

other worlds than our own; science and philosophy received more and more attention, and the heart of man seemed to beat with a more vigorous pulsation, and his mind, brought from heaven to earth, awakened to a life of activity and adventure.

A thousand glorious events and magnificent inventions and discoveries thronged upon one another with pressing haste to witness the great and momentous Reformation. That religious revolution was due to the labors of thousands who preceded the Protestant reformers of the sixteenth century. These latter but reflected the comparatively advanced thought and sentiment of the age, which had been gradually growing in strength and influence for centuries. Wickliffe had long ago opposed the corruptions of Rome, and incurred the hatred and vengeance of the Church. Huss had perished at the stake for his reformatory views. Others less distinguished had met a similar fate. The bones of multitudes of heretics were bleaching on the mountains whither they had been driven by the fury of persecution.

During all this struggle between intellectual life and intellectual death, which continued for ages, Christianity opposed most stubbornly every innovation, and punished with imprisonment, torture, and death the votaries of science, philosophy, and reform. Roger Bacon was imprisoned many years for his scientific investigations; the work of Copernicus was condemned, his theory denounced as "a false Pythagorean doctrine," and the author, there is reason to believe, excommunicated; Bruno was burnt at the stake; Galileo was arrested and forced to renounce his scientific theories, and when released his steps were dogged until his death.

If the Church once became the friend of the serfs against the nobles of Europe, it was because a proud and powerful nobility, not always submissive to ecclesiastical discipline, having almost unlimited control over the people, weakened the authority of the Church. The people once more under her power, she oppressed the nobles and serfs alike.

The Archbishop of Canterbury joined with the barons in extorting Magna Charta from King John. For this act he incurred the wrath of Pope Innocent III., who removed him from office, denounced the charter, declared it null and void, and threatened the king with excommunication and curses of the Church if he did not disregard it. It was, we may add, Spanish monks, with the famous Las Casas at their head, that introduced into America that "sum of all villanies," negro slavery.

In Spain, the supremacy of Catholic Christianity was followed by the most disastrous results. Under the Saracens, as we have seen, that country was the most enlightened portion of Europe. Its decline commenced with the triumph of the Christian faith, when science decayed, manufactures gradually disappeared, industrial pursuits were abandoned, fields were uncultivated, and whole districts depopulated. The most valuable part of the Spanish population—the Moriscoes, a remnant of the people that had made Spain illustrious in preceding centuries—were

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