INTRODUCTION.

The curious production which now appears for the first time in print under the auspices of the Camden Society, is taken from a MS. preserved in the Bodleian Library, but originally belonging to Archbishop Laud, as appears from the following note inscribed in the fly-leaf: "Liber Guil. Laud. Archiepî. Cant. et Cancellar. Universit. Oxon. 1637." It is a small quarto volume, written on paper in characters which betoken a period not later than the middle of the sixteenth century. It is unfortunately, however, imperfect, as several leaves have been entirely torn out; and some few have undergone a partial mutilation. Those that remain amount to the number of fifty-five. Had no other copy of the work been in existence, there would have been no means of ascertaining the extent of the loss which the Oxford MS. has sustained. From a notice, however, in Montfaucon's
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Biblioth. Bibliothecarum, t. i. p. 502, I was led to infer, that another and more complete copy was preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. The following is the notice referred to in the Catalogue of that Library: “Nicandri Nuncii (r. Nucii) Corcyrensis Historiarum Libri tres.” From which it appears, that the entire work consisted of three books, whereas the Bodleian MS. only contains the two first; nor is the second even complete, a small portion of it having been torn out at the end. I suspect, indeed, that this last MS., having been written in England, never had the third book in it, this having been added by our author subsequently.

It would have been most satisfactory to have inspected myself the Ambrosian MS. and to have completed from its more ample contents the deficiency of the Oxford copy; but my engagements not permitting me to leave England, the Rev. Ch. Balston of C. C. C. in this University, in his way through Milan in the summer of 1840, obligingly undertook to inspect the MS.; and to obtain, if possible, for me, a transcript of the portion wanting in ours. Mr. Balston readily obtained a sight of the MS. and ascertained from a comparison of its contents, that the deficiency of the Oxford copy amounted to about eight or ten pages; and he was enabled also to inform
me, which was of consequence, that the Second Book of Nicander alone related to the History of England. He was, however, unable to obtain the desired transcript; nor was a subsequent application, made through the Rev. S. Reay, Laudian Professor of Arabic, more successful: it being intimated in reply to that gentleman, as a reason for withholding the copy, that there was an intention, on the part of one of the officers of the Ambrosian Library, of publishing the work in question.

Being thus precluded from the assistance I had hoped to derive from Milan, I have been under the necessity of publishing the Oxford MS. in its imperfect state. Should, however, as it is to be hoped, the publication of the entire work of Nicander Nucius take place from the Ambrosian copy, the defect will be more than rectified; and all regret at the failure of my application will be entirely removed.

Respecting Nicander Nucius, our author, I have been able to collect no other information than what he himself has supplied us with in the First Book of his Travels, a short sketch of which will be the most appropriate mode of introducing him to the reader.

He states in the opening of his work, which is dedicated to a friend, whose name does not appear, that whilst residing at Venice, whither he had been driven,
from his own country by various misfortunes, there arrived in that city an embassy from the Emperor Charles V. to the Court of the Sultan Solyman. The chief person employed on this service was Gerardus, a native of Flanders, who is described as a person of great learning and acquirements, and versed not only in Greek and Latin literature, but also in Hebrew, as his numerous writings on that language abundantly testify. Nicander having been previously known to the Ambassador, waited upon him in the course of his stay at Venice, and made an offer of his services during the journey he was about to undertake to Constantinople, which having been courteously accepted, he was presently admitted into the Ambassador's suite, and travelled with him through Illyria and Thrace to the Turkish capital. Our Author does not enter into any details in this part of his travels, since he wrote, as he states, for his countrymen, who were sufficiently acquainted with Constantinople and Turkish affairs, but were more ignorant respecting the state of those countries which are situate in the western parts of Europe. Passing then rapidly over the journey to the Bosphorus, and the return of the embassy to Venice, he commences the descriptive part of his narrative from the latter city on his way to the Low Countries, whither he
was to accompany his patron. Proceeding through Padua, Ferrara, Mantua, and Verona, of which cities he gives detailed accounts, as well as of the Po and its course, he then quits Italy, passing through Trent, where he observes, that the famous Council was then sitting, and crossing the Alps by the Brenner Pass, descends into Germany. On his arrival at Augsburg, the attention of our traveller was much attracted by the new religion, which, he says, had lately sprung up; and his account of it is curious. "This was the first city in Germany," he says, "in which we met with the religion at variance with the Roman Pontiff. For it had embraced, not long before, the doctrines of one called Martin Luther, and a certain Philip Melanchthon, men of reputation on the score of learning, both in Latin and Greek, and also in Hebrew. These then practise nothing in unison with, or similar to, the observances of our Church. With regard, indeed, to the symbol of faith, they have made no innovation; but with respect to ecclesiastical traditions, they differ altogether from us, and reject the whole. And they neither admit commemorations, nor festivals of saints, nor fasts or lents,* nor holydays, nor liturgies, nor the decrees of

