

From the Catholic Advocate.

HISTORY

Of the life, works and doctrines 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.)

Gérard was poor, deriving from his office of fiscal procurator, an income of only 700 francs, and he had a wife and six children, demanding his care. In his distress, the noble family des Mommor came to his assistance. Often did this generous family throw their charitable protection over the Calvin, old and young. One of its members, the abbe Hangest, pastor of St. Eloy, became the friend of John, and afforded him a home and the means to pursue his earliest studies.

This worthy priest, a skilful man, instructed young Calvin, together with the children of the house of Mommor, and initiated him in the French, Latin, and Greek languages. Will Calvin exhibit any gratitude for such favors?

"Calvin was now twelve years of age." His body dry and attenuated, he already exhibited a green and vigorous intellect, prompt at repartee, bold in attack; a great faster, whether he did this to arrest the fumes of that megrin which continually-beseiged him, or to have the mind more unembarrassed for writing, studying, and for the amelioration of his memory. He spoke little with serious purpose, and words which told; he was never with company, but always retired."

The task of the Noyon professor was completed, and Calvin set out for Paris, at that time, the great rendezvous of choice spirits from the provinces. The chairs of professors were there filled with men, who enjoyed a European reputation. Humanists, poets, literati, artists, theologians, all had there congregated under the patronage of Francois Ist., whose court was the common asylum of all the glories of the age. The theses of Luther had already been discussed before the Sorbonne, and smitten by its censures. But among the learned, their perverse principles became the fertile cause of controversy, dispute, doubt & incredulity. Amid the contests of proud science, amid the disputations of unsound, sceptical or incredulous theologians, amid religious factions of every colour and shade, the young student from Noyon was thrown, in order to qualify himself for his future occupations. He took up his abode with a locksmith, his uncle Richard Calvin, who resided near the church St. Germain l'Auxerrois. It seems that Richard was an honest labourer, who said his prayers, and went in the morning to assist at the parochial mass. Calvin, only fourteen years of age, had already been shaken in his faith by some of Luther's works, and consequently could laugh at the pious practices of the uncle, who was feeding and lodging him at his own cost and expense. However, with the locksmith had an easy

and tranquil conscience. The young scholar was filled with doubt, disquietude, and anxiety. During the week, he went daily to the Colloge de la Marche, and on Sundays and festivals, might be found at the dinner table of some great lord, friend of the noble Mommor family, or walking in the gardens of the gymnasium, with the youthful companions of his studies:

At the Colloge de la Marche, Calvin assisted at the lessons given by Mathurin Cordier, a man "who made the Latin writers of ancient Rome his friends and gods," but also one fond of novelty and change. "Having introduced a salutary disorder into the science of instruction, he desired to treat the catechism as a rudiment." The new movement in Germany had seduced his imagination, and he believed that the language of Homer and of Virgil, "was marvellously well understood by the propagators of doctrines, which had their birth yesterday." Though great lights had already illumined the court of Leo X. and learned men throughout Italy, France, and Germany, were illustrating the sciences, the arts and literature, and giving a benign impulse to social progress, Cordier disregarded their efforts and success, which he would not recognize, but obstinately predicted a future awakening up of the human intellect.

"But already Italy could boast of a Michanel, an annalist after the manner of Tacitus; an Ariosto, a poet like Homer; a Guichardin, often as glowing as Sallust; a Sanneza, whom Plato would not have had the fortitude to banish from his republic; a Michael Angelo, Raphael, Benvenuto Cellini. A beautiful heaven of poets, painters, sculptors, historians, jurists, and orators, which hourly opened on the view, and whence descended some divinity, which, under the name of Alciati, fixed its seat at Bourges, to teach the science of law, or at Paris under that of Alessandro, to spread the knowledge of the Greeks."

Calvin studied dialectics under a different professor, who in nothing resembled Cordier. He was a Spaniard, and a devoted admirer of Aristotle and his syllogisms. Beza informs us that Calvin made rapid progress in this art, and no doubt Aristotle must have greatly pleased him, considering the dispositions and character of his mind. "Luther despised syllogisms, and left them behind him "as Abraham did his ass;" but the scholar of Noyon had a cold imagination, and, while unfitted to appreciate the poetic reveries of a Plato, would no doubt delight in the mazes of dry argument and logic.

It was at this epoch, that Calvin first saw and knew Farel, his much esteemed friend and fellow preacher.

"This puritan of reform, would have wished to establish the reign of God, by fire and sword, and in vain did Ecolampadius try to tinge his lips with honey, "a lying seditious virulent soul," as described by Erasmus, who must have known him. Farel a native of Gap, and son of a notary named Fareau, came to Bale."

