



The Life of Giordano Bruno

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Nola, a city founded by the Chalcidian Greeks, at a short distance from Naples and from Vesuvius, was the birth-place of Giordano Bruno. It is described by David Levi as a city which from ancient times had always been consecrated to science and letters. From the time of the Romans to that of the Barbarians and of the Middle Ages, Nola was conspicuous for culture and refinement, and its inhabitants were in all times remarkable for their courteous manners, for valour, and for keenness of perception. They were, moreover, distinguished by their love for and study of philosophy; so that this city was ever a favourite dwelling-place for the choice spirits of the Renaissance. It may also be asserted that Nola was the only city of Magna Græcia which, in spite of the persecutions of Pagan emperors and Christian princes and clergy, always preserved the philosophical traditions of the Pythagoreans, and never was the sacred fire on the altar of Vesta suffered to become entirely extinct.

Such was the intellectual and moral atmosphere in which Giordano Bruno passed his childhood. His paternal home was situated at the foot of Mount Cicada, celebrated for its fruitful soil. From early youth his pleasure was to pass the night out on the mountain, now watching the stars, now contemplating the arid, desolate sides of Vesuvius. He tells how, in recalling those days—the only peaceful ones of his life—he used to think, as he looked up at the infinite expanse of heaven and the confines of the horizon, with the towering volcano, that this must be the ultimate end of the earth, and it appeared as if neither tree nor grass refreshed the dreary space which stretched out to the foot of the bare smoky mountain. When, grown older, he came nearer to it, and saw the mountain so different from what it had appeared, and the intervening space that, seen from afar, had looked so bare and sterile, all covered with fruit-trees and enriched with vineyards, he began to see how illusory the judgment of the senses may be; and the first doubt was planted in his young soul as he perceived that, while the mind may grasp Nature in her grandeur and majesty, the work of the sage must be to examine her in detail, and penetrate to the cause of things. When he appeared before the tribunal of the Holy Office at Venice, being asked to declare who and what he was, he said: “My name is Giordano, of the family of Bruno, of the city of Nola, twelve miles from Naples. There was I born and brought up. My profession has been and is that of letters, and of all the sciences. My father’s name was Giovanni, and my mother was Francesca Savolini; and my father was a soldier. He is dead, and also mother. I am forty-four years old, having been born in 1548.” He always regarded Nola with patriotic pride, and he received his first instruction in his father’s house and in the public schools. Of a sad disposition, and gifted with a most lively imagination, he was from his earliest years given to meditation and to poetry. The, early years of Bruno’s life were times of agitation and misfortune, and not propitious to study. The, Neapolitan provinces were disturbed by constant earthquakes, and devastated by pestilence and famine. The Turks fought, and ravaged the country, and made slaves of the inhabitants; the neighbouring provinces were still more harassed by hordes of bandits and outlaws, who invested Calabria, led by a terrible chief called Marcone. The Inquisition stood prepared to

light its fires and slaughter the heretic. The Waldensians, who had lately been driven out of Piedmont, and had sought a shelter in the Calabrian territory were hunted down and given over to the executioner.