* In the MS. τεσσαρακοστάς.
œcumenical councils, nor yet those ratified at various
times by special councils, and approved by sovereigns:
in a word, they allow themselves none of the ecclesias-
tical usages which are admitted amongst us. They work
during all the days of the week; but respect in the
highest degree the day named after our Lord. They will
retain, however, no images or statues of saints, either in
their churches or dwellings; and they have banished the whole order of monks and nuns, and brought back
their clergy to the mode of life adopted by the laity.
Neither have they instituted any grades among their
clergy; affirming that these are the inventions of super-
stitious men. And on the Lord’s day, as I before stated,
they assemble in their churches; and there both men and
women promiscuously, and of all ages, sit down in rows.
And some one, who is deemed well versed in the Scriptures,
ascends the pulpit, and instructs them forsooth in the Gospel, all listening with pious reverence. This instruc-
tion being ended, they chaunt certain hymns and harmo-
nious melodies in praise as they say of Christ. And when
the psalmody is over, they return home; and before they
proceed to take their repast, they send to their poorer
neighbours some portion of it. And they are wont to do
nothing besides this in their churches. But with respect

* In the Greek, ἐξωστράκησαν.
to those who are initiated by baptism, they select certain men, to whom all bear witness for the excellence and sanctity of their lives. And these fulfil that office, baptising the children in the usual manner, except that they do not recite so many prayers. But they celebrate the Holy Communion in this manner. Having assembled together and broken bread, they distribute it to each other; and in like manner they partake of the wine in the cup, saying that they perform this in remembrance of our Saviour; for this is accounted communion and participation amongst them. And simplicity in regard to religion is much prized by them; and they avoid as much as possible strife and dissensions. Nor are they unmindful to assist those who are in want. But they detest the Roman Pontiff, and heap on him insults without number, both in their writings and their speeches; nor will they in any way submit to the dogmas of the Romish Church. And they call themselves Evangelists, assuming to themselves, forsooth, the knowledge of the Gospel as it ought to be understood. And they consider all other Christians as superstitious, and living under a delusion. To this mode of worship then they adhere in a surprising manner; and no one could prevail on them by arguments, however persuasive, to change their tenets, but...
they hold them most firmly, and retain them until death. Of this we could judge with our own eyes, for the city of Augsburg had embraced this new religion most surprisingly; and most of the other cities of Germany have likewise been caught by the novelty of this form of worship.

"And we have here given an account of what we ourselves have seen in regard to these matters."

On quitting Augsburg, our author proceeds to Ulm, which affords him an opportunity for describing the course of the Danube. From thence he appears to have traversed the plains of Suabia, and reached the Rhine, which he crosses, and successively passes through the cities of Spire, Worms, Mentz, Coblentz, and Cologne, of all which he gives detailed accounts, especially the latter, and its numerous relics and curiosities. He then digresses somewhat from his narrative to touch upon the doctrines of the fanatical leader of the Anabaptists, whom he calls John of Munster,* which he says had made a great sensation some ten years previously.

