longed to the community of Jewish emigrants from Portugal and Spain who, fleeing from Catholic persecution in the Peninsula, had sought refuge in the nearly emancipated Netherlands. The name, variously written De Spinoza, D’Espinoza, and Despinoza, probably points to the pro­vince of Leon as the previous home of the family; there are no fewer than five townships so called in the neigh­bourhood of Burgos. Of the philosopher’s parents nothing is known. His father is said to have been a tradesman in fair circumstances, and the house is still shown upon the Burgwal where his son Baruch was born; two sisters, Rebekah and Miriam, formed the remainder of the family. Spinoza received his first training under the senior rabbi, Saul Levi Morteira, whose most promising pupil he soon became. Under Morteira he became familiar with the Talmud and, what was probably more important for his own development, with the philosophical writings of Ibn Ezra and Maimonides, Levi ben Gerson, Chasdai Creskas, and other representatives of Jewish mediæval thought, who aim at combining the traditional theology with ideas got from Aristotle and his Neoplatonic commentators. Latin, still the universal language of learning, formed no part of Jewish education; and Spinoza, after learning the elements from a German master, resorted for further in­struction to a physician named Franz van den Ende, who eked out an income by taking pupils. Van den Ende appears to have been distinctly a man of parts, though of a somewhat indiscreet and erratic character. He was eventually hanged in Paris as a conspirator in 1674. His enthusiasm for the natural sciences may have been the only ground for the reputation he had acquired of instilling atheistic notions into the minds of his pupils along with the Latin which he taught them. But it is quite possible that his scientific studies had bred in him, as in many others at that time, a materialistic, or at least a naturalistic, turn of mind ; indeed we should expect as much in a man of Van den Ende’s somewhat rebellious temperament. We do not know whether his influence was brought to bear in this sense upon Spinoza ; but it has been suggested that the writings of Bruno, whose spirit of enthusiastic natural­ism and fervid revolt against the church would be especially dear to a man of Van den Ende’s leanings, may have been put into the pupil’s hand by the master. Latin, at all events, Spinoza learned from Van den Ende to use with correctness, freedom, and force, though his language does not, of course, conform to classical canons. The only romance of Spinoza’s life is connected with Van den Ende’s household. The physician had an only daughter, Clara Maria by name, who, besides being a proficient in music, understood Latin, it is said, so perfectly that she was able to teach her father’s pupils in his absence. Spinoza, the story goes, fell in love with his fair instructress ; but a fellow-student, called Kerkering, supplanted him in his mistress’s affections by the help of a valuable necklace of pearls which he presented to the young lady. Chronology unfortunately forbids us to accept this little episode as true. Recent investigation has proved that, while the marriage with Kerkering, or rather Kerckkrink, is a fact, it did not take place till 1671, in which year the bride, as appears by the register, was twenty-seven years of age. She cannot, therefore, have been more than eleven or twelve in 1656, the year in which Spinoza left Amsterdam; and as Kerckkrink was seven years younger than Spinoza, they cannot well have been simultaneous pupils of Van den Ende and simultaneous suitors for his daughter’s hand. But, though the details of the story thus fall to pieces, it is still possible that in the five years which followed his retirement from Amsterdam Spinoza, who was living within easy distance and paid visits to the city from time to time, may have kept up his connexion with Van den

Ende, and that the attachment may have dated from this later period. This would at least be some explanation for the existence of the story; for Colerus expressly says that Spinoza “often confessed that he meant to marry her.” But beyond possibility we cannot go in the matter. There is no mention of the Van den Endes in Spinoza’s correspondence; and in the whole tenor of his life and character there is nothing on which to fasten the prob­ability of a romantic attachment.

The mastery of Latin which he acquired from Van den Ende opened up to Spinoza the whole world of modern philosophy and science, both represented at that time by the writings of Descartes. He read him greedily, says Colerus, and afterwards often declared that he had all his philosophical knowledge from him. The impulse towards natural science which he had received from Van den Ende would be strengthened by the reading of Descartes; he gave over divinity, we are told, to devote himself entirely to these new studies. His inward break with Jewish orthodoxy dated, no doubt, farther back,—from his ac­quaintance with the philosophical theologians and com­mentators of the Middle Ages; but these new interests combined to estrange him still further from the traditions of the synagogue. He was seldomer seen at its services,— soon not at all. The jealousy of the heads of the synagogue was easily roused. An attempt seems to have been made to draw from him his real opinions on certain prominent points of divinity. Two so-called friends endeavoured, on the plea of doubts of their own, to lead him into a theo­logical discussion ; and, some of Spinoza’s expressions being repeated to the Jewish authorities, he was summoned to give an account of himself. Anxious to retain so promising an adherent, and probably desirous at the same time to avoid public scandal, the chiefs of the community offered him a yearly pension of 1000 florins if he would outwardly conform and appear now and then in the synagogue. But such deliberate hypocrisy was abhorrent to Spinoza’s nature. Threats were equally unavailing, and accordingly on the 27th of July 1656 Spinoza was solemnly cut off from the commonwealth of Israel. The curses pronounced against him may be read in most of the biographies. While negotiations were still pending, he had been set upon one evening by a fanatical ruffian, who thought to expedite matters with the dagger. Warned by this that Amsterdam was hardly a safe place of residence for him any longer, Spinoza had already left the city before the sentence of excommunication was pronounced. He did not go far, but took up his abode with a friend who lived some miles out on the Old Church road. His host belonged to the Col- legiants or Rhijnsburgers, a religious society which had sprung up among the proscribed Arminians of Holland. The pure morality and simple-minded piety of this com­munity seem early to have attracted Spinoza, and to have won his unfeigned respect. Several of his friends were Collegiants, or belonged to the similarly-minded community of the Mennonites, in which the Collegiants were after­wards merged. In this quiet retreat Spinoza spent nearly five years. He drew up a protest against the decree of excommunication, but otherwise it left him unmoved. From this time forward he disused his Hebrew name of Baruch, adopting instead the Latin equivalent, Benedictus. Like every Jew, Spinoza had learned a handicraft; he was a grinder of lenses for optical instruments, and was thus enabled to earn an income sufficient for his modest wants. His skill, indeed, was such that lenses of his making were much sought after, and those found in his cabinet after his death fetched a high price. It was as an optician that he was first brought into connexion with Huygens and Leibnitz ; and an optical *Treatise on the Rainbow,* written by him and long supposed to be lost, has been recently