

THE
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but we suffer ourselves to become the victims of fraud disguised by a pleasant manner, by plausible words.

Another remedy—a secondary remedy, not a primary one that cuts at the root of fraud—might be found in the most drastic legal punishment of all sorts of fraud, and possibly by a revision of the penalties sanctioned by the criminal law. A legal authority has stated that the courts have deliberately refrained from defining fraud because they did not wish to limit their power of dealing with fraudulent transactions. Let any transaction, the gist of which is shown to be fraud, be dealt with by a heavy hand, that is not too nicely concerned to draw the legal line between fraud non-criminal and fraud criminal.

J. HOLT SCHOOLING.

JEAN ARTHUR RIMBAUD.

FRENCH poetry blossomed abundantly in the seventh decade of the last century. Under the noble influence of Victor Hugo, Théophile Gautier, Baudelaire, Leconte de Lisle and Banville there grew up a group of Parnassians who came forth to defend the neglected art of poetry, sought perfection of form, rhythm and language, and fought against the lachrymose sentimentality and cynical vulgarity of the degenerate successors of de Lamartine and de Musset. From that group of "seekers of stars and infinity" sprang almost all our well-known poets, such as Catulle Mendès, J. de Heredia, Armand Silvestre, Anatole France, Dierx, Sully-Prudhomme, etc.; in it we find the precursors and the future leaders of symbolism: Paul Verlaine, the Count de Villiers de l'Isle Adam and Mallarmé. This group, however, did not count all the superior minds of the time. About 1870 a few solitary poets began to appear, who brought into their verse quite novel elements, but who, either on account of their originality or of their contempt for notoriety, were neither understood nor even known, and who are indebted to Verlaine and the symbolists for their renaissance. Among them Rimbaud, who was born October 20th, 1854, in Charleville, and died November 10th, 1891, in Marseilles, was in danger of oblivion, because he published hardly any of his writings. He destroyed his small volume of poetry, called *Une Saison en Enfer*, published in 1873, with the exception of a few copies which he presented to his friends; one of his pieces only, *Les Corbeaux*, was published, without the author's permission, in the first volume of a review called *La Renaissance* in 1872. Rimbaud not only did not publish, he did not even recite his poetry, as was customary, at gatherings of the Parisian poets. He was known only by those whom he respected and to whom he would read his verse or send his manuscript. Among them was Verlaine, who, in his volume *Les Poètes Maudits* (1884), printed Rimbaud's best pieces, and two years later, with the assistance of the editor of the review *La Vogue*, succeeded in publishing Rimbaud's volume of prose, *Les Illuminations*.

The readers of that volume learned meanwhile that its original, powerful and masterly author had given up writing and gone to the East. Imagination was excited and surrounded Rimbaud's name with a fantastic circle of tales and legends. Strange news would appear in the journals about Rimbaud's great artistic labours somewhere in the depths of Asia, about the literary plans he was going to realise after his return, about his ruling over some savage tribe in Africa, etc. Hundreds of critiques were written, full of enthusiasm for his poetry, but absurdly exaggerated and overloaded with superlatives. There was no lack, on the other hand, of bitter attacks and equivocal commentaries, and it was even insinuated that there was no such person as Rimbaud. Meanwhile the mist gathered thicker and thicker around the poet, and it was almost necessary for him to die for his work to find a publisher and his life a conscientious biographer.

The first attempts were inadequate. Genonceaux's edition, called *Le Reliquaire* (1891), with a preface by R. Darzen, was immediately withdrawn from circulation, the text being defective and the biography incomplete. Leon Vanier's two volumes, the prose under the title *Les Illuminations, Une Saison en Enfer* (1892), and the volume of poetry, *Poésies Complètes* (1895), with a preface by Verlaine, were also inadequate, although Verlaine corrected the most important errors of incompetent or malicious biographers. Only in 1897, 1898 and 1899 Patern Berrichon induced the *Mercure de France* to publish Rimbaud's complete Life and Works, as well as his letters to his family. Thanks to these conscientious publications, we are able to-day to gather up Rimbaud's whole life and work, and to arrive at a clear idea of this apparently fantastic but really very solid and, if the word may be pardoned, monolithic genius.

