Morosini perceived that he had inadvertently touched upon a tender spot, and changed the subject. The room was now rapidly filling, and there was only time for conversation that was necessarily more or less discursive, while Morosini spoke to each guest as he approached him. But he kept Bruno by him for some time, evidently considering him his chiefest visitor for that evening, and directing his attention to such among his other guests as he thought most likely to interest the Neapolitan.

“But who is that small pale man yonder, dressed in the dress of the Servites ?” asked Bruno, after receiving descriptions of various persons famous for their erudition, in whom he did not feel any great

amount of interest. "His face seems at once familiar and unfamiliar. Can I have seen him, and if so, where?"

"That is Fra Paolo Sarpi," answered Morosini.

"Then I have seen him before," answered Bruno, with a certain eagerness in his voice. He had not, as the reader will probably remember, been greatly attracted to Sarpi, when he had met him ten years previously; but his was a nature that could not regard an acquaintance of long standing quite with the same feelings as those not yet an hour old. Moreover, was it not in Sarpi's company that he had first met Philip Sidney? He regarded him for a few minutes with intense interest, and then said:

"He has aged more than ten years should account for."

"He has," answered Morosini; "but he is naturally delicate, and his application to study is truly immense."

"Age does not always go by years."

"No, indeed," interposed the officious bookseller, who was standing near. "Did not the unhappy Tasso write when he was but forty:

Tu che ne vai in Pindo

Ivi pende mia cetra ad un cipresso

Salutala in mio nome, e dille poi

Ch'io son dagl'anni e da fortuna oppresso."

"*Gnaffe!*" said Giustiniani, a bright young Venetian noble, who had not long joined the circle. "It is the fashion to picture Tasso as infirm and

miserable. But there is plenty of life in him still, in spite of all his complaints; he knows how to hold his own. Doubtless," continued Giustiniani, turning to Bruno, "you know to what I allude?"

"Nay, signore, I know not," answered Bruno.

"Well, it appears that our poet had suspicions of the fidelity of one who pretended to be his friend. Nay, his suspicions were almost certainties. He boldly taxed him with the infamy of opening his trunk with false keys, to pry into his secrets among the papers. And upon the accused denying the charge, what must our melancholy, woe-begone poet do but up with his hand, and boldly strike the traitor on the face. Aha! I should like to have been there. This poet who pretends to be old at forty has got some youthful passion in him."

"And this," interposed Ciotto, seeing another opportunity for a quotation, "gave rise to the well-known couplet:

Con la penna e con la spada
Nessun val quanto Torquato."

Bruno listened, but with no great interest. He was more anxious to hear of Sarpi, and asked quickly, lest he should again be hindered:

"Sarpi was a youth of exceeding ability. Has the promise of his youth been fulfilled?"

"More than fulfilled," answered Morosini. "But he is a strange character; taciturn and reflective to an extent unusual among our people, Messer Bruno.

But then he had a somewhat anxious childhood, and this, coupled with his delicacy of constitution, is quite sufficient to account for his unusual gravity."

"Had he an anxious childhood?" said Bruno, looking at Sarpi's form, still some distance away, with increasing interest. "It will not, I trust, seem impertinent curiosity if I ask you to tell me all you know of him. Years ago, when I met him in the society of Philip Sidney, he struck me as being a remarkable youth, though I will not disguise that I thought him also a somewhat disagreeable one. But what of that? The man is not always as the youth."

"No, indeed," interposed the officious bookseller, determined not to be left out of the conversation. "Clever lads always are disagreeable; acid, as fine fruit before it is ripe. But he is over thirty now, and is mellowing every year."

Bruno was a little annoyed at the interruption. Without looking at Ciotto, he turned to Morosini, and said, almost as if he had not heard the bookseller: "You will tell me all about Sarpi? Unless, indeed, there is anything about his history that he would dislike made known."

"Nay," answered Morosini; "there is nothing to be hidden, either about him or his relations. But our worthy friend, Messer Ciotto, will doubtless be more able to tell you what you seek," continued Morosini, laying his hand on Ciotto's shoulder with a smile. He had seen how eager was the bookseller to impart

the information he knew ; and was not sorry to seize an opportunity where without rudeness he could leave Bruno and attend to his other guests. Moreover, he was just a little disappointed that one like Bruno should seem to care for personal gossip rather than literary discussion.

Love of gossip was, as we know, fully as far removed from Bruno as from Morosini. But there are occasions when we all behave somewhat differently from our custom. And there was a look about Sarpi's very remarkable face that had excited uncontrollable interest in Bruno.

The bookseller waited till Morosini was out of hearing, and then said to Bruno, with an air of much greater familiarity than Morosini had used towards him :

"Aha ! my young messere, when you have been in Venice a little longer you will be as certain as everyone else that it is useless to go to anyone save Giambattista Ciotto when you desire to discover any gossip about your neighbours."

"I desire no gossip," said Bruno, with a mixture of haughtiness and surprise. "I met Fra Paolo many years ago, and am naturally anxious to learn how he has been progressing. But if there is any scandal connected with his name I would rather not hear it."

"Nay, nay, there is no scandal. The story that I have to tell you is but a tame one, and

assuredly redounds more to his honour than dishonour."

"Well, then, let me hear it. What was it made his childhood such an anxiety?" asked Bruno.

"He was the son of a wealthy merchant, who, when young Pietro (as Fra Paolo was then called) was hardly more than an infant, and his little sister even younger than himself, lost the whole of his fortune, and died, as some think, of a broken heart. His widow and her little ones had not even the means for bare subsistence. But, luckily for Pietro, his mother was in her way almost as remarkable as himself. She set to work with a will, and discovering signs of rare ability in her boy, even by the time that he was four or five years of age, determined that he should have an excellent education. She placed him at a school which was under the supervision of a brother of her own, Fra Ambrosio Morelli. Yet finding that in a few years he had learnt all that could be taught him here she insisted that he should have the benefit of travel. The lad, fully conscious of the lack of means, and of the privations his mother had to endure in order to pay for the privileges she insisted her son should enjoy, resolved that he would do something to distinguish himself at a very early age, or else would accept some small remunerative drudgery, so that at least he would be no longer a burden on his mother. Night and day, night and day he worked, till at the age of twenty he brought

out his "History of the Councils after the Acts," a work that would have done credit to a man of thirty. But what wonder that he was irritated and morose ; what wonder that he was never to know vigorous health again when a lad in his teens works like a man of forty ?"

"What wonder, indeed?" said Bruno compassionately. Then after a few minutes' thought he continued in a tone of compunction : "*Poverino ! poverino !* And I was annoyed with him, was cold to him when I should have honoured and encouraged him ! But I trust that his troubles are all over now ?"

"Yes," answered the bookseller ; "since the publication of his book, his career has been one of rapid progress. After having made his solemn profession in 1572, he came back to Venice, and for some seven or eight years taught philosophy and theology among the Servites."

"It was during that period that I first met him," interrupted Bruno somewhat eagerly.

"But from 1579 until a year or two ago, he has been travelling about," continued the bookseller ; "and what with his reading and what with his travels, the information that he has acquired is enormous. Then, you must know that he has a great taste for astronomy."

"Ah !" exclaimed Bruno, with a deep-drawn breath, "I had forgotten it. But it all comes back

to me now. I remember his description of the wonderful star in Cassiopœia."

"Further, you must know that he has a friend and pupil, whose future glory, he declares, will far outshine his own—Galileo Galilei."

"Ah ! I have heard of him. He is the appointed lecturer on mathematics at Pisa."

"Just so," answered the bookseller.

"And so," continued Bruno, musingly, "Fra Paolo is as devoted to astronomy as when I knew him?"

"I should even say more so," answered Ciotto.

"I almost wonder that he has not broken from his Order," remarked Bruno in a low voice. "Think you that he is really a Catholic at heart?"

"*Messere mio*," answered the bookseller somewhat incisively, "at Rome a man dare not say what religion he has ; and even at Venice he would rather not be asked. Be warned in time, and seek not to pry into what every scholar would fain conceal. Remember rather the saying, '*Pensieri stretti ed il viso sciolto*.' But here comes Fra Paolo. Does he recognise you?"

Bruno advanced, and in an instant he and the Servite were in earnest conversation ; the latter seeking to learn all about Philip Sidney and his death ; the former anxious to atone by more than ordinary courtesy for any coldness and ill-feeling that he might have shown in earlier years.

Meanwhile Mocenigo was wending his way through the now densely-crowded rooms. Unexpected business had detained him, and he was nearly the latest arrival. He expected to find Bruno anxiously awaiting him, and uneasy at the lateness of his appearance. Naturally jealous, and having an especial reason for desiring that Bruno should regard him as his first and chief protector, he was a little annoyed at learning from Morosini that he had left the Neapolitan in earnest conversation with Ciotto. But he was much more annoyed when the bookseller informed him that Bruno was now engrossed with Fra Paolo Sarpi, in whom he had discovered an acquaintance of more than ten years' standing. Apart from other reasons, Mocenigo had a particular dislike to Sarpi; for the Servite was one of the very few thinkers in the sixteenth century who had an unfeigned contempt for those theurgic and alchemic reveries secretly indulged in even by minds of a superior order.

Mocenigo only stayed at the party a short time. He did not once speak to Bruno, by whom he had been unperceived in the crowd. Mocenigo was one not to complain of small grievances. He brooded over them instead. As he went to his bed his thoughts were busy trying to divine what was the nature of the intimacy between Sarpi and Bruno. Was it only a casual acquaintance, or had they corresponded all these years? Above all did they

share the same intellectual beliefs? One thing was clear to Mocenigo: he would not dismiss his old astrologer Giulio till he had fully discovered whether Bruno would really be willing or competent to take his place.



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CHAPTER XV.

BRUNO BECOMES THE GUEST OF MOCENIGO.

Do not the histories of all ages
Relate miraculous presages
Of strange turns in the world's affairs
Foreseen by astrologers, soothsayers,
Chaldeans, learned Genethliacs,
And some that have writ almanacks.

HUDIBRAS.

NOTWITHSTANDING this resolution on Mocenigo's part, within eight weeks from Morosini's assembly, Giordano Bruno became duly installed as resident and guest in his house.

Two events had conduced to this result. The first was the sudden death of old Giulio the astrologer; the other the brief absence of Bruno from Venice on a visit to Padua, which absence had prevented both Mocenigo and Bruno from discovering how entirely erroneous was the conception each had formed of the other's character. Had Giulio not died so suddenly, it is probable that Mocenigo would have deferred inviting Bruno to be his guest till he had had time

and opportunity to learn more about him. But he was an idle man, and a superstitious one; and the old astrologer's death had created a greater blank for him than he had anticipated. Day after day he went either to Ciotto or to the other bookseller intimate with Bruno when at Frankfort, Britanno, to learn all he could of the Neapolitan. And when with Ciotto, Mocenigo invariably asked to see anew those works of Bruno that had so greatly interested him at the memorable interview when he had first heard of them and their author from the bookseller. The more he studied the works, the more they fascinated him. Again and again he perused them, reading into the more obscure passages all he desired they should mean. "Yes," he said to himself, "notwithstanding that ill-judged friendship of Bruno's for Sarpi, an author of such works must be in my service! I could not do without him, especially now Giulio is dead!" And so it came to pass that when Bruno's visit to Padua was within a short time of its termination, he received a letter from the Venetian, imploring him to leave the lodgings Ciotto had taken for him at Venice, and come instead to Via San Samuele, abiding as friend and honoured guest in his (Mocenigo's) house.

Bruno was greatly touched at this fresh proof of the esteem in which he was evidently held by the Venetian. He accepted the invitation with gratitude, nay, with ardour. As the days passed he felt him-

self becoming impatient that his visit to Padua should terminate, and the brotherly communion with Mocenigo commence. Moreover, he was just now more conscious of external loneliness than was usual with him ; for the books he had been writing when at Frankfort were all finished, and another had not yet been commenced. Most authors are familiar with an uncomfortable consciousness of blankness at inevitable periods like these, and have a greater inclination towards society than at any other time. And thus, for many reasons—as fate would have it—it happened that Bruno became as eager to become Mocenigo's guest, as the Venetian was to have him so.

And for a time all went off well. The only thing that caused Mocenigo discomfiture was the evident liking Fra Paolo Sarpi had conceived for his guest. Still, he could not forbid the Servite's visits, since Bruno was as yet in the position of visitor, and not in his service, as he intended that he should ultimately be. He merely contented himself with exercising a sort of espionage over the friendship, and being present whenever possible during the interviews. And before Bruno himself he was strictly on his guard ; reserved, and uncommunicative, showing little of the demonstrative eagerness that he had displayed at their first introduction.

Bruno himself was a little surprised at the great intimacy that was springing up between himself and

Fra Paolo ; and could not disguise from himself that the Servite occupied more of his attention than did his host. Nevertheless, even Fra Paolo was scarcely the ideal friend that he sometimes hoped he might meet. Such a friend must be a disciple, younger than himself, and eager to learn. He must be ardent, moreover ; and, above all, honest, willing to sacrifice everything for his opinions. Fra Paolo was a few years his junior, it was true ; but was certainly more able to fill the position of teacher than taught. Then he had but little taste for metaphysics and speculation. He was acute, and, perhaps, a little unimpassioned, though he had a quiet plodding devotion to scientific pursuits, which he loved for their own sakes ; while Bruno loved scientific investigations only because of the deductions he drew from them.

Neither as yet suspected that their friendship was disagreeable to Mocenigo. Bruno, indeed, unsuspecting as he was unobservant, had not even noticed that his host always intruded his presence whenever the Servite was announced, always insisted upon forming one at any interview that might be contemplated away from his own house. Even Sarpi did not for some time regard this constant presence as other than accidental. He was acute and shrewd, but not inordinately suspicious. His natural reserve was the result of his delicacy of constitution and exceeding application to study ; not, as with Mocenigo, of innate love of secrecy and proneness to distrust.

But though the Servite had not as yet come to regard the constant presence of Mocenigo with any suspicion, that presence was exceedingly unwelcome. With his shy, reserved nature, Sarpi was more than usually susceptible to slight external circumstances, and could not fail, therefore, to be conscious that three was a number much less propitious for quiet discussion than two. Moreover, he had a certain contempt for Mocenigo himself. That finely-dressed, indolent, luxurious, young nobleman formed a striking contrast to the poorly-clad, indefatigable friar, and was always suspected by him of being a mere dabbler in learning, totally unworthy of taking part in discussions that should only occur between genuine students of philosophy.

Things had been going on in this way for about a fortnight, when, on one bright morning in April, Bruno happened to be alone, seated in that private room belonging to Mocenigo that I have already described, rejoicing in his unusual solitude; for Mocenigo had been at a party the previous evening and in consequence had not yet risen. Bruno had already, though as yet scarcely consciously, begun to weary of this indolent signore who so seldom spoke to him, yet who never left him alone. He remained musing in somewhat sad abstraction, unconscious of any external sounds, when a short figure stood before him. He looked up and recognised Fra Paolo.

"Musing!" exclaimed the friar half jocosely, "and musing so deeply that you did not even perceive my entrance!" Then looking round, Sarpi continued, as he saw with delight that Mocenigo was absent: "But you must rouse yourself. To be alone together is not so frequent a privilege that we can afford to slight it. Rouse yourself. I have a letter from my pupil Galileo that must interest you."

Bruno roused himself, and the conversation became eager, nay, at times excited. Sarpi, boasting with unselfish pride of the future glory of his pupil Galileo; Bruno, half shrinking as with personal pain from the notion that this young lecturer at Pisa should ever outshine Copernicus. That Prussian astronomer had, as we know, from the time that Bruno was fifteen, exercised a fascination over him; and the recollection that the greatest scientific discoverer of his age had kept his book concealed from public criticism for thirty-six years, and died a few days after he had seen a published copy, entirely ignorant of his future fame, touched a responsive chord in the Neapolitan's breast. He was giving vent in his eager, excited way to enthusiastic, nay, extravagant praise of the Prussian's merits, when Sarpi interrupted.

"Nay, nay, you overrate Copernicus. He was a great discoverer, no doubt; but not the original thinker you would depict. A century before Coper-

nicus, Cardinal de Cusa taught a very similar doctrine."

"I do not deny Cusa's ability," answered Bruno, "but it seems to me," he added with a certain significance in his tone, "that he was terribly hampered by his priest's gown."

"Is that little thrust aimed at me?" inquired Sarpi with good humour.

"Yes," answered Bruno, with his usual candour. "I cannot conceive how you, holding the scientific doctrines you do, can continue to wear the habit of a monk."

