

learned men among them to have done so. Was it because they felt that no defence would avail anything against Henry and Cromwell, that they allowed an institution, which doubtless many of them loved, to be annihilated without a blow struck in its defence? Did they covet infamy so much that they have left it to the chance pen of posterity to vindicate their memory? Or was it because the noblest and best among them knew that no matter how stainless they as individuals were, the moral condition of the monasteries in the time of Henry VIII. was indefensible? Why, too, was there such a widespread attack on monasteries at the time of the Reformation, not only in England but on the Continent? And why, finally, have monasteries since been suppressed, even in those countries which at the time of the suppression remained loyal to the Catholic faith? These are questions which the tardy defenders of English monasteries will find it difficult to ignore or to answer.

Pope Pius IX. made a significant remark on the suppression of the Italian monasteries in his day. "It was the devil's work; but the good Lord will turn it into a blessing, since their destruction was the only reform possible to them."