* * * *

A man who gives to poetry but four years of his youth—from his fifteenth to his nineteenth year—who during that time produces extraordinary and unique works of genius, and who then suddenly gives up writing, abandons all his literary connections, leaves the country and disappears from sight until illness forces him to return, would, in any country and in any century, be considered an extraordinary phenomenon. Usually men become accustomed to their occupation and grow fond of the sphere of activity they have entered, especially when they are successful.

In these days of division of labour, when a vocation quickly becomes a profession, when this man is a writer, the other a savant, a third a merchant or diplomat, but one very seldom sees a complete man, Rimbaud was bound to attract attention and to be the subject of animated comment, although he was not to be easily understood. Hence misty legends and stories about his life and character, hence false opinions, laudatory or critical, about the relation of his life to poetry, hence the lack of deeper penetration into that very simple

nature, into that consistent, though possibly unconscious, life. Paul Verlaine alone, knowing Rimbaud more intimately, instinctively felt "that life, beautiful in its logic and unity and striving wholly towards "light and strength." In another place he says: "Everything, the "work, the man and the life, is simple as the country maiden, and has "the beauty of the tiger." I said "felt," for there could be no question of understanding and analysis on the part of Verlaine, who had a big heart, with regard to the mental calibre of the author of "Illuminations."

It was however possible to understand that striking figure even before Berrichon published biographical documents, from an attentive reading of Rimbaud's writings. They give the impression, not of unfinished literary work, but of vigorous penetration into the depths of knowledge. From the midst of passing follies, failures and tears, from sneers directed both at himself and at others, from despair and blasphemy, there emerges distinct and dazzling a powerful, ocean-like soul, refusing to be satisfied with any abstract rays of knowledge, longing to embrace everything, conscious of the great unity of the world and striving to seize and express it, a soul looking only to find ends, having the presentiment of a long succession of future lives after the temporary departure from this earth, which shall tend always towards that which is eternal and divine, which in reaching perfection shall become broader and more subtle, and shall draw man on to infinity. Rimbaud had a soul full of great, simple, natural kindness; it grew bitter only against incorrigible vulgarity, sentimentality, villainy and slavishness, in life and in people; a proud, strong, heroic soul, refusing to be wrapped in Hamlet's mist, and armed with the knowledge that man must rely on himself alone; a soul full of inexhaustible faith in its own strength; a soul above all paltriness, independent of formulas, despising patterns; a soul free, or in process of freeing itself, from all rules and fetters; a soul intoxicated with its own freedom and tending towards the unique aim of the highest perfection of fulness of knowledge and strength.

Les Illuminations and *Une Saison en Enfer* are penetrated with one great, unsatisfied desire—the principal and most powerful characteristic of the poet—to know everything, to climb the highest summits, to exhaust the deepest springs, to unveil all secrets . . . of death, birth, past, future, cosmogony, annihilation; to embrace the universe, to concentrate it in oneself, to dissolve in it like a wandering cloud, and then to melt all into oneself, to be able to do everything, to know everything. This mad desire tormented him continually. His only regret was that such strength and knowledge, awful as it would be, must be eternally withheld from him by merciless fate. The intensity of his desires, their bottomless mysticism, their persistence, were bound to urge him constantly forward and to make every concession, even the smallest compromise with himself, impossible. A man who considered the only aim of his life to be the "discovery of divine life, far from the people,"

a man who "waited for God impatiently," could be satisfied neither with poetry, in which the result always falls far short of the creative dream, nor with Europe, with its earthly sorrows, its indifference to faith, its hypocritical social relations, its ridiculous pride in science and lack of all enthusiasm, its pettiness and formality. That *oisive jeunesse à tout asservie*, must have seemed to him wasted; for he was dissatisfied with that which he had created and he felt he had absorbed into his mind all the prejudices of Europe, and he must have said to himself: *point de cantiques* and become silent; he must have felt the attraction of unknown distances and of the great, quiet contemplative wisdom of the East. And so it was with his life.

Paterne Berrichon, in trying to explain Rimbaud's flight to the Orient, quotes the beginning of Mallarmé's well-known poem:—

"La chair est triste, hélas ! et j'ai lu tous les livres.
Fuir ! là-bas fuir ! Je sens que des oiseaux sont ivres
D'être parmi l'écume inconnue et les cieux."