The convent was the only refuge from violence, and Bruno, either from religious enthusiasm, or in order to be able to devote himself to study, became a friar at the age of fifteen. There, in the quiet cloister of the convent of St. Dominic at Naples, his mind was nourished and his intellect developed; the cloistral and monkish education failed to enslave his: thought, and he emerged from this tutelage the boldest and least fettered of philosophers. Everything about this church and this convent, famous as having been the abode of Thomas Aquinas, was calculated to fire the enthusiasm of Bruno's soul; the leisure and quiet, far from inducing habits of indolence, or the sterile practices of asceticism, were stimulants to austere study, and to the fervour of mystical speculations. Here he passed nearly thirteen years of early manhood, until his intellect strengthened by study he began to long for independence of thought, and becoming, as he said himself, solicitous about the food of the soul and the culture of the mind, he found it irksome to go through automatically the daily vulgar routine of the convent; the pure flame of an elevated religious feeling being kindled in his soul, he tried to evade the vain exercises of the monks, the puerile gymnastics, and the adoration of so-called relics. His character was frank and open, and he was unable to hide his convictions; he put some of his doubts before his companions, and these hastened to refer them to the superiors; and thus was material found to institute a cause against him. It became known that he had praised the methods used by the Arians or Unitarians in expounding their doctrines, adding that they refer all things to the ultimate cause, which is the Father: this, with other heretical propositions, being brought to the notice of the Holy Office, Bruno found himself in the position of being first observed and then threatened. He was warned of the danger that hung over him by some friends, and decided to quit Naples. He fled from the convent, and took the road to Rome, and was there received in the monastery of the Minerva. A few days after his arrival in Rome he learned that instructions for his arrest had been forwarded from Naples; he tarried not, but got away secretly, throwing aside the monk's habiliments by the way. He wandered for some days about the Roman Campagna, his destitute condition proving a safeguard against the bands of brigands that infested those lands, until, arriving near Civita Vecchia, he was taken on board a Genoese vessel, and carried to the Ligurian port, where he hoped to find a refuge from his enemies; but the city of Genova was devastated by pestilence and civil war, and after a sojourn of a few days he pursued once more the road of exile. Seeking for a place wherein he might settle for a short time and hide from his pursuers, he stayed his steps at Noli, situated at a short distance from Savona, on the Riviera: this town, nestled in a little bay surrounded by high hills crowned by feudal castles and towers, was only accessible on the shore side, and offered a grateful retreat to our philosopher. At Noli, Bruno, obtained permission of the magistracy to teach grammar to children, and thus secured the means of subsistence by the small remuneration he received; but this modest employment did not occupy him sufficiently, and he gathered round him a few gentlemen of the district, to whom he taught the science of the Sphere. Bruno also wrote a book upon the Sphere, which was lost. He expounded the system of Copernicus, and talked to his pupils with enthusiasm about the movement of the earth and of the plurality of worlds.

As in that same Liguria Columbus first divined another hemisphere outside the Pillars of Hercules, so Bruno discovered to those astonished minds the, myriads of worlds which fill the immensity of space. Columbus was derided and banished by his fellow-citizens, and the fate of our philosopher was similar to his. In the humble schoolmaster who taught grammar to the children, the bishop, the clergy, and the nobles, who listened eagerly to his lectures on the Sphere, began to suspect the heretic and the innovator. After five months it behoved him to leave Noli; he took the road to Savona, crossed the Apennines, and arrived at Turin. In Turin at that time reigned the great Duke Emanuele Filiberto, a man of strong

character--one of those men who know how to found a dynasty and to fix the destiny of a people; at that time, when Central and Southern Italy were languishing under home and foreign tyranny, he laid the foundations of the future Italy.

He was warrior, artist, mechanic, and scholar. Intrepid on the field of battle, he would retire from deeds of arms to the silence of his study, and cause the works of Aristotle to be read to him; he spoke all the European languages; he worked at artillery, at models of fortresses, and at the smith's craft; he brought together around him, from all sides of Italy, artisans and scientists to promote industry, commerce, and science; he gathered together in Piedmont the most excellent compositors of Italy, and sanctioned a printer's company.

Bruno, attracted to Turin by the favour that was shown to letters and philosophy, hoped to get occupation as press reader; but it was precisely at that time that the Duke, instigated by France, was combating, with every kind of weapon, the Waldensian and Huguenot heresies, and had invited the Jesuits to Turin, offering them a substantial subsidy; so that on Bruno's arrival he found the place he had hoped for, as teacher in the, university, occupied by his enemies, and he therefore moved on with little delay, and embarked for Venice.

Berti, in his *Life of Bruno*, remarks that when the latter sought refuge in Turin, Torquato Tasso, also driven by adverse fortune, arrived in the same place, and he notes the affinity between them--both so great, both subject to every species of misfortune and persecution in life, and destined to immortal honours after their death: the light of genius burned in them both, the fire of enthusiasm flamed in each alike, and on the forehead of each one was set the sign of sorrow and of pain.