"If I chose to bandy words," answered Sarpi, "I might retort upon you, and ask, How comes it that you, the friend of Philip Sidney, the professed admirer of Elizabeth of England, the open defender of Martin Luther, how is it that you have not the courage of your opinions, and openly profess yourself to be, what the greater part of Europe knows that you are, a friend and believer of one or other of those numerous reforms that are now agitating Europe?"

"Reforms!" exclaimed Bruno, as a passionate, contemptuous glance broke upon his face. "Change the first letter, and call them *deforms*! There is not one of them that is not a blot upon humanity. Courage of my opinions! Nay, my worst enemy cannot deny that at least I am honest. If I were a believer in Protestantism, do you think that I would not avow it as easily as I avow my belief in Copernicus? I loved

Philip Sidney, it is true ; but not because he was a Protestant, but because he was a good man. I love Castelnau de Mauvissière still more, not because he is a Catholic, but because he is the noblest man I have ever met. Men are great, not because of their beliefs, but in spite of them. To me there is nothing more extraordinary in this extraordinary world than the fact that not only the noblest but the wisest men have been holders of the insanest doctrines."

Bruno stopped short. Imprudent though he was, he could not help being struck with the magnitude of his imprudence in thus divulging his opinions before one who was after all little more than a stranger. But he need not have feared Sarpi. That Servite friar was wholly above treachery. He remained silent a few minutes, absorbed in thought, during which time Mocenigo entered, and sat himself at the table ; but he was totally unperceived by the two friends, both of whom were too entirely buried in meditation to notice the entrance so quietly effected. Then, after a few minutes, Sarpi raised his head, and said slowly :

"You wonder that I continue to wear the gown of my Order—many others have wondered also—yet I believe I am right in so doing. I believe that Catholicism is nearer to true Christianity than any other forms ; though, as you are aware, there are certain of the Catholic practices that my soul abhors. I hate the Inquisition. I rebel against its establishment into Venice as much as you Neapolitans struggled,

forty years ago or more, against its introduction into Naples. And I am trying my utmost, as you are probably aware, to limit the despotism of the Pope. But for Christianity I have an unfeigned reverence. And as for those philosophical and mystical speculations you would like to take the place of Christianity, I tell you that they are incapable of proof—almost as wholly in the region of dreamland as those absurd theurgic and alchemic vagaries which seem to have such a peculiar attraction for the lunatics of all ages and all nations.”

A curious bystander would have been interested in penetrating the meaning of the peculiar expression that stole over Mocenigo's face during this last speech. It portrayed at once anger and dismay, strangely mingled with triumph, followed, as he turned to Bruno, with a certain glance of appealing longing. For this was the moment that he had been expecting since Bruno had become his guest. He had longed that some such speech, on Sarpi's part, should make Bruno disclose his real feeling on alchemy and astrology. But Bruno took no notice. He had evidently not observed the entrance of Mocenigo; and the latter part of Sarpi's speech had the effect of making him more abstracted than before. Mocenigo waited for a few moments, and then, perceiving that Bruno showed no inclination to comment upon Sarpi's speech, he turned to the friar himself and said, in his slow suspicious way :

"You are hasty in your conclusions. I am little of a believer in astrology and alchemy myself; but surely men like Raymond Lully, Roger Bacon, Nicholas Flamel, Trithemius, Paracelsus, Cornelius Agrippa—to mention but a few among a distinguished host—scarcely deserve to be ranked with lunatics."

Sarpi curled his lip, and did not answer. He knew quite enough of Mocenigo to be aware that this remark did not arise from impartial love of fairness. And, after another pause, Mocenigo, observing that Bruno was still in a state of abstraction, and, determined to make him speak, said, as he lightly touched him on the arm:

"I suppose you know that Alasco, of Poland, is a firm believer in these arts."

"I did not know it at the time of my interview with him," answered Bruno, "but I have heard it from various persons since. I am afraid he must have fallen into bad hands. His belief in these arts seems to have brought him to the verge of beggary. Still," he added, turning to Sarpi, "though there is doubtless much imposition mingled with these practices, I would not pronounce them to be entirely imposition."

Mocenigo's face brightened. He turned cordially to Bruno and said: "That is just my own opinion. For instance, in Alasco's case, one of the so-called astrologers—Kelly—was undoubtedly an impostor

practising frauds upon the unfortunate prince for the sake of robbing him of his money. But his associate, Dr. Dee, seems from all accounts to have been as honest as he was fervent."

A cynical smile stole over Sarpi's face. "Ah," he said, "let a mad enthusiast combine with an unprincipled cheat, and the number of converts they will make is truly marvellous. But," he added after a pause, with greater gravity, and dropping his tone of cynicism, "what I deprecate most of all in these theurgic and alchemic insanities is the diversion of ability and patience from a worthy to a worthless object. Look at Alasco, for instance. With his own very fair share of talent, and in a country devoted to learning, such as Poland, what might he not have done to help true science on her way? Yet, ever since he came into the clutches of Kelly and Dee he has been so absorbed in grasping at shadows that he has lost all interest in substance."

"Yes," answered Bruno rather sadly, "there is a good deal of truth in what you say, yet such cases are not quite so hopeless as you imagine. In searching for discoveries that may be, and probably are impossible, those that are possible are alighted on. And yet," he added, in a low tone, half to himself, "who can say what is possible or not? The folly or wisdom of research can be only proved by the result."

There was again a pause for a few moments.

Mocenigo was watching Bruno attentively, and waited with eagerness till he should speak again. It was Sarpi, however, who spoke next.

"Investigate Nature by all means," he said. "However you aspire to probe her mysteries, whether you are successful or no, you will hear no word of discouragement from me. But it is those things that are called supernatural—divination, and the kindred arts, alchemy, astrology, and what not—that seem to me to be such a mixture of insanity and quackery."

"And yet," answered Bruno, "is it not strange that there has been no nation, no sect, without some such belief? Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, all have their diviners. Academician, Peripatetic, Stoic, alike attest their belief. Pythagoras, Democritus, Socrates, however they differ in other ways, resemble each other in this. Among the ancients, the only two great men who held a contrary belief are Xenophanes and Epicurus. Then, again, unless we discredit all history, things that have been foretold have really come to pass."

"Through coincidence, not cause," answered Sarpi. "You hear of the few prophecies that are fulfilled; the many unfulfilled are passed over."

"Doubtless," answered Bruno, "things that have been predicted sometimes fail to happen. But I remember hearing my father—a man the reverse of credulous—read aloud a passage from Cicero in reference to this very argument. 'Does an occasional

shipwreck?' asks Cicero, through the mouth of one of his characters, 'prove that there is no such art as navigation? Is the science of generals good for nothing because a general may sometimes lose an army?' The same rule applies to the answers of soothsayers. They may sometimes deceive us, but more frequently direct us to the truth. As in the infinite duration of time things have happened in almost a countless number of ways, with the self-same indications preceding each occurrence, an art has been concocted and reduced to rules from a frequent observation and notice of the circumstances."

"Why, Bruno," exclaimed Sarpi, in some surprise, "are you really a believer in occult science? I had no idea of it."

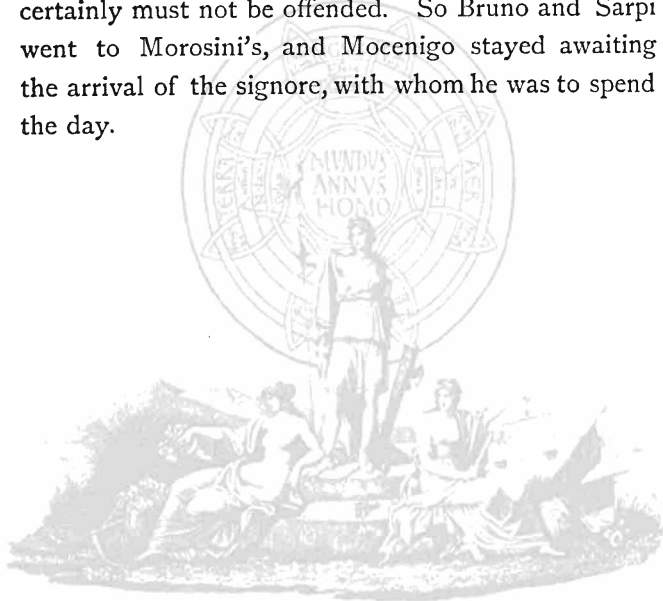
"Nay," answered Bruno, "those arguments are Cicero's, not my own. I am an investigator, not a believer. But it seems to me that in all these matters it is as unwise to be too incredulous as the reverse."

"Well," answered Sarpi, after a slight pause, "we must be going; you know we have promised to spend to-day with Morosini?"

"Yes," answered Bruno, "I am quite ready;" and he rose to put on his cap.

Mocenigo was intensely annoyed at finding that Bruno was going to accompany Sarpi to Morosini's. He had arranged to spend that afternoon with the father of the lady he was courting. He had meant

Bruno to stay at home until his return. He dared not interfere, however ; especially just now, when it really seemed as if the Neapolitan might be competent to take the place of the astrologer Giulio. Yes, he certainly must not be offended. So Bruno and Sarpi went to Morosini's, and Mocenigo stayed awaiting the arrival of the signore, with whom he was to spend the day.



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CHAPTER XVI.

PORTENTOUS.

Sound needed none,
Nor any voice of joy ; his spirit drank
The spectacle ; sensation, soul, and form
All melted into him ; they swallowed up
His animal being ; in them did he live
And by them did he live ; they were his life.
In such access of mind, in such high hour
Of visitation from the living God
Thought was not ; in enjoyment it expired.
No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request ;
Rapt into still communion that transcends
The imperfect offices of prayer and praise
His mind was a thanksgiving to the power
That made him ; it was blessedness and love !

WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*.

IT was late in the afternoon when Bruno and Sarpi left Morosini's. They parted almost at the gate, as their ways lay in different directions.

A perfect sea and a splendid sky broke upon Bruno's view as he wended his steps homewards. And he rejoiced that he was alone. There are few

lovers of natural beauty who are not familiar with the great companionship that lies in Nature, and long at times to be alone with her. And Bruno was just now unusually appreciative of solitude, since for the last fortnight he had had so little.

Nature was in one of her lavish moods that evening, and spread her gorgeous colouring wherever eye could see. The distant buildings were all aglow with light. The sea, on which the beautiful city seemed, as it has been so often described, to float, was chameleon-like in its ever-varying hues. The clouds that gathered round the setting sun were now gold, now gray, now crimson; and each little wave reflected the changing colours. Then a light haze rose and seemed to unite the sea and sky in one, and the sea became dull, as if mourning for the loss of light. Anon, all of a sudden, the sun, like a bright god, determined not to die, struggled through the haze, and the sea sparkled exultant, radiant with sympathetic colour, and every building seemed flooded with crimson glow. Then, a long way off, and nearly opposite, rising as the sun set, was the pale young moon, spreading her silvery mystic light around her. Bruno wandered on, lost in delicious consciousness of beauty; not so much observing every detail, or consciously thinking of it, as penetrated and pervaded by it. A sea of beauty was at his feet, a sky of beauty was above his head; the horizon was bathed with silver or gold, buildings glowed with purple or red,

and he thrilled with indefinable delicious enjoyment of nameless charm. Feeling for the time prevented all sense of conscious knowledge.

But after awhile this mystic intoxication gave place to a longing to know and comprehend. His ardent love for beauty was strongly intermingled with religious sentiment, and was as distinct from his father's merely artistic enjoyment of it as from the cold scientific curiosity of Sarpi. This wonderful thing called colour set him musing. Was it an entity, or only an appearance? Did it arise from the sun? Had its rays really power to tinge the water, or was the gorgeous sea merely a reflection of the gorgeous sky. Above all, was there a Soul of Things in colour, that it should have power thus to affect his own soul, making him vibrate and thrill almost as if he had heard a grand harmonious sound. That thought set him musing upon another strain. What was sound? There was something wonderfully musical to his ear in the gentle lapping of the waves. He gazed and listened; he listened and gazed, till his soul seemed ready to burst with his emotions; till his mind seemed bewildered with his speculations—speculations which grew, as all speculations did with him, into some subtle, indefinable certainty of the unity of the universe. He buried his face in his hands, and remained in silent worship.

When he raised his head, still half-abstracted, his perception of outward things the reverse of vivid,

the first object that met his gaze was the form of Mocenigo. Even the happiness of being with the lady of his choice had not had power to make that Venetian nobleman forget the conversation of the early morning. And as soon as he could leave without discourtesy, he did so, tracing Bruno to where he hoped he should find him, alone by the sea.

"You were discreet this morning," he said, in a tone of approval that was quite sincere.

Had Bruno been less abstracted, he would have smiled at receiving, for the first time in his life, a compliment upon his discretion. All he did, however, was to say, in a tone that he could not help being rather weary, for Mocenigo's companionship at that moment was singularly grating :

"Was I?"

"I mean," answered Mocenigo, in a slow, distinct way, as if he were trying to recall Bruno to his senses, "in relation to your conversation with Sarpi. I am glad you did not too openly avow your belief in alchemy; and yet I also rejoice that you would not allow that scoffing friar to proceed entirely unrebuked. For," he added, with increased significance, "I have suspected, ever since I read your books, that you do believe in alchemy." Then, as Bruno answered not, he added: "You do believe in it?"

Bruno pointed to where the sun had so lately set, to the gorgeous clouds that were still floating near, to the strange gray haze that was hanging

mistily over part of the city, to the moon, dispersing her thousand beams that were dancing in the water, and said in a low voice, more to himself than to Mocenigo :

“Is not the whole of Nature an alchemy? One form changing into another form, one substance casting its thousand shadows. The same animating spirit is in all things, nay, the same substance has been in all things, passing from one thing to another, changing its forms but not itself.”

Mocenigo listened attentively. This highly spiritual philosophy was not at all what he meant by alchemy; but he did not fully comprehend Bruno's meaning, and was disposed to honour him with all the more attention because of his obscurity. He said half jocosely, trusting thereby to make Bruno more explicit :

“What! you do not think that every isolated thing has an animating spirit? For instance, am I to think that my cloak, my hat, my ring, are each and all animated?”

“Yes,” answered Bruno, “I mean my words in real soberness. I do not of course pretend that these things are akin in the usual sense of the word. But they have in each of them some corpuscle or portion of indestructible matter which, under fitting conditions, might become animated. Do not water and earth nourish the plant, does not the plant feed the animal which in its turn is to be transformed into man? And

when man dies will he not be dissolved into component parts and be absolved again into vegetable and animal matter?"

A dubious look flitted across Mocenigo's features. But it was transitory, and quickly vanished. He only said, "Let us go home."

Bruno could scarcely decline. And the two turned homeward; walking side by side, but neither speaking. Bruno was still in a half dreamy state and very disinclined for conversation, and Mocenigo was making up his mind to disclose to Bruno his real aim in taking him into his friendship.

Only such persons as are very reserved themselves can fully comprehend the exceeding difficulty it is to a reserved person to reveal himself. In so doing is he not breaking through the strongest instincts of his nature? But Mocenigo had determined upon disclosure now, and walked rapidly, eagerly homeward, fearing that any delay might make him change his resolution. He led the way into the antechamber I have described; and not sitting down or resting, proceeded at once to draw aside the tapestry and disclosed to Bruno for the first time the little secret staircase leading to the late astrologer's room.

As Bruno followed Mocenigo up the staircase, and came out upon the room cunningly contrived that all parts of the sky could be seen from it, a thrill of delight ran through him at the exceed-

ing beauty of the night. He turned to Mocenigo, half gratefully, half reproachfully, and said: "Ah! why did you not bring me up here before? Never have I seen a room so adapted for study of the stars!"

"Here," said Mocenigo, "dwelt an old astrologer, who only left the world a few weeks ago. Here he lived day and night, labouring to read the stars. Nay, I sometimes think he succeeded in reading the stars. My future bids fair to be as he foretold; but," added Mocenigo in a voice that he vainly tried to keep from trembling with eagerness, "in one thing he was unsuccessful. He could not prevent himself from—I mean he is no longer alive. You who believe in alchemy, think you that the discovery of an elixir of life is an impossibility?"

He could hear his own heart beating as he waited for Bruno's answer. If it were not favourable his last hope was gone. He knew not to whom to turn instead. Moreover he would have committed the immense mistake of confiding himself to the wrong person.