"This man," who, according to his report, "was one

* This man, whose name was John Boccolt, was a native of Leyden, not of Munster.
of the citizens of Munster, not of the higher or more wealthy classes, but a low and obscure artizan, being a tailor by trade, and thereby gaining his livelihood, began to preach in the streets of that city, affirming that he was an Apostle sent by God for the salvation of the inhabitants. On which a great many persons began to follow him; and not long after the chief persons in the city embraced his tenets, and elected him to be their legislator and governor, and besought him to give them laws and a rule of life. And he is said to have devised for them these regulations and statutes. From the first, then, he made away with, and entirely rejected, all the dogmas and practices of the Roman Pontiff. Then he allotted to each an equal share of property, awarding the same even to him who previously had nothing. And he decreed, that nothing else should be taught but the Gospel alone, and the Five Books of Moses. He moreover ordered all the clergy to be banished, or be classed with the other citizens. And that all men should take to themselves wives; and that those females who should conceive and bear children, should be attended to and held in honour, but that the barren should be expelled from the state. Since the Gospel forsooth says, ‘every tree which beareth
not fruit is cut down and cast into the fire.’ But he, out of humanity, did not burn them, but sent them out of the city. He would not, however, permit any one to remain idle; but compelled all to labour in some craft, being desirous of fulfilling the saying, ‘he that is idle, let him not eat.’ And he proclaimed himself to be an Apostle of God and the Divine Spirit. And some of these men remained as if in a trance; abstaining altogether from food, whether of solid nutriment or liquid, alleging, ‘that man must not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth,’ &c. and they persisted in waiting for the heavenly bread with open mouths. And many of them fell to the ground speechless; but others stood up also without taking nourishment,* though not opening their mouths. And the greater number persevering in their folly and madness perished. And these were accounted by the rest fortunate and blessed.”

Our author, proceeding in his narrative, affirms that, this state of things having continued three years, the Emperor Charles summoned the leader of these people, and some of his associates, into his presence at Brussels; and having appointed some of the ablest of the clergy to

* It is ἄρρεπται in the Greek; but it should be ἄθρεπται.
inquire into their opinions, when he found they could not be prevailed upon to abandon their heresy, but persisted in affirming, that the Divine Spirit had spoken to them, and that their leader would not return to the religion and usages of his country, he ordered him to be burnt alive, and the rest of his adherents to be decapitated. Many, however, were induced through terror to embrace again the faith of their country, and the observances of the Romish Church. This happened, he states, in Munster, more than ten years previously. And similar practices, and even worse than these, took place in several other cities of Germany.

On quitting Cologne, our traveller proceeds to Aix-la-Chapelle, of which he gives an ample description, as well as of the ceremonial observed at the election of the Emperor of the Germans. From thence he journeys to Louvain, whose University he notices as celebrated and flourishing; and finally arrives at Brussels, where the Emperor Charles was then holding his court. On his arrival, Gerardus was admitted to an audience by his Sovereign; and laid before him the result of his mission to the Sultan. Our Author, being still in his suite, accompanied him on this occasion, as well as in other visits of ceremony he paid to several persons of rank, and especially
to Maria Queen of Hungary,* sister of the Emperor, but then a widow, and residing at Brussels.

Not many days after, the Emperor departed on a tour through the provinces of Brabant and Flanders, proceeding by Mechlin to Antwerp, having Gerardus and Nicander in attendance upon him. Our traveller’s account of the latter city, and its great commercial prosperity at this period, is interesting, there being scarcely any maritime state which did not send ships to its port and merchants to its exchange; so that he does not hesitate to estimate its trade as superior to that of any other city at that time.

