

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Dostoyevsky Smith Willis  
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Henry Willis  
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac  
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Gogol Busch  
Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato Scott  
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott  
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Dickens Plato Scott  
Andersen Andersen Cervantes Burton Hesse Harte  
London Descartes Wells Voltaire Cooke  
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke  
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving  
Bunner Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving  
Richter Chekhov da Shakespeare Chamberlain Irving  
Doré Dante Shaw Wodehouse  
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# **Colloquies of Erasmus, Volume I.**

Desiderius Erasmus

# Imprint

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#### Prefatory Note.

The present English version of Erasmus' *Colloquies* is a reprint of the translation of N. Bailey, the compiler of a well-known Dictionary. In his Preface Bailey says, "I have labour'd to give such a Translation as might in the general, be capable of being compar'd with the Original, endeavouring to avoid running into a paraphrase: but keeping as close to the original as I could, without Latinizing and deviating from the English Idiom, and so depriving the English reader of that pleasure that Erasmus so plentifully entertains his reader with in Latin."

This is a modest and fair account of Bailey's work. The chief peculiarity of his version is its reproduction of the idiomatic and proverbial Latinisms, and generally of the classical phrases and allusions

in which Erasmus abounds, in corresponding or analogous English forms. Bailey had acquired, perhaps from his lexicographical studies, a great command of homely and colloquial English; the words and phrases by which he frequently *represents* rather than construes Erasmus' text have perhaps in many instances not less piquancy than the original. Thus his translation, as a piece of racy English, has a certain independent value of its own, and may be read with interest even by those who are familiar with the original.

In preparing this volume for the press, Bailey's text has been carefully revised, and clerical errors have been corrected, but the liberty has not been taken of altering his language, even to the extent of removing the coarsenesses of expression which disfigure the book and in which he exaggerates the plain speaking of the original. Literary feeling is jealous, no doubt justly, on general grounds, of exurgations.

Further, throughout the greater part of the work, the translation has been closely compared with the Latin original. Occasional inaccuracies on Bailey's part have been pointed out in the Appendix of Notes at the end of the volume. The literal sense of the original, sometimes its language, has in many of these notes been given, with the view of increasing the interest of perusal to the general reader. The remainder of the notes are, like the contents of the volume, of a miscellaneous character: philological, antiquarian, historical. They do not, of course, profess to supply an exhaustive commentary; but are designed to afford elucidations and illustrations of the text that may be intelligible and instructive to the English reader, and possibly to some extent to the scholar.

The Colloquies of Erasmus form a rich quarry of intellectual material, from which each student will extract that which he regards to be of peculiar value. The linguist, the antiquary, the observer of life and manners, the historian, the moralist, the theologian may all find themselves attracted to these pages. It is hoped that there are many who at the present time will welcome the republication, in English, of a book which not only produced so great a sensation in Europe on its appearance, but may be said to have had something to do with the making of history.

It is unnecessary to do more than refer to the fact that the Editor undertook his task under certain inconveniences, and limitations as to space and time, which have prevented him from satisfying his own idea of what the book should be. He trusts it will not be found wanting in accuracy, however falling short of completeness.

The Latin text used has been that of P. Scriver's edition, printed by the Elzevirs. 1643. A translation of Erasmus' dedication to young Froben has been added; also of several pieces from the *Coronis Apologetica*, not given by Bailey, which contain matters of interest bearing upon the history or contents of the book.



## DEDICATION.

D. ERASMUS Rot.

TO

*JOHN ERASMIUS FROBEN,*

*A Boy of Excellent Promise: Greeting.*

The Book dedicated to you has surpassed my expectation, my dearest Erasmus: it will be your part to take care that *you* do not disappoint my expectation. Our studious youth are so in love with the book, seize upon it so eagerly, handle it so constantly, that your father has had repeatedly to print it, and I to enrich it with new additions. You might say it too was an [Greek: herasmion], the delight of the Muses, who foster sacred things. It will be the more your endeavour that you also may be what you are called, that is, that you may be, by learning and probity of manners, "most endeared" to all good men. It were deep cause for shame, if, while this book has rendered so many both better Latin scholars and better men, you should so act that the same use and profit should not return to yourself, which by your means has come to all. And since there are so many young fellows, who thank you for the sake of the Colloquies, would it not be justly thought absurd, if through your fault the fact should seem that you could not thank me on the same account? The little book has increased to the fair size of a volume. You must also endeavour, in proportion as your age increases, to improve in sound learning and integrity of manners. No ordinary hopes are placed upon you: it is indispensable that you should answer to them; it would be glorious for you to surpass them; disappoint them you surely cannot without the greatest disgrace. Nor do I say this, because your course thus far gives me occasion for regret, but by way of spurring the runner, that you may run more nimbly;

especially since you have arrived at an age, than which none happier occurs in the course of life for imbibing the seeds of letters and of piety. Act then in such a way, that these Colloquies may be truly called yours.