Bruno did not answer for some minutes. A certain contemptuous look was upon his features. He had no sympathy with cowardice; and perhaps took a little pleasure in keeping Mocenigo in suspense. But the exceeding beauty of the scene, coupled with the silence, brought back upon him the feeling of exaltation that he had only partly

shaken off, and rendered him incapable of unworthy conduct for more than a moment. After all, this world was very beautiful, and it was natural to wish to remain in it! Mocenigo waited, and then, impatient for an answer, compelled himself to speak more plainly than was his wont :

“You do not believe in—in annihilation?”

“Surely not,” answered Bruno, “nothing is destroyed, nothing is annihilated. There is no such thing as death; only ever-varying change. We are, therefore, what we are, solely by the one substance of the soul, round which, like round a centre, the atoms develop and cluster. Hence the building spirit expands through birth and growth to that body, by which we exist, and is poured forth by the heart, into which it may finally retire, wrapping itself up—like into the warp of the web—in order to recede and go out again by the same way on which it had come and had entered life. For Birth is the expansion of the centre; Life the consistence or stability of the sphere; Death the contraction into the centre.”

Mocenigo listened but did not understand. Partly because Bruno was certainly more obscure than was his wont; partly also because Mocenigo himself was in an excited state of mingled fear and hope, which prevented him from exercising his customary cool perception. All he said was :

“Proceed, I pray you.”

"A still more potent argument for our immortality may be derived," said Bruno, "from the pregnant point of view that the One Substance which builds up, clusters and develops, regulates, vivifies, moves, interweaves, and, like a marvellous artist, presides over such considerable work, cannot assuredly be of a meaner quality, than the bodies which are by it agglomerated, developed, regulated, moved, and into whose service that is taken, the substance of which is, in truth Eternal."

"But," remarked Mocenigo, feeling rather bewildered, "this does not touch upon my inquiry. What I seek to learn from you is the possibility or impossibility of discovering an elixir that shall prevent us ever leaving this world."

"No science, occult or other, will ever teach us that. It is an impossibility to discover what you would find," answered Bruno slowly and decisively.

Cold drops of sweat were on Mocenigo's brow. The disappointment caused by Bruno's reply was almost greater than could be borne. But by an immense struggle of pride he rallied sufficiently to be able to answer in a hoarse voice :

"Why impossible? Are not herbs and minerals and waters being constantly discovered for the prevention of ill health and cure of disease? Why not then for the preservation of life?"

"Because," answered Bruno, "there is no analogy between the two. Disease is an accident, an ab-

normal, unnecessary circumstance in human life; Death normal, necessary, inevitable as birth itself. In the true sense of the word there is no such thing as death or extinction; only swift, unceasing change. Otherwise we may, in one sense, be described as dying every day."

Mocenigo shuddered, but again tried to conceal the extent of his feeling, and answered: "I fail to penetrate your meaning."

"The infant fades from view and is replaced by the child, the child is replaced by the youth, the youth changes into man, the strong man into feeble age, and feeble age into insensible death, which shall resolve——"

"You misunderstand me!" interrupted Mocenigo. "I know of course that the body changes and grows; but what I mean by life is consciousness, emotion, feeling!"

"I tell you," answered Bruno, "that the consciousness alters and changes fully as much as the physical growth, so that two different individuals of the same age have a far greater resemblance to each other than the same individual has to himself at a different age. Does the babe, happy with a rattle, understand the passion of the lad eager after a pretty face? As little as you or I could realise what we shall feel when we are without sight, or hearing, or power of movement."

There was silence for a few moments. The stars

were shining with exceeding brilliance ; the sea was calm and still ; the whole scene one of peaceful majesty. "After all," said Bruno half to himself, "why should we shrink from being absorbed into the whole, which is the dwelling-place of God, extending everywhere, the entire immeasurable Heaven, the empty space, the plenitude of which He is, the Father of the Light, which comprehends the darkness, the ineffable."

"And—and Purgatory?" whispered Mocenigo, not in the least understanding Bruno's meaning. "If—if we cannot remain on earth for ever, is there no way of escaping purgatory?"

Bruno answered dreamily, still gazing on the scene before him, thinking far more of the beauty of the night than of Mocenigo :

"The higher bliss would certainly be to be absorbed into the Infinite Perfection immediately ; yet there are moments when I confess it seems to me that Divine Justice cannot be satisfied save by an adjustment of virtue and reward, vice and punishment. And in such moods I find myself leaning to that doctrine taught by priest philosophers of nearly all ages—Brahmans, Magi, Chaldeans, Egyptians, Pythagoreans, viz. : the Transmigration of Souls—those who have done good shall pass into the bodies of demi-gods, those who have done evil into the bodies of such animals as most nearly resemble themselves in their past life."

A fierce look of anger passed across Mocenigo's face. This last speech of Bruno's was at least not difficult of comprehension. The dismay, the mortification, the terror of the last minutes seemed suddenly to culminate into intense passion now that Bruno had uttered something that he could really lay hold of. "The Church does not sanction that doctrine," he exclaimed.

It was not the words so much as the tone that acted like a revelation to Bruno. He experienced a sudden revulsion of feeling, and for the first time since he had parted from Sarpi in the afternoon, was thoroughly roused from his state of abstraction. He turned and looked at Mocenigo keenly, face to face; for the light from the moon and stars was quite sufficient to allow of this. It would be difficult to say whether anger or cowardice was the expression most strongly depicted on Mocenigo's countenance. The white trembling lips, the ashen grey skin, formed a strange contrast to the fierce bright eyes gleaming with passionate life. "The Church does not sanction this," he repeated.

The characters of the two seemed for the moment to be changed. Mocenigo, usually so reserved and calm, now trembling with vehement anger; Bruno, so subject to emotional excitement, calm, contemptuous, self-restrained. He kept his eyes fixed on the Venetian for a full moment; then turned away and said in a tone of provoking super-

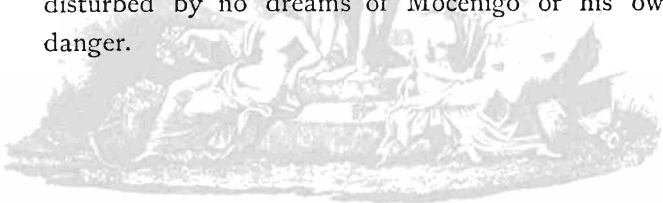
ciliousness, in answer to Mocenigo's remark, "Possibly not."

Mocenigo turned away with a gesture of angry despair; ran down the little staircase, and locked the entrance-door behind him, leaving Bruno still in the turret. He was perfectly aware that he was acting foolishly, childishly; and that it was impossible for him to detain or keep prisoner, in the way that he had the astrologer, one of such distinction and renown as Giordano Bruno. Yet to save his life, he could not have prevented himself acting as he did. With his morbidly reserved nature, it was as natural to him to shrink from one to whom he had made the mistake of confiding in, as it would have been instinctive to him to start and wince if he knew a blow was going to be aimed at his face.

Meanwhile Bruno waited patiently in the turret for about half-an-hour, in expectation that Mocenigo would return; and then ran down the staircase, imagining that his host must have gone to bed, and intended him to follow his example at his own discretion and choice. When he found that the door was locked, a half contemptuous, half amused smile came over his face. Had he liked Mocenigo more, he would have been more deeply hurt and disappointed. He could be wounded through his affections with far too great facility; but his fortnight's intimacy with Mocenigo had tended to alienate rather than draw him to him. He liked

Sarpi far better than his host; and now that Mocenigo had chosen to act as he had, why, it would make it all the easier for him to break with him altogether.

But in an hour or so, even this slight degree of excitement passed away. As the moon sank the night seemed to increase in beauty. He did not throw himself on the little bed that used to be occupied by Giulio; but sat gazing at the scene before him, till the pearly gray of early dawn. He watched in silence, till the sun, which he had seen set, now rose again, lighting up as with an Enchanter's wand, the beautiful city. Then, and not till then, he threw himself upon the bed, and slept soundly, disturbed by no dreams of Mocenigo or his own danger.



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CHAPTER XVII.

MOCENIGO SEEKS FURTHER PROOF AND GAINS IT.

No power of genius has ever yet had the smallest success in explaining existence. The perfect enigma remains.

EMERSON.

YET this episode passed away with little immediate result. Mocenigo was adroit at equivocation. Rising at his usual hour the next morning, he proceeded to the turret, and on finding it locked, uttered a well-feigned exclamation of surprise, and immediately ran down the stairs to fetch the key.

Returning with this and opening the door, he was profuse in his apologies to Bruno, explaining that he could only account for his mistake by supposing that he must have locked the door automatically and from old habit, for it had been the astrologer's custom to sleep in that room every night, and he had always requested his employer to lock the door after him whenever he left, as he disliked the possibility of anyone disturbing him in his calculations.

And although even the unsuspecting Bruno half suspected a lie, the suspicion was transitory, vanishing almost as soon as it made itself felt. Mocenigo was careful to treat his guest with more than customary attention and kindness, as if to atone for the annoyance he must have caused him ; so that the warm-hearted Neapolitan felt it impossible to express any desire to quit.

A week passed on with little outward circumstance. Mocenigo watched his guest furtively, but with intense distrust. His natural suspiciousness was doubly intensified by his apprehension and dread lest Bruno might reveal to his many friends and acquaintances what had occurred on the night that he had been first introduced to the turreted chamber. Mocenigo dared not a second time lock Bruno into the chamber for a whole night. But more than once when he was going out for an hour or two he was careful to turn the key upon the Neapolitan, partly because he was determined to prevent him having any opportunity to speak to his friends in private ; partly also because his native adroitness in equivocation and intrigue told him that the excuse he had made about the locked door could not receive better support than occasionally appearing to fall into the old habit again.

Yet this state of affairs could not go on for long. Mocenigo was intensely anxious to learn more of Bruno's opinions, both on theology and alchemy. He

longed to start some fresh discussion, so as to entrap him in his words; but some subtle consciousness, common to both, prevented Mocenigo as well as Bruno from entering into any grave conversation after the episode in the turreted chamber. Mocenigo saw that if he wanted to learn further of the Neapolitan's opinions he must not deny him access to his friends. And so it came to pass that one day early in May, when an invitation came from Andrea Morosini to himself and his guest to spend a quiet afternoon with him, it was accepted.

They started together; but they had not proceeded more than a few yards, when Mocenigo, uttering an exclamation of annoyance, said that he had forgotten something and must return for it, but begged Bruno to proceed to Morosini's by himself. He would quickly overtake him.

It was a ruse on Mocenigo's part, though a ruse only concocted within the last few minutes. It had suddenly occurred to him that if he allowed Bruno to precede him, and followed afterwards, entering Morosini's quietly and unobserved, he would have a better opportunity of judging what use Bruno had made of his liberty; whether he had disclosed the episode in the turreted chamber; above all, whether he had made him (Mocenigo) a laughing-stock to amuse that scoffing friar, Fra Paolo.

Bruno had been at Morosini's over half-an-hour when Mocenigo arrived. The latter entered the

drawing-room quietly and unperceived, having refused to allow the servant to announce him. He saw, somewhat to his relief, that there was no large gathering; only five or six intimate friends; though amongst them was the much-dreaded Servite, Sarpi. A glance was sufficient to show him that the conversation was very earnest; but it was a woman's, not a man's tones that met his ear, and came from that sweet old lady, Andrea Morosini's mother. She was speaking in that deep-toned voice, by no means rare in old womanhood, which, though if it belonged to a girl would be pronounced harsh, in one of her time of life seems to possess a quiet richness that is very effective. She was evidently addressing her words to Bruno.

"You are right, messere," she said. "One cannot look around one without perceiving how universal, how unceasing is Change. Nay," she added, in a tone of pathos, "to one who has deep affections and a constant nature, there are few things more sad in this sad world than the knowledge that nothing endures. As soon as one gets used to it, or grows attached to it, it vanishes away."

"Nay, *madre mia*," observed Morosini caressingly, "it is not like you to be mournful. You are always dilating upon the happiness of your lot."

"I have much to be grateful for, indeed," replied the lady, "and chiefly in having a son like thee, my Andrea. But," turning again to Bruno, "your words

set me thinking. One of my age feels the truth of them, the full reality of them, more than the young can possibly do. When I glance back to my own girlhood, or, still more, to my early married life, it seems to me that I live in a world altogether different. Little voices rang in my ear then, little feet pattered after me, little kisses were showered upon my face. Where are they now? All died long since; faded from sight; but not—not," she added as if half to herself, "from remembrance."

"Nay, beloved mother," answered Morosini, very tenderly, "you have one son left, who loves you as dearly, nay, more dearly than when he was a child."

"I know it, I know it, my Andrea," answered the old lady, her eyes bright with the tears that she did not allow to fall. "Do not think for a moment that I doubt it. Only," she added a little hesitatingly, "it seems sometimes to me as I sit here alone, and you are engaged about your literary or State duties, that you and that little boy-baby to which my thoughts revert are literally two distinct individuals." Then, by a sort of transition, and with something in her manner approaching the childishness of old age, she dropped her voice to a mysterious whisper, and said as if in confidence: "Andrea, dost thou remember how fond thou and my little Luigi were of threading rings for me made of tiny little shells?"

"Ah! do I not?" exclaimed Andrea Morosini.

"What years I seem to have lived when I recall it!" Then taking his mother's hand into his, he turned to Bruno and said: "This dear mother! Do you know, Messer Bruno, that the earliest thing I can remember is seeing her fingers covered with the shell rings we used to thread for her. I believe she discarded all her jewels at this time, and save when in company always wore these rings. I believe she liked them better than her finest ornaments."

"They were threaded by thee, Andrea, and thy brother Luigi," said the old lady, "and they became the most precious jewels to me. Ah," she continued musingly, as if these memories had recalled others, "I was reading the other day the first letter Luigi ever wrote to me, in large unsteady hand and wonderfully misspelt. He had gone to an aunt's, and it was the first time that he had slept out of my bed. He described in his baby fashion how desolate he felt, and how at last he took the pillow in his arms and kissed and fondled that, trying to make believe it was his mother. *Ah!*" she continued, with a deep-drawn sigh, "when I read these old letters, or look at the shell rings that I still keep, it seems to me that my little boys both died long ago; Luigi who really died at five years old, not more than Andrea who is changed into a man. The one vanished suddenly, the other changed gradually, but both are lost to me, and now live only in remembrance."

There was not a man in Morosini's room who was

not touched by the old lady's memories, but Bruno and Sarpi were especially affected; Bruno through his warm, affectionate nature; Sarpi because of the peculiar sympathy there had ever been between himself and his own mother. But after a moment's silence Bruno happened to glance up, and his eyes fell on Mocenigo. He could not resist giving him a look which showed that his mind was reverting to the subjects they had discussed in the turret. It seemed to him that this sweet old lady, speaking from the depth of a heart filled with maternal memories, had in reality given a far better illustration of the constant, unceasing Change that takes place in individual life than he had himself done, speaking merely as a philosopher. This doctrine was, as we know, one very familiar to him; yet even to him it seemed that this old lady's memories had impressed it upon him with a peculiar vividness. Certainly there was nothing in Morosini now, that distinguished statesman and eminent writer, to recall the little child happy in threading beads of shells!

But Mocenigo, though not untouched by the old lady's memories, was principally occupied in trying to fathom the origin of the conversation. Was it by cause or coincidence? Had Bruno been detailing in full the conversation that had taken place between himself and Mocenigo in the turreted chamber; or had the conversation, by one of those inexplicable chances that occasionally occur, merely drifted into

the same current without design or motive? One thing at least was clear to him : that now that Bruno had once broken through the seemingly cautious reserve that he had maintained since the night he had been locked into the turreted chamber, he should by all possible means be prevented from falling into it again. After he had interchanged courtesies with his host and the few guests who were present, he turned to Bruno with a well-assumed air of ease and familiarity, as he said :

“So you were avowing that belief of yours in the Unity that underlies Variety ; in the constant, unceasing change that pervades the universe. But if everything can be changed into something else, why not the baser metals into gold? *Gnaffe!* you might be the richest philosopher in the world! And if the richest, then the most influential. For you know the proverb: ‘If you make gold, the Great Turk shall come to be your servant.’ Why not make all your learning of some practical use; a means to some definite end?”

“Because,” answered Bruno indignantly, “my philosophy is an end in itself, and shall never be prostituted into a means for getting money.”

Mocenigo with an effort succeeded in disguising the anger he felt at the implied rebuke. He took his part in the various philosophical discussions that followed, and when it was time to leave, put his arm within Bruno’s, and said :

"I am interested greatly in your views. Do not let our departure from Morosini's be an excuse for departing from our subject. Let us continue our discussion during our walk. Nay," Mocenigo added, throwing a certain turn of affectionate interest into his words, "you should surely be more open before me, should confide in your friend and host as you should in no other man in Venice."