Both Bruno and Tasso entered the cloisters as boys: the one joined the Dominicans, the other the Jesuits; and in the souls of both might be discerned the impress of the Order to which they belonged. Both went forth from their native place longing to find a broader field of action. and greater scope for their intellectual powers. The one left Naples carrying in his heart the Pagan and Christian traditions of the noble enterprises and the saintly heroism of Olympus and of Calvary, of Homer and the Fathers, of Plato and St. Ignatius; the other was filled with the, philosophical thought of the primitive, Italian and Pythagorean epochs, fecundated by his own conceptions and by the new age; philosopher and apostle of an idea, Bruno consecrated his life to the development of it in his writings and to the propagation of his principles in Europe by the fire of enthusiasm. The one surprised the world with the melody of his songs; being, as Dante says, the "dolce sirena che i marinari in mezzo al mare smaga," he lulled the anguish that lacerated Italy, and gilded the chains which bound her; the other tried to shake her; to recall her to life with the vigour of thought, with the force of reason, with the sacrifice of himself. The songs of Tasso were heard and sung from one end of Italy to the other, and the poet dwelt in palaces and received the caress and smile of princes; while Bruno, discoursing in the name of reason and of science, was rejected, persecuted, and scourged, and only after three centuries of ingratitude, of calumny, and of forgetfulness, does his country show signs of appreciating him and of doing justice to his memory. In Tasso the poet predominates over the philosopher, in Bruno the philosopher predominates over and eclipses the poet. The first sacrifices thought to form; the second is careful only of the idea. Again, both are full of a conception of the. Divine, but the God that the dying Tasso confessed is a god that is expected and comes not; while the god that Bruno proclaims he already finds within himself. Tasso died in his bed in the cloister, uneasy as on a bed of thorns; Bruno, amidst the flames, stands out as on a pedestal, and dies serene and calm. We must now follow our fugitive to Venice.

At the time Giordano Bruno arrived in Venice that city was the, most important typographical centre of Europe; the commerce in books extended through the Levant, Germany, and France, and the. philosopher hoped that here he might find some means of subsistence. The plague at that time was devastating Venice, and in less than one year had claimed forty-two thousand victims; but Bruno felt no fear, and he took a lodging in that part of Venice called the Frezzeria, and was soon busy preparing for the press a work

called "Segni del Tempo," hoping that the sale of it would bring a little money for daily needs. This work was lost, as were all those which he published in Italy, and which it was to the interest of Rome to destroy. Disappointed at not finding work to do in Venice, he next went to Padua, which was the intellectual centre of Europe, as Venice was the, centre of printing and publishing; the most celebrated professors of that epoch were to be found in the University of Padua, but at the time of Bruno's sojourn there, Padua, like, Venice, was ravaged by the plague; the university was closed, and the printing-house was not in operation. He remained there only a few days, lodging with some monks of the Order of St. Dominic, who, he relates, "persuaded me to wear the dress again, even though I would not profess the religion it implied, because they said it would aid me in my wayfaring to be thus attired; and so I got a white cloth robe, and I put on the hood which I had preserved when I left Rome." Thus habited he wandered for several months about the cities of Venetia and Lombardy; and although he contrived for a time to evade his persecutors, he finally decided to leave Italy, as it was repugnant to his disposition to live in forced dissimulation, and he felt that he could do no good either for himself or for his country, which was then overrun with Spaniards and scourged by petty tyrants; and with the lower orders sunk in ignorance, and the upper classes illiterate, uncultivated, and corrupt, the mission of Giordano Bruno was impossible. "Altiore, Peto" was Bruno's motto, and to realize it he had gone forth with the pilgrim's staff in his hand, sometimes covered with the cowl of the monk, at others wearing the simple habit of a schoolmaster, or, again, clothed with the doublet of the mechanic he had found no resting-place—nowhere to lay his head, no one who could understand him, but always many ready to denounce him. He turned his back at last on his country, crossed the Alps on foot, and directed his steps towards Switzerland. He visited the universities in different towns of Switzerland, France, and Germany, and wherever he went he left behind him traces of his visit in some hurried writings. The only work of the Nolan, written in Italy, which has survived is "Il Candelajo," which was published in Paris. Levi, in "Eroici Furori" the first part of which I have translated, and to note his remarks upon the style of Bruno, which presents many difficulties to the translator on account of its formlessness....