The Lord Jesus keep the present season of your life pure from all pollutions, and ever lead you on to better things! Farewell.

BASIL, *August 1st.*, 1524.

## AN ADMONITORY NOTE OF ERASMUS ON THE TRICKS AND IMPOSTURES OF A CERTAIN DOMINICAN, WHO HAD PUBLISHED IN FRANCE THE COLLOQUIES OF ERASMUS RIDICULOUSLY INTERPOLATED BY HIMSELF.

*A Book of Colloquies had appeared, the material of which was collected partly from domestic talks, partly from my papers; but with a mixture of certain trivialities, not only without sense, but also in bad Latin, – perfect solecisms. This trash was received with wonderful applause; for in these matters too Fortune has her sport. I was compelled therefore to lay hands on these trumperies. At length, having applied somewhat greater care, I added considerable matter, so that the book might be of fair size, and in fact might appear worthy even of the honour of being dedicated to John Erasmus, son of Froben, a boy then six years old, but of extraordinary natural ability. This was done in the year 1522. But the nature of this work is such, that it receives addition as often as it is revised. Accordingly I frequently made an addition for the sake of the studious, and of John Froben; but so tempered the subject-matters, that besides the pleasure of reading, and their use in polishing the style, they might also contain that which would conduce to the formation of character. Even while the book I have referred to contained nothing but mere rubbish, it was read with wonderful favour by all. But when it had gained a richer utility, it could not escape [Greek: τὸν sykophantὸν δέγmata]. A certain divine of Louvain, frightfully blear of eye, but still more of mind, saw in it four heretical passages. There was also another incident connected with this work worth relating. It was lately printed at Paris with certain passages corrected, that is to say, corrupted, which appeared to attack monks, vows, pilgrimages, indulgences, and other things of that kind which, if held in great esteem among the people, would be a source of more plentiful profit to gentlemen of that order. But he did this so stupidly, so clumsily, that you would swear he had been some street buffoon: although the author of so silly a piece is said to be a certain divine of the Dominican order, by nation a Saxon. Of what avail is it to add his name and surname, which he himself does not desire to have suppressed? A monster like him knows not what shame is; he would*

rather look for praise from his villainy. This rogue added a new Preface in my name, in which he represented three men sweating at the instruction of one boy: Capito, who taught him Hebrew, Beatus Greek, and me, Latin. He represents me as inferior to each of the others alike in learning and in piety; intimating that there is in the Colloquies a sprinkling of certain matters which savour of Luther's dogmas. And here I know that some will chuckle, when they read that Capito is favoured by such a hater of Luther with the designation of an excellent and most accomplished man. These and many things of the like kind he represents me as saying, taking the pattern of his effrontery from a letter of Jerome, who complains that his rivals had circulated a forged letter under his name amongst a synod of bishops in Africa; in which he was made to confess that, deceived by certain Jews, he had falsely translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew. And they would have succeeded in persuading the bishops that the letter was Jerome's, had they been able in any tolerable degree, to imitate Jerome's style. Although Jerome speaks of this deed as one of extreme and incurable roguery, our Phormio takes peculiar delight in this, which is more rascally than any notorious book. But his malicious will was wanting in power to carry out what he had intended. He could not come up to Erasmus' style, unpolished though it be: for he thus closes his flowery preface: Thus age has admonished, piety has bidden me, while life is still spared in my burdensome age, to cleanse my writings, lest those who follow my mournful funeral should transcribe my departed soul!