Bruno was touched at what appeared to him like an evident attempt on Mocenigo's part to rekindle the ardour of their first meeting. He answered gently :

"I will discuss willingly with you ; yet I fear I must always cause you disappointment. I do not believe in the possibility of finding an elixir of life ; and whether it be possible or not to transmute base metal into gold, I shall never practise it."

"Nay," answered Mocenigo, with an air of such grave deference that a much more shrewd, suspicious listener than Bruno might have been duped, "it is of something much more important, of a subject that is at once inspiring yet awful that I speak. I would know your full religious belief. You hold that there is a God ; but do you define Him ?"

"In one sense," answered the unsuspecting Bruno, "it is of course impossible. All religions alike have perceived the inconceivability of the finite mind comprehending the Infinite."

"But you have some peculiar views relating to the nature of God and the origin of the universe ?"

"I have," answered Bruno quietly, "and I will tell them ; though it is of course impossible to make my meaning clear unless you have read my books."

"Nevertheless, confide them to me," answered Mocenigo, as Bruno paused, anxious to find words in which best to explain his doctrine. For just now he had no external stimulus to his natural enthusiasm, neither was he in any abstraction. All circumstances had been against this. It was many hours since he had been alone with his own thoughts, and there happened this evening to be nothing very remarkable either about the sky or sea. He spoke therefore without great fervour, freer perhaps from obscurity than was usual with him, when upon his beloved subject ; yet lacking also a good deal of the poetic beauty of expression that came at times spontaneously to him.

"I conceive," he said, slowly and quietly, "God to be the original and immanent cause of the universe. Power, wisdom, and love are His attributes. The stars are moved not by a prime mover, but by the souls immanent in them. Matter contains within herself the form of things, and brings them forth from within herself. The elementary parts of all that exist are the monads, which are to be conceived as points, not absolutely unextended, but spherical ; they are at once spiritual and material. The soul is a monad. It is never entirely without a body. God is the Monad of monads. He is the Minimum,

because all things are external to Himself ; but at the same time the Maximum, because all things are in Him. God caused the worlds to come forth from Himself, not by an arbitrary act of will, but by an inner necessity ; hence without outward compulsion, and hence also freely. The worlds are Nature realised. God is Nature working. God is present in things in like manner as Being in the things that exist, or Beauty in objects that are beautiful."

A peculiar light shone in Mocenigo's eyes ; but Bruno was not regarding him. After another short pause Mocenigo pressed the Neapolitan's hand, and said gently :

"You interest me greatly. Pray go on. Have you any particular belief or non-belief in the doctrine of the Trinity?"

"I believe," answered Bruno, "in three kinds of intelligences: the Divine, which is everything ; the mundane, which does everything ; and the particular intelligences, which are all made by the second."

"Thank you ; that will do," answered Mocenigo in a peculiar tone.

They were at his house now, and parted almost immediately, each to his own room—Mocenigo to write down, before it had faded from his remembrance, Bruno's confession of his faith ; Bruno to go quietly to his bed, and quickly fall asleep, as unsuspecting of danger from Mocenigo as he had been at his first interview.



CHAPTER XVIII.

WARNINGS.

Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Macbeth ! Beware Macduff.

Macbeth.

IT is a trite remark that the spectators of a drama, whether on the stage or in real life, see more of the play than the actors themselves. Nay, when the drama is in actual life, they not only see, but foresee more ; are enabled to prophesy the inevitable evolution and consequences of certain actions which are entirely hidden from the performers of those actions.

Thus it came to pass, that as the days glided on, and the estrangement between Mocenigo and Bruno increased, two persons—Ciotto, the bookseller, and Fra Paolo, the Servite—became more thoroughly convinced of the danger of Bruno, not only than the unsuspecting Neapolitan, but even than Mocenigo himself.

Yes, more than Mocenigo ; for remember that he is not wholly vicious and cruel. When he

had first taken Bruno into his friendship, he meant nothing but good towards him. If he had been told *then of the future part he was to play towards him*, he would have shrunk with righteous indignation, and exclaimed, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" But though he is not wholly base and cruel, he is wholly a coward; and I believe that cowardice is at the bottom of at least half the cruel and base actions that take place on the face of the earth. Yet let us spare some of our compassion for him. Just now he is entirely miserable, in a state altogether more pitiable than the unsuspecting Bruno, absorbed in his great pursuit. And his mistake had arisen, as so many mistakes arise, from his utter incapacity to divine a character entirely different from his own; nay, so entirely above his own that it would have been as impossible for him to divine it as for a part to comprehend the whole. So many of the saddest mistakes in life arise in this way, that there should be few who cannot have some comprehension and sympathy. For it is not simply the lower nature that cannot comprehend the higher. It is only after hard experience that the higher learns to understand the lower. Even the best and wisest amongst us have, I suspect, in early life endowed a polished little piece of glass with the qualities of the diamond, and on discovering our mistake are apt to quarrel with the glass for lacking the qualities it could never possess, save in our imagination.

But no experience would have enlightened Mocenigo as to Bruno's character. He was, as I have said, too entirely above him. Mocenigo could not understand any character in which self-interest was not the moving spring. Bruno had no self. And while the Neapolitan was ready to sacrifice every selfish feeling, personal ambition, life, and even liberty, in his devotion to his work, Mocenigo had imagined him to be a mere vulgar astrologer and alchemist, ready to impart his occult knowledge to anyone willing to pay him in certain coin. And as he had wholly mistaken him on the subject of astrology, so was he now mistaking him as to his probable conduct after the episode in the turreted room.

The more he thought of the conversation between Andrea Morosini's mother and Bruno, the more he felt convinced that it could not have arisen from coincidence; but that Bruno had been making him a laughing-stock to the whole company. He gravely wronged Bruno in this suspicion. The Neapolitan was no saint, as we know; he could hold his own, and was assuredly one not to turn his left cheek if he had been already smitten on the right. But if he was no saint, he was also no traitor; and while he was Mocenigo's guest—nay, the mere remembrance of having once received kindness from him—Mocenigo was safe from any satire on his part. It would require conduct far more openly antagonistic

than Mocenigo had as yet shown, to make Bruno forget the kindness he had received from him. The conversation between himself and Morosini's mother had arisen, indeed, not wholly from coincidence; Bruno had related openly and freely enough the fact that he had been locked into the chamber, and the splendid view he had in consequence enjoyed of Venice at night and early dawn; but he had carefully given Mocenigo's own interpretation of the locked door; had dwelt on the episode more as productive of great enjoyment to himself, than as resulting even from carelessness on Mocenigo's part. He had commented slightly, it is true, upon the strong leaning Mocenigo had to astrology and alchemy; but in so doing he intended no slur upon the Venetian. Belief in occult science was a belief that with rare exceptions was universal in the sixteenth century. And although Bruno was aware that Sarpi held all such matters in profound contempt, he was unaware that it was fast becoming a fashion in Venice for pretenders to learning to assume superiority to a doctrine of which they were nevertheless secret adherents.

But whether a wrong be imaginary or not, it is equally hard to bear; and Mocenigo was suffering as intense misery as if Bruno were really indulging in a delight to make him a laughing-stock to all he came across. He brooded and chafed till the Neapolitan became absolutely hateful to him; and

yet he dared not part with him, feeling that his only safeguard lay in incessant, untiring watchfulness.

If it be objected that there was nothing in Bruno's behaviour to account for this extreme feeling Mocenigo was growing to entertain against him, I would reply that Mocenigo had been cursed with a nature the reverse of healthy. And in such natures effects arise totally out of proportion to their causes. Let a healthy man, who is also a busy one, slightly cut himself by a slip with his penknife, stanch the wound with his handkerchief for a minute, proceed with his work, and think no more of it; and in half-an-hour it will be well. Let an unhealthy man, who is also an idle one, do the same thing, and rub the wound, chafe it, look at it, think of nothing but it; and in a few days the slight cut will be changed into a festering sore. Unfortunately for Mocenigo, his naturally suspicious, distrustful temper could not have had a soil more favourable for the growth of these qualities than was afforded by the easy abundance and competence of a Venetian patrician. Had he been a plebeian, forced to work for his living, he could not have had time to brood upon his grievances. But he was a man too rich to be forced to work, too indolent to voluntarily undertake it. He was at once too refined and intelligent to find any pleasure in the coarse abominations that attracted the lower natures in Venice; too indolent and self-distrustful to share enthusiasm in scholarship with

the higher natures. He was a man with many acquaintances, but no friends; and never imparting his small grievances to anyone, nor unburdening himself of them, they accumulated, so to speak, in such an enormous mass, that they became too heavy for him to bear.

In the sixteenth century it was no uncommon thing for a man to rid himself of his enemy by the *stiletto* or by poison, but Mocenigo, as I have said before, was not wholly base and cruel; and he had, moreover, that sort of conscientiousness that originates in an immense dread of a hereafter. He would not run the risk of being a murderer, unless, indeed—and there were times when Mocenigo's heart leapt with joy at the hope that he might find this to be the case—unless it could be proved that Bruno was actually a heretic; for Mocenigo held a belief, shared by many Catholics at this time, that offences against heretics were innocent, which, were they practised against true believers, would be worthy of extremest reprobation. But he could not be sure that Bruno was a heretic, though he strongly suspected it. Was that supercilious utterance on the turret, "*Possibly not*," merely the offspring of a temporary irritation, or did it imply an actual contempt on Bruno's part for the Church's sanction on philosophical opinions? Many times a day did he read over Bruno's religious confession as he had heard it from his own lips, but the more he read it the less he felt

that he understood it. Did his philosophic conception of a Trinity include or exclude the Christian conception? How came it that he had been on terms of intimacy and friendship with the prior of the Carmelite monastery if he were really a heretic? Sometimes he thought he would consult his confessor on the subject, but then his cowardly, self-distrustful nature warned him that in so doing he might bring himself under suspicion, if it were known that he had taken Bruno under his protection, believing him to be an astrologer. For the Church had played a somewhat equivocal part towards occult science; at rare intervals honouring it with her protection, but for the most part visiting it with stern reprobation, denouncing it as proceeding from the Evil One, and persecuting its believers as wizards and witches. So the days passed on, Bruno receiving still such apparent kindness and attention from Mocenigo that he did not like to offer to leave, yet day by day feeling an increased consciousness of the great mistake he had made in allowing himself to be enticed into intimacy. Yet he had no fear of him, still less suspicion; he only felt that his host was becoming wearisome to him beyond endurance, and not the less so because Mocenigo scarcely ever left him alone.

Both Ciotto and Sarpi had been for nearly three weeks awaiting an opportunity to warn Bruno against his host, but had never been able to speak to him

alone. And their suspicions were too vague for them to be able to exactly define them in writing. Yet as Sarpi's visit to Venice was fast drawing to a close he was anxious to do all he could to put his unsuspecting friend upon his guard before his departure. And, as good luck would have it, on the 19th of May a sort of opportunity did at last occur.

Ciotto and Sarpi had called at Mocenigo's house to spend an hour or two in the evening with Bruno. It was Sarpi's farewell visit; and Mocenigo could scarcely forbid Bruno to receive him. But he intended, if possible, not to leave them alone together. The Servite was going to visit his pupil, Galileo; and the conversation naturally drifted into comment upon the rapidly growing fame of the young astronomer.

"I should like to see him," remarked Bruno.

"Would you?" asked Sarpi, with more eagerness than was usual with him; "I should like much to bring you together. You could not fail to like each other."

"Perhaps they would be rivals," said Mocenigo. "You know two of a trade seldom agree."

He really did not intend any insolence or insinuation. But it was just one of those speeches that grated upon Bruno; and the latter was, as we know, always too unguarded in his tongue. He answered quickly:

“Men who love their work better than themselves have no petty rivalries, Signor Mocenigo.”

It was easy to see that Mocenigo resented the implied rebuke ; but before he could answer he was summoned away upon some slight matter of business. And he had scarcely turned his back when the bookseller, seizing the opportunity, said :

“*Messere mio*, have a care how you answer your host. Unless I am gravely mistaken, he has not the friendship for you that he once believed he should have.”

“In that,” answered Bruno a little contemptuously, “he is like myself. I do not find that he improves upon acquaintance.” Then after a pause, and with a certain compunction in his tone, he added : “But I should not speak in that way ; for he has never shown me anything but kindness since I have been his guest. He once reproached me, it is true, for not having effected some great improvement in his memory that he imagined I ought to have done. But what of that ? A single unjust reproach should not be allowed to outweigh the numerous undeserved kindnesses I have received at his hands.”

“What could be his object,” said Sarpi musingly, “in taking you into his intimacy ?”

“That has always been a matter of perplexity to me,” said the bookseller.

“Why, surely that is clear enough,” answered Bruno, quite simply and without vanity. “He was

interested in my works, and wished to know their author."

"Yes, yes," answered the shrewd bookseller. "But what was there in your books to excite such an extraordinary amount of interest? For you must know that Signor Mocenigo is not greatly respected for his scholarship by the scholars of Venice. Nay, to do him justice, he scarcely aspires to be considered one of our great scholars."

"Well," answered Bruno, "I confess it has been to me a matter of great disappointment that he has shown so little interest in the doctrines of Copernicus. But though I can see that he is no lover of science, he must surely have some aptitude for letters, or Andrea Morosini would scarcely admit him into his assemblies."

"We-l-l," said the bookseller, with a certain hesitation, "you must know that the house of Mocenigo is a very illustrious one, equalling if it does not surpass that of Morosini himself. Then Giovanni Mocenigo is rich; able, if the mood seizes him, to purchase the most expensive books. And although he is no enthusiastic scholar, he is not without a certain culture. But though he has had, ever since they were commenced, a free *entrée* into Morosini's assemblies, it was only on the rarest occasions that he availed himself of it."

"Only on the rarest occasions!" exclaimed Bruno in surprise. "Since I have been in Venice he has

never missed one. He has been as constant in his attendance as I have been."

"He went only because you went," answered the bookseller, "but why he should thus follow you is what baffles me, though I would give much to learn."

There was a pause for a few moments, and then Sarpi, turning to Bruno, said with a mixture of diffidence and affection :

"Before I leave Venice I feel that I must put you on your guard with Mocenigo. It may be that I am apprehensive without cause. Yet I confess I have always felt a certain indefinable distrust of Mocenigo with those narrow, suspicious, eyes of his! I would give much if I could teach you to distrust him sufficiently to be careful how you anger him. If you would endeavour to restrain your—your—vivacity—imprudence——"

"Is not my vivacity, as you term it, excusable?" interrupted Bruno in his excited manner; "for am I not the jealous guardian of an inexhaustible treasure of truths?"

"Well, for the sake of these truths, if not for your own sake, at least be careful." Then after a pause the friar continued earnestly: "I wish by all the saints that I could see you safely out of Venice before I leave it myself."

"Why, what danger do I run," said Bruno, "with Mocenigo? He has been invariable in his kindness to

me. I confess that he is not what I imagined him to be ; and I would willingly offer to leave could I do so without ingratitude. But as for danger, I am as confident in him as if I had known him for years. What object or interest could he have in conferring his friendship upon me, unless he really liked me ?”

Had Sarpi been able to give any better justification of his apprehension than his own vague dread Mocenigo's return would have sufficiently prevented him doing so. The conversation drifted into general subjects ; and in about an hour Fra Paolo and Ciotto took their departure.

But a letter Bruno received the next day completed what the Servite's warnings had only slightly begun. It was from Castelnau ; written evidently with difficulty, and in a spirit of bitterness and depression. The Holy League, enraged with him for the support he had given to the house of Navarre, had plundered and almost destroyed his estate ; so that he had to retire to his seat at Joinville. Bruno, on reading the letter, became suddenly inspired with a longing to see the kind fatherly friend who had been so good to him, and who was now in sore want of consolation. Moreover, this misfortune of Castelnau would form a more than sufficient excuse for Bruno to quit Venice ; and, as I have already said, it was only gratitude on the Neapolitan's part that had kept him so long a resident at Mocenigo's.

The Venetian was already familiar with the ex-

treme intimacy existing between Castelnau and Bruno ; and when the latter read him out a portion of the letter he had received, and afterwards expressed his intention of going to Castelnau at once, Mocenigo could scarcely object. He merely asked quietly how soon he proposed to leave.

“Almost directly,” answered Bruno. “I wish to spend a day or two at my former lodgings, as I have to arrange some manuscripts, and shall be able the more quickly to finish it if I am quite alone. Moreover, I shall be closer to Ciotto’s, in case I may decide to entrust a portion of my manuscript with him. I wish also to spend a day or two at Frankfort, to see how the sale of my books is progressing there. And as I desire to start not later, at the outside, than a fortnight hence for France, it will be necessary, I fear, for me to leave you almost immediately.”

