basis for this statement is her belief that Thomas Betson wrote in one of the Stonor letters “the clock smote nine, and all our household cried after me and bade me come down, come down to dinner at once” (p. 170). A glance at the original of this letter suggests, as in other cases, the author’s inadequate grasp of late fifteenth-century English; it reads: “the Cloke smote noynne, and all our howsold cryed after me and bade me come down; come down to dener at ones” (Stonor Letters [1918], II, 8). The clock struck at noon, not nine, and the reference thus proves More’s story perfectly feasible, whether he gained it from Morton (who was present at the event) or not.

One must conclude, then, that in spite of this book’s considerable merits in dealing with purely historical matters, it has by no means said the last word on More’s History; nevertheless, Dr. Hanham has done More scholarship a real service in providing a study that is so provocative, and one hopes that it will induce others to explore further the meaning of More’s elusive text.

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This addition to Toronto’s impressive edition of the Collected Works of Erasmus is the second volume of Erasmus’ correspondence. It provides an English translation of 155 letters collected in the authoritative canon for the correspondence, the Opus Epistolarum, edited by P.S. and H.M. Allen (1906-1958), and adds one other letter first published by P.O. Kristeller in 1961. In a preface to the volume Professor Ferguson briefly describes the nature and origin of Erasmus’ correspondence during the period 1501-1514, and characterizes the editorial problems it presents. More specific observations on such matters are left for the introductions to individual letters. Each of these is a model of scholarly economy, clarifying essential historical details and offering brief but very useful reviews of critical problems and possibilities. Footnotes contribute additional information, though much of it is necessarily selected from material available in Allen. There are, however, many valuable new additions, a considerable number of which discover previously unidentified classical allusions and locate Erasmus’ use of them in other works. Such allusions, we know, delighted Erasmus, and were an important ingredient of his style. In fact it may be said that, for him, style consisted in a nice accommodation of
copia rerum et verborum — to which his classical allusions contributed — and a restrained or casual simplicity. Properly balanced, copia and simplicitas, the erudite reference and the artless context, produced the "Attic charm". he so admired. A close study of Erasmus' allusions can therefore help us trace not only his course of reading but his sense of style. The point is worth noting here because after 1500, when Erasmus undertook the study of Greek, he further enriched his prose with words and phrases from that language. It is unfortunate that the translators generally fail to identify these passages through the use of italics, for without some such indication one facet of Erasmus' erudite allusiveness is lost to English readers.

In addition to material directly related to the letters, the editors have included a thirty-six-page appendix which continues an appendix of similar length from Volume I. In these two studies, author John H. Munro describes money current in the early sixteenth century and surveys some economic values in the period. In doing so he illuminates the specific meanings of Erasmus' prevalent financial worries, but his principal target is economics on a grander scale. There are, for instance, useful statistical tables on prices and wages. These seem to indicate that, while the continent suffered a period of rapid inflation after 1512, the economy of England remained stable over the entire survey period, and by 1514 became comparatively wealthy. Readers of the correspondence will want to know whether or how these facts may have affected the social experience or political thought of Erasmus and his fellow-humanists, but Mr. Munro unfortunately hazards no opinions in this direction.

The index to the volume includes names but contains a list of subjects which, though more complete than the one found in Volume I, remains inadequate. There are, for instance, no entries for "consensus," for "rhetoric," "satire," and "panegyric," and for "war," though Erasmus makes important statements on all these subjects (eg., Epp. 288; 180, 222, 269; 288). The editors have promised to produce an index of scriptural and classical allusions for all the letters, and this should be extremely useful; but there is still no indication that they have planned a general index of names and subjects such as the one which Barbara Flower compiled for Allen's edition.