It seems as if Rimbaud during his creative time had been plunged in himself, in his thoughts, in dreams, in studies, in books, separated entirely from the exterior world; and as if, suddenly, all that had appeared to him sterile, narrow pedantry, something inferior to the simple life, free of study, intoxicated with its own ignorance. This was a great mistake. In the first place, Rimbaud's mind, full of metaphysical aspirations, would have been incapable of exclusively unconscious relations with reality. Again, he never would sacrifice that reality for the sake of intellectual studies, and during a most enthusiastic absorption in the wisdom of books he would always complete his mental labours by a broad and enthusiastic association with nature and the outward life. However this may be, his wanderings on foot, his *jambes sans rivales*, his adventures and his exceedingly varied life, passed into legend. That universality, so seldom seen in creative minds, either in art or in science, and which was the result of an unheard-of combination of deep thought with fulness of life in his work, was noticeable at a very early age, when he was undoubtedly under the influence of unconscious impulses. As a boy of fifteen at college he astonished his teachers by his capacity and erudition, translating Juvenal, Tibullus and Propertius; he was already acquainted with the whole of French literature, and with poetry from Villon to Baudelaire and the Parnassians. At this period he wandered through the country surrounding his native town, was familiar with the charming wild banks of the river Mosa, and very often walked in the direction of the Belgian frontier, where he became intimate with smugglers. His feeling for nature and his intimacy with her at that time are seen in the poem called *Impression*, which was written during his wanderings and is full of an indescribable freshness.

When Rimbaud was sixteen years old, he revolted against the severity

of his mother—a well-to-do, thrifty, bigoted, narrow-minded, despotic bourgeoisie; he was tired, too, of the monotony of teaching in school, as well as of the mechanical preparation for his baccalaureate; so he went to Paris with a copy-book full of poetry, but without a penny in his pocket. This was the beginning of his frequent and strange wanderings. His first four excursions—from September, 1870, to November, 1871—were directed to *Ville Lumière*, a place with which he was acquainted only through poetical dithyrambs, but which fascinated his imagination. Those excursions served to disperse many of his youthful illusions, to make him bitter and to mark his face with a *pli boudeur et narquois*, as Mallarmé said; they also had a marked influence on the development both of his creative capacity and his ideas.

The first excursion was not very promising. As he had a ticket only to the next station from Charleville, he was obliged to hide under a bench in order to reach Paris; for this he was arrested and put into the Mazas prison, as he refused to give his name; he decided to do so only after twelve days of imprisonment, when, without seeing his beloved Paris he was sent back home in charge of a gendarme. "In 'this way,'" says Berrichon, "after restraint in school and home, the 'frantic aspirant for freedom learned what it meant to be constrained 'by the State.'" As he was very badly received by his mother, he fled a few days later to Charleroi, where he expected to become sub-editor of the local paper, published by a friend of his father. That excursion he made on foot and without any money in his pocket. When he reached his destination he met with a refusal, accompanied by an exhortation to the effect that education is not necessary for a journalist, who can do quite well without the art of writing. Although he was penniless and was obliged to live on God knows what and to sleep where he could, he would not return to the slavery at home, but wandered about in Belgium and the North-East of France, at that time full of German soldiers. At last, starving and in rags, he was conducted by gendarmes to his mortified mother. Notwithstanding the want of sweetness in his home-life he remained at Charleville for four winter months, eagerly reading the old books in the public library. In February, 1871, as soon as the gates of Paris were opened after the siege, he sold his watch, bought a railway ticket and went to Paris with more poetry in his pocket and with better hope of success, for someone gave him the address of the then famous caricaturist and revolutionary Bohemian, André Gill. Hoping that Gill, if anybody, would be able to understand his rebellious aspirations towards freedom and would not refuse to assist him, Rimbaud went to him directly on his arrival and told him sincerely the story of his life, revealed his aspirations and hopes, but was sent away empty by the astonished artist. Surprised that anyone could question his proceedings, Rimbaud was left to himself in Paris. For a whole week, towards the end of a cold winter, he wandered in the streets, eating what he could pick up and spending nights either

under bridges or on coal barges. At last, half dead, he decided to return on foot to Charleville. How hard, how awful that journey was may be seen from a painful paragraph to be found in *Une Saison en Enfer*, called *Mauvais Sang*.