Mocenigo made no further observation, and on the evening of the 22nd of May Giordano Bruno packed up his goods and went back, with a certain feeling of freedom and delight, to the same rooms that Ciotto had selected for him but a few months back at the commencement of his visit to Venice.

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CHAPTER XIX.

MOCENIGO SHOWS HIS HAND.

The mind is like a mill. Give it nothing to grind and it will grind itself.

MARTIN LUTHER.

IT may perhaps be thought that the projected departure of Bruno from Venice could afford Mocenigo nothing but relief; and that now at last he would be freed from his tormenting suspicions that the Neapolitan was making him a laughing-stock to his acquaintances. Not in the least. He who judges thus knows little of the extraordinary capacity a nature such as Mocenigo's has for making itself miserable. A self-tormenting spirit, more than any other, sees what it expects to see; that is to say, in a case like this, sees exactly what it fears.

Mocenigo had made little comment upon Bruno's intended departure at the time that it was communicated to him; yet for the remaining portion of the day he felt apprehensive and perplexed. He slept scarcely at all at night, but tossed restlessly

about, assailed by his brooding, self-tormenting spirit, till apprehensions that had been but vague doubts during the day grew into absolute certainties by the next morning. First and foremost amongst his sources of anxiety, was Bruno's projected intercourse with Ciotto. Though Mocenigo knew that authorship shared with teaching and lecturing the means by which the Neapolitan drew his source of livelihood, he almost tormented himself into believing that his intention of entrusting his manuscripts to Ciotto was but an excuse on Bruno's part, and that his sole object in desiring to be near the gossiping bookseller was that he might indulge his taste for satire, and Ciotto for epigram, with special view to the tastes and pursuits of Signor Giovanni Mocenigo.

There is something at once comic and pitiable in the facility that minds such as Mocenigo's possess to creating within themselves a belief that they are objects of paramount occupation to persons who are in reality thinking of nothing less. Mocenigo had indeed power to cause Bruno a certain irritation when in his society. Most small natures have a certain irritating effect upon large ones. But the irritation was but temporary, passing away with the cause. He thought little of Mocenigo when away from him, and spoke less. His disappointment in not finding him the ideal friend he had hoped that he might have proved, would have been greater had not his discovery followed so quickly upon his introduc-

tion that his transitory liking had not had time to take deep root. Certainly nothing was further from Bruno's thoughts than to slander, or even make game of, the man under whose roof he had been so long a guest. It would have afforded him not the slightest pleasure to gossip about him either to Ciotto or to the booksellers at Frankfort. And although he contemplated speaking to Castelnau about him as of all the other friends and acquaintances he had made since their parting, he was one who would dwell more upon the kindness and hospitality he had received from him, than upon his disappointment in finding him not altogether as he had expected.

But as I have said before, imaginary wrongs are as hard to bear as real ones ; perhaps indeed harder, since the dimensions they assume are without limit. Before daylight had dawned, Mocenigo had worked himself up into such a state of dread of what Bruno might do and say against him if he were at large, that rather than allow this he would brace himself to consult his confessor as to the heresy in Bruno's religious faith. He would excuse to the confessor the fact of Bruno having been a guest in his house for several weeks by saying that he was anxious to have his memory improved, and it had seemed to him that Bruno was one competent to effect this. If his confessor should seek further particulars, why, he would even own to a slight wish to pry into the future, and would submit to any penance his confessor

chose to impose. What misery could be equal to the misery that he was undergoing now?

The resolution was scarcely formed before it was carried out. Mocenigo rose earlier than was his wont. He went to his confessor, carrying with him his written copy of Bruno's religious opinions. The confessor was well acquainted with the name of Giordano Bruno, and knew that by delivering him to the Inquisition he would gain favour, not only with the Dominican body, but with the whole Catholic Church. He asked Mocenigo no inconvenient questions as to how he first became acquainted with the apostate Dominican monk, Giordano Bruno. He simply gave it as his decision that the accused should not be allowed to be at large, but should be detained by Mocenigo till due notification had been given to the Inquisitor-General.

Mocenigo listened to the decision with a feeling of relief. He came home and breakfasted. Then seeing that Bruno was busy packing up his goods, he went for a rapid walk, for he felt too restless to be capable of inaction. The breakfast, the exercise, the fresh morning air, gave him healthier feelings; and although the imaginary wrongs Bruno had committed against him did not fade from his consciousness, the insane dimensions that they had assumed in the hours of darkness certainly lessened. And it may be—for it is upon such slight accidents that the fates of many of us depend—that had Mocenigo

breakfasted and taken a fresh morning walk immediately on rising, he would never have consulted his confessor upon Bruno's heretical opinions. However this may be, it was too late to be merciful now. The Inquisitors visited those who protected or knowingly allowed heretics to escape, almost as heavily as actual heretics; and it need scarcely be said that Mocenigo in his noblest moods was not one to risk the faintest personal danger to save his nearest or dearest, much less to save one whom he had taught himself to regard as his bitterest enemy. Still he was not without some feelings of compunction. None—save those who had been actual victims of the Inquisition—knew better than he the peculiar mercilessness of all those connected with the body. And when on the afternoon of the following day, Bruno, as he bade him farewell, thanked him in his warm-hearted, emotional way for all his goodness and hospitality to him, he could not make himself return the pressure of Bruno's hand. He was cowardly and self-tormenting, but no practised hypocrite.

Bruno was just in a slight degree wounded at what seemed like the extreme coldness of Mocenigo's farewell; but he did not care for him sufficiently to feel it very deeply. He had scarcely left the house before the remembrance had ceased to annoy him. Two feelings absorbed his thoughts during his journey from Mocenigo's house to his lodgings: genuine compassion and anxiety for Castelnau,

strangely mingled with light-hearted glee at finding himself once more his own master.

When he arrived at his lodgings he found Ciotto there.

"Messer Ciotto!" he exclaimed, "this is good of you! It makes me think of the first day I arrived in Venice."

"You have arrived at last," said the bookseller with an air of relief. "I know not how it is, for I am not used to imaginary fears, but I have been troubled with apprehensions concerning your safety the whole day and could not rest till I had learnt for myself that your host had allowed you to depart in safety."

"Indeed, you wrong my host," answered Bruno. "He has done nothing to deserve such suspicion. But I am almost sorry now that I had not offered to leave before. He did not show much regret at parting from me. I begin to suspect that he was as much disappointed with me as I with him. Each of us imagined the other different from the reality; and when these mistakes arise, it appears to me that one party is as much to be pitied as the other. But enough of this. Tell me, has Fra Paolo already left, or why did he not accompany you?"

"He left this morning," answered Ciotto.

"How strangely things fall out!" remarked Bruno. "*How little I thought when I came here but a few months ago, that my chief friend would—be not*

Mocenigo as I anticipated—but Fra Paolo Sarpi, for whom years ago I entertained a dislike that was certainly unjust.”

“Ah well, it is natural that you and Fra Paolo should like each other. He is as zealous for work as you are.”

“He has a quiet devotion to work,” answered Bruno, “but I should scarcely apply the epithet *zealous* to him.”

“One may be zealous according to knowledge, *messere mio*,” answered Ciotto, with a certain meaning in his voice.

“Which means,” answered Bruno good-humouredly, “that I am zealous not according to knowledge.”

“Well,” answered the bookseller, “I confess I often catch myself wishing that you had a little of his prudence! However, all’s well that ends well. You will be safely out of Venice in a few days, and greatly as I shall miss you, I trust never to see you here again. Where do you think of going when you leave M. Castelnau de Mauvissière?”

“I shall probably stay with M. Castelnau as long as he lives. How long that may be is difficult to say. He is but seventy-two. But cares and anxiety have made him older than his years. He wrote as if he thought his end was very near.”

“Of course,” remarked the bookseller kindly, “you would like to remain with him as long as he desires you to do so. But if he should either die

or get well—I suppose he will do one or the other—what shall you do then?”

“I may even then remain in France,” answered Bruno; “I have many pleasant associations with France.”

“No, no; not France. I would almost as soon have you back in Italy. Germany or England, or perhaps Poland, are the only countries where you will be tolerably safe.”

“Well, then,” said Bruno, with a courteous smile, “let us say it shall be Frankfort, for there at least I shall have the pleasure of seeing you sometimes.”

“Well,” said the bookseller after a pause, “I must be going; I will look in about the same hour to-morrow evening.”

“Nay, do not trouble to do that, for I shall have already, I trust, started on my way for Frankfort.”

“Then, is this our final parting?” inquired Ciotto.

“No,” answered Bruno, “I shall look in upon you to-morrow morning; for, if I can finish it in time, I shall have a manuscript to entrust to your care.”

“Addio,” said the bookseller, taking up his cap.

“Addio,” answered Bruno.

When the bookseller had fairly taken his departure, Bruno went to his bed-room, where was his luggage, unpacked a small box containing his manuscript; and then, returning to his sitting-room, which

adjoined his bed-room, drew a table close to the window, and prepared himself for a pleasure—now somewhat rare—of a quiet evening of writing, undisturbed by fear of interruption. It was the 22nd of May, and consequently the days were nearly at their longest. Bruno worked on till past nine o'clock, and then paused for awhile to lean back in his chair and read what he had been writing.

He had scarcely finished it when he fancied he heard a footstep on the stair, and a tap at the door. He waited till the tap was repeated, and then answered: "Come in."

The door opened, and there entered an old attendant—part boatman, part confidential servant—belonging to Mocenigo, called Bartolo.

"Why, Bartolo," said Bruno, in some surprise at seeing him so soon, "what do you come about? Have I left anything behind me?"

"Yes, messere, a book. I have it in the gondola."

"I am sorry my forgetfulness should have caused you the trouble to come with it. However, bring it up."

"It is a very heavy book," answered Bartolo, still lingering.

"Nay, then," answered Bruno, with that courteous deference to age that was instinctive with him, "I will come down for it. Lead the way."

The old man went slowly down the stairs, and led the way to where the gondola was. There were five

or six boatmen on land, and Bruno fancied he saw the figure of Mocenigo on the gondola. Old Bartolo gave a peculiar sign with his arms to the figure on the gondola, which was returned in a similar manner. And at that instant the five or six boatmen surrounded Bruno, gagged him, bore him to the gondola and locked him into a small cabin. When he reached the Via San Samuele, he was taken out in the same way, and carefully locked into a small chamber with grated windows, on the ground floor of Mocenigo's house.



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CHAPTER XX.

CALAMITIES THICKEN.

A lie which is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies.

TENNYSON.

SOME subtle influence, formed of diverse elements, amongst which, however, cruelty certainly was not one, prompted Mocenigo to visit his prisoner the next morning. He had no wish to gloat over his victim. On the contrary, he had suffered more or less from compunction from the time that he had betrayed him; and it may be that among the many motives that impelled him now to look upon the man that he had so cruelly wronged, a desire to excuse himself was not the least powerful.

Bruno was seated in the chamber in which he was a prisoner; the ample breakfast with which Mocenigo had provided him, was before him still untouched. He had slept little during the previous night, and, as so often happens when such is the case, recoiled with positive distaste from food. He had had no

time as yet for fears concerning personal safety. Every other thought was swallowed up in the passionate indignation burning within him against Mocenigo. He had been accustomed to think that hypocrisy was the only vice that should never be forgiven. He had now to deal with the most deadly form of hypocrisy, one that had never come within his ken before—treachery. The greater part of the night he had spent in pacing restlessly the small chamber in which he was confined with a bitter, despairing sense of the helplessness of his position. Ah, why had he not foreseen what had evidently been foreseen by Fra Paolo and Ciotto?

Two strong male servants in the prime of life were sent by Mocenigo to prepare and bring to Bruno his breakfast, lest by any chance the Neapolitan might injure old Bartolo did he bring it. And for the same reason, before entering himself, Mocenigo was careful to order the same strong men-servants to be within call in case of necessity.

His apprehensions were groundless. Strange to say, passionate and excitable as Bruno was, he had never felt any temptation to lift his finger against a creature. But as Mocenigo entered, the look of withering contempt his prisoner flung at him was perhaps a greater punishment than an actual blow. For remember Mocenigo was no mere dull insensible brute, incapable of shame or even pain, so long as he can come through with a whole skin. On the contrary,

his psychical sensibility was fully as great as his physical; and the look he received from Bruno caused him to the full as exquisite torture as would a horsewhipping to his more than ordinarily sensitive skin.

His lip quivered, and there was a nervous tremor about his hands that he tried vainly to conceal. He glanced at the untouched breakfast, and then said with evident effort :

"You have not eaten your breakfast. I trust it is to your liking. I gave special instructions to my servants to prepare for you your favourite food."

No answer came from Bruno. He only kept his glance fixed on Mocenigo, who quivered before the absolute contempt it conveyed. Then after a pause of a few minutes Bruno turned away his eyes slowly, with an expression which to Mocenigo's acute sensibility seemed to convey a greater measure of ineffable contempt. It seemed to Mocenigo that by thus turning away and not deigning even to look upon him, Bruno considered him beneath his very anger. He stood still, gazing out of the grated window in bitter mortification, not knowing whether to leave or to stay. At last he took a chair close to where Bruno sat, and said gently :

"I am extremely sorry to have been compelled to act in the way I did last night ; but it was forced upon me. You must surely see for yourself that after hearing from your own lips the confession of

your faith the night we walked together from Andrea Morosini's, no other course was open to one who professes to be a devout Catholic, than to denounce to the Inquisition one holding opinions such as yours."

There was a flash in Bruno's eyes that showed that passion was again getting the mastery over silent contempt. He burst out fiercely: "So that is the ground upon which you have chosen to confine me here!"

"I was commanded to do it by my confessor. You must surely acknowledge yourself that I could not have acted otherwise. Remember in what terms you defined your belief in the Trinity. Try and recall your own words!"

"I will tell you what I will recall instead," Bruno hissed out, evidently undergoing an extreme struggle between the fiery impulses of his own passionate nature and his consciousness that it was beneath his dignity even to be angry with one so wholly wanting in manliness and honour. "I will tell you what I will recall. It is that of a host who took his guest's hand—a guest whom under the plea of ardent admiration and friendship, he had tempted from honourable and safe occupation at Frankfort, and begged him in a voice of tender interest, not to shrink from discussing subjects of the highest importance, since who could be more suited for confidence than one who was at once his host and warmest friend."

Mocenigo quivered. He had been, as we know,

not without compunctions from the time that he had betrayed Bruno. Yet he had never regarded himself as the supremely infamous traitor, now too clearly seen by the light of Bruno's words.

"Yes—but——" he replied nervously. "There were other occasions when—I had—not invited your confidence. You must surely remember having—often implied beliefs the reverse of orthodox."

Mocenigo stammered out, half-incoherently, various heretical opinions he declared Bruno had often set forth. Many of these Bruno openly denied having uttered. But he would not stop to discuss. Mocenigo's presence was so greatly agitating his excitable nature that not even his pride had power to prevent him trembling with rage. Mocenigo, seeing him quivering, and mistaking the cause, said with sympathy that was entirely unfeigned:

"Take courage. I pray you take courage. Perhaps after all, the Inquisition will acquit you. It is an opinion that I have heard expressed by many that she is more tolerant of scientific writers than she used to be, and that it is only against Protestants that her extreme severity is exercised."

"I fear not the Inquisition," answered Bruno scornfully. "At the worst she can but kill me, and we must all die sooner or later."

A visible shudder ran through Mocenigo's frame. When it had passed he said as he pointed to a rope upon the wall: "You see there is a bell in this room.

Do not scruple to ring for anything you may want. Make all your desires known."

"There is but one desire I have," remarked Bruno.

"And what is that?" inquired Mocenigo.

"To be relieved from your houndship's presence," burst out Bruno with a sudden fierceness that he could not control.

Mocenigo turned and left the room, feeling every nerve in his body jarred. He was not resentful nor indignant. He was wincing under too keen uneasiness for him to be able at present to feel anger at Bruno's behaviour.

But when a man is smarting under a keen sense of moral disquietude at the way he has injured another he is certain to pursue one of two courses. If he be of an exceptionally noble nature, he will openly and generously acknowledge his fault; never rest till he has won the forgiveness of the man he has injured; never cease exertion—though it be at the risk of health, or even life, till he has atoned in full measure for the wrong that he has committed. If he be not exceptionally noble, the only way that he can escape from the self-reproach that is torturing him is to justify to his conscience his behaviour; and this can only be done by persistently shutting his eyes to any good qualities his victim may possess; by brooding deliberately and of self-purpose upon any bad qualities, till what conscience formerly

pronounced to be an injury grows gradually to be regarded as a simple act of justice. And so, my average reader, in order to hate your friend, you have but to commence by behaving unjustly to him. The hatred will follow in due course, by the simple law of effect from cause.