From Antwerp the Emperor removed his Court to Ghent. This town, as Nucius relates, had not many years previously revolted from its Sovereign, who being then in Spain, had been summoned in haste to quell this formidable insurrection in the Netherlands; and, for the purpose of greater speed, had not hesitated to traverse the kingdom of France. On his arrival in Flanders, he took measures to put down the rebellion, partly by conciliation, and partly also by the adoption of severe measures against the ringleaders. Quitting Flanders and Brabant, our author next proceeds into Holland, and visits Rotterdam: “a town celebrated,” he says, “as the birth-

* In the original, Queen of Pæonia.
place of Erasmus, whose reputation is great among the nations of the west.* This man lived not long before us; and he has composed many important works which have been written by him in a most excellent manner, not only in Latin, but in Greek. And in regard to style and elegance and the clearness of his ideas, he will be found on comparison inferior to none who have been celebrated for wisdom in ancient times. This man, then, having been born and educated in this city, of parents not wealthy, but of moderate and independent means, and having commenced his education at school, and having been further instructed at Louvain and Cologne, travelled to Italy and Venice, and studied logic in Bologna and Padua; and having become known to many, and been celebrated for his learning by persons of the first consequence, was invited by the King of France to visit his Court; but this he declined, and resided the greater part of his time in Germany, at Basle and Argentina. Having then attained to a very advanced age, he terminated his life in Argentina, a city of note in Germany, where he is buried. He left behind him a great many works and a very high reputation, and was about eighty years old when he died.”

* τοῖς ἐπεριτον.

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After visiting Holland, our Author returned to Brussels, from whence Gerardus having been despatched on state affairs to Liege, Nicander is led to visit the coal mines in the neighbourhood of that city; and the account of what he saw, strongly tinged as it is with the love of the marvellous, common to our traveller's countrymen in ancient times, is sufficiently curious to be placed before the reader. "In this city," says he, "and all the neighbouring country, they are accustomed to burn a certain black substance, stony and shining, and producing hot embers without smoke. But when the coal has been consumed, it yields no cinders, but a very fine dust is scattered through the air. These stones they dig out of the deepest recesses of the earth, finding certain veins from which they extract them; but a peculiar prodigy takes place when they are being dug out. For the miners are accustomed to excavate, at a distance of eight or more stadia from the city, below the river, about thirty cubits or more. When they meet with this mineral, they form a spacious cavern; but they are not able to throw out the stones immediately, for fire on a sudden bursts forth, and encompasses the whole cavern.

"When the miners are desirous of extracting the coal, they put on a linen garment, which has neither been
bleached nor dipped in water. This covers them from head to foot, leaving only certain apertures for the eyes, that they may be able to see through them; they also take a staff in their hands, which serves to guide and direct their steps in the passage leading to the cave. The miner then draws near to the fire, and frightens it with his staff. The fire then flies away, and contracts itself by little and little; having then expended itself, it collects itself together in a surprising manner, and becoming very small, remains quite still in a corner. But it behoves the man who wears the linen garment to stand over the flame when at rest, always terrifying it with his staff. Whilst he performs this service, the miners extract the stones; but as soon as they have left the cave, the dormant fire on a sudden bursts forth, and environs the whole cave. No one then ventures to enter without the above-mentioned garment and staff, for he would inevitably be consumed. And this we ourselves have beheld. For we were desirous of ascertaining the fact by actual experience, being admirers of the operations of nature. For we were unable to discover the cause of this,—whether these things take place through a spiritual agency; and we were aware that linen possesses a certain mysterious power, tending in a remarkable degree to expel fire: since fire
will not touch it, though it burns and consumes every thing it lays hold of in a wonderful manner. Whence also this is accounted a prodigy by the beholders.

"But the most surprising thing is, that when the fire has retired, and the violence of the flame is quenched, instead of being exceedingly hot, it renders the cave of a gentle heat, and capable of being approached. And they call these stones, in the language of the country, 'oulleis' (houille). And whilst they are burning, no great or bright flame is emitted, but red and blue; and this lasts for about eight hours, and possesses somewhat of a sulphureous nature."