His third sojourn in Paris, during the Commune, in which he took a part, disgusted him with all doctrinaire revolutions and revolutionists; for he detected the emptiness of their set speeches, the whole misery of compromise, and the mass of personal interests underlying those apparently altruistic enthusiasms and outbursts. One illusion was yet left to him, and this concerned the poets, whom, as it seems, he believed to be free, sincere, without pettiness and constantly tending to supreme perfection. After his return to Charleville, he wrote *Bateau Ivre*, the most passionate expression of spleen and disenchantment imaginable. He sent it to Verlaine, with a letter asking him to assist him during his sojourn in Paris, to introduce him into literary circles and in that way to make possible his further work in the field of poetry. Verlaine was enthusiastic over the poetry and wrote to him to come as soon as he pleased. He went, and remained in Paris from October, 1871, to July, 1872. It was the period of his creative fever, of most intense work within himself, of penetration into the depths of his own existence, of his final emancipation from all alien influences, of the development of new individual elements; but in the meanwhile it was, perhaps, the time of his bitterest disappointments, even in regard to the poets.

Rimbaud, whose nature was monolithic and who could not dissociate talent from character, must have looked upon those poets as monsters, who, while perfect in their own line, differed in no way as men from the ordinary Philistine and even rivalled the crowd in their narrow-mindedness, hypocrisy, lack of sincerity, malice, cliquishness and pettiness; and who were striving not after perfection, even be it unattainable, but to produce some small, original effect. While the loss of his other illusions was expressed in passionate, biting sarcasms, the case of the poets caused a reaction in his own life; he scandalised the smooth and polished among them by his untimely sincerity. Usually thoughtful and silent, he frightened them by cynical paradoxes, by assuming the mask of a scoundrel or even of a criminal, and astonished them with false confidences, enjoying their disgust, their contempt and their outbursts of shocked propriety. All this must naturally have irritated the poets, and been the cause on their side of the intrigues, the gossip, the malice, of which we find an echo in articles written after his death by Maurras and R. de Gourmont. They reproached him with his *mœurs de voyou*. Under the same influence even the dignified Fénelon, speaking of Rimbaud's portrait by Fantin-Latour, maintained in argument with Verlaine, who had pointed out in the author of *Illuminations* a certain angelic sweetness, that Rimbaud's was the head of a peasant murderer. In those slanders we discover also the source of the calumnies launched against both poets,

Verlaine and Rimbaud, on account of their friendship, and especially because of their peregrinations, lasting fifteen months, in Belgium and England. Paterné Berrichon has dealt in a proper manner in his *Verlaine Héroïque* and in Rimbaud's biography with those infamies. As for their wandering together, it was simply a flight of both poets from the circle of "smooth" people and stereotyped customs to Nature in its full pulsations, to a freedom in which life becomes poetry and poetry life. For both poets that wandering had important results. Verlaine with his *Romances sans Paroles* entered upon a period of new and real originality. Rimbaud closed his literary career with the two volumes already alluded to. But Verlaine also, as Berrichon rightly said, was only an incident, an episode in the psychological evolution of Rimbaud, who was ten years his junior. To Rimbaud, whose nature was many-sided and eager to comprehend all things, Verlaine was too exclusively a poet, influenced passively in some way by momentary impressions, and often creating under their impulse poems of unusual and penetrating beauty, but not striving to reach the heights of perfection at any cost, even if it could not be expressed in words; he would stop half way and be satisfied with the possible; he was a man of the pen, in a word, and not the full, strong man, identical in work and life. Rimbaud, whose only aim was the complete and lofty human being, must have looked with contempt mingled with pity at such a lack of internal unity, such a social specialisation. "*J'ai horreur de tous les métiers,*" said he in *Mauvais Sang*. "*La main à la plume vaut la main à charrue. Quel siècle à main! . . . "Je n'aurai jamais ma main."*

A sense of great solitude and the need of a friendly hand, of a soul to whom he could impart confidences and in whom he might find some comfort, all this probably attracted Rimbaud towards Verlaine, the only Parnassian who appealed to him by his poetry. A closer acquaintance dispelled the illusion as to spiritual communion, and that last disappointment convinced Rimbaud, as it seems, of the necessity of solitude. The two *laeti et errabundi* were obliged to part company simply for this reason, and not on account of a revolver shot as journalistic gossip would have it. Verlaine, a greater poet than before, returned to the *affreux naufrages* of his lot. Rimbaud, having put his visionary dreams into *Une Saison en Enfer*, like a tombstone over his poetical creation, started the long wandering which lasted till his death. Where did he not go? As the small volume of his prose and poetry would suffice as the glorious and proud result, not of four years, but of the whole life of a man, so with his travels one might fill up the life of four men.