I believe that no translation of Giordano Bruno's works has ever been brought out in English, or, at any rate, no translation of the "Eroici Furori," and therefore I have had no help from previous renderings. I have, for the most part, followed the text as closely as possible, especially in the sonnets, which are frequently rendered line for line. Form is lacking in the original, and would, owing to the unusual and often fantastic clothing of the ideas, be difficult to apply in the translation. He seems to have written down his grand ideas hurriedly, and, as Levi says, probably intended to retouch the work before printing.

Following the order of Levi's Life of Bruno, we next find the fugitive at Geneva. He was hardly thirty-one, years old when he quitted his country and crossed the Alps, and his first stopping-place, was Chambery, where he was received in a convent of the Order of Predicatori; he proposed going on to Lyons, but being told by an Italian priest, whom he met there, that he was not likely to find countenance or support, either in the place he was in or in any other place, however far he might travel, he changed his course and made for Geneva.

The name of Giordano Bruno was not unknown to the Italian colony who had fled from papal persecution to this stronghold of religious reform. He went to lodge at an inn, and soon received visits from the Marchese di Vico Napoletano, Pietro Martire Veimigli, and other refugees, who welcomed him with affection, inquiring whether he intended to embrace the religion of Calvin, to which Bruno replied that he did not intend to make profession of that religion, as he did not know of what kind it was, and he only desired to live in Geneva in freedom. He was then advised to doff the Dominican habit, which he still wore; this he was quite willing to do, only he had no money to buy other clothing, and was forced to have some made of the cloth of his monkish robes, and his new friends

presented him with a sword and a hat; they also procured some work for him in correcting press errors.

The term of Bruno's sojourn in Geneva seems doubtful, and the precise nature of his employment when there is also uncertain; but his independent spirit brought him into dispute with the rigid Calvinists of that city, who preached and exacted a blind faith, absolute and compulsory. Bruno could not accept any of the existing positive religions; he professed the cult of philosophy and science, nor was his character of that mould that would have enabled him to hide his principles. It was made known to him that he must either adopt Calvinism or leave Geneva: he declined the former, and had no choice as to the latter; poor he had entered Geneva, and poor he left it, and now turned his steps towards France.

He reached Lyons, which was also at that time a city of refuge against religious persecutions, and he addressed himself to his compatriots, begging for work from the publishers, Aldo and Grifi; but not succeeding in gaining enough to enable him to subsist, after a few days he left, and went on his way to Toulouse, where there was a famous university; and having made acquaintance with several men of intellect, Bruno was invited to lecture on the Sphere, which he did, with various other subjects, for six months, when the chair of Philosophy becoming vacant, he took the degree of Doctor, and competed for it; and he continued for two years in that place, teaching the philosophy of Aristotle and of others. He took for the text of his lectures the treatise of Aristotle, "De Anima," and this gave him the opportunity of introducing and discussing the deepest questions—upon the Origin and Destiny of Humanity; The Soul, is it Matter or Spirit? Potentiality or Reality? Individual or Universal? Mortal or Eternal? Is Man alone gifted with Soul, or are all beings equally so? Bruno's system was in his mind complete and mature; he taught that everything in Nature has a soul, one universal mind, penetrates and moves all things; the world itself is a *sacrum animal*. Nothing is lost, but all transmutes and becomes. This vast field afforded him scope for teaching his doctrines upon the world, on the movement of the earth, and on the universal soul. The novelty and boldness of his opinions roused the animosity of the clergy against him, and after living two years and six months at Toulouse, he felt it wise to retire, and leaving the capital of the, Languedoc, he set his face towards Paris.

The two books—the fruit of his lectures—which he published in Toulouse, "De Anima" and "De Clavis Magis," were lost.

The title, of Doctor, or as he said himself, "Maestro delle Arti," which Bruno had obtained at Toulouse, gave him the faculty of teaching publicly in Paris, and he says "I went to Paris, where I set myself to read a most unusual lecture, in order to make myself known and to attract attention." He gave thirty lectures on the thirty Divine attributes, dividing and distributing them according to the method of St. Thomas Aquinas: these lectures excited much attention amongst the scholars of the Sorbonne, who went in crowds to hear him; and he introduced, as usual, his own ideas while apparently teaching the doctrines of St. Thomas. His extraordinary memory and his eloquence caused great astonishment; and the fame of Bruno reached the ears of King Henry III., who sent for him to the Court, and being filled with admiration of his learning, he offered him a substantial subsidy.