Such being the man's style throughout, he has nevertheless not shrunk from interweaving his flowers with my crowns; either pleasing himself in a most senseless manner, or having a very ill opinion of the judgment of divines. For these things were composed for their benefit, all of whom he supposes to be such blockheads that they will not instantly detect the patch-work he has so awkwardly sewn together. So abjectly does he everywhere flatter France, Paris, the theologians, the Sorbonne, the Colleges, no beggar could be more cringing. Accordingly, if anything uncomplimentary seems to be said against the French, he transfers it to the British; or against Paris, he turns it off to London. He added some odious sayings as if coming from me, with the view of stirring up hatred against me amongst those by whom he is grieved to know me beloved. It is needless to dwell upon the matter. Throughout he curtails, makes additions, alterations after his fashion, like a sow smeared with mud, rolling herself in a strange garden, bespattering, disturbing, rooting up everything. Meanwhile, he does not perceive that the points made by me are quite lost. For example, when to

one who says, 'From a Dutchman you are turned into a Gaul,'[A] the answer is made, 'What? was I a Capon then, when I went hence?': he alters 'From a Dutchman you are turned into a Briton. What? was I a Saxon, then, when I went hence?' Again, when the same speaker had said, 'Your garb shows that you are changed from a Batavian into a Gaul,' he puts 'Briton' for 'Gaul'; and when the speaker had replied, 'I had rather that metamorphosis, than into a Hen,' alluding to 'Cock:' he changed 'Hen' into 'Bohemian.' Presently, when there is a joke, 'that he pronounces Latin in French style,' he changes 'French' into 'British,' and yet allows the following to stand, 'Then you will never make good verses, because you have lost your quantities'; and this does not apply to the British. Again, when my text reads, 'What has happened to the Gauls' (cocks) 'that they should wage war with the Eagle?' he thus spoils the joke, 'What has happened to the pards, that they should go to war with the lilies? as if lilies were in the habit of going forth to war. Occasionally he does not perceive that what follows his alterations does not hang together with them. As in the very passage I had written, 'Is Paris free from the plague?' he alters, 'Is London free[B] from the plague?' Again, in another place, where one says, 'Why are we afraid to cut up this capon?' he changes 'capon' into 'hare'; yet makes no alteration in what follows, 'Do you prefer wing or leg?' Forsooth, although he so kindly favours the Dominican interest that he desired to sit among the famous Commissaries: nevertheless he bears with equal mind a cruel attack on Scotus. For he made no change in what one says in my text, 'I would sooner let the whole of Scotus perish than the books of one Cicero.' But as these things are full of folly, so very many of the contents bear an equal malice joined to folly. A speaker in my text rallies his comrade, who, although of abandoned life, nevertheless puts faith in indulgentiary bulls. My Corrector makes the former confess that he, along with his master Luther, was of opinion that the Pope's indulgences were of no value; presently he represents the same speaker as recanting and professing penitence for his error. And these he wants to appear my corrections. O wondrous Atlases of faith! This is just as if one should feign, by means of morsels dipped in blood, a wound in the human body, and presently, by removing what he had supplied, should cure the wound. In my text a boy says, 'that the confession which is made to God is the best;' he made a correction, asserting 'that the confession which is made to the priest is the best.' \_Thus did he take care for imperilled confession. I have referred to this one matter for the sake of example, although he frequently

indulges in tricks of this kind. And these answer to the palinode (recantation) which he promises in my name in his forged preface. As if it were any man's business to sing a palinode for another's error; or as if anything that is said in that work of mine under any character whatever, were my own opinion. For it does not at all trouble me, that he represents a man not yet sixty, as burdened with old age. Formerly, it was a capital offence to publish anything under another man's name; now, to scatter rascalities of this kind amongst the public, under the pretended name of the very man who is slandered, is the sport of divines. For he wishes to appear a divine when his matter cries out that he does not grasp a straw of theological science. I have no doubt but that yonder thief imposed with his lies upon his starved printer; for I do not think there is a man so mad as to be willing knowingly to print such ignorant trash. I ceased to wonder at the incorrigible effrontery of the fellow, after I learnt that he was a chick who once upon a time fell out of a nest at Berne, entirely [Greek: hek kakistou korakost kakiston hōon]. This I am astonished at, if the report is true: that there are among the Parisian divines those who pride themselves on having at length secured a man who by the thunderbolt of his eloquence is to break asunder the whole party of Luther and restore the church to its pristine tranquillity. For he wrote also against Luther as I hear. And then the divines complain that they are slandered by me, who aid their studies in so many night-watches; while they themselves willingly embrace monsters of this description, who bring more dishonour to the order of divines and even of monks, than any foe, however foul-mouthed, can do. He who has audacity for such an act as this, will not hesitate to employ fire or poison. And these things are printed at Paris, where it is unlawful to print even the Gospel, unless approved by the opinion of the faculty.

