

the first elements of letters. Not one priest in a thousand in Spain, about the age of Charlemagne, could address a common letter of salutation to another" ("Middle Ages," 460). The clergy could not translate a sentence of Latin. The homilies they preached were prepared from previous works of the same kind by some of the bishops.

It is not, as many suppose, creditable to the Church, that what little learning did exist was the boast of ecclesiastics, for Christianity made the cultivation of letters outside the Church absolutely impossible. Whoever wished to follow a life of study had to abandon secular pursuits and adopt the monastic life. "Mediæval Catholicism discouraged and suppressed in every way secular studies, while it conferred a monopoly of wealth, and honor, and power upon the distinguished theologian. Very naturally, therefore, it attracted into the path of theology the genius that would have existed without it, but would, under other circumstances, have been displayed in other forms" ("Hist. Morals," ii. 209).

In the monasteries, it is true, were kept all the libraries of Europe, but in these receptacles they conferred no blessings on mankind. Indeed a large number of the manuscripts of the classic authors that descended to us through the monasteries, were defaced, the original writing scraped off, and monkish tales and patristic fables substituted for it. "Not till the education of Europe passed from the monasteries to universities, not till Mohammedan science and classical freethought and industrial independence broke the sceptre of the Church, did the intellectual revival of Europe begin" (Ibid, p. 206).

In view of the general and deplorable ignorance that existed, which the Church helped to produce and to perpetuate; of the general disuse of the Latin language, and of the use of the jargon which represented it, it is undeniable, I think, that there were certain circumstances in the Catholic system which contributed to prevent the extinction of learning, or the state of letters from becoming worse than it was. I do not refer to the monastic institutions as receptacles of learning. I allude to the perpetuation of Latin as a sacred language. Such was the intellectual condition of the world that the hope of literature depended very largely, almost wholly, on this language. Keeping the Scriptures and liturgy in that language after it had ceased to be spoken, insured the transmission to us of the literature of antiquity which those ecclesiastical ages were unable to appreciate, and the study of which, a little later, contributed to revive Europe from her intellectual torpor. It is not to the credit of the Catholic Church that she kept the Bible and her liturgy in a dead language. Indeed, for no other act has she been so severely condemned by the Protestant world. Yet this very policy on her part, under the circumstances, proved a blessing to mankind. "Every rational principle of religion," says Hallam, "called for such a change [translation of the Bible and liturgy], but it would have been made at the expense of posterity" ("Middle Ages," 462).

It is common for Christian writers to speak of the service Christianity

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