Mocenigo paced his room for more than half an hour, trying in vain to recover calmness, to seek some excuse for his conduct, to do anything that would prevent him seeing himself in the hateful light that Bruno's reproach had too clearly cast. Such consciousness—half excitement, half misery—is sure to end in action of some sort. And by the time the half-hour had elapsed Mocenigo had decided to write a full account of Bruno to the Inquisitor-General of Venice. This resolution was entirely the effect of his own remorse. He had intended his confessor to undertake the duty of acquainting the Inquisitor with Bruno's opinions, hoping thereby to be relieved from any future aid or active steps in the prosecution. But, Mocenigo, that is impossible; one evil action begets another. You have deliberately made one false downward step, and now, in spite of yourself, you will be forced lower still by mere force of gravitation. The letter was as follows:

“23rd May, 1592.

“MOST REV. FATHER,

“I, Giovanni Mocenigo, by command of my

conscience and in obedience to my confessor, feel it right to tell you that one, Giordano Bruno, of Nola, whom I took into my house believing that he was competent to effect an improvement in my memory, has blasphemed greatly against the Catholic doctrines, especially upon Transubstantiation. He is an enemy to the Mass, and no religion pleases him. He declares Christ tried to seduce the populace. He even pronounces Him to be a caitiff,* a sorry fellow, since he died far from willingly. This blasphemer says, further, that the world is eternal, and that there are more worlds than one; nay, that there are an infinite number of worlds. He declares that there is no punishment for sin; but that as animals are born from dust and return to dust, so do men. He has had the audacity to praise openly certain princes and sovereigns who are heretics. He believes in the transmigration of souls.

"I had designed to learn many things from him, not knowing what a wretch he was. But when I began to doubt of his orthodoxy, I noted down almost at the time of utterance many of his expressions, in order that I might acquaint you with them; and to prevent his escape I have locked him into a room from which it is impossible for him to elude us.

* The actual words Mocenigo puts into Bruno's mouth are, *che Christo fù un tristo*. The word *tristo* is an expression which will probably be comprehensible to all my readers, but for which we have no exact equivalent in English.

I am able to call in confirmation the librarians Ciotto and Britanno. The latter especially has spoken to me against him, and says that he is an enemy to Christ and of our faith. I have been to see him this morning in the room in which he is a prisoner and accused him to his face of uttering words against our Holy Church and Blessed Redeemer. But the greater part of what I accused him, he denied, or at least said he could not remember having uttered. He pretends that he is not in the least frightened of the Inquisition, for even were it to condemn him to death he should not be dismayed, since it could but injure him in this world.

"I send three books containing certain passages from his writings, together with an entire work of his. And as I hold him for one possessed, I pray that some steps may be immediately taken.*

"Your most humble servant,
"GIOVANNI MOCENIGO."

The strange mixture of truth and untruth this letter contained, need scarcely to be pointed out. Yet in thus exaggerating, if not indeed actually perverting

* In matter of fact, Mocenigo sent three letters to the Inquisitor-General of Venice, severally bearing the dates of the 23rd, 25th, and 29th of May. But as each letter is almost a repetition of the other, I have condensed the three into one. But in substance, and in a certain degree even in form, the above letter contains an accurate description of the charges Mocenigo brought against Bruno.

what were Bruno's opinions, Mocenigo scarcely acted consciously. When a man has brooded and dwelt upon the sayings and doings of another for the number of weeks Mocenigo had now done upon Bruno's, it is next to impossible to separate the small nucleus of truth from the vast mass of accretions which imagination has thrown round it.

He read the letter several times, and at each perusal felt his conscience growing lighter. Certainly it was not fit that such a blasphemer should be on the face of the earth! How foolish of him to be thus conscience-stricken before Bruno's reproaches! Had he not denounced him to his confessor would he not have been committing a gross dereliction of duty? By the time Mocenigo had folded his letter and directed it, he had quite succeeded in persuading himself that personal reasons played no part in his behaviour to his victim. He had simply acted as became a loyal son of the Church.

Mocenigo fastened the letter carefully, entrusted it to old Bartolo to deliver immediately to the Inquisitor-General; and that same night a captain and guard were sent to the house of Mocenigo.

In this way it came to pass that on Saturday the 23rd of May, 1592, the unfortunate Bruno was lodged in the prison of the Inquisition of Venice.



CHAPTER XXI.

THE INQUISITION IN VENICE.

“Inconsistencies,” answered Imlac, “cannot both be right, but imputed to man they may both be true.”

RASSELAS.

It was Monday morning, the 25th of May, and Ciotto was in his shop a little earlier than was his wont, dusting and arranging his books. He proceeded about his task very leisurely, for the hour was too early for him to expect callers or purchasers; and he amused himself, as he often did when he had the rare pleasure of being alone, with pausing now and then in his occupation of sorting, to dip at random into a favourite book. He was so engrossed with one passage in particular that he did not hear the entrance of a party of young men till they interrupted him laughingly:

“Why, Messer Ciotto, how grave you look! What is the dusty parchment that engrosses you?”

Ciotto held up a freshly bound book, and

answered in the same tone of badinage with which he had been addressed: "No dusty parchment; look for yourselves. Or rather let me ask what brings you here at so unusual an hour?"

Ciotto asked the question in a tone almost devoid of interest. The young men were perfectly well known to him; young Venetian loungers of the patrician class, who often frequented the shop for the sake of a gossip with the popular bookseller, and who were endured by him for politic reasons rather than actually liked.

"What makes us up so early?" echoed the youngest of the party, a richly dressed, somewhat dissipated-looking youth of about twenty. "Why, I think all Venice is astir a little earlier than usual talking of the news."

"What news?" asked Ciotto carelessly, thinking he was only going to hear an ordinary piece of gossip, or at the outside a scandalous or indecent jest.

"What news!" exclaimed all the young men together. "Why, good Messer Ciotto, where are your ears?"

"Nay," answered the bookseller, "blame my health and not my ears. I took a chill on Friday night, was unable to leave my bed on Saturday, and even on Sunday was still confined to my room. My old housekeeper who has acted as my leech ever since I was a child is the only person I have seen since Friday evening; and she is so deaf that she

never takes the trouble to ask for news, since she would not be able to understand it were it given her."

"Well, then," answered the youngest speaker, evidently eager to be the first to inform the bookseller of the news. "Be prepared for a shock! It is nothing less than the arrest and imprisonment in the Inquisition of the Neapolitan philosopher, Giordano Bruno."

The speaker had expected to see a look of surprise, but was unprepared for the genuine distress that passed over the kindly bookseller's countenance.

"Now by all the blessed saints," exclaimed Ciotto, "I would sacrifice a year's earnings to believe that this news is untrue."

"Nay, it is true enough. All Venice rings with it."

"But how did it happen? I was with him on Friday night; I fancy it must have been then that I took this chill. He told me that he intended to leave Venice the next morning. It is true," added the bookseller more slowly and dubiously, "that he did not come to wish me farewell as he promised. Yet his non-appearance caused me no alarm. I fancied that he must have heard of my sudden indisposition, and would not disturb me, knowing that whatever the consequences he certainly would not be denied admittance. Are you sure that there is no mistake?"

"Mistake," echoed the young man, "come abroad and judge for yourself; all Venice is talking of it. Nay, you need scarcely come abroad; for unless we are gravely mistaken, you will be one of the first to be commanded to give evidence against him."

A look of intense distaste passed over Ciotto's face. "When and how did his capture take place?" he asked. "Well, you must know," answered the young nobleman, "that he left Mocenigo's house on Friday last——"

"I know, I know," interrupted the bookseller impatiently. "Did I not tell you that I was with him in his lodgings on Friday evening?"

"Well, then, it must have been soon after your departure; for on Friday night Mocenigo's old servant, Bartolo, entered his apartment, and by some ruse or other, managed to inveigle him down into the street, where he was seized by five or six boatmen, and placed in Mocenigo's gondola; the owner of the gondola looking on all the time, though he did not actually assist in the capture."

"Ah, the accursed hound!" was upon Ciotto's lips; but he strangled the exclamation at the moment of utterance, and there merely came from him an indistinct sound, which his hearers only partly comprehended. They were frivolous and thoughtless, but not wholly wanting in the ordinary feelings of humanity.

"Why, good Messer Ciotto, I had no idea you would be so distressed at this news," said one of them kindly, "or assuredly we would have broken it to you more gently."

"How should I not be distressed," exclaimed the good bookseller, almost breaking down before the tone of kindness that he had scarcely imagined he should hear from such gay and apparently worthless youths, "how should I not be distressed, when it is chiefly my doing that Giordano Bruno entered Venice? I ought to have obeyed my better instincts. I have never since his arrival been free from apprehensions, now vague, now almost stronger than I could bear. I would to God I had never seen him! I wish I had not met him at Frankfort! If I had never brought away his books with me Mocenigo would not have desired his acquaintance!"

The young men turned and left the shop. They had come in for a gossip, and had no inclination to stay now that the poor bookseller was too depressed to enter into their light prattle; while Ciotto put on his cap to rush to Bruno's lodgings and discover for himself whether the sad intelligence were really correct.

The Venetian noblemen had spoken but the truth when they described Venice as ringing with the news of Giordano Bruno's arrest. The excitement it created was strongly mingled with disapproval. Bruno was liked by many; Mocenigo was disliked by more.

Yet at the bottom of the disapproval lay a graver, more enduring element than personal taste. The more independent spirits in Venice—and these were not a few—regarded the arrest with indignation approaching dismay.

The Republic of Venice and the Holy Office had played a remarkable part one towards the other: the Roman Inquisition insisting that she should have a footing in Venice as in other Catholic countries; Venice haughtily answering that she would be under no authority, not even that of the Pope. At last a sort of compromise was effected. Venice was compelled to admit the Inquisition; but only yielded on the haughty condition that it should be subject to the Commonwealth and not depend in any way on the Court of Rome. It should have its own customs, its own ordinances, and should receive orders from no other place. At the time of Bruno's arrest the antagonism was ostensibly in abeyance; yet it still lay latent, ready to spring forth again upon the slightest provocation. Each party suspected the other—all the more bitterly, perhaps, for their apparent reconciliation. Rome, it was known, had emissaries all over the world, and it was strongly suspected that in some of the Venetian Inquisitors were to be found Roman spies; while Rome suspected, on her side, and with some degree of truth, that in admitting the Inquisition, Venice was in reality but playing a part, allowing the Inquisition

so little power that actually she would have no existence save in name. Amongst those most strongly suspected was the Servite friar, Fra Paolo ; though he had played his part so warily that nothing that he had said or written as yet could be laid hold of. Yet how warranted were the suspicions of Rome as to the doctrines and intentions of Sarpi may be seen by a perusal of his "History of the Inquisition in Venice." Departing for an instant from his accustomed wariness and caution he there boldly incites the Venetians to resist the faintest encroachment on the part of Rome. "It is a thing frequent, yea, and ordinary, that a judge whose jurisdiction is limited seeketh as much as he can to enlarge it, disabling the general jurisdiction, as well civil as ecclesiastical. And this cometh as well through the natural inclination, which all men have as near as they can for command, as also for the profit which the office receiveth. Wherefore if the Inquisitors do extend themselves beyond their natural duties, *they are the most to blame* that do suffer it. . . . The ancient history of the Gordian knot, which, because it could not be untied, was cut to pieces, is to be applied to all human ties and bonds, which, if they be of such a sort that those which are unjustly bound may free themselves by ordinary way of justice, then are they suffered ; but if there be no ordinary means, then they run to extraordinary ones, as seditions and other plagues. Wherefore it is to be believed that it

is doing God service to restrain that office within due bounds.”* The antagonism that the Inquisition excited amongst the Venetians was, speaking generally, political rather than religious. Religion was

* Sarpi's "History of the Inquisition in Venice," pp. 68, 69. Translated from the Italian copy, 1655.

How warily and cautiously Fra Paolo set about destroying the power of the Inquisition in Venice will be seen from the Table of Contents of certain of his chapters that I herewith append, concerning the office of the Inquisition throughout all the Venetian Dominion, as it was agreed between Pope Julius the Third and the Illustrious Commonwealth of Venice, 1551 :

CHAPTER XVI.

That neither the Processes nor the Prisoners shall be sent out of the Dominions, without the Prince have notice of it.

CHAPTER XVIII.

That the Government shall not suffer the imprisonment of any before the Process be framed.

CHAPTER XIX.

That they shall not suffer the Inquisition to meddle with Enchantments and Soothsayings if they do not contain Heresy.

CHAPTER XX.

That they shall not do the same by Herbal Enchantments, Witchcrafts, and Sorcery.

CHAPTER XXI.

That ordinary blasphemies shall not be judged by the Inquisition, nor wounding of Images, singing of Psalms, nor impure Litanies.

CHAPTER XXIII.

That the Assistants shall not suffer the Inquisition to meddle in cases of Usury.

not disliked in Venice, it was only ignored ; and what is viewed with indifference seldom excites antagonism. The inhabitants might be described as divided into two classes, one of which was devoted to vice, the

CHAPTER XXIV.

That the Inquisition shall not, in any case, proceed against Jews or Infidels.

CHAPTER XXV.

That the Inquisitors shall not proceed against the Greeks.

CHAPTER XXVII.

That the Inquisition shall have nothing to do with the Goods of condemned persons.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

That no Bull shall be published by any Order from the Congregation of Rome without the Prince's Licence.

CHAPTER XXIX.

That the Inquisition shall not cause any prohibition of any sort of books to be printed without observing the Conditions of the Agreement.

Obviously, if these conditions were carried out, there would be little left of the Inquisition save its name. It seems to me that few of the Protestant Reformers did so much to weaken the aggression of religious power as this Servite Friar. And on many points he anticipated the rationalistic teaching of modern times. Thus, in dealing with the crime of witchcraft, he pointed out with acumen rare in his own day, that persons accused of that offence seemed to him in need of instruction rather than punishment, since they were almost invariably women of less than average ability, or men with a peculiarly feminine, hysterical cast of mind.

other to learning. And as neither troubled themselves sufficiently about heresy to be carefully on the watch for it, they did not quickly discover it.

Very few of Bruno's acquaintances suspected him of heresy; and when the news of his arrest became known the surprise was nearly as great as the grief. Many suspected Mocenigo of personal dislike; others thought that Rome was playing a secret part; and this suspicion was increased when it became known that the arrest was scarcely effected when intimation of it was sent to the Grand Inquisitor of Rome, San Severino. The indignation of the Venetians was deep, but not loud. They had been too suddenly taken by surprise to be able to judge immediately how to act. Had Bruno been a Venetian by birth, the case might perhaps have been different; but he was a Neapolitan. Then the only man who would have taken any decisive step in the matter, Fra Paolo, was away, and showed no inclination to return. Not, be it remembered, that he was one, cautious and prudent as he was by disposition, who would refuse to succour a friend in time of need; but he knew that he would do Bruno more harm than good, since the Neapolitan had confided his views more openly to him than to others. He knew also that he would be endangering not only his own life, but the cause of liberty, by taking any prominent part in the defence of Bruno. He was perfectly aware that he was himself just now

an object of carefully concealed suspicion to Rome, and that she would seize the first opportunity she could of getting him into her power.*

The tribunal of the Venetian Inquisition was composed of the Nuncio, or Pope's Ambassador, the Patriarch, the *Padre Inquisitore*, and three assisting noblemen, designated under the name of *Savii all'eresia*, nominated every year, and dependent on the Government of Venice. And in conformance with this provision, in erecting the tribunal against Bruno, were employed Monsignore Taberna, *nunzio apostolico* in Venice; Monsignore Lorenzo Priuli, *patriarca*; Giovanni Gabrielle da Saluzzo, *dell'Ordine dei Domenicani, Padre Inquisitore*. Luigi Foscari was the *Savio* who assisted in the first meetings (in which were never present all three), and afterwards Sebastiano Barbarigo and Tomaso Morosini.