On quitting Liege, our traveller returns to Antwerp, where Gerardus receives from the Emperor an order to proceed on a mission to England, for which he prepares without delay, and travels by Bruges and Dunkirk to Calais. Our traveller being still in his suite, closes his first Book with a very detailed description of the latter town, then in the hands of the English. He concludes in the following terms:

"These things which have happened to me in my travels through Germany and Belgium, I have dedicated to you—oh! best of friends—for I have readily addressed myself to you in this narrative, since you have suggested it.
To you is due whatever merit it may possess; and your kindness will supply whatever defects may have been caused by various circumstances, whether of fatigue or successive misfortunes, and that violent love which more especially rules and controls me. Love, alas! for that Nucia, at whose recollection alone my heart is torn and enflamed. But do thou pardon me, most sage friend, if I utter this to you in an unguarded manner, for this has been the cause of all my misfortunes. But in this one thing am I beholden to it, that it has made me acquainted with so many nations and cities, and their different forms of government. Thus far then I have spoken. But the remainder of my travels I will set forth perhaps in a Second Book."

The reader must not expect any great store of information from the somewhat quaint and simple narrative of our Coreycarean traveller. His work must be regarded rather as a literary curiosity than as supplying any considerable deficiency in the annals of our country. His stay in England seems to have been but short, and his means of information were doubtless limited; and this has sometimes led him into great mistakes both in history and chronology. His attention seems especially to have been directed to ecclesiastical affairs; and some of the
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particulars he relates respecting the suppression of monastic institutions are new and curious. So are also the speeches he puts into the mouth of Henry VIII. on that occasion. Our Author's style, though by no means pure, is yet sufficiently clear and fluent, and shews an evident acquaintance with the writers of antiquity. The MS. however, is very incorrectly written, and required alteration in several places; these I have been careful to note in every case.

I have stated, that with respect to Nicander Nucius himself, I have been unable to discover any particulars beyond what he himself relates; and this obscurity might naturally have given rise to some doubts as to the authenticity of his work, had we not possessed the means of testing the truth of his narrative by what he states respecting his patron Gerardus. The latter must evidently have been a person high in the confidence of the Emperor Charles V. and our author describes him also as a most accomplished and distinguished scholar. And yet it is singular that even the most approved biographical works should have omitted all notice of one entrusted with such important missions as those to the courts of Solyman and Henry. For the following particulars of his life, I am indebted to the researches of my friend
Count Mortara, whose profound acquirements, both in ancient and modern literature, are well known to those who have the pleasure of his acquaintance.

"Gerard Veltuyckus, or Veltwick, who, by J. C. Wolfius, in his *Bibliotheca Hebræa*, is erroneously called Vectuyckus, and by Bohun, in his translation of Sleidan, Feldwig, was born of a Jewish family at Ravestein in Flanders, towards the end of the fifteenth century. That he was born at Ravestein, and not at Utrecht, as some have said, we learn on his own authority in a title-page of a work of his, which I shall mention hereafter. Having high talents, he devoted his youth to study; and made great progress, particularly in the Chaldee and Hebrew languages. He then gave himself up to teaching, and in 1528 he was made rector of the schools of Louvain, of those very schools in which he had been educated. His learning was very extensive; but what helped to make it more generally known was his eloquence. The fame of his talents and acquirements having reached the ears of Nicholas Perrenot de Granvelle, the great minister of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, he was sent for, and employed by him in public affairs. The manner in which he conducted all those entrusted to his care raised him so much in the estimation of the Emperor,
that he made him one of his councillors. In 1545 he was sent as ambassador to Constantinople, to negotiate a truce with the Sultan Soliman. It is said, that the oration which he made on his presentation, was most beautiful. Valerius Andrea, in his Bibliotheca Belgica (p. 285, edit. Lovanii, typis Jacobi Zegers, 1643, in 4to.), states, that it was printed at the time, together with a letter to N. Granvelle, in which he gives an account of his embassy, but I have not been able to find it. John Sleidan, in his Commentaries de Statu Religionis et Reipublicae, Carolo V. Caesar (lib. XVI. p. 435, edit. Francofurti, apud Joan. Schonwetterum, 1610, in 4to), under the year 1545, says: Cum autem in bellum Turcicum nihil ab eis (the Princes of the Empire) contribui videret, legatum mittit ad Turcam de induciis, Gerardum Veltuwichum, hominem cum primis docutum, et linguarum valde peritum.