During his stay at Paris, although he was much at Court, he spent many hours in his study, writing the works that he afterwards published.

Philosophical questions were discussed at the Sorbonne with much freedom: Bruno showed himself no partisan of either the Platonic or the Peripatetic school; he was not exclusive either in philosophy or in religion; he did not favour the Huguenot faction more than the Catholic league; and precisely by reason of this independent attitude, which kept him free of the shackles of the sects, did he obtain the faculty of lecturing at the Sorbonne. Nor can we ascribe this aloofness to religious indifference, but to the fact that he sought for higher things and longed for nobler ones. The humiliating spectacle which the positive

religions, both Catholic and Reformed, presented at that time--the hatreds, the civil wars, the assassinations which they instigated--had disgusted men of noble mould, and had turned them against these so-called religions; so that in Naples, in Tuscany, in Venice, in Switzerland, France, and England, there were to be found societies of philosophers, of free-thinkers, and politicians, who repudiated every positive religion and professed a pure Theism.

In the "Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante" he declares that he cannot ally himself either to the Catholic or the Lutheran Church, because he professes a more pure and complete faith than these--to wit, the love of humanity and the love of wisdom; and Mocenigo, the disciple who ultimately betrayed and sold him to the Holy Office, declares in his deposition that Bruno sought to make himself the author of a new religion under the name of "Philosophy." He was not a man to conceal his ideas, and in the fervour of his improvisation he no doubt revealed what he was; some tumult resulted from this free speaking of Bruno's, and he was forced to discontinue his lectures at the Sorbonne.

Towards the end of the year 1583 the King became enthralled by religious enthusiasm, and nothing was talked of in Paris but the conversion of King Henry. This fact changed the aspect of affairs as far as Bruno was concerned; he judged it prudent to leave Paris, and he travelled to England.

The principal works published by Bruno during his stay in Paris are "Il Candelajo" and "Umbrae Idearum." The former, says Levi, is a work of criticism and of demolition; in this comedy he sets in groups the principal types of hypocrisy, stupidity, and rascality, and exhibiting them in their true colours, he lashes them with ridicule. In the "Umbrae Idearum" he initiates the work of reconstruction, giving colour to his thought and sketching his idea. The philosophy of Bruno is based upon that of Pythagoras, whose system penetrates the social and intellectual history of Italy, both ancient and modern. The method of Pythagoras is not confined, as most philosophies are, to pure metaphysical speculations, but connects these with scientific observations and social practice. Bruno having resuscitated these doctrines, stamps them with a wider scope, giving them a more positive direction; and he may with propriety be called the second Pythagoras. The primal idea of Pythagoras, which Bruno worked out to a more distinct development is this: numbers are the beginning of things; in other words numbers are the cause of the existence of material things; they are not final, but are always changing position and attributes; they are variable and relative. Beyond and above this mutability there must be the Immutable, the All, the One.

The Infinite must be one, as one is the absolute number; in the original One is contained all the numbers; in the One is contained all the elements of the Universe.

This abstract doctrine required to be elucidated and fixed. From a hypothesis to concentrate and reduce it to a reality was the great work of Bruno.

One is the perfect number; it is the primitive monad. As from the One proceeds the infinite, series of numbers which again withdraw and are resolved into the One; so from Substance, which is one, proceed the myriads of worlds; from the worlds proceed myriads of living creatures; and from the union of one with the diverse is generated the Universe. Hence the progression from ascent to descent, from spirit to that which we call matter; from the cause to the origin, and the process of metaphysics, which, from the finite world of sense rises to the intelligent, passing through the intermediate numbers of infinite substance to active being and cosmic reason.

From the absolute One, the sun of the sensible and intellectual world, millions of stars and suns are produced or developed. Each sun is the centre of as many worlds which are distributed in as many distinct series in an infinite number of concentric and systems. Each system is attracted, repelled, and moved by an infinite, internal passion, or attraction; each turns round its own centre, and moves in a spiral towards the centre of the whole, towards which centre they all tend with infinite passionate ardour. For in this centre, resides the sun of suns, the unity of unities, the temple, the altar of the universe, the sacred fire of Vesta,

the vital principle of the universe.