This last work of the Colloquies, with the addition of an appendix, is issued in the month of September, 1524.\_

[Footnote A: Gallus: meaning also a Cock.]

[Footnote B: *Immunis* instead of *immune* agreeing with *Londonium*.]

\* \* \* \* \*

*From a letter of Erasmus dated 5th Oct. 1532, we gather some further particulars about the obnoxious person above referred to. His name was Lambert Campester. Subsequently to his exploit at Paris in printing a garbled edition of the Colloquies, he "fled to Leyden; and pretending to be a great friend of Erasmus, found a patron, from whom having soon stolen 300 crowns, fled, was taken in his flight amongst some girls, and would have been nailed to a cross, had not his sacred Dominican cowl saved him. He, I say, many other offences and crimes having been proved against him, is at length in a certain town of Germany, called, I think, Zorst, in the Duchy of Juliers, — his cowl thrown aside, teaching the Gospel, that is, mere sedition. The Duke begged them to turn the fellow out. They answered that they could not do without their preacher. And this sort of plague spreads from day to day."*



## #ERASMUS ROTERODAMUS# TO THE DIVINES OF LOUVAIN,

*His dearly beloved brethren in the Lord, greeting.*

A matter has been brought to my knowledge, not only by rumour, but by the letters of trustworthy friends, expressly stating in what words, in what place, a calumny was directed against me in our midst, through the agency of a well-known person, who is ever true to himself; whose very character and former doings lead one to assume as ascertained fact what in another would have been but probable. Accordingly, I thought I ought to make no concealment of the matter; especially from you, whose part it was to restrain the unbridled impudence of the fellow, if not for my sake, at all events for that of your Order.

He boasts and vociferates that in the book of Colloquies there are four passages more than heretical: concerning the *Eating of meats* and *Fasting*, concerning *Indulgences*, and concerning *Vows*, Although such be his bold and impudent assertion, whoever reads the book in its entirety will find the facts to be otherwise. If, however, leisure be wanting for the reading of trifles of this description, I will briefly lay the matter open. But before I approach it, I think well to make three prefatory remarks.

First, in this matter contempt of the Emperor's edict[C] cannot be laid to my charge. For I understand it was published May 6th, 1522, whereas this book was printed long before: and that at Basle, where no Imperial edict had up to the time been made known, whether publicly or privately.

[Footnote C: Edict of the Emperor Charles V.: 1523.]

Secondly, although in that book I do not teach dogmas of Faith, but formulae for speaking Latin; yet there are matters intermixed by the way, which conduce to good manners. Now if, when a theme has been previously written down in German or French, a master should teach his boys to render the sense in Latin thus: *Utinam nihil*

*edant praeter allia, qui nobis hos dies pisculentos invexerunt.* ("Would they might eat naught but garlic, who imposed these fish-days upon us.") Or this: *Utinam inedia pereant, qui liberos homines adigunt ac jejundandi necessitatem.* ("Would they might starve to death, who force the necessity of fasting on free men.") Or this: *Digni sunt ut fumo pereant qui nobis Dispensationum ad Indulgentiarum fumos tam care vendunt.* ("They deserve to be stifled to death who sell us the smokes (pretences) of dispensations and indulgences at so dear a rate.") Or this: *Utinam vere castrantur, qui nolentes arcent à matrimonio.* ("Would they might indeed be made eunuchs of, who keep people from marrying, against their will")—I ask, whether he should be forced to defend himself, for having taught how to turn a sentence, though of bad meaning, into good Latin words? I think there is no one so unjust, as to deem this just.

Thirdly, I had in the first instance to take care what sort of person it should be to whom I ascribe the speech in the dialogue. For I do not there represent a divine preaching, but good fellows having a gossip together. Now if any one is so unfair as to refuse to concede me the quality of the person represented, he ought, by the same reasoning, to lay it to my charge, that there one Augustine (I think) disparages the Stoics' principle of the *honestum*, and prefers the sect of the Epicureans, who placed the highest good in pleasure. He may also bring it against me, that in that passage a soldier, amongst many things which he speaks about in true soldier-fashion, says that he will look for a priest to confess to, who shall have as little of good as possible about him. The same objector would, I imagine, bring it up against me, were I to ascribe to Arius in a dialogue a discourse at variance with the Church. If such charges against me would be absurd, why in other matters should not regard be had to the quality of the person speaking? Unless perchance, were I to represent a Turk speaking, they should decide to lay at my door whatever he might say.

