dola during a journey in Italy, and brought into Germany a decided taste for mysticism. He was less an alchemist than an allegorist, and wrote a treatise on the cabalistic art, *De Arte Cabalistica*, and another, *De Verbo Mirifico*.* He studied the Oriental languages, in particular the Hebrew and the Talmud, and defended the persecuted Jews. Agrippa of Nettesheim, who was born at Cologne in 1486, and who died at Grenoble in 1535, was a friend of Reuchlin, whose work, *De Verbo Mirifico*, he commented upon and expounded even at the University of Dole, at that time a flourishing institution. He had composed a work, *De Philosophia Occulta*; but as it was necessary to draw attention to mysticism by decrying every species of philosophy, he wrote another, *De Vanitate Scientiarum*.† Agrippa of Nettesheim, like Reuchlin, was an allegorist; but he applied himself to alchemy and theurgy. Paracelsus, who was born at Einsielden, in Switzerland, in 1493, and who died at Saltzburg in 1541, was a chemist and an ingenious physician.‡ He travelled a great deal in Italy and in Germany; he occupied the first public chair of chemistry at Basle. Bacon remarked that the greatest fault of Paracelsus was that he concealed his real experience under a mysterious appearance. The doctrine of Paracelsus consists in three principles, the union of which forms the *Archæum Magnum* with which he explains all nature. Valentine Weigel, a Lutheran minister, who was born in Misnia in 1533, and who died in 1588, followed the theurgical tendency of Paracelsus, in uniting to it

* Reprinted in the collection of Pistorius, Bas., 1587, in-fol.

† H. C. Agrippæ Opp., 2 vol. in-8, Lugduni, per Beringos fratres, without date. The following are thoughts of Agrippa drawn from his letters:

"Supremus et unicus rationis actus religio est."

"Omnium rerum cognoscere opificem, atque in illum tota similitudinis imagine, cam essentiali contactu sine vinculo, transire quo ipse transformeris efficiareque Deus, ea demum vera solidaque philosophia est.

"Sed quomodo qui in cinere et mortali pulvere se ipsum amisit Deum inveniet? Mori nimirum oportet mundo et carni et sensibus omnibus, si quis velit ad hæc secretorum penetralia ingredi. . . "

‡ Phil. Theophrasti Paracelsi volumen medicinæ paramirum, Argentorati, 1575, in-fol.



the moral and religious mysticism of Reuchlin, of Tauler, and of Gerson.* Leibnitz said that he was "a man of spirit,† even of too much spirit." At the commencement of the seventeenth century the doctrines of this school, allegorical as well as theurgical, passed into a secret society, the society of the Rosicrusians,‡ where they were preserved as in deposit. We may also place among the mystics of this epoch Jerome Cardan of Pavia, who was born in 1501, and who died in 1576, a physician and a celebrated naturalist, of extensive knowledge, and who, in the midst of great extravagances, often presented the most elevated views.§ After Paracelsus I ought to speak of Von Helmont, who sprang from him: he was a mystical alchemist, and was born at Brussels in 1577, and died in Vienna in 1644. His son Mercurius Von Helmont, who published his works,‖ belongs to the seventeenth century. Robert Fludd, an English physician, of the

* "Libellus de vita beata, non in particularibus ab extra quærenda, sed in summo bono intra nos ipsos possidendo; item exercitatio mentis de luce et caligine divina; collectus et conscriptus a M. Valentino Weigelio, Halæ Saxonum, 1609."

† Theodicea, discourse on the conformity of reason with faith, ix. p. 11 of Vol. i. of the Edit. of Amsterdam, 1747.

‡ Formed at the commencement of the seventeenth century, on the occasion of a poem by the theologian Andreæ: *Mariage chimique de Christian Rosencreutz*, 1603.—*Réformation universelle au moyen de la* fama fraternitatis *des rose-croix*. Ratisb., 1614.

§ The following are some specimens of his great work: *De subtilitate et varietate rerum*.—"Est aliquid in nobis præter nos. . . Incitari autem nemo ad virtutem poterit aut verum experiri, qui id quod in se est præter se obruit atque sepelit. XVIII.—Quod si quis vel exiguo tempore ex se ipso exire possit unirique Deo, hunc momento fieri beatissimum necesse est. . . Atque hæc illa exstasis solis probis sapientibusque concessa, et infinite melior omni humana felicitate. XXI.—Animæ immortalitatem non nunc primum, sed semper agnovi; sentio enim aliquando intellectum sic Deum esse adeptum, ut nos prorsus unum cum eo esse intueamur." *De utilitate ex advers. capiend.*, II. 6. His works have been collected in ten volumes in-fol., Lugd., 1663.

‖ Among others Ortus medicinæ, id est initia physicæ inaudita, progressus medicinæ novus, in morborum ultionem, ad vitam longam, autnore J. B. Van Helmont, &c., edente authoris filio; edit. nova, Amstelodami, 1651, in-4, Elzevir.

county of Kent, who was born in 1574, and who died in 1627, tried to combine Paracelsus with the assiduous study of *Genesis*, allegorically interpreted.* But the most profound and at the same time the most unaffected of all the mystics of the sixteenth century was Jacob Böhme, who was born in 1575, and who died in 1624. He was a poor shoemaker of Görlitz, without any literary attainments, for which reason he remained for a long time in obscurity, occupied solely with two studies, which every Christian and every man may always pursue, the study of nature ever spread out before his eyes, and that of the sacred Scriptures. He is called the Teutonic philosopher. He wrote a multitude of works which afterwards became the gospel of mysticism. They have often been reprinted† and translated into different languages. One of the most celebrated, published in 1612, is called *Aurora*.‡ The fundamental points of the doctrine of Böhme are: 1st, the impossibility of arriving at truth by any other process than illumination; 2d, a theory of the creation; 3d, the relations of man to God; 4th, the essential identity of the soul and of God, and the determination of their difference as to form; 5th, the origin of evil; 6th, the reintegration of the soul; 7th, a symbolical exposition of Christianity.

