

historical events, is not difficult to trace. The establishment of the Mahometans in Spain, and, some centuries later, the Crusades, had brought the West into direct contact with the East, where the Arabs had kept alive the traditions of Greek learning, and the foundation of the great universities of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was the result of the intellectual impulse which this intercourse aroused. The institution of the mendicant orders, which were established at the same time, and whose office was chiefly to teach, stimulated this activity still further; while the overthrow of the Byzantine Empire, in the middle of the fifteenth century, sent westward many of the most learned Greeks of that age. Then came the Reformation, with its all-embracing discussions upon the most important problems of mental activity,—the introduction of the arts of printing and engraving, multiplying a thousand-fold the influence of thought,—the invention of gunpowder and of fire-arms, bringing brute force under the control of intellectual energy and foresight,—the discovery of America, and of a passage into the Pacific Ocean around the Cape of Good Hope and the southern extremity of America, opening new worlds to the investigations of the learned.

The extraordinary activity then prevailing manifested itself in the most striking manner also among those whose inclination tended towards the study of nature, and of man as an intellectual being. Besides philosophy and mathematics, we see human anatomy taught in the public schools, and extending its influence over the investigations of the whole animal kingdom; so that the great anatomists of the sixteenth century, Vesalius, Fallopius, Eustachius, Fabricius ab Aquapendente, and Harvey, had their peers among the naturalists in Wotton, Bélon, Salviani, Rondelet, Gessner, Aldrovandi, and Fabio Colonna. Among these, we are chiefly indebted to Rondelet for contributions to the natural history of the Acalephs. He was, indeed, not only better acquainted with the inhabitants of the Mediterranean than all his predecessors, but he knew them even more accurately than any naturalist that lived before the present century. Professor of Anatomy in the University of Montpellier, where he had the best opportunity for studying the marine animals of the Mediterranean, he has published a work upon the fishes inhabiting that sea, which challenges our admiration even now;<sup>1</sup> and if his account of the soft-bodied animals is far inferior to his descriptions of the other types of the animal kingdom, it is simply to be ascribed to the mode of investigating which has too long prevailed, and from which even some of the living naturalists are not yet altogether free,—that of removing the animals to be examined from their natural element in order to describe them. While there is hardly a naturalist at present who does not know

<sup>1</sup> GUIL. RONDELETHI libri de piscibus marinis, Lugduni, 1554, 1 vol. fol. The 14th Chap. of the

17th book is devoted to the Acalephs, which he calls *Urticæ* (nettles).