The young Venetian nobles had been right in supposing that the bookseller would be one of the first amongst Bruno's acquaintances who would be cited to give his evidence before the Tribunal of the Holy Office. He had scarcely returned home from

* There is an anecdote told of Sarpi (occurring some few years after the date of this story) that being too wary to allow himself to be decoyed to Rome, assassins were employed to kill him at home; but he escaped from their hands severely wounded. On recovering himself, and seeing that the ruffians had fled, he coolly delivered the memorable piece of wit, *Agnosco stylum Romanum*, which may be translated either, "I recognise the Roman style," or, "I know the Roman dagger."

his visit to Bruno's late lodgings when the document containing the command was put into his hands. He hated complying with the order, but felt that it would do no good to refuse. And on the next morning—namely, the 26th of May—Giambattista Ciotto, librarian and bookseller, deposed what he knew for and against the prisoner, Giordano Bruno.

He is first asked to describe him in person. This he does willingly, dwelling upon the person of Bruno with perhaps greater minuteness than was necessary, since there was no dispute about his identity. At last he is interrupted with the critical question :

“Do you know if he is a Catholic; and does he live as a Christian?”

There was a pause, and then Ciotto answered slowly :

“When I spoke to him he never said anything to make me doubt that he was a Catholic.”

There was a certain air of scepticism on the faces of the official body. Yet Ciotto's answer was not entirely false. Bruno had never denied nor even protested against Catholicism in his presence. The Padre Inquisitore will not question the bookseller at any great length now, but he is told somewhat sternly that he will have to appear again to give his evidence.

Andrea Morosini is also cited to appear against his friend; and very haughtily does he obey the command. To the question as to his opinion upon

the belief or non-belief of Bruno, he answered with the quiet dignity that was native to him: "He has never done anything to make me believe that he was **not** a Christian," adding, with a certain significance, "had he done so, he would not have been my guest."

The words contained an implied rebuke which was not without its weight upon the official body. The house of Morosini was too illustrious for any member of it to be trifled with. Yet Morosini's answer had been given in perfect good faith. Bruno had never spoken directly against Catholicism; and Morosini had too little comprehension of his mystical philosophy to be aware of its indirect implications.

On the 29th of May Giacomo Britanno, librarian, is cited to give his depositions. Mocenigo hoped more from his evidence than from the other witnesses, since there was a certain friendship between himself and Britanno. Moreover, Bruno had shown such a decided preference for the society of Ciotto, that Mocenigo hoped that Britanno would be smarting under a certain personal feeling, and would give his evidence accordingly. Yet when the critical question is asked this librarian: "Do you know if the prisoner Giordano Bruno is a good Christian or no?" he too answered: "When with me, the said Giordano Bruno has never spoken a word to make me believe that he was not a good Christian."

The Inquisitor's countenance falls, but he says

quickly: "Have you never seen him read heretical books?"

"Yes; but in Frankfort everyone did that;" an admission that Britanno might make with tolerable impunity in Venice; but that assuredly he would not have dared to avow in Rome without taking good care to cite himself as a careful exception to the general rule.

"What sort of character did the prisoner bear when in Frankfort?"

A quiet smile comes over the somewhat peculiar face of Britanno, as he answers with an air that is half meditative, half sarcastic:

"I remember asking the Prior of the Carmellite Monastery in Frankfort, what sort of a man was this Giordano Bruno, and he answered that he considered him a man of much genius and literary knowledge; but that he did not appear to him to have much religion, since he seemed to entertain the extraordinary wish that everybody could have one religion." There was a sarcastic ring in Britanno's tone, but his hearers could not determine whether the sneer was levelled at Bruno, or the multiplicity of religions.

Evidently so far the evidence against the prisoner has been of a most unsatisfactory description. The great hope now is that Bruno, with his accustomed imprudence and known love of truth, will inculcate himself.

From his place of confinement the prisoner is

brought into the open court. He is under careful escort, for the Inquisitors are not without fear that there may be some attempt on the part of his friends to rescue him. As he enters, the eyes of all are upon him, and a sort of thrill runs through him. He is absolutely without fear; but he is emotional and excitable, and he is unused to being gazed upon in this way. Moreover the escort as they press round him are unbearable to him. He breathes more freely when he has reached his destined place and they stand a little way off. Then the sacred page is offered him with a sort of expectation that he will refuse to take it. On the contrary, he touches it gravely, reverently, and swears to speak the truth. Then he is questioned as to his life—questioned, it would seem, in some hope that he might be betrayed into falsehood; for the questions show how thoroughly familiar are his prosecutors with his life.

This familiarity surprised Bruno, and showed him how far-seeing had been Castelnau when he warned him that in all probability not a single public speech or action of his would escape the Dominicans. For it was simply impossible in the few days that elapsed between his arrest and his present examination—especially at a time when intelligence travelled so slowly—that so many facts concerning Bruno's earlier career could have been collected. The Dominicans must have been watching him furtively for years. The only incident in his life about which he was not

questioned, and of which we may therefore fairly conclude his enemies were in ignorance, was the discussion with Leyson in the University of Oxford. Whether the Dominicans disdained to question a Protestant such as Leyson ; or whether the sleeping University had, after the momentary excitement, sunk into drowsiness again, certain it seems that that episode passed away and left no consequences of any kind behind it.

In compliance with the Inquisitor's command to relate and describe in full the leading circumstances of his life, Bruno begins, strange to say, with the latter part of it. He has no particular motive in proceeding thus. But his mind, from the time of his arrest, has been full of the unhappy mistake he had made in leaving Frankfort ; and it is a thing of course with him that what his mind is filled with he must express in words. He relates therefore circumstantially, and with perfect accuracy, his habit of discussing upon philosophy and kindred subjects at Frankfort ; his friendship with the Prior of the Carmelite monastery ; his acquaintance with the two booksellers ; the letter he received from Ciotto, begging him to leave Frankfort and become a resident in Venice. When for the first time he utters the name of Mocenigo, his voice trembles and his articulation becomes indistinct. And when he retails the proffered friendship, the hospitality, and the mode by which he was entrapped into disclosing

his opinions, and his consequent arrest, a look of mingled disgust and contempt comes over his features. That Venetian nobleman, had he been there, would have scarcely liked to see. Yet this was all. Bruno indulged in no vituperations. Not that he was afraid to anger Mocenigo or his friends; but that he would not deign to let Mocenigo know how greatly his treachery had power to move him.

When Bruno finished relating the late events in his life he was commanded by the Inquisitor to begin in proper order to describe his career from the time of early childhood. And he does tell it, quietly and calmly, beginning with the names of his parents, the profession of his father, the fact of his own baptismal name being Filippo. He gives the names of his early teachers. Then he communicates the intelligence that in his fifteenth year he became a member of the Dominican Order.

There was an inevitable pause; for Bruno, with that strangely emotional, susceptible temperament of his, which always vibrated to the vibrations of others, felt by a sort of immediate intuition that he had made an admission of almost insuperable significance. There was savage triumph depicted on the faces of his enemies, dismay and despair on those of his friends. Many of his slighter acquaintances were wholly ignorant of his religious profession. And even such of those as were more intimate with him had indulged in a hope—vague and futile on the face of

it—that he would deny the fact ; in which case they would have endeavoured to set up some plea of mistaken identity. But it was too late now. Rome certainly would never forgive the crime of embracing a religious Order and afterwards discarding it. The only hope is—will Venice ?

Bruno proceeds with his narrative, telling it simply and fully. He does not disguise his boyish acts of rebellion ; at which, it need scarcely be said, his enemies display increased triumph, and his friends additional apprehension. Then he details his flights from the convents, and his life as a teacher of grammar to boys, till he arrived at the period when, in 1576, he finally discarded at Geneva the dress of the Dominican Brotherhood.

“When you were at Geneva, did you attend various Protestant churches ?”

This question is put by the Inquisitor in a tone of eager significance, that on this occasion is misplaced. Bruno's open praise of various Protestant princes, and his known friendship for several members of the Reformed Faith, had given rise to a widely spread belief—entertained alike by Protestants, Free-thinkers, and Catholics—that Bruno was at heart a Protestant. I need not say that this belief was entirely without foundation.

“I did,” answered Bruno quietly, “but out of curiosity, not because I accepted the doctrines.”

“But you went more than once ?”

"I went several times. I was anxious to understand how these doctrines had gained so many believers ; but I went away caring as little, if not indeed less for them, than before I came."

"Have you read any heretical books ?"

"I have read many : Luther, Melancthon, Calvin ; but this again I did from curiosity. I have no love for the authors."

"Have you praised certain heretics and heretical princes ?"

"I have praised many heretics ; not for their heresy, but for their noble lives."

"Have you vituperated against theology, saying that all its dogmas are vanity ?"

"I have never spoken thus of the Holy Catholic Church ; though I have against the Reformed Religions."

"Do you hold that good works are necessary for salvation, or indeed consider them to be all-sufficing, provided we live morally ?"

"I have always held that good works are necessary to salvation. And in my books entitled *"De Causa, Principio ed Uno"* and *"Infinito Universo e Mondi,"* I have particularly stated that that kind of religion which would teach the people to confide in Faith without Works is no religion in the true sense of the word. It should be extirpated from the earth ; since by this confidence every bad tendency would become more bad. Such a doctrine should

be extirpated from the earth, I repeat; and this it is why I have designated those religions that teach what is so pernicious, *deforms* rather than *reforms*."

There is again a pause. Bruno's partisans breathe more freely; and his enemies look somewhat crest-fallen. Certainly his examination upon the Protestant heresy has not tended to inculcate him. It remains now to see whether he will pass equally well through his examination concerning opinions held alike by both forms of Christianity.

"What do you consider necessary to salvation?" asks the Inquisitor.

"Faith, Hope, and Charity."

The answer is returned by Bruno gravely and reverently; yet there is sufficient significance in his voice to make it displeasing to his enemies, who look upon it—and not without reason—as an implied rebuke.

"Have you written a work called 'Cena delle Cenere,' and if so, what was your object in writing it?"

"I have written such a work. It is divided into five Dialogues, and treats of the Movement of the Earth."

"Have you made a study of theology?"

"Not greatly. Philosophy is my profession."

"Have you ever doubted the Incarnation of the Word?"

"I do not think I have ever argued or lectured on the Incarnation. Yet I confess it has been to me a matter of private difficulty how the Word could be made flesh."

There is a look of savage triumph on the Inquisitor's face on hearing this admission; and his next question is in a tone of almost undisguised ferocity.

"Have you ever declared that the Holy Catholic Church is full of blasphemy?"

"Neither in thought, word, nor writing."

"Have you ever said that Christ was an impostor (*tristo*)?"

Bruno's answer is given in a tone of mingled dignity and indignation.

"I marvel that such a question is put to me. I have never said so, never thought so."

"Have you ever said that the miracles of Christ were apparent miracles and performed by magic?"

"I have never said these things, signori; read my books and see for yourselves."

"Having thus doubted of the Incarnation of the Word, how do you define the exact relationship of the Virgin Mary to Christ?"

"I hold that Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary; and if it can be proved that I have said or held otherwise let me be subjected to every pain."

The answer is given in a quick, excitable manner,

which, combined with the unexpected words, causes astonishment to all present. His enemies and even certain of his friends infer that to save himself from obvious penalties he has yielded to the force of circumstances, and has had recourse to falsehood. Yet the more far-seeing amongst the audience are not entirely satisfied with this solution; since, were Bruno really afraid of the Inquisitors, why should he have almost volunteered the confession that he had privately doubted how the Word could be made flesh? Certainly it was not easy to reconcile statements so obviously contradictory.

Few there understood Giordano Bruno; as few in our own day understand men who display behaviour somewhat similar—that is to say, men who, endowed with a peculiar sensitiveness of temperament, are prone to a timidity of conscience though they are entirely above any more vulgar timidity; who, vaguely and scarcely consciously holding opinions such as few of their generation sanction, shrink, abashed at themselves, when those doctrines are placed before them naked, so to speak, and unobscured by any veil. Bruno was certainly not a believer in the Catholic doctrines, but he was no strong anti-Catholic. As he said himself, philosophy was his profession, not theology. Moreover, all the associations of his youth had been Catholic. He had never intended to write openly against Catholicism. Yet he had couched most of his

writings in the forms of dialogues ; yielding occasionally, through the mouth of an imaginary opponent, to the habit of scurrilous abuse so prevalent in his century. As the questions concerning the blasphemy of his sayings and writings were put to him, a sort of shock ran through him. Was it possible that anything he had written might really be twisted into blasphemy such as this ? He was too excited to be able to remember distinctly what he had written ; whether what was put into his mouth was entirely the invention of his enemies, or whether there lay in his writings a certain foundation whence such an interpretation might naturally arise. And, with this dread before him, he was betrayed, through the force of the reactionary feeling so habitual to him, to expressions of sympathy with the doctrines of the Catholic Church that were assuredly the reverse of accurate.

To the question, "Have you ever reasoned about the Holy Mass, or doctrine of Transubstantiation ?" he answers in the same quick, excitable way, his attention far more occupied with seeking to atone for any former anti-Catholic exaggerations than to present accuracy,

"I have never spoken of the sacrifice of Mass, nor of that of Transubstantiation, save as it is held by the Catholic Church."

To interrogations concerning his belief in a Trinity he answers, he holds it as the Church

preaches it. But on another inquiry on the same subject, the temptation to disclose some of his own mystical ideas upon the Trinity is too strong upon him, and he begins with a sort of fervour that surprises the Inquisitors, and indeed the Venetians in general, who are wholly at a loss to comprehend him.

"It seems to me," he begins, "that the Word is neither Creator nor created, but it may be a medium between Creator and created, as words are signs or medium of comprehension between speaker and listener. . . ."

Poor Bruno! he proceeded but for a few minutes. Perhaps he was conscious that it was a vain attempt to try and define the indefinable; or it may be that the utter lack of sympathy and interest on the faces of his listeners chilled him. Both enemies and friends thought that he was but indulging in equivocation and falsehood to escape punishment. "And little blame to him," thought the more kindly feeling of the light Venetians; "should we not all do the same under the same circumstances?"

The trial lasts at intervals till the 30th of July; but the principal answers and questions have been already given. Bruno throughout the whole of this lengthy trial acted as I have already described. Nothing will tempt him into abuse of the Protestant friends who have shown him kindness; nothing will make him deny the philosophical and scientific

theories to which he has devoted his life. But upon all matters of theology, he declares he will submit himself to the Church. Nay, once he describes himself as willing to submit all his writings to the Pope, and if anything be discovered in them that is in abuse of the Holy Catholic Church, he will destroy the pages that contain it.

Whether this conduct was in reality the effect of fear, as it undoubtedly appears at first sight ; or whether, as a careful study of his character leads me to think, it arose from a subtle complexity of feelings of which cowardice certainly was not one, the reader must of course judge for himself. Assuredly the admissions he made were of so grave a character that his equivocations—if they were employed in order to save himself from punishment—seem almost absurdly lame and futile. The charges of which he was afterwards found guilty may be said to be almost entirely founded on his own admissions.

“ He is an apostate from the Dominican Order of which he was formerly a member ; he has openly praised the Queen of England and other heretic princes ; he has taught the Copernican theory of the movement of the earth ; he believes in the infinity of worlds ; he supposes that those worlds are inhabited.”

On the 17th of September, the Cardinal of St. Severino wrote to the Venetian Inquisitor, requiring Bruno to be given over to the Governor of Ancona.

On the 28th of the same month the Patriarch of Venice, with the members of the Tribunal of the Inquisition at Venice, came to the College and demanded the extradition of Bruno as the author of heretical works and heresiarch. This demand is made by order sent from Rome through the Cardinal of San Severino. The Doge answered haughtily that it shall be thought upon, and the Patriarch shall hear. On the same day the Inquisitor comes again, impatient for an answer, but is told that the matter has not yet been taken into consideration. But on October the 3rd, the Senate writes to say that it would prejudice the authority of the Tribunal of Venice to allow the extradition of Bruno.

On the 22nd of December, the Nuncio comes to the College to insist that the case of Bruno belongs to the Holy Office and should therefore be remitted to Rome ; and after a little time wasted in dispute, Venice gives way, but in all probability would not have given way had Bruno displayed a little more anxiety to remain under her protection. But whether it were that he was weary of an imprisonment that had already lasted several months ; whether it were that he would not deign to implore protection of any description ; or whether it were that his natural restlessness was more than usually strong upon him ; certain it is that he betrayed no apparent consciousness that he was more safe from violence in Venice than he would be were he in Rome. And towards

the close of January, 1593, by way of Ancona to Rome was Bruno sent.

But when he has completed the journey, and is commanded to descend from the conveyance, a greater feeling of ominousness passes over him than he has experienced since his arrest; for he finds that the place of his destination is that very convent of San Minerva whence he had escaped so many years ago. It is strange what a part association plays in a nature that is very emotional. His heart beat, and his face alternately flushed and paled almost as it did when he was a wanderer, weak and faint from long fasting.

