

immoral as the princes and merchants. The ballads of Provence were as impure as the Greek odes of Italy. By the fall of Constantinople, a school of subtle refugees had been let loose upon the West—a school of aliens, in every case, to Catholic orthodoxy—a school who styled Plato the Divine, who in their discourses compared the Blessed Trinity to Jupiter and Apollo, and the Blessed Mother of God to Diana or Minerva. Not only these philosophic foreigners, but their European disciples, exalted this pagan literature above all sacred knowledge. The extent of the epidemic is illustrated by the fact that all who had pretensions to literature exchanged their Christian names for Greek. Thus, in Rome itself, we meet the Chamberlain Paris de Grassi with one brother called Agamemnon, and another called Achilles, both in high office; thus, in Germany, Gerhard becomes Erasmus, Schwarzerd becomes Melancthon, Kuhorn is changed to Bucer, and Hauschien to Ecclampadius. When Professor Luther entered the novitiate at Erfurt, after spending the evening at the Tavern, he brought only Plautus and Virgil in with him—a pretty pair of Pagan companions for a novice of the Order of St. Augustine! Long afterwards he said he never was a true monk at heart—one of the few true things he ever said.

The chief result of the oceanic discoveries, on the schools and studies of the Europeans, was to draw the most active minds to physical and from metaphysical inquiries. The observations made, and materials brought from, Africa and America, gave constant appetite and food for analogical reasoning. The ancient ideas of earth and ocean, once exploded by experiment, the unmoored mind drifted from truth to conjecture—from faith to skepticism. Every innovator pleaded the precedents of Columbus and De Gama; (a famous anatomist at Bologna was styled, by way of distinction, "the Columbus of the human body;") that desire to demonstrate every science to the satisfaction of the senses then grew up, which flowered in the system of Lord Bacon, and has since produced such perilous fruits of false science. The art of printing, in Luther's youth, was preparing men's minds, by these new studies, for innovations still more immoral.

These were some of the general conditions of Europe immediately "before the Reformation." Bearing them in mind, it will not appear to you so strange why the Reformation succeeded at the time it did, and no sooner. We have still to consider why it broke out in Germany and not at Rome itself, or in France, or