That which occurs in the world off stars is reflected in the telluric world; everything has its centre, towards which it is attracted with fervour. All is thought, passion, and aspiration.

From this unity, which governs variety, from the movement of every world around its sun, of every sun around its centre sun--the sun of suns—which informs all with the rays of the spirit, with the light of thought—is generated that perfect harmony of colours, sounds, forms, which strike the sight and captivate and enthrall the intellect. That which in the heavens is harmony becomes, in the individual, morality, and in companies of human beings, law. That which is light in the spheres becomes intelligence and science in the world of the spirit and in humanity. We must study this harmony that rules the celestial worlds in order to deduce the laws which should govern civil bodies.

In the science of numbers dwells harmony, and therefore it behoves us to identify ourselves with this harmony, because from it is derived the harmonic law which draws men together into companies. Through the revolution of the worlds through space around their suns, from their order, their constancy and their measure, the mind comprehends the progress and conditions of men, and their duties towards each other. The Bible, the sacred book of man, is in the heavens; there does man find written the word of God.

Human souls are lights, distinct from the universal soul, which is diffused over all and penetrates everything. A purifying process guides them from one existence to another, from one form to another, from one world to another. The life of man is more than an experience or trial; it is an effort, a struggle to reproduce and represent upon earth some of that goodness, beauty, and truth which are diffused over the universe and constitute its harmony.

Long, slow, and full of opposition is this educational process of the soul. As the terraqueous globe becomes formed, changed, and perfected, little by little, through the cataclysms and convulsions which, by means of fire, flood, earthquake, and irruptions, transform the earth, so it is with humanity. Through struggle is man educated, fortified, and raised.

In the midst of social cataclysms and revolutions humanity has one guiding star, a beacon which shows its light above the storms and tempests, a mystical thread running through the labyrinth of history--namely, the religion of philosophy and of thought. The vulgar creeds would not, and have not dared to reveal the Truth in its purity and essence. They covered it with veils with allegories, with myths and mysteries, which they called sacred; they enshrouded thought with a double veil, and called it Revelation. Humanity, deceived by a seductive form, adored the veil, but did not lift itself up to the idea behind it; it saw the shadow, not the light.

But we must return to our wandering hero.

Bruno was about thirty-six years old when he left Paris and went to England. He was invited to visit the University of Oxford, and opened his lectures there with two subjects which, apparently diverse, are in reality intimately connected with each other—namely, on the Quadruple Sphere and on the Immortality of the Soul. Speaking of the immortality of the soul, he maintained that nothing in the universe is lost, everything changes and is transformed; therefore, soul and body, spirit and matter, are equally immortal. The body dissolves, and is transformed; the soul transmigrates, and, drawing round itself atom to atom, it reconstructs for itself a new body. The spirit that animates and moves all things is one; everything differentiates according to the different forms and bodies in which it operates. Hence, of animate things some are inferior by reason of the meanness of the organ in which they operate; others are, superior through the richness of the same. Thus we see that Bruno anticipates the doctrine, proclaimed later by Goethe and by Darwin, of the transformation of species and of the organic unity of the animal world; and this alternation from segregation to aggregation, which we call death and life, is no other than mutation of form.

After having criticised and scourged the religions of chimera, of ignorance, and hypocrisy, in "Lo Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante" and in "L'Asino Cillenico," the author, in "Gli Eroici Furori," lays down the basis for the religion of thought and of science. In place of the so-called Christian perfections (resignation, devotion, and ignorance), Bruno would put intelligence and the progress of the intellect in the world of physics, metaphysics, and morals; the true aim being illumination, the true morality the practice of justice, the true redemption the liberation of the soul from error, its elevation and union with God upon the wings of thought. This idea is developed in the work in question, which is dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney. After treating of the infinite universe, and contemplating the innumerable worlds in other works, he comes, in "Gli Eroici Furori," to the consideration of virtue in the individual, and demonstrates the potency of the human faculties. After the Cosmos, the Microcosm; after the infinitely great, the infinitely small. The body is in the soul, the soul is in the mind, the mind is in God. The life of the soul is the true life of the man. Of all his various faculties, that which rules all, that which exalts our nature, is Thought. By means of it we rise to the contemplation of the universe, and becoming in our turn creators, we raise the edifice of science; through the intellect the affections become purified, the will becomes strengthened. True liberty is acquired, and will and action becoming one through thought, we become heroes.