After having published and destroyed *Une Saison en Enfer* in Brussels, he went once more to Paris, towards the end of 1873, but only for a short time. Almost the whole of the year 1874 he spent in London, where he lived by giving lessons in French and studied

English. At the beginning of 1875 he went to Stuttgart, where Verlaine visited him and found him very correct and *rangé*, studying in libraries. After four months' work he knew the German language thoroughly; he then sold all he possessed and started, for the first time, for the East. At Altdorf, at the foot of the St. Gothard, his money came to an end; he crossed the Alps on foot and reached Milan half dead with hunger and fatigue. There, sheltered by someone, he took advantage of a month's rest to learn the Italian language. Having recovered his strength, he started on foot for Brindisi, but was sun-struck between Siena and Livorno. He was cured in the hospital at Livorno, and then sent by the French Consul to Marseilles, where he worked hard for a living. There someone persuaded him to join the Carlist army; he received a certain sum of money on account, and having first of all satisfied the demands of his stomach, he suddenly bethought him of all the miseries of war, and instead of going to his destination left for Paris and thence went home.

In 1876 he made another attempt to reach the East, this time going through Vienna, Varna and the Black Sea. In Vienna he was robbed of everything he possessed, and was obliged to work with his hands for a living, until owing to a conflict with the police—for humanitarian reasons—he was sent under escort of a gendarme to the German frontier, and thence in the same manner to Strasburg, from which place he went home on foot. He was not, however, discouraged by all this, and by way of a new method of getting to the Orient he joined the Dutch army and was sent to Java. Once there, however, he could not endure the military discipline and was disgusted with the cruelties daily practised on the aborigines; and having come to the conclusion that it was impossible for him as a soldier to visit the fabulous country of volcanoes, he deserted, was in hiding for a month in the virgin forests, and finally was received on board an English ship and landed at Dieppe. After a month of rest in the Ardennes, where he was thinking continually how to go East, he took service, under an assumed name, as recruiting sergeant for the Dutch army in one of the cities on the German frontier. Having thus earned a good sum of money, he went to Hamburg in order to start from there. But he squandered all he had earned in the gay city and was obliged to accept the position of an interpreter and cashier in the Loisset Circus; in that capacity he visited Copenhagen and Stockholm. But he could not stand the monotony of his occupation, and being constantly tormented by the desire to see tropical countries he gave up his position, and with the help of the French Consul went to Charleville, this time by railway.

From 1878 onwards his ardent desire began to be partly realised. A certain Hamburg firm sent him to Alexandria. From thence he went to the island of Cyprus as manager of a marble and granite quarry. After six months of sojourn in a hot, unhealthy, treeless locality he contracted malignant fever, and was obliged to return home,

where he remained for a year. In March, 1880, he was again in the island of Cyprus in the capacity of superintendent of the building of the Governor's palace on Mount Troodos. Although this latter position would have assured him an independence for the future, he was so strongly possessed by the desire to see other countries, where he could put forth a broader and more independent activity, that he left his post after a few months, took passage on board a ship going through the Red Sea, visited Suakim, Massowa and Hodeida, and landed in Aden. At first he worked there in the office of some French commercial company; then he was sent to Harrara to represent the same company. In 1888 he started a business for himself, and displayed extraordinary activity in the way of travels, colonisation and civilisation, not forgetting purely mental work. He studied mechanical engineering and ordered books and instruments from Europe. He endeavoured to instil into the aborigines all that was good in European civilisation. In the meanwhile he treated them with justice and benevolence, and tried to induce the European pioneers who visited him and asked his advice to act toward them in the same way as he himself did. He went to Samolis, Shoa and Abyssinia, and sent reports of the results of his travels to the Geographical Society in Paris. He studied different languages and dialects, customs and ways of living, and read the Koran and other Oriental books. He even concerned himself with important political affairs, for he understood the great importance of Abyssinia to Africa, and desired to influence Menelik.