Such, briefly, are the four great schools with which history fills the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The rough statistics which I have just given you are sufficient to demonstrate that, even in this epoch of artificial culture and imitation, the human mind remained faithful to itself, and to the laws which we have already observed, to the four tendencies which impel it, everywhere and always, to seek truth either in the senses and empirical observation, or in consciousness and rational abstraction, or in the negation of all certitude, or finally in enthusiasm and the

* Philosophia Mosaica, Gudæ, 1638, in-fol.—Historia macro et microcosmi metaphysica, physica et technica, Oppenheim, 1617, in-fol.

† The preferable edition is that of 1730, 7 vol. in-12.

‡ It has been translated into French by Saint-Martin. See the following volume, Lecture 13.



immediate contemplation of God. This is the classification under which all the systems of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are arranged. It remains to be known which of the four schools has reckoned the most partisans, and which consequently reflects best the general spirit of the two centuries. Assuredly it is not skepticism, for it is reduced, as you have just seen, to three men of mind. Nor is it the sensualistic peripatetic school, nor the idealistic Platonic school, both almost equally fertile in distinguished men and celebrated systems: it is the mystic school in its double allegoric and alchemic development. Examine and you will see, in fact, that the number and importance of systems is on the side of mysticism. Mysticism is even found in the empiric school; and this inconsistency proceeds from the domination of mysticism. Whenever one point of view predominates it attracts to it all the others, even those which are foreign to it, even those which are hostile to it.

Let us take another view of these four schools; let us consider their division among the different countries of Europe. In the middle age there was scarcely any other distinction than that of religious orders; but towards the fifteenth century national individualities appear; and it is curious to see how, in the nascent independence of Europe, the different nations have, thus to speak, shared the philosophic points of view. We find, 1st, that there was no skepticism except in France; the three men who then represented skepticism being two Frenchmen and one Portuguese naturalized in France; 2d, that Italy was the classic ground of the double peripatetic and Platonic dogmatism, and that it was from Italy that it passed into all the other countries of Europe; 3d, that mysticism, although it came from an Italian source, spread chiefly throughout Germany; so that in considering only the general results we should say that dogmatism belongs to Italy, skepticism to France, and mysticism to Germany. England plays but a feeble part in the philosophy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

There is still another view to be taken of these four schools.

What have been their means of expression? What languages have they used? This is important, for the introduction of the vulgar tongues into philosophy, therein exhibits more or less the independence and originality of thought. I do not find that any peripatetic then wrote in a vulgar tongue. In the Platonic school, near the close, and even towards the middle of the sixteenth century, the employment of a national language began; we find the *Dialectics* of Ramus* in pretty good French; and Giordano Bruno wrote several works in Italian.† As to skepticism, Sanchez excepted, it always made use of a vulgar tongue, the French. I conclude then that sensualism and idealism were, especially during the fifteenth century, borrowed systems, and that there was more originality in skepticism. I say as much of mysticism. If in its first developments, in the Florentine school, it speaks the appropriate language of this school, the Latin, it ended by speaking in Böhme a vulgar tongue. It must be observed that Jacob Böhme wrote all his works in the only language that he knew, and that was known around him, the German; a circumstance which makes of the mysticism of Böhme a system more natural and serious than that of Ficino and of the Picos of Mirandola.

Finally, if I seek out the good and the evil part in the philosophy of these two centuries, it seems to me that the good is especially found in the immense career which the free imitation of antiquity has opened to the human mind, and in the fruitful fermentation which systems so numerous and so diverse must have excited in European philosophy. This is a benefit which must balance all inconveniences, for from that must have proceeded whatever was good in the future. When we read the

* *Dialectique de Pierre de La Ramée, à Charles de Lorraine cardinal, son Mécène*, Paris, in-4, 1555.

† *Della causa, principio et uno.—Degli eroici furori.—La Bestia trionfante.—Dell' infinito, universo e mondi;* finally the *Candelaio, come diadel Bruno Nolano, achademico di nulla achademia, detto il fastidito.* "*In tristitia hilaris, in hilaritate tristis,*" Pariggi, 1582.



life, the adventures, and the enterprises of Ramus, of Giordano Bruno, of Telesio, and of Campanella, we feel that Bacon and Descartes are not far off. The evil is in the predominance of the spirit of imitation which engenders immense confusion and is betrayed by the absence of method. Absence of method, such is the capital fault of the philosophy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is marked in two ways: 1st, This philosophy scarcely establishes the relation of the different parts of which it is composed; metaphysics, morals, politics, physics are not therein united among themselves by those intimate ties which attest the presence of a single and profound thought. 2d, It cannot discern, and does not seek out among the different parts which it embraces that which must be the fundamental part and the basis of the whole edifice. We thus begin in every thing, to go, we know not to what; there is no order of research which may be accepted as the fixed and necessary point from which philosophy must set out in order to reach its ultimate aim. Or if we wished to find a point of departure common to all systems, we might say that this point of departure is taken in ontology, that is, outside of human nature. We begin in general by God or by external nature, and we arrive as well as we can at man, and that too, without any very well-defined rule, without establishing this manner of proceeding as a principle and as a method. Hence the necessity of a revolution whose character must have been the opposite of that of the philosophy of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, to wit, the introduction of a method, and of a method which must have been the opposite of the confused practice of the preceding epoch, the opposite of ontology, that is, psychology. It is this fruitful revolution, with the great systems which it has produced, that I propose to make known to you in my next lecture.