discovered and reprinted by Dr Van Vloten. He was also fond of drawing as an amusement in his leisure hours; and Colerus had seen a sketch-book full of such drawings representing persons of Spinoza’s acquaintance, one of them being a likeness of himself in the character of Masaniello.

The five years which followed the excommunication must have been devoted to concentrated thought and study. Before their conclusion Spinoza had parted company from Descartes, and the leading positions of his own system were already clearly determined in his mind. A number of the younger men in Amsterdam—many of them students of medicine or medical practitioners—had also come to regard him as their intellectual leader. A kind of philo­sophical club had been formed, including among its members Simon de Vries, John Bresser, Louis Meyer, and others who appear in Spinoza’s correspondence. Originally meet­ing in all probability for more thoroughgoing study of the Cartesian philosophy, they looked naturally to Spinoza for guidance, and by-and-by we find him communicating sys­tematic drafts of his own views to the little band of friends and students. The manuscript was read out and discussed at their meetings, and any points remaining obscure were referred to Spinoza for further explanation. An interesting specimen of such difficulties, propounded by Simon de Vries and resolved by Spinoza in accordance with his own principles, is preserved for us in Spinoza’s correspondence. This Simon de Vries was a youth of generous impulses and of much promise. Being in good circumstances, he was anxious to show his gratitude to Spinoza by a gift of 2000 florins, which the philosopher half-jestingly excused himself from accepting. De Vries died young, and would fain have left his fortune to Spinoza ; but the latter re­fused to stand in the way of his brother, the natural heir, to whom the property was accordingly left, with the con­dition that he should pay to Spinoza an annuity sufficient for his maintenance. The heir offered to fix the amount at 500 florins, but Spinoza accepted only 300, a sum which was regularly paid till his death. The written communica­tions of his own doctrine referred to above belong to a period after Spinoza had removed from the neighbourhood of Amsterdam ; but it has been conjectured that the *Short Treatise on God, on Man, and his Wellbeing,* which repre­sents his thoughts in their earliest systematic form, was left by him as a parting legacy to this group of friends. It is at least certain, from a reference in Spinoza’s first letter to Oldenburg, that such a systematic exposition was in existence before September 1661.@@1 There are two dialogues somewhat loosely incorporated with the work which probably belong to a still earlier period. The short appendix, in which the attempt is made to present the chief points of the argument in geometrical form, is a fore­runner of the *Ethics,* and was probably written somewhat later than the rest of the book. The term “Nature” is put more into the foreground in the *Treatise,* a point which might be urged as evidence of Bruno’s influence,—the dialogues, moreover, being specially concerned to establish the unity, infinity, and self-containedness of Nature@@2 ; but

the two opposed Cartesian attributes, thought and exten­sion, and the absolutely infinite substance whose attributes they are—substance constituted by infinite attributes— appear here as in the *Ethics.* The latter notion—of sub­stance—is said to correspond exactly to “the essence of the only glorious and blessed God.” The earlier differs from the later exposition in allowing an objective causal relation between thought and extension, for which there is substituted in the *Ethics* the idea of a thoroughgoing parallelism.

Early in 1661 Spinoza’s host removed to Rhijnsburg near Leyden, the headquarters of the Collegiant brother­hood, and Spinoza removed with him. The house where they lived at Rhijnsburg is still standing, and the road bears the name of Spinoza Lane. Very soon after his settlement in his new quarters he was sought out by Henry Oldenburg, the first secretary of the Royal Society.@@3 Olden­burg became Spinoza’s most regular correspondent,—a third of the letters preserved to us are to or from him ; and it appears from his first letter that their talk on this occasion was “on God, on infinite extension and thought, on the difference and the agreement of these attributes, on the nature of the union of the human soul with the body, as well as concerning the principles of the Cartesian and Baconian philosophies.” Spinoza must therefore have unbosomed himself pretty freely to his visitor on the main points of his system. Oldenburg, however, was a man of no speculative capacity, and, to judge from his subsequent correspondence, must have quite failed to grasp the real import and scope of the thoughts communicated to him. From one of Oldenburg’s early letters we learn that the treatise *De Intellectus Emendatione* was probably Spinoza’s first occupation at Rhijnsburg. The nature of the work also bears out the supposition that it was first undertaken. It is, in a manner, Spinoza’s “organon,”—the doctrine of method which he would substitute for the corresponding doctrines of Bacon and Descartes, as alone consonant with the thoughts which were shaping themselves or had shaped themselves in his mind. It is a theory of philosophical truth and error, involving an account of the course of philosophical inquiry and of the supreme object of know­ledge. It was apparently intended by the author as an analytical introduction to the constructive exposition of his system, which he presently essayed in the *Ethics.* But he must have found as he proceeded that the two treatises would cover to a large extent the same ground, the account of the true method merging almost inevitably in a state-

@@@1 Various manuscript copies were apparently made of the treatise in question, but it was not printed, and dropped entirely out of knowledge till 1852, when Edward Böhmer of Halle lighted upon an abstract of it attached to a copy of Colerus's Life, and shortly afterwards upon a Dutch MS. purporting to be a translation of the treatise from the Latin original. This was published in 1862 by Van Vloten with a re-transla­tion into Latin. Since then a superior Dutch translation has been discovered, which has been edited by Professor Schaarschmidt and translated into German. Another German version with introduction and notes has been published by Sigwart based on a comparison of the two Dutch MSS.

@@@2 The fact that Spinoza nowhere mentions Bruno would not imply, according to the literary habits of those days, that he was not acquainted with his speculations and even indebted to them. There is no mention,

for example, of Hobbes throughout Spinoza’s political writing, and only one casual reference to him in a letter, although the obligation of the Dutch to the English thinker lies on the surface. Accordingly full weight must be allowed to the internal evidence brought forward by Sigwart and others to prove Spinoza’s acquaintance with Bruno’s writings. But in regard to this question, and in regard to the elaborate researches directed to prove that the main determinations of Spinoza’s thought are anticipated in the mediæval philosophers of his own race, it must be said that these investigations are of comparatively little vital interest. Doubtless Spinoza’s thought was coloured by his Hebraic origin and his Hebraic studies ; from these sources, above all, he may have brought with him to the study of the dualistically expressed philosophy of Descartes the need, and the profound conviction, of unity. But the main strain of Spinoza’s thought is sufficiently explained by reference to the Cartesian philosophy itself, the intellectual milieu of the time. Descartes’s metaphysics can be shown to lead us to the very threshold of Spinoza’s system ; not only the general form, but the very terminology—substance, attributes, and modes—lay waiting to be appropriated by an independent student.

@@@3 Henry Oldenburg (c. 1626-1678) was a native of Bremen, but had settled in England in the time of the Commonwealth. Though hardly a scientific man himself, he had a genuine interest in science, and must have possessed social gifts. He was the friend of Boyle, and acquainted with most of the leaders of science in England as well as with many on the Continent. He delighted to keep himself in this way au courant with the latest developments, and lost no opportunity of establishing relations with men of scientific reputation. It was probably at the suggestion of Huygens that he bent his steps towards Spinoza’s lodging.