During this full development of his activity an illness, which, as it seems, was aggravated by the African climate, obliged him to go to Aden for medical advice, and thence to Marseilles. The amputation of a leg did not have the result that was hoped, the illness returned, and the indefatigable traveller died in the thirty-seventh year of his age.

Such is the outline of that Odyssey, unique in its way. Thanks to Berrichon's efforts, Rimbaud's fascinating life has not remained *vita abscondita*. The more attentively one considers it the more distinctly one sees that his was the personality of a complete man, difficult to be understood by those who are fond of specialisation and narrowness; he was like a great tone, containing in itself all harmonies. His universality, and the astonishing balance of his faculties and desires which characterised him as a boy, increased and became stronger during those seventeen years of wandering.

He became, as he had desired and predicted in *Une Saison en Enfer*, one of the strong ones. The mere catalogue of his travels testifies in itself to his great courage and endurance in all his miseries and misfortunes, physical as well as moral. In Africa Rimbaud's qualities made him a famous, even fabulous, man. The traveller Jehan Saudan found that on the shores of the Red Sea there still lingered the remembrance of his journey through some tropical desert, which is avoided with dread even by the natives, for they say that the brain

would boil and the skull would split; whereas Rimbaud crossed that desert with a simple Turkish fez on his head. Rimbaud was superior to all famous travellers in culture and intelligence, and by no means inferior to them in regard to endurance, coolness of blood, enterprise, determination and fearlessness in the face of difficulty. In Africa he was a merchant, but differed entirely from that rapacious class of people whose only aim is profit. To Rimbaud money was not the aim but the means; and he made it quite differently from the ordinary African explorer; he was scrupulously honest in his transactions, kind-hearted and always ready to help every one liberally. His house in Harrara was like an hotel in which hospitality was given gratis. All Europeans who came into contact with Rimbaud in Africa spoke with gratitude of the liberality shown to missionaries and travellers, whom he would help with good advice and money as well as with hospitable entertainment. Naturally, Rimbaud must have felt bitterly the petty ways and rapacious explorations of European adventurers; if they needed help he would help them, but with a contemptuous sneer at their paltry souls, knowing, as he did, the impossibility of reforming them. In a word, his good-heartedness was that of a man of "strong race," who would help the needy and oppressed, but would scorn any sentimental self-pity for his own lot.

His treatment of the aborigines was quite different from that of almost all robber-explorers in that he was humane and just towards them. No wonder then that the inhabitants of Samolis worshipped him like some supernatural being and called him "Just Weight"! No wonder that even in Entotto and Adna he was a symbol of goodness and honesty, his name being pronounced with religious respect! No wonder that the Abyssinian chiefs looked on him with admiration, and that Makomen, the most intelligent and noble amongst them, was Rimbaud's warm friend, and said, when he learned that the poet had died: "God calls to him those of whom the earth is unworthy."

S. C. DE SOISSONS.

THE REFORMED CHURCH OF FRANCE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

It is not by institutions, however perfect they may be, but by saintly individualities that the Gospel is propagated and the Kingdom of God founded here below.—*Vinet.*

Differences of opinion which are finally brought to a logical form commonly indicate the existence of a fuller truth than that which finds expression in the arguments of either side.—*Dr. Westcott, late Bishop of Durham.*

True causes of religious reform in France in the sixteenth century.

IT is no longer a matter for discussion that religious reform in Europe was in the 16th century an absolute necessity for the nations.

It was a need based on reason, and not on caprice and passion, as has too often been asserted. The champions of the political authority of the Catholic Church, more diplomatists than Christians, wished to see in the reform movement in Germany only jealousy and revolts of monks, which provided the small States with a pretext for rebellion; in Switzerland only a change of government; in England only a royal opposition of which Anne Boleyn was the soul; in France only an imitation of what was going on elsewhere. There was something more.

There can be no question that Luther was the representative of the tendencies towards enfranchisement and the feelings of disgust which were making their appearance in the monasteries, and that in Germany the multiplicity of independent and fairly strong States was a fact in his favour, although these States were far from being strong enough to support him. It is no less true that Luther's state of mind was that of the majority of German Catholics, and his new theories formed a true formula of the general trend of thought.

Zwingli, the most celebrated of the Swiss Reformers, seems to have been the first to begin to win over the Helvetic populations to the new