And unfortunately for Bruno this ominous foreboding was on this occasion only too well justified by the result; for he is now to undergo the greatest punishment that could be inflicted upon a nature such as his—immeasurably greater than any amount of physical torture. For seven long years the restless, excitable Italian, with his passionate love of freedom, with his subtle, mystical enjoyment of Nature and her beauties, is to be kept a prisoner in Rome, without books, without pen and paper, without companionship; nay, almost without light. The world, it is true, is busy with him; but he is shut out from the world. For seven long years the doom of one with whom expression and expansion are almost necessities, is absolute, unbroken silence. And for seven years, therefore, must this narrative too be silent.



CHAPTER XXII.

THE INQUISITION IN ROME.

“Blessed Father,” said Baronius to Paul V., “the ministry of Peter is twofold—to *feed* and to *kill*; for the Lord said to him ‘Feed my sheep,’ and he also heard a voice from Heaven saying ‘Kill and eat.’”—Quoted in DR. RULE’S *History of the Inquisition*, vol. ii., p. 208.

IN one of the earliest of Bruno’s works, *Il Candelajo*, he indulged in the following denunciation of Fortune—at a time perhaps when Fortune had not done so very much towards him to deserve it.

“Fortune loves to bestow honour on those to whom it is *not* due; lands richly wooded to those who have not planted a tree; much money to those who have never earned a crown, and who scarcely know how to spend it; many children to those who do not wish for them, and who do not know how to bring them up; a good appetite to those who have nothing to eat; rich dainties to those who have a loathing for food. But what shall I say? We ought to excuse

the poor lady, for perhaps she is blind. Perhaps she really desires to bestow her favours only upon such as deserve them or value them ; yet being obliged to grope in the dark, is it not to be expected that she would frequently alight upon the ignorant and foolish since the world contains them in such numbers ? ”

Why did the Inquisition allow so long a time to elapse between Bruno's trial at Venice and his final sentence ? Certainly such behaviour was very unusual with her. On the 5th April, 1599, a list was made of those imprisoned in the Holy Office. Including Bruno there were in all twenty-one prisoners ; but with the exception of himself, the incarceration of none was of long date. The majority had been there but a few months, one or two had been there two years. Why had there been an exception made alone with Bruno ? Was it from any intention of more than usually refined cruelty on the part of his enemies, knowing that to one like the Neapolitan, imprisonment and solitude were punishments worse than any death ? I do not think so. If blame is to be laid anywhere, let us charge it upon that convenient abstraction Fortune, who perhaps was avenging herself upon Bruno for his bitter denunciation of her so many years ago. But perhaps it was not revenge after all. Perhaps, as Bruno says, she was but blind, and only made a mistake. Perhaps in thus prolonging his life, in deferring his death, she was actuated by motives of

real kindness, imagining him to be one who felt that

The weariest and most loathed worldly life,
That age, ache, penury, and imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear of death.

There are many who think thus—notably Moenigo, for instance—but certainly Bruno was not amongst them. When life had ceased to be enjoyable—above all, when it had ceased to be useful—it had ceased, in his opinion, to be desirable. And yet, as I have said, I believe this terrible prolongation of his misery had its origin more probably through that strange misfortune that dogged his footsteps the latter part of his life than through any malice or deliberate cruelty on the part of his enemies. Strange as it may sound, it appears to me that had Bruno sinned more grossly against the Catholic Faith, he would have been spared this long imprisonment; but we must remember that if he had many high up in authority who disliked him, he had a larger number by whom he was held in affection and esteem. Then he had recanted everything that might give offence in his religious doctrines. He had openly avowed that he had written as a philosopher, not as a theologian.

Again, just about the time of Bruno's arrest, Clement VIII., otherwise Aldobrandini, was made Pope. And he was not only high-minded and of a merciful disposition, but was a sufficient patron of learning to have made Bruno entertain the idea of dedicating his

work upon which he was engaged at the time of his arrest, "*Delle Sette Arte Libretti*," to him. Cardinal Bellarmin, too, a dignitary of great authority with the Holy Office, was of a like high-minded disposition; and his candour and good faith to enemies had more than once exposed him to the reproaches of those of his own communion. On the other hand, San Severino, the Grand Inquisitor at Rome, was a most severe man; one who openly exulted in his own severity, not hesitating to affirm that by all good Catholics no day should be held in such triumph and rejoicing as St. Bartholomew's Day. Yet of what consideration was San Severino may be judged by the fact that when Aldobrandini was made Pope, San Severino was the rival claimant.

And so, between those who were severe and those who were lenient, between those who hated him and those who compassionated him, Bruno lingered on in imprisonment that was more hateful to him than the worst of deaths.

Signor Raffaele Mariano dissents from Signor Berti* in believing that Bruno was burned for his heretical opinions. He believes that it was not to his heretical but to his philosophical opinions that his death is to be traced. For myself I am disposed to think that his real offence was neither philosophical nor religious, but political. I believe

* "*La Vita di Giordano Bruno*," par Raffaele Mariano, p. 99.

that with such a Pope at the head of the Church as Clement VIII., combined with the fact that Bruno had offered to erase from his pages any opinions that might be considered heretical, he would have been released had he not committed the great imprudence, both in his writings and by word of mouth, of praising Queen Elizabeth. True, he had praised other Lutheran princes; yet this, in common with his apostasy and his philosophy, might have been forgiven under the rule of such an one as Clement VIII. But even by the most tolerant of Catholic rulers Elizabeth's name was held as a by-word of reproach; for was not she the murderess of Mary, Queen of Scots? And was not Mary a favourite and beloved daughter of the Catholic Church? Above all, was not Elizabeth hated by Spain? And was not Spain of paramount power in all matters pertaining to the Roman Inquisition? Doubtless this praise could not form the ostensible excuse for murdering Bruno. His apostasy was a much more convenient plea. But for all that I believe that had he not praised Elizabeth so openly his liberty might probably have been spared to him.

"Everything comes to him who waits," it is said. And so at last there comes a time when even an imprisonment of seven years is to cease.

On the 9th of February, 1600, an official enters the door of the unhappy prisoner's room; bids him rise; and then with the assistance of a warder stationed

within call, proceeds to robe him in the dress of the Dominican Brotherhood. Over the robe is solemnly placed the *san benito*. Bruno knows by this the fate that is reserved for him. Yet he makes no resistance. He does not shriek and pray for pardon ; still less does he offer to recant if only his life may be preserved. He looks dazed and bewildered, that is all ; and that is scarcely surprising after an imprisonment of seven years.

How had this time passed with him ? Had he been racked, or scourged, or half-starved ? Had he been made indignant or despairing by his long restraint ? Or had his philosophy been of the support to him that his own praise of it to Castelnau required it to be ? We have no means of judging. Kept absolutely without pen, ink, or paper, he had no means of communicating with his friends. And assuredly the officials of the Inquisition were not those to whom he would be likely to unburden himself. One thing is certain : that he is not mad. And this escape from the worst of all dooms is in itself something of a miracle, seeing what a trial seven years' imprisonment to one so excitable as the Italian must have been.

And so dressed in the gown of his Order and wearing the *san benito*, he is led into the presence of the Assembly to hear his sentence.

The Assembly was unusually crowded. Looks of ferocity were cast upon him as he entered ; but also

looks of the most unfeigned compassion; for his friends and enemies were alike to be seen here; notably among the last the Spanish Inquisitor-General Deza, who, though without any personal acquaintance with Bruno, had long held him in hatred.

"*Kneel!*" is the first word Bruno distinctly hears as he has slightly recovered from the shock of seeing so many faces after his long solitude.

He obeys. How should he do otherwise? The bravest must submit to numbers. And had he refused he would but have had to endure the greater indignity of being forced upon his knees.

Then, one by one, his Dominican garments are taken from him. And, as this is being done, the sentence is slowly read over him:

"By the authority of God Almighty, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we take from thee the clerical habit, we depose thee, we degrade thee, we deprive thee of every ecclesiastical benefice."

He is then made to rise, while the *san benito* is replaced, but having under it this time no religious gown. Then, again he is told to kneel, and his final sentence is read. Eight days are to be allowed him to repent; but if at that time he is still unrepentant he is to be delivered over to the secular authorities, to be punished "as mercifully as possible without shedding of the blood."

Bruno knew that this hypocritical method of

expression was the atrocious formula for burning a man alive. Yet there is no dismay on his face. Nay, there is almost what would seem a certain compassion. For, with his strongly sensitive nature, he feels, by a sort of intuition, the thrill of horror that passes through the breasts of such among the audience as are friendly to him as the sentence is being pronounced. Nay, even the most cruel there seem less full of savage exultation than was usual with them. It is felt that there is something about this prisoner not quite ordinary ; that, both with his opinions and himself, there must be something peculiar that would make Rome take seven years before she could come to a decision upon him.

There is a moment's silence. Bruno rises and looks steadily at the faces of the congregation of Inquisitors, and then says gravely, almost gently :

"Perhaps it is with greater fear that ye pronounce this sentence than I receive it."

To his prison he is led back in silence. If he recants, he will probably be strangled. If he does not recant, he will certainly be burnt alive.

But he will recant so much and no more than he did seven years ago. If he has written anything that is really blasphemous, he will recant it ; but he will not say a word against the Lutherans who have been good to him, or against the philosophical and scientific theories to which he has devoted his life.



CHAPTER THE LAST.

GIOVANNI BRUNO'S FOREBODINGS ARE WHOLLY
FULFILLED.

"Whereby, on what ways soever he travels and struggles, often enough falling, he is still a brother man. Hate him not; thou canst not hate him! Shining through much toil and tarnish, and now victorious effulgent, and oftenest struggling eclipsed, the light of genius itself is in this man, which was never yet base and hateful, but at worst was lamentable, lovable with pity."—*Carlyle*.

It is the 17th of February, 1600, and about the Campo di Fiore—the public place set apart in Rome for the burning of heretics—is gathered an unusual crowd, come out to see a man who has been notorious for more than twenty years burnt alive.

It is the time of Jubilee, and Rome is unusually full. Fifty cardinals are in the city; princes not a few; foreigners from many countries. Yet, engrossing and varied as are the objects of interest just now, the apostate monk who has so obstinately refused to recant, and his approaching fate, is the one absorbing

topic, by the side of which all others are put into the shade.

Rapidly the crowd increases, and the hum of voices seems almost oppressive in its apparent ceaselessness. Conspicuous in numbers, even among that multitude of forms, are undoubtedly the white-robed Dominicans. The convent of San Bartolomeo is of course peculiarly represented; and foremost among these is Fra Giuseppe, now grown into a stout, middle-aged man, with an expression of unmistakable malice and cruelty. On one side of him is Schioppus, a convert from Protestantism to Romanism but two years since, to whom we are indebted partly for the details of what he is now come to see; and on the other side was a venerable old monk, with a kind benevolent expression, who, from a sense of duty, has compelled himself to witness what nevertheless he shrank from with unfeigned reluctance.

There is a restless movement of the crowd, as it surges to and fro. Why lingers the prisoner so long? A common interest will often make friends of perfect strangers. Fra Giuseppe and Schioppus know nothing of each other. Yet the eagerness of their common expectation brings them together, and they commence to discuss Giordano Bruno and his fate.

"It is rumoured," remarked Schioppus, "that even yet he has not recanted. Well, however odious are his opinions, he is at least endowed with courage."

"Call it not courage," answered Giuseppe, with

savage bitterness. "It is only vanity. I know him of old. He dwelt with me in the same convent. A conceited upstart! These braggarts always are cowards at heart. Wait till he sees the faggots. He will flinch then, I warrant!"

"Well!" remarked Schioppius, with a critical air, for he prided himself on his knowledge of human nature, "how and in what way he meets his fate will afford a certain proof whether, of the two qualities you say he possesses, vanity or cowardice is the greater. If he is greatly animated by vanity he——"

"He will do what?" asked Giuseppe, as Schioppius paused for a few minutes.

"Make a speech," concluded Schioppius drily. "But, hush! He comes!"

For now from the Church of the Minerva is seen the crucifix, borne aloft, high above the heads of all, so that no one present should fail to see it. It is carried between two priests; and then by twos, walking in slow, stately procession, issue a numerous party of priests. All look on in eager expectation; for after the last priests have left the Minerva it is known that the Philosopher of Nola will appear.

Clad in the cloak painted with flames and devils, and surrounded on all sides with a strong body of soldiers, comes the prisoner, upright and fearless, treading as firmly as any in the procession. The first taste of fresh air after so many years' deprivation

of it is like wine to him ; and he holds up his face to enjoy it more thoroughly. There is a grandeur upon his countenance that none has observed before, though it has often been there when he was alone. Eagerly is he gazed upon ; but he gazes upon no one ; nay, is scarcely conscious of any one.

For he is abstracted ; is in one of those mystical trances that hitherto have only come upon him when he was alone with Nature. For the first time in his life perhaps, the exciting influences of the environment have no effect upon him—save for the first minutes, the air, which had a power upon his physical nature that bewildered him. But it quickly passes. And now his whole being is filled with the thoughts that in greater or less degree have occupied him since his sentence was finally pronounced. The Great Perhaps that he has speculated upon dreamily for so many years is now face to face with him. What would it be like ? Will his consciousness cease with his breath ? Will it pass into the body of some animal ? Or will it be absorbed into the Unity of which he knows so little but feels so much ?

In such a moment as this will Bruno pose before his fellows, and rally his courage in order to make a speech ? Schioppius, you know much of human nature, but you have no insight into a character such as this. Will he wince, Fra Giuseppe, at the sight of the faggots ; and, wailing for mercy, recant all the doctrines he has held ? On the contrary, he regards

this death as a painful but rapid means in effecting the change for which he has almost taught himself to long. The crucifix is offered to him, but he refuses to look upon it; yet gently—not irreverently, not scornfully. He has no wish to hurt the feelings of any Catholic present. But in such a moment as this even courtesy will not prompt him to an action which would, with his present experience, be more than equivocal; it would be dishonest. His seven years' imprisonment has made it next to impossible but that he should regard the symbol of Catholicism with feelings of bitter condemnation. His attitude to the Church is no longer negative; it is wholly inimical.

As he turns away from the crucifix an angry hiss arises amid the crowd. But even this, singularly susceptible as was in general his nature, he does not seem to hear. He submits quietly to be placed upon the faggots. A light is applied to them; and as the wind is fresh and brisk, the flames mount rapidly.

For an instant the grand face is convulsed in agony; and all, even the most cruel, turn away their eyes, half fearing, half morbidly expecting the shriek they feel sure must come. But no shriek comes; and wonder is on every soul.

Some of the bolder ones venture to look again. The flames have risen now above his head, and obscure the view. Yet it is plain that he is alive; for through the flames can be seen a moving convulsed mass. Still

there is no cry, not even a moan, and the silence becomes oppressive. The spectators hold their breath, longing with a sort of morbid apprehension for some sound, some cry. There is something ghastly in this total absence of ordinary behaviour; but still the only break in the otherwise absolute silence, is the occasional crackling of the fuel. Has there been some trick? Is the burning of this heretic, but burning of his effigy?

There is no trick, O spectators! It is only that you are no more able to understand him in his death than you have understood him in his life.

There is another interval; and now the flames decrease in fury; but they have scarcely died away, when the wind, which throughout has been brisk, grows into something approaching a gale. The dying embers give a renewed, momentary glow and then are completely extinguished. But the wind catches up the ashes, tosses them, whirls them in its grasp till they are scattered far and wide. Which are the man's ashes? Which are the faggots?

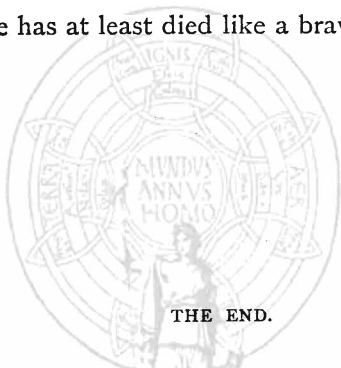
Schioppius is the first to speak. In spite of himself he feels a certain admiration for courage so unusual; and his tone of sarcasm is only attained after distinct effort.

"There! it is over," he said, "and our philosopher has gone to the worlds he so wickedly feigned!"

"Rather say," answered Fra Giuseppe with a

ferocity that was entirely unassumed, "that he has gone from one furnace to another."

"Peace, good brother," said the old monk with the benevolent face. "However he may have erred in life, he has at least died like a brave man."



THE END.



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