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. The *Short Treatise* is of much interest to the student of Spinoza’s philosophical development, for it represents, as Martineau says, “ the first landing-place of his mind in its independent advance.” Although the systematic framework of the thought and the terminology used are both derived from the Cartesian philosophy, the intellectual *milieu* of the time, the early work enables us, better than the *Ethics* to realize that the inspiration and starting-point of his thinking is to be found in the religious speculations of his Jewish predecessors. the histories of philo­sophy may quite correctly describe his theory as the logical development of Descartes’s doctrines of the one Infinite and the two finite substances, but Spinoza himself was never a Cartesian. He brought his pantheism and his determinism with him to the study of Descartes from the mystical theologians of his race.

Early in 1661 Spinoza’s host removed to Rhijnsburg near Leiden, 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.@@8 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 statement of the truth reached by its means. The *Improvement of the Understanding* was therefore put aside unfinished, and was first published in the *Opera posthuma.* Spinoza meanwhile concentrated his attention upon the *Ethics,* and we learn from the correspondence with his Amsterdam friends that a consider­able part of book i. had been communicated to the philosophical club there before February 1663. It formed his main occupation for two or three years after this date. Though thus giving his friends freely of his best, Spinoza did not cast his thoughts broadcast upon any soil. He had a pupil living with him at Rhijnsburg whose character seemed to him lacking in solidity and discretion. This pupil (probably Albert Burgh, who after­wards joined the Church of Rome and penned a foolishly insolent epistle to his former teacher) was the occasion of Spinoza’s first publication—the only publication indeed to which his name was attached. Not deeming it prudent to initiate the young man into his own system, he took for a textbook the second and third parts of Descartes’s *Principles,* which deal in the main with natural philosophy. As he proceeded he put Descartes’s matter in his own language and cast the whole argument into a geometric form. At the request of his friends he devoted a fortnight to applying the same method to the first or metaphysical part of Descartes’s philosophy, and the sketch was published in 1663, with an appendix entitled *Cogitata metaphysica,* still written from a Cartesian standpoint (defending, for example, the freedom of the will), but containing hints of his own doctrine. The book was revised by Dr Meyer for publication and furnished by him, at Spinoza’s request, with a preface in which it is expressly stated that the author speaks throughout not in his own person but simply as the exponent of Descartes. A Dutch translation appeared in the following year.@@4

In 1663 Spinoza removed from Rhijnsburg to Voorburg, a suburban village about 2 m. from the Hague. His reputa­tion had continued to spread. From Rhijnsburg he had paid frequent visits to the Hague, and it was probably the desire

@@@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 retranslation 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. A scholarly English translation similarly equipped was published by A. Wolf in 1910.

@@@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, Avernarius and others to prove Spinoza’s acquaintance with Bruno’s writings. . But the point remains quite doubtful and is in any case of little importance.

@@@8 Heinrich 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.

@@@4 The title of the Latin original ran—*Renati des Cartes princi~ piorum phïlosophìae pars i. et ii. more geometrìco demonstratae per Renedictum de Spinoza Amstelodamensem. Accesserunt ejusdem cogitata metaphysica.*