

From the Catholic Advocate.

HISTORY

Of the life, works and doctrine of Calvin, by Mr. Audin, Knight of the order of St. Gregory the Great, member of the Academy and literary circle of Lyons, of the Tiberine Academy of Rome, of the Academy of the Catholic Religion of the same city, &c. New edition, revised and corrected. Paris. 1843.

(CONTINUED.)

FRANCIS I.

Calvin Like Luther, boasted that he had been sent by God to deliver mankind from the Papacy, and to cause human reason to illumine society, and effect a moral regeneration of the world. Could we summon from the deep shades of the past, the illustrious personages of that epoch, we would find Catholic names, before the glory of which the pretensions of Luther and Calvin become obscure.

Francis I., when but a pupil in the college of Navarre, was distinguished among his rivals, at the age of fourteen years, was esteemed worthy of being selected as patron by the learned men of the day. To him did Francis Tissot, Professor of the University, dedicate his Hebrew Grammar. When he had not yet attained his majority, Castiglione subjected to his criticism and correction his golden book, "Il Cortegiano."

When he became King, he fulfilled the promises of his earlier years. Among the illustrious men whom he loaded with his royal favor, we find a Poncher, Bishop of Paris, whom Erasmus regards as "an angel descended from heaven to revive the cultivation of letters;" a Justiniani, Bishop of Nebio, a famous professor of Greek, Hebrew and Arabic; a Petit, Bishop of Troyes and Sens; a William Pillissier, Bishop of Maguehone, whose erudition was proverbial; a James Colin almoner of the King, and a famous poet both in French and Latin; a John du Bellay Languet, confidential friend of Bembo, Vida, Sadolet, Ascolti, and other glories of the Court of Leo; a Rhene du Bellay, Bishop of Meux, whose whole revenues were lavished upon the poor, or expended in the erection of a physical cabinet, for the benefit of science.

"Now let Calvin declaim against the ignorance of the higher clergy of France! We know some of the Prelates who occupied the principal sees of the Episcopacy. Does any one believe that these priests were obscure individuals, as he calls them? Could they not, as well as John of Noyon, boast of celestial gifts?"

"On beholding these violet and purple robes, were we to imagine that Francis I. sought for light only in the sanctuary, we should be mistaken. At this epoch French episcopacy felt the necessity of placing itself at the head of the movement, which propelled the minds of men into new paths. It was the court of Leo X., which gave the example of a passion for letters: the Pope is poet, musician, linguist; our Bishops, if they cannot sing, will, with laudable ambition, study human science, learn the old idioms.—Greek, Hebrew, Syriac.—languages no longer spoken: they will erect colleges, as did

Cardinal de Tournon: instruct youth, as did Rhene du Bellay; surround themselves with men of letters, as did Briconet of Meaux; resuscitate from the tomb the antique Roman stones, as did the Archbishop of Vienna; they will know how to counsel and enlighten the prince, who will have invested them with the purple."

In an obscure retreat, William Bude occupied himself in the study of letters, and the worship of the muses. Termed by Lascais, "the Athenian of France," he was deeply skilled in ancient lore, a philologist, philosopher, linguist and poet. Francis the First, who delighted to disperse the royal sunshine on all the glorious names of his epoch, summoned him to court. It is Bude who first suggested to the king the foundation of the College Royal; a project into which the monarch entered willingly, although death surprised him before he had time to accomplish its erection.

The professors, however, were named and endowed, two for Hebrew, two for Greek, whose lessons were to be given gratuitously. Each professor received 450 livres annually with a good abbey, of which, at a later period, their successors were deprived.

Paul Paradis, an Israelite, converted to Catholicity, was selected first professor of Hebrew. Guidacerio, a favorite of Leo X., was the second Hebrew professor. Vatable, a poor priest from the village of the Bramatz, in Valois, was first professor of Greek, the second was Peter Danes. The names of Vatable and Danes can scarcely be rivalled, even by that of William Postel, whom Maurice Bresieur terms "the map of all languages, of all arts, the abridgment of all the sciences.

At times, Postel was unfortunate. His reason tottered on his throne.

"He made himself Rabbini, and had visions: an angel, the Raziell, revealed to him the secrets of heaven. He dreams of a universal religion, of which he will be great Pontiff, and he printed his "cord of the world," wherein he salutes Francis I., with the title of universal monarch.—To the new prophet, a new land was necessary. Postel goes to Rome, and assumes the habit of a Jesuit, "because," says he, "the conduct of the disciples of Loyola is the most perfect of any in the world, since the days of the Apostles."

Postel departed from Rome for Venice, where, illumined and inspired, he gave to the world his book *De vinculo mundi*, and other treatises. Postel may be regarded as an avant courier of our modern clair-voyants. He appears to have taken a start of Mesmer, and taught positively "that the human eye can "locally" see through bodies." (*)

"He had lucid intervals. It was in one of these intervals, repiete with all sorts of intellectual wonders, that Francis I. confided to him the chair of mathe-

(*) Come sia possibile che siano talmente aperti li occhi una persona che lei possa vedere localmente a traverso i corpi scuri, over quello che nessuno altro vede.

matics and of the oriental languages: the learned world was forced to applaud the perspicacity of the prince."