This education of the soul, or rather this elevation and glory of thought, which draws with it the will and the affections, not by means of blind faith or supernatural grace, not through an irrational and mystical impulse, but by the strength of a reformed intellect and by a palpable and well-considered enthusiasm, which science and the contemplation of Nature alone can give, this is the keynote of the poem. It is composed of two parts, each of which is divided into five dialogues: the first part, which may be called psychological, shows, by means of various figures and symbols drawn from Nature, how the divine light is always present to us, is inherent in man; it presents itself to the senses and to the comprehension: man constantly rejects and ignores it; sometimes the soul strives to rise up to it, and the poet describes the struggle with the opposing affections which are involved in this effort, and shows how at last the mail of intelligence overcomes these contending powers and fatal impulses which conflict within us, and by virtue of harmony and the fusion of the opposites the intellect becomes one with the affections, and man realizes the good and rises to the knowledge of the true. All conflicting desires being at last united, they become fixed upon one object, one great intent--the love of the Divine, which is the highest truth and the highest good. In "Gli Eroici Furori" we see Bruno as a man, as a philosopher, and as a believer: here he reveals himself as the hero of thought. Even as Christ was the hero of faith, and sacrificed himself for it, so Bruno declares himself ready to sacrifice himself for science. It is also a literary, a philosophical, and a religious work; form, however, is sacrificed to the idea--so absorbed is the author in the idea that he often ignores form altogether. An exile wandering from place to place, he wrote hurriedly and seldom or ever had he the opportunity of revising what he had written down. His mind in the impulsiveness of its improvisation was like the volcano of his native soil, which, rent by subterranean flames, sends forth from its vortices of fire, at the same time smoke, ashes, turbid floods, stones, and lava. He contemplates the soul, and seeks to understand its language; he is a physiologist and a naturalist, merged in the mystic and the enlightened devotee.

Bruno might have made a fixed home for himself in England, as so many of his compatriots had done, and have continued to enjoy the society of such men as Sir Philip Sydney, Fulke Greville, and, perchance, also of Shakespeare himself, who was in London about that time; but his self-imposed mission allowed him no rest; he must go forth, and carry his doctrines to the world, and forget the pleasures of friendship and the ties of comfort in the larger love of humanity; his work was to awaken souls out of their lethargy, to inspire them with the love of the highest good and of truth; to teach that God is to be

found in the study of Nature, that the laws of the visible world will explain those of the invisible, the union of science and humanity with Nature and with God.

Bruno returned to Paris in 1585, being at that time tutor in the family of Manvissier, who had been recalled from England by his Sovereign. During Bruno's second sojourn in Paris efforts were made by Mendoza, the Spanish and others, to induce him to return to his allegiance to the Church, and to be reconciled to the Pope; but Bruno, declined these overtures, and soon after left Paris for Germany, where he arrived on foot his only burden being a few books.

He visited Marburg and Wurtemberg, remaining in the latter place two years, earning his bread by teaching.

Prague and Frankfort were next visited; ever the same courage and boldness characterized his teaching and ever the same scanty welcome was accorded to it, although in every city and university crowds of the intelligent listened to his lectures; but the Church never lost sight of Bruno, he was always under surveillance, and few dared to show themselves openly his friends. Absorbed in his studies and intent upon his work, writing with feverish haste, he observed nothing of the invisible net which his enemies kept spread about him, and while his slanderers were busy in doing him injury he was occupied in teaching the mnemonic art, and explaining his system of philosophy to the young Lutherans who attended his lectures; in settling the basis of a new and rational religion, and in writing Latin verses; using ever greater diligence with his work, almost as if he felt that, the time was drawing near in which he would be no longer at liberty to work and teach.

It was during the early part of the pontificate of Gregory XIV. that Bruno received letters from Mocenigo in Venice, urging him to return to Italy, and to go and stay with him in Venice, and instruct him in the secrets of science. Bruno was beginning to tire of this perpetually wandering life, and after several letters from Mocenigo, full of fine professions of friendship and protection, Bruno, longing to see his country again, turned his face towards Venice.

