

what they saw, especially the riches, which Coler said angrily should be given to the poor. He refused to bestow a reverential kiss on a prize relic, the "Arm of St. George," dismissed a rag supposedly dipped in St. Thomas's blood "with a whistle of contempt" and exploded when a licensed beggar showered him with holy water and offered him St. Thomas's shoe to be kissed. He said to Erasmus, "Do these fools expect us to kiss the shoe of every good man who ever lived? Why not bring us their spittle or their dung to be kissed?" It was more than a hundred years since Chaucer's pilgrims had come to Canterbury, "the holy blissful martyr for to seke," full of unquestioned faith in his miracle-making capacities. In the meantime the Renaissance had been doing its work. Medieval certitude—or credulity, depending on one's viewpoint—was now faced with Renaissance scrutiny or skepticism.

With the benefit of hindsight it seems strange that the church did not see what was coming and take steps to prepare for or even resist it. In German-speaking central Europe the cultural war was clearly stirring by the second half of the fifteenth century, with books pouring from the presses in ever-growing number and quantity. In the half century up to 1500, nearly 25,000 works were printed in Germany, and given the average edition size as 250, that means 6 million printed books were circulating in Germany alone. Most of the German humanists were men grown critical of the church. The archerypal one, Ulrich von Hutten (1488–1523), a poet awarded the laureate by the emperor Maximilian, attacked, among other things, the old-style teaching at Cologne University (he had attended no fewer than seven universities himself, including Bologna, where he learned Greek), the sale of indulgences, the useless life of monks, corruption in Rome and the trade in relics. Significantly, he brought out a new edition of Valla's book on the Donation of Constantine. Hutten wrote a fluent new kind of German, witty, pithy and full

of popular expressions, and with it went a new kind of nationalism, which, north of the Alps, was one of the products of the Renaissance turmoil. Indeed, he was a Renaissance man through and through—even his death was the doing of the new Renaissance scourge, syphilis. He pronounced Latin in the new, scholarly way, denouncing the church for its "barbarous" usage, and he took pride in his "correct" pronunciation of classical Greek, another point on which the church fell short. Indeed, pronunciation of Latin and Greek was an infallible test of which side you were on in the culture war. Like other humanists, Hutten sought protection from the secular power when the church authorities moved against him, and got it. This was a growing pattern as the Renaissance progressed.

Even in Spain, land of the last great crusader people, which finally "purified" itself in the 1490s by expelling Moslems and Jews, the church seemed unaware of the danger to itself that the new progressive forces of Renaissance scholarship embodied. Spain was emerging as a major Mediterranean power, indeed an Italian power too, absorbing the Balearic Islands, Sardinia, Sicily and Naples, even before the accession of Charles I of Spain in 1516 and his election as Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire in 1519 created the largest agglomeration of power in Europe and the world. Throughout the fifteenth century, Spanish contacts with the Italy of the Renaissance grew, and not only the courts and chanceries but the archbishops' palaces (as in Saragossa) became centers of humanist learning, where the classics of antiquity were translated and, from the 1470s, printed. It is significant that the troublesome Lorenzo Valla wrote the life of the father of Alfonso V ("The Magnanimous"), king of Aragon, who spent much of his reign, 1416–58, absorbing the new culture in his Italian territories. When Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile united the crowns, they gave

their joint support to the propagation of humanist scholarship throughout Spain. It was with the personal encouragement of Isabella that the most vigorous of the Italian-trained Spanish humanists, Antonio de Nebrija (1444-1522), waged fire and sword against the old teaching at Salamanca, Spain's oldest and finest university. He called himself a *conquistador* and his enemy "barbarism." He replaced the old-style Latin manuals used at Salamanca and elsewhere with his new book *Introductions to Latin* (1481), dedicated to Isabella and translated and circulated all over Europe.

The "Catholic monarchs," as Ferdinand and Isabella were known, were impelled in a humanist direction not only by their own tastes but by the advice of their great primate, the cardinal-archbishop of Toledo, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (1436-1517). It was he who in 1509 founded at Alcalá de Henares the Complutensian University (using the Latin place name of Alcalá) for the study of Hebrew, Greek and Latin and the training of priests in the new humanist methods. This in turn gave birth to the great Complutensian Polyglot Bible, first printed in 1514-17. He was a patron of Erasmus and anxious that he should come to Spain to teach. The Low Countries connection was strengthened after 1516, when Charles's Habsburg territories there were united with the Spanish crown. The Spanish humanists delighted in Erasmusian satire, their favorite being his *The Praise of Folly*, a book that had a profound influence on Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616), Spain's first great writer of world stature, whose novel *Don Quixote* is both the last word on the vanished world of medieval chivalry and the first to tackle the pathos of modern life.

If Erasmus was the hero of the Spanish humanists, his own hero, insofar as he had one, was Valla. He wrote: "In me you see the avenger of Valla's wrongs. I have undertaken to de-

feral his scholarship, the most distinguished I know. Never shall I allow that scholarship to be attacked or destroyed with impunity because of anyone's insolence." He particularly championed Valla's *Elegantiarum Latinae Linguae*, a manual for writers in Latin that set new standards of excellence. More than fifty manuscripts of this work and 150 early printed editions survive, which indicates its wide circulation and popularity. In 1489 Erasmus, while still a student, wrote a shortened version of it, and he produced another digest for publication in 1498; this went into at least fifty editions. It is notable that both Valla and Erasmus referred to their opponents as "barbarians," and it is a melancholy fact that, as humanism spread, especially in northern Europe, its language became more vituperative, provoking in turn harsh language from those thus classified, who held the leading positions in the church. Thus the cultural war intensified and became more vicious. We have dealt so far with its open, literary expression in manuscripts and printed books. It is now time to turn to its mute but visible images in bronze and stone, paint and plaster, bricks and mortar.