Besides of the glory of founding this great monument of learning, the college royal, Francis I. had the honour to establish in France, those chairs of Roman law, of which Bologna furnished the model. He invited to his kingdom the famous Alciati, who at Bourges, on the 25th April, 1529, opened that school, which was destined to exert upon civilization so powerful an influence.

"Now, let them cease to tell us that the reformers were the receptors of France. Was not the tree of knowledge flourishing there, when Calvin came to study under Mathurin Cordier? Calvin, says Mr. Nisard, formed himself after the manner of Melancthon, (*), but this method had not yet appeared in France, at the period when Cordier published his dialogues; Ravius Textor, his *Specimen Epithetorum*; Aleandro, his *Lexicon*; Sadolet, his *de liberis recte instituendis*; Bude, his *tractatus de studio literarum recte instituendo*; Tissot, his *Hebrew Grammar*; Fitchet, his *rhetoric*; Martin Delpha, his *tractatus on the art of oratory*. What then can the reformation cite at this epoch of renovation? At most, Calvin's *Psychopanychia*, and Beza's ode to Audebert: and truth there is here no subject for glorying. We speak not now of Italy, who had her historians when France was making her essay in Latin Grammar. What work of art has the reformation produced? None. It was not it which inspired master Roux, the architect, poet, musician, caupon of the holy chapel of Paris, when he was constructing the grand gallery of Fontainebleau; nor Jules Romain, whom Franco by his benefits, nor Andre del Sarto, the painter of the *Madonna del Sacco*; nor Benvenuto Cellini, the sculptor so poetic; nor Primaticci, who makes a Vatican out of Fontainebleau; nor Vecelli, the great Venetian colorist; painters, statuaries, humanists, literari, you all belong to Catholicism! We claim your glory as belonging to Catholicism. Doubt, says a critic, Mr. Planche, is a method of investigation, and not of instruction or study, he who learns must believe already; now Calvin did not believe. Let him then admire himself in his pride, compare himself to the sun, applaud himself for having brought light and truth to his country. We think that Bude, Danes, John du Bellay, Vatable, and those streams of Greeks and Italians, which at the voice of the great monarch, came to mingle with the Parisian population, are glorious representations of human letter; that Nicol. Jerome Poncher, William Pellissier the honor of the French episcopacy, have taught and practised the gospel; that the reformation, in the person of Calvin, has no more found light than truth, both of which were of the patrimony of France at the time he dreamed of reforming Luther, and converting Francis I., by dedicating to him his book of institutions."

(*) *Revue des deux mondes*, Oct. 1829.

THE APOSTOLIC LADIES.

"Who would at this time believe that a woman's intrigues came near robbing France of her ancient *credo* of Athanasius? The chief of this conspiracy was Margaret, the real or pretended author of the *Heptameron*, and the auxiliaries were the Duchess d'Etampes, her sister, Madame di Pisseleu, and Madame de Cani. At Pau, Margaret had a fine castle where since was born Henry IV., a true feudal habitation, quite quick-set with draw-bridges, and impenetrable to the human eye, were it even as sharp as that of Lieutenant Morin. In this old manor the Queen's court assembled of an evening, in imitation of the Christians of the primitive church, and there read in French some prayer arranged *a la Lutherienne*. When Roussol, the Queen's chaplain was absent, a fugitive Carmelite, by name Solon held forth the word. This monk did not scruple heaping insults on those whom he termed papistical gentry. These were received with loud peals of laughter, such as arose at the jovial recitals of Desperriers, in the evening reunions.—In an especial manner they ridiculed the Catholic mass, and resolved to displace it for the mass of seven points."

"Now, here is the mass of seven points:"

Mass, with public communion; first point.

Mass, without elevation of the host; second point.

Mass, without adoration of the species; third point.

Mass, without oblation of the bread and wine; fourth point.

Mass, without commemoration of the Virgin and saints; fifth point.

Mass, with breaking the bread at the altar: first, for the priest, then for the faithful; sixth point.

Mass, celebrated by a married priest; seventh point.

Mass, Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinistic.

"The Ladies d'Etampes, de Cani, and di Pisseleu, grew passionately fond of the Mass of seven points; had it been allowed them, perhaps, together with the abolition of confession, they would not have been very exact with regard to the other dogmas of the Catholic Church. They accepted the Pope's supremacy, purgatory, the veneration of the Virgin and the Saints, the greater part of the sacraments, and even hell itself; only it was necessary that they should have a prayer book in French which was found for them. Margaret caused a French translation to be prepared of the "book of hours," by the Bishop of Sens, the confessor of the king, whose orthodoxy was not doubtful.

This book caused considerable excitement, not only at the court of Nerec, but in different parts of France. It was secretly printed, and by colporteurs spread through the country. Others, from a prospect of gain undertook the same business, published and distributed bibles, tracts, psalm books, catechisms, pamphlets, &c.

(To be continued.)