Lamp of the house of God, had welcomed and embraced him as brother." After parading his vagabond proselytism through Switzerland, he came to Bale and demanded a discussion."

Louis Berus a renowned theologian of the University, opposed him. The points of discussion were put up at the doors of the University. The general vicar, rector of the University, forbid persons to be present at the dispute, which caused the Senate to issue orders to all theologians, curates and scholars, to attend the religious tournament, under penalty of losing the right, to have their grain ground at the mills, or purchase food at the markets.

"Therefore every denizen of the theological world, who dreaded starvation, was at his post on the 15th of February. Farel sustained his *Theses*, insulted, calumniated, raged, and was compelled to leave the city which he cursed in his anger."

On the 15th of May, 1521, Calvin before leaving Noyon, had purchased the prebend of the Chapel of "our Lady" of Gesine, with money given him by his noble benefactors. In 1527, at the age of nineteen, he was invested with the Church of Martville, being only tonsured. On the authority of Beza and Bayle, it seems that Calvin never received any order in the church, and only belonged to the clerical body in virtue of his tonsure. By the influence of his father, the Bishop was induced, a few years later, to give him the parish of Pont l'Eveque, in place of that of Martville. The good Abbe Hangest presented him to this office.

"Now the pupil has grown up, he is a man, and dreams not of blessing the hand which secures him a livelihood. He has no other joy than that of a proud child who has been made curate of a parish; by one only thesis. Search his books and letters, and you will not find a single word of affection or gratitude, for this new benefit of the Mommor family! Cold heart, which has no memory except for injuries! Oh! how much, as regards character, do we prefer Luther to Calvin! With the Saxon monk, every thing is a passion, even gratitude itself. In the midst of his triumphs, calculated to intoxicate a youthful head, he has sweet recollections for Cora, who gave him the first alms. The image of this holy woman, which so often interposes between the Pope and the Doctor, has for me a certain charm, which seems to soften the outbreaks of the reformer. Florimond de Remond was right: "Calvin, after having lived at the expense of the Crucifix, forgot who had nourished and reared him."

"He went back to Noyon and sometimes preached at Pont l'Eveque. He tells us nothing in his letters of his adieus to his College companions, to his teacher Cordier, or to his uncle the locksmith. Here Luther would have found a scene of tenderness to describe, and the monk of Wittenberg would not have forgotten it."

THE UNIVERSITIES.

In the second chapter of his work, Mr. Audin gives an interesting *coup-d'ail* of the Universities of the sixteenth century. The students of these great schools of

learning, "constituted a society governed at the same time by canon laws, civil jurisprudence and local customs. Collected from different parts of France, they brought with them to the cities to which they came for purposes of study, manners, a language, garments whose form could not promptly be effaced. The student of that epoch bears some resemblance with the scholar of the 19th century: both careless, fond of noise, quarrelsome; good hearts, but bad heads. Religious and political opposition, which were not able to find organs in books and journals, took refuge in the school. The student then, was the living ballad, censuring throne and altar, monarch, and pontiff. In Saxony, when Luther's voice was heard at Wittenberg, the students ran to the College, brought away their books, and burnt them before the church of All Saints, thinking themselves forever liberated from the yoke of their professors. In France, with puerile joy, they received the first Lutheran missionaries who preached the abolition of abstinence on Fridays and Saturdays. The picture of these scholastic franchises, has been drawn by Peter Rebuffy, a professor at Montpellier at the time Calvin went to study at Paris."

It would be interesting to accompany the author in his examen of the chartered privileges of the society of students, as a study of morals, but our purpose will only allow an imperfect glance at this part of his work, that we may more closely follow the steps of the scholar of Noyon. Students at Paris generally congregated at the *Quartier Latin*, near to the college which they attended. On declaring his title of student, the proprietary was bound to hire him lodgings, and if need be, he could force the expulsion of an old renter of the rooms.

On giving sufficient security, he could force his habitual *jockey* to hire him a horse.

If the master asked too much for his rooms, the student could call in the college rector to fix the price.

When must the scholar pay his lease? If there was an agreement, the articles held good and obliged; in default of agreement custom was the rule.

If the owner needed his whole house, he could not eject the student, because the time of the student was too precious to be lost in searching for lodgings; always difficult to be found in cities where there were universities.

If the hammer of some son of Vulcan, or the song of some toiling labourer, disturbed the student in his literary labours, he had the privilege to have the nuisance abated.

In the commencement of the scholastic year, the father of the scholar was obliged to pay the price of one month's board, and, in case of the father's death, the son could not be bound to restore the books he had used, nor to allow the price to be made a burden upon his inheritance.

If, during his studies, he contracted debts in the interest of science, he was not bound, on his father's death, to pay the same from his part of the succession, but