The great achievement of this volume is, very properly, the translation of the correspondence itself. In producing it the editors have modestly aimed at "an accurate, readable English text." However, R.A.B. Mynors and D.F.S. Thomson have managed much more. The letters in this second volume, like those of the first, seem to reflect the colour of the original Latin prose, and something, therefore, of their author's personality. There are, of course, certain changes in style between the two volumes, but during the opening years of the sixteenth century Erasmus himself changed considerably. It is true that before 1500, while still a student at Paris, he produced some of his most delightful correspondence. For instance, the
letters to Mountjoy and his other students are, at their best, filled with the same kind of eloquent and engaging sophistication that distinguishes Erasmus’ mature correspondence. Among them, however, are other letters that contain disturbing indications of Erasmus’ anxieties about his neglected theological responsibilities. With increasing frequency, letters to his monastic friends were written in a strained and tasteless manner, the products of his apprehensive vanity and bitter frustration. The problem had reached a critical stage by 1498 when Erasmus confessed that he planned to withdraw from the university (Ep. 81), though he still hoped—rather vaguely—to take a doctorate at Bologna (Epp. 15, 92). Though initially disappointed in this plan, he was, within a few months, invited to accompany Mountjoy to England. That journey made a deep impression on him, for during it he met a circle of distinguished men willing to praise his accomplishments, encourage his work and, in Colet’s case, share his distaste for late medieval theology. As a direct result, the following year witnessed some of the most important developments of Erasmus’ career: his first serious attempt at developing his own brand of homiletic theology, the *Disputatiuncula de tedio, pavore, tristitia Jesu*; the decision to learn Greek; and a proposed commentary on Jerome. Moreover, these projects were seized with what Erasmus himself called a new and “burning desire” which would change his life; and, indeed, the letters after 1500 do seem to display a pride which is less vain and apprehensive, a zest which is more mature and self-possessed, and a purposefulness which is grander and more serious. However, his correspondence reveals other stylistic shifts, shaped, presumably, by subtler factors than the better circumstances of his life. In the years following his return from England he slowly began to develop his notions about style and, in particular, his sense of the importance of *simplicitas*. By 1508, according to L.W. Tracy (*Erasmus, The Growth of a Mind*, Geneva, 1972), he was considerably less interested in the ornate and copious manner that governed much of his earlier work. It is true that Volume II of the correspondence opens in 1501 with a group of letters composed in the old manner: self-consciously verbose appeals to patrons, often laboured and rarely pretty. But Erasmus secretly confessed that such rhetoric now troubled him (Ep. 146), and when he published his *Panegyricus* in 1504 he added to it, by way of explanation, an interesting account of the special uses of flattery and purple prose (Ep. 180).

More to the point, his letters to humanist colleagues seem more modest, and none more so than those composed for John Colet, an early critic of Erasmus’ ornate style (Ep. 108). In 1504 Erasmus sent Colet a copy of his most recent work, the *Enchiridian Militis Christiani*. It was, he suggested, composed as Colet would have wished, “not in order to show off my cleverness or my style, but solely in order to counteract...error.” Of some other works, chiefly panegyrics, he claims to have written them “almost against the grain, especially the *Paean* and *Obsecratio*; this task was dis-
charged in deference to the wishes of my friend Batt and the sentiments of Anna, princess of Veere. I was so reluctant to compose the *Panegyricus* that I do not remember ever doing anything more unwillingly” (Ep. 181).

A few years later Folly mocked the pretentious artifice of the “patch-work” speech of praise, and her creator adopted a similar attitude in the preface to her oration. In fact Erasmus’ fascination with Folly herself seems to have been shaped by his interest in the power of her simple speech. The same interest no doubt contributed to the direction of other work he undertook during these years, notably on Lucian, and on some of the Adages. In Volume II of the correspondence, few letters illustrate this developing stylistic concern so successfully as Epistle 296. Written to Servatius Roger, it is a defence of Erasmus’ way of life, an apologia for his work, and an account of the praise that he had won; yet an uneasy awareness of his religious obligations encourages him to speak of these things simply, and with authentic modesty:

I have searched for the kind of life in which I should be least bad; and indeed I believe I have found it. During this time I have lived among men of sobriety, and among literary studies which have kept me away from many vices. I have been able to enjoy the society of such as have the true flavour of Christianity and have been improved by their conversation. As for my books, I do not boast of them. Possibly you despise them. But there are many people who will testify that reading them has made them not only better educated, but better men.

Though the manner of this letter is indisputably more modest than that of many of Erasmus’ earlier epistles, not all will agree that it is a product of the kind of stylistic development I have described. In fact Albert Rabil has recently stated that Erasmus altered his style only “according to the type of work he was composing,” adding that “this had nothing to do with a chronological progression” (*Erasmus and the New Testament: The Mind of a Christian Humanist*, p. 85; see also D.F.S. Thomson, “The Latinity of Erasmus” in T.A. Dorey, ed., *Erasmus*). While important problems regarding the nature and development of Erasmus’ prose therefore remain, the careful stylistic decisions behind this splendid translation offer many valuable suggestions. To the numerous virtues of the edition, therefore, may be added this one: it should send many scholars back to Erasmus’ Latin with renewed interest and fresh ideas.

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