With this preface, I will make a few general remarks on the passages criticised by the person to whom I refer. In the first passage, a boy of sixteen years says that he confesses only sins that are unquestionably capital, or gravely suspected; while the Lutherans teach, as I understand, that it is not necessary to confess all capital offences. Thus the very facts show, that this boy's speech is in great disa-

greement with the dogma which you condemn. Presently, the same boy being asked, whether it be sufficient to confess to Christ himself, answers that it will satisfy his mind, if the fathers of the Church were of the same opinion. From this my critic argues, not with dialectic art, but with rascally cunning, that I suggest that this *Confession* which we now practise was not instituted by Christ, but by the leaders of the Church. Such an inference might appear sound, were not Christ one of the Primates of the Church, since according to Peter's saying He is Chief Shepherd, and according to the word of the Gospel, Good Shepherd. Therefore he who speaks of princes of the Church, does not exclude Christ, but includes Him along with the Apostles, and the successors of the Apostles, in the same manner as he who names the principal members of the body does not exclude the head. But if any one shall deem this reply to savour of artifice: well now, let us grant that the boy was thinking of pure men, heads of the Church: is it then not enough for the boy that he follows in the matter of confession their authority, even although he is not assured whether the Popes could ordain this on their own authority, or handed it down to us from the ordinance of Christ? For he has a mind to obey, in whatever way they have handed it down. I am not even myself fully convinced as yet, that the Church defined the present practice of Confession to be of Christ's ordinance. For there are very many arguments, to me in fact insoluble, which persuade to the contrary. Nevertheless, I entirely submit this feeling of my own to the judgment of the Church. Gladly will I follow it, so soon as on my watch, for certainty I shall have heard its clear voice. Nay, had Leo's Bull given the fullest expression of this doctrine, and any one should either be ignorant of it, or should have forgotten it, it would meanwhile suffice (I imagine) to obey in this matter the authority of the Church, with a disposition of obedience, should the point be established. Nor in truth can it be rightly inferred, *This Confession is of human ordinance, therefore Christ is not its Author*. The Apostles laid down the discipline of the Church, without doubt from Christ's ordinances: they ordained Baptism, they ordained Bishops, &c., but by the authority of Christ. And yet it cannot be denied, that many particulars of this Confession depend on the appointment of the Pontiffs, viz., that we confess once a year, at Easter, to this or that priest; that any priest absolves us from any

trespasses whatever. Hence I judge it to be clear how manifest is the calumny in what relates to *Confession*.

Further, no mention is there made of *fasting*, to which the Gospel and the Apostolic epistles exhort us, but *concerning the choice of foods*, which Christ openly sets at naught in the Gospel, and the Pauline epistles not seldom condemn; especially that which is Jewish and superstitious. Some one will say, this is to accuse the Roman Pontiff who teaches that which the Apostle condemns. What the Gospel teaches, is perfectly plain. The Pontiff himself must declare with what intention he commands what the Gospel does not require. Yet no one there says—what I know not whether Luther teaches—that the constitutions of the Pontiffs do not render us liable to guilt, unless there has been contempt besides. In fact, he who speaks in that passage grants that the Pope may appoint an observance; he simply enquires, whether this were the intention of the Pope, to bind all equally to abstinence from meats, so that one who should partake would be liable to hell-fire, even although no perverse contempt should be committed. And he who says this in the Colloquies, adds that he hates fishes not otherwise than he does a serpent. Now, there are some so affected that fish is poison to them, just as there are found those who in like manner shrink from wine. If one who is thus affected with regard to fishes, should be forbidden to feed on flesh and milk-food, will he not be hardly treated? Is it possible that any man can desire him to be exposed to the pains of hell, if for the necessity of his body he should live on flesh? If any constitution of Popes and Bishops involves liability to the punishment of hell, the condition of Christians is hard indeed. If some impose the liability, others not; no one will better declare his intention than the Pope himself. And it would conduce to the peace of consciences to have it declared. What if some Pope should decree that priests should go girt; would it be probable that he declared this with the intention that if one because of renal suffering should lay aside the girdle, he should be liable to hell? I think not. St. Gregory laid down, That if any one had had intercourse with his wife by night, he should abstain the next day from entering church: in this case, supposing that a man, concealing the fact of intercourse having taken place, should have gone to church for no other reason than that he might hear the preaching of the Gospel, would he be liable to hell? I do not think