

we pledge to Leo XIII., the worthy Pontiff, to whose hands Almighty God has committed the helm of Peter's bark amid the tempests of this stormy age, the loyal sympathy and unstinted aid of all his spiritual children in vindicating that perfect liberty which he justly claims as his sacred and inalienable right."

LETTER FROM "JUNIUS."

The year of our Lord 1600 was one of jubilee in the great city of Rome. The papal chair was occupied by Clement the Eighth. The leaders of the proud Roman church were unusually serious. Roman supremacy in western Europe was already subverted. In Italy herself, an intellectual ferment was in progress anything but satisfactory to the advocates of established systems. France was rent by faction and feud, by family jealousies and political intrigues. Spain was humiliated and chastened. She had not yet recovered from her terrible disaster of twelve years ago, when her "Invincible Armada" of 150 ships, 3,000 cannon, and 27,000 men were sacrificed to the god of storms in the English channel. But what was still more alarming, the Copernican system of astronomy was being popularized, and the scholastic philosophy of convents and colleges was being mercilessly assailed. Galileo was now 36 years of age, and was acquiring European renown as a scientist. He had already constructed his thermometer, and his telescope and his pendulum were in embryonic incubation. Several of the Aristotelian dogmas were rudely shattered by his discoveries and inventions. Campanella was now 32 years of age. He, too, with eloquent tongue and vigorous pen, assailed the old beliefs and advocated the new. Numbers of scholars in Italy and elsewhere were breaking away from the old ties. Giordano Bruno was now in prison in Rome, after having made a ten years' tour of Europe, ridiculing Aristotle, Ptolemy and the church, and eulogizing heretics.

Perhaps, it was to render the jubilee year of 1600 more impressive, and more worthy of commemoration, that the dignitaries of the Church resolved to celebrate it with an execution under the decrees of the famed Inquisition. On the morning of February 17, 1600, the people of Rome were in a state of excitement both eager and expectant. The news had gone around that a heretic would that day be burned alive. One, too, who had been a priest, and who spurned the dogmas of transubstantiation and immaculate conception. In one of the public squares the fagot pile was built. Up from its centre towered the dreadful stake. The people well knew what it meant. Old and young, vulgar and refined, rude and gentle, male and female all struggled to catch a glance at the terrible pile and stake. Presently the cry circulated "They are coming!" Yes, they did come—monks, priests and soldiers, and took up their stations around the stake. Among them was the victim,

calm, cool, resolute and determined. He was a man fifty years of age, prepossessing in appearance, intellectual and interesting in countenance. Priests of the Dominican order approached him, addressed him, exhorted him, but to all he turned a deaf ear. His sentence was read to him, but he told the multitude that he received it with more fortitude than his judges pronounced it. He was placed on top of the pile, chained to the stake, while fire was applied beneath. The smoke ascended, next the flames burst out. A monk thrust a crucifix in the victim's face, through the flame, but the victim turned from it in disgust. In a few minutes nothing was visible but a little heap of ashes and cinders.

Reports of this execution did not appear in the daily or weekly papers, for the simple reason there were none. The first newspaper, *The Venice Gazette*, did not appear until 30 years later, 1630. Nevertheless, the question is as anxiously asked, who was the person who suffered this terrible death, and what did he do? Was he a polygamist? Did he believe in a personal God? No, but he said the earth moved, that God was manifest in all the works of nature, and that life was only a struggle preparatory to a brighter and grander existence beyond. He denounced Aristotle and eulogized Copernicus. Transubstantiation he held to be such a self-evident absurdity that beings who believed in it he declared to be devoid of reason and common sense. But did he deserve burning at the stake? The world at the time said yes. Lutheran nor Calvinist, Anglican nor Romanist raised a wail of anguish at this man's fate. For ten years after his death his name was barely mentioned. His name was obliterated from the archives of the Dominican order of monks, to which he once belonged. It was also expunged from college records in other countries than Italy, where he disputed and lectured, and for a time it was in a fair way of sinking into complete oblivion. Later on, an undue importance was attached to him, owing more to the nature of his death than to the worth of his works as a scientist or philosopher. A little book of his entitled "Spaccio" sold in Holland for 300 florins, at one time, and in England for \$150. All Europe was searched for copies of his works, and fabulous prices offered for them. In 1830 his works were collected and published. The general verdict is that he has been overestimated as a scholar and thinker, and that though often elegant and impressive, he is frequently buffoonish and indecent.

To learn something of this man's biography we must betake ourselves to Nola, a little town fifteen miles from Naples, and situated midway between Vesuvius and the sea. This little town itself has a history. The great Hannibal once besieged it. It was after the terrible slaughter of Cannae. Here were born and died Octavius Caesar and Marcus Agrippa. It was here church bells were first introduced by Paulinus, one of the bishops in the fifth

century. And here was born Giordano Bruno, the man who was burnt at the stake in the City of Rome, February 17, 1600.

Bruno was born either in 1548 or 1550; the latter date is the one most usually accepted. Ten years before Copernicus died, the man who most influenced Bruno's life. Luther was dead only four years, Melancthon and Calvin were yet alive. Servetus was not burned until three years later (1553). Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order was still alive (died 1556). Charles the First of Spain was also alive, but a few years later resigned his crown and retired to a monastery, where he died (1558). Of Bruno's youth little is known. He joined the Dominican Order when young. He was not long among the monks before his skepticism attracted attention, and though he doubted some of the leading dogmas at an early age, yet he was thirty before he severed his connection with the convent. But this was an age of controversy and dispute, and even in the schools and colleges the orthodox varied among themselves.

In 1580 Bruno appeared in Geneva. He still wore his friar's garb, but he did so because he had not money to buy other clothing. Some Italian refugees represented to Bruno that among the Calvinists a friar's garb alone would be sufficient cause for torture if not the stake. He converted his gown into a kind of smock, and with the aid of a tailor turned his Roman raiment into Calvinistic smallclothes. The inner man did not undergo any such transformation. Calvin was now dead sixteen years, but his spirit still lived. Poor Bruno found that moving from Rome to Geneva was only running from the tiger into the mouth of the tigress. In Geneva Aristotle and Ptolemy were as strongly entrenched as in Rome. Bruno soon fled from there, making his way to Toulouse. Here he raised another storm about his head, and fled to Paris, where he arrived about 1582. Henry the Third was king. Henry was either very liberal or else he secretly disbelieved in many principles held to be orthodox. He was not entirely partial to Roman supremacy. However, he took Bruno under his protection, but Bruno would not go to mass, and in Paris at this time it was mass or death Bruno attacked the Paris University and its doctrines. He wrote a comedy said to be indecent. He had to leave Paris and betake himself to foggy London. Here he arrived some time in 1583. Sir Philip Sidney, whom Bruno had met before in Italy, received him warmly. Queen Elizabeth accorded the wondering philosopher a gracious welcome, and Bruno with the Count de Lasco became the lion of the day.

During two years that Bruno sojourned in England (1583-85) he was most royally and hospitably treated. He published, while here, several works, one of which he dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney. Ever since it has been a mystery to critics and historians why Sir Philip accepted the dedication, because