Gerard had with him as secretary, Matthew Laurin, of Bruges, who, in passing through Venice, having met Hugo Favoli, a learned man, who had been his school-fellow, obtained permission from the ambassador for him to accompany them. Favoli afterwards wrote in Latin verse a description of his journey from Venice to Constantinople under the title of Hodæporicum Byzantinum, which
was dedicated to Cardinal Granvelle (the son of Nicholas), and printed at Louvain in 1563, in 8vo. At the commencement of this description, he mentions the time and the occasion of the journey, and celebrates Gerardus, whom he calls, *Velduicius heros, sermone potens, &c.*

Gerardus employed all his skill, but could not bring Soliman to his terms. He then returned to the Emperor, whom he met at Brussels. From thence he accompanied him to Ratisbon; and from that city on the 22nd of July 1546, was sent again to Soliman, with whom at last he succeeded in effecting the desired truce, to the great satisfaction of the Emperor. Sleidan gives us the above date in the following words (lib. xvii. p. 487): *Julii die vigesimo secundo* (anno 1546), *Gerardus Velduuiichus Ratisbona remittitur Costantinopolim, quum nuper inde venisset.*

In the year 1549, Charles the Fifth conferred upon him the office of treasurer of the illustrious order of the Golden Fleece. He continued, however, to be employed in the most important affairs of the empire until his death, which occurred at Vienna in 1555.

Taken from his literary pursuits in the flower of his age, he has left only one work known to us,* which never-

* Nucius mentions that he wrote several.
theless is such as to show what his acquirements were. This work is written in Hebrew, partly in verse and partly in prose; and is intitled, sive *Itinera Deserti*; *De Judaicis disciplinis, et earum varietate*; auctore Gerardo Veltuycko Ravesteynensi: addita etiam nonnulla quæ ex illorum libris eruta cum fide Christiana consentiunt: printed *Venetiis in officina Danielis Bom-bergi, MDXXXIX.* in 4to. Wolfius calls the verse *carmen elegans, et biblico stilo exaratum*; and Augustinus Beatianus wrote the following eulogy upon the book:

> Hæbraæ quis nosse cupit miracula linguæ,  
> Doctaque Davidicis condita verba modis:  
> Carmina Gerardi insueto depicta colore  
> Hæc legat, Hyblæo dulcia melle magis.  
> Non tantum hinc penitus doctorum vana peribunt  
> Somnia, judiciis nil facienda bonis:  
> Sed longo demum discusso errore patebit  
> Qua deceat Domini quærere mente vias.

From this account there can be no doubt that the Gerardus of Nucius is the same as Gerard Veltwick of Ravestein; and our author enables us to add, to the particulars above collected from other sources, the fact of his mission to England. This it appears must have taken place about the middle of 1545, and have lasted till the
spring of 1546, when Gerardus seems to have rejoined the Emperor at Brussels, leaving our author to proceed with the English army destined to invade Scotland. (P. 89.) The other embassy from the Emperor, mentioned in p. 83, but where there is an hiatus in the MS. is that of Ferdinando Gonzaga, Viceroy of Sicily, who arrived in England at Christmas 1543. See Holinshed, p. 961.

Having thus endeavoured to lay before the reader what information I have been able to procure, illustrative of the present work, I shall conclude by expressing my obligations to the Council of the Camden Society for the facilities they have afforded me in this publication, by engaging the services of the Rev. Isaac Fidler, of New Inn Hall, who has transcribed the MS. and executed the translation under my direction. I am also indebted to the same gentleman, for the few extracts from our English historical writers contained in the Notes, and the preparation of the Index, other occupations in this place not allowing me to undertake more than a general superintendence of the whole work.

Oxford, Nov. 29.