

that time, (since the art of printing had not been invented yet) great numbers assembled. To those who excelled in these contests, particular titles were given, to render them honourable, such as—Irefragable Doctor, Profound Doctor, Solemn Doctor. Masters, Bachelors, and Doctors were entitled to very high privileges, and it is recorded that Doctors contended even with knights for precedence, to which title, it was asserted, a Doctor had a right without creation.

During the Scholastic ages, the most exaggerated praises were bestowed upon Aristotle's Philosophy by the most learned persons of these times, and his authority was absolute on every subject, *Ipse dixit* or *Magister dixit*, was sufficient to silence all opposition.

Another great cause of so much attention being paid to it was, that the policy of the Romish church lay in supporting it to the utmost of its power, since the doctrines of Syllogism furnished them with weapons which they used extremely well in maintaining their ground against the Reformers who began about that time to attack it.

The causes which led to the overthrow of this system had been in silent operation for nearly a century before this. When Constantinople was taken by the Turks, in the year 1453, the fugitive Greeks fled to the western parts of Europe, and carried with them such of the Greek and Roman authors as they had preserved. From this period the revival of learning and the fine arts began, and a more intimate acquaintance with the languages prevailed. When men once relished the beauties of these, the bargamous jargon of the Scholastic Disputation would soon become disagreeable to their ears.

The free form of Government, which Charles V. granted to his subjects, and the discovery of the New World, at that time, must have contributed a good deal to the overthrow of the Aristotelian system. But the Reformation, and the invention of the art of Printing, in the fourteenth century, were still more effectual means, as by the one the knowledge of mankind was greatly extended, and by the other, men would be rendered bolder in forming opinions for themselves.

Ramus in France, Des Cartes in Germany, and Lord Bacon in England, took the most active part in bringing about this change. Ramus was the first who, boldly but rashly, attacked the system in a Thesis, which he published in the University of Paris (as was customary before obtaining a degree.) In this Thesis he declared that all the theories of Aristotle were false. He, however, met with great opposition, and at last fell a victim to the fury of the Popish party, in the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, as he was suspected of being a Protestant.

Aristotle's Philosophy still kept a strong hold over the minds of men, particularly in schools and uni-

versities. The College of Paris presented a petition to Parliament to prevent the publication of the opinions of Ramus and Des Cartes, and their request was upon the point of being granted, when the poet Boileau addressed another petition to them with so much wit and satire, that it made such an impression upon them, as to refuse the petition of the College.

The universities of Germany were the first who adopted the opinions of Ramus and Des Cartes, although they were unable to substitute any regular system instead of the old, till Lord Bacon arose, who, instead of inventing theories, and reasoning upon possibilities, has directed the attention of Philosophers to experiments, observations, and cautious induction.

The excellence of this plan has been proved by more discoveries having been made in science during the two last centuries, than for 2000 years preceding.

PASSAGE OF THE DOURO.

BY HARRY LORREQUER.

NEVER did the morning break more beautifully than on the 12th of May, 1809. Huge masses of fog-like vapour had succeeded to the starry cloudless night, but, one by one, they moved onward towards the sea, disclosing, as they passed, long tracts of lovely country, bathed in a rich golden glow. The broad Douro, with its transparent current, shone out like a bright coloured ribbon, meandering through the deep garment of green; the darkly shadowed mountains, which closed the background, loomed even larger than they were; while their summits were tipped with the yellow glory of the morning. The air was calm and still, and the very smoke that arose from the peasant's cot, laboured as it ascended through the perfumed air, and, save the ripple of the stream, all was silent as the grave.

The squadrons of the 14th, with which I was, had diverged from the road beside the river, and, to obtain a shorter path, had entered the skirts of a dark pine wood: our pace was a sharp one; an orderly had been already dispatched to hasten our arrival, and we pressed on at a brisk trot. In less than an hour we reached the verge of the wood, and, as we rode out upon the plain, what a spectacle met our eyes. Before us, in a narrow valley, separated from the river by a narrow ridge, were picketed three cavalry regiments; their noiseless gestures and perfect stillness bespeaking, at once, that they were intended for a surprise party. Farther down the stream, and upon the opposite side, rose the massive towers and tall spires of Oporto, displaying from their summits the broad ensign of France; while, far as the eye could reach, the broad dark masses of troops might be seen; the intervals between their columns glittering with the bright equipments of their cavalry, whose steel caps and lances were sparkling