In those days men of superior intellect were often considered to be magicians or sorcerers; Mocenigo, after enticing Bruno to Venice, insisted upon his teaching him "the secret of memory and other things that he knew."

The philosopher with untiring patience tried to instil into this dull head the principles of logic, the elements of mathematics, and the rudiments of the mnemonic art; but the pupil hated study, and had no faculty of thought; yet he insisted that Bruno should make science clearly known to him! But this was probably only to initiate a quarrel with Bruno, whom he intended afterwards to betray, and deliver into the hands of the Church.

The Holy Office would have laid hands on Bruno immediately on his arrival in Italy, but being assured by Mocenigo that he could not escape, they left him a certain liberty, so that he might more surely compromise himself, while his enemies were busy collecting evidence against him. When at last his eyes became opened to what was going on about him, and he could no longer ignore the peril of his position, it was too late; Bruno could not get away, and was told by Mocenigo that if he stayed not by his own will and pleasure, he would be compelled to remain where he was. Bruno, however, made his preparations for departure, and sent his things on to Frankfort, intending to leave the next day himself; but in the morning, while he was still in bed, Mocenigo entered the chamber, pretending that he wished to speak with him; then calling his servant Bartolo and five or six gondoliers, who waited without, they forced Bruno to rise, and conducted him to a garret, and locked him in. There he passed the first day of that imprisonment which was to last for eight years. The next day he went over the lagoon in a gondola, in the company of his Jailers, who took him to the prison of the Holy Office, and left him there. Levi devotes many pages to the accusations brought against Giordano Bruno by the Inquisitors, and the depositions and denunciations. made against him by his enemies. The Court was opened without

delay, and most of the provinces of Italy were represented by their delegates in the early part of the trial; Bruno himself, being interrogated, gave an account in detail of his life, of his wanderings, of his occupations and works: serene and dignified before this terrible tribunal, he expounded his doctrine, its principles, and logical consequences. He spoke of the universe, of the infinite, worlds in infinite space, of the divinity in all things, of the unity of all things, the dependence and inter-dependence of all things, and of the existence of God in all. After nine months' imprisonment in Venice, towards the end of January 1593, Bruno, in chains, was conveyed from the Bridge of Sighs through the lagoons to Ancona, where he remained incarcerated until the prison of the Roman Inquisition received him. If we look upon "Gli Eroici Furori" as a prophetic poem, we see that his sufferings in the loneliness of his prison--and in the torture-chamber of the Inquisition passed by anticipation before his mind in the book written when he was free and a wanderer in strange lands.

"By what condition, nature, or fell chance,
In living death, dead life I live?"

he writes eight years and more before he ever breathed the stifling air of a dungeon; and again:

"The soul nor yields nor bends to these rough blows,
But bears, exulting, this long martyrdom,
And makes a harmony of these sharp pangs."

Further details of the trial of Giordano Bruno are to be found in Levi's book. It is well known how he received the sentence of death passed upon him, saying: "You, O judges! feel perchance more terror in pronouncing this judgment than I do in hearing it." The day fixed for the burning, which was to take place in the Campo dei Fiori, was the 17th February in the year 1600. Rome was full of pilgrims from all parts, come to celebrate the jubilee of Pope Clement VIII. Bruno was hardly fifty years old at this time; his face was thin and pale, with dark, fiery eyes; the forehead luminous with thought, his body frail and bearing the signs of torture; his hands in chains, his feet bare, he walked with slow steps in the early morning towards the funeral pile. Brightly shone the sun, and the flames leapt upwards and mingled with his ardent rays; Bruno stood in the midst with his arms crossed, his head raised, his eyes open; when all was consumed, a monk took a handful of the ashes and scattered them in the wind. A month later, the Bishop of Sidonia presented himself at the Treasury of the Pope, and demanded two scudi in payment for having degraded Fra Giordano the heretic.

"L'incendio è tal, ch'io m'ardo e non mi sfaccio."

Giordano Bruno. *Heroic Enthusiasts*. Translation and Introduction by L. Williams. London: George Redway, 1887.

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