

the year 88 of the Hegira, A. D. 706. This invention spread with rapidity throughout all the dominions of the Arabians, and more especially in Spain, where the town of Sativa, in the kingdom of Valencia, now called San-Philippo, was renowned from the twelfth century for its beautiful manufacture of paper.

It appears that, at this time, the Spaniards had substituted, in the fabrication of paper, flax, which grew abundantly with them, for cotton, which was far more scarce and dear. It was not until the end of the thirteenth century that, at the instance of Alfonso X., king of Castile, paper-mills were established in the Christian states of Spain, from whence the invention passed, in the fourteenth century, only to Trevisa and Padua.

Gunpowder, the discovery of which is generally attributed to a German chemist, was known to the Arabians at least a century before any traces of it appear in the European historians. In the thirteenth century it was frequently employed by the Moors in their wars in Spain, and some indications remain of its having been known in the eleventh century.

The compass, also, the invention of which has been given, alternately, to the Italians and the French, in the thirteenth century, was already known to the Arabians in the eleventh. The Geographer of Nubia, who wrote in the twelfth century, speaks of it as an instrument universally employed.

The numerals which we call Arabic, but which, perhaps, ought rather to be called Indian, were undoubtedly, at least, communicated to us by the Arabians. Without them, none of the sciences in which calculation is employed could have been carried to the point at which they have arrived in our day, and which the great mathematicians and astronomers, amongst the Arabians, very nearly approached.

The number of Arabic inventions, of which we enjoy the benefit without suspecting it, is prodigious. But they have been introduced into Europe, in every direction, slowly and imperceptibly; for those who imported them did not arrogate to themselves the discovery, but acknowledged that they had seen them practised in the East. It is peculiarly characteristic of all the pretended discoveries of the middle ages, that when the historians mention them for the first time, they treat them as things in general use. Neither gunpowder, nor the compass, nor the Arabic numerals, nor paper, are any where spoken of as discoveries, and yet they must have wrought a total change in war, in navigation, in science, and in education. It cannot be doubted but that the inventor, if he had lived at that time, would have had sufficient vanity to claim so important a discovery. Since that was not the case, it may reasonably be presumed that these inventions were slowly imported by obscure individuals, and not by men of genius, and that they were brought from a country where they were already universally known.

Such, then, was the brilliant light which literature displayed, from the ninth to the fourteenth century of our era, in those vast countries which had submitted to the yoke of Islamism. Many melancholy reflections arise when we enumerate the long list of names which, though unknown to us, were then so illustrious, and of manuscripts buried in dusty libraries, which yet, in their time, exercised a powerful influence over the human intellect. What remains of so much glory? Not more than five or six individuals are in a situation to take advantage of the manuscript treasures which are enclosed in the library of the Escorial. A few hundreds of men only, dispersed throughout all Europe, have qualified themselves, by obstinate application, to explore the rich mines of oriental literature. These scholars with difficulty obtain a few rare and obscure manuscripts; but they are unable to advance far enough to form a judgment of the whole scope of that literature, of which they have so partial a knowledge.

But the boundless regions where Islamism reigned, and still continues to reign, are now dead to the interests of science. The rich countries of Fez and Morocco, illustrious, five centuries, by the number of their academies, their universities, and their libraries, are now only deserts of burning sand, which the human tyrant disputes with the beasts of prey.

The smiling and fertile shores of Mauritania, where commerce, arts, and agriculture attained their highest prosperity, are now the retreats of corsairs, who spread horror over the seas, and who only relax from their labours in shameful debaucheries, until the plague periodically comes to select its victims from among them, and to avenge offended humanity. Egypt has, by degrees, been swallowed up by the sands which formerly fertilised it. Syria and Palestine are desolated by the wandering Bedouins, less terrible still than the pacha who oppresses them. Bagdad, formerly the residence of luxury, of power, and of knowledge, is a heap of ruins. The celebrated universities of Cufa and Bassora are extinct. Those of Samarcand and Balkh share in the destruction. In this immense extent of territory, twice or thrice as large as Europe, nothing is found but ignorance, slavery, terror, and death. Few men are capable of reading the works of their illustrious ancestors; and of the few who could comprehend them, none are able to procure them. The prodigious literary riches of the Arabians no longer exist in any of the countries where the Arabians and the Mussulmans rule. It is not there that we must seek, either for the fame of their great men, or for their writings. What

have been preserved are in the hands of their enemies, in the convents of the monks, or in the royal libraries of Europe. And yet these vast countries have not been conquered. It is not the stranger who has spoiled them of their riches, who has annihilated their population, and destroyed their laws, their manners and their national spirit. The poison was their own; it was administered by themselves, and the result has been their own destruction.

Who may say that Europe itself, whither the empire of letters and of science has been transplanted; which sheds so brilliant a light; which forms so correct a judgment of the past, and which compares so well the successive reigns of the literature and the manners of antiquity, shall not, in a few years, become as wild and deserted as the hills of Mauritania, the sands of Egypt, and the valleys of Anatolia? Who may say, that in some new land, perhaps in those lofty regions whence the Orinoco and the river of the Amazons have their source, or, perhaps, in the impregnable mountain fastnesses of New Holland, nations with other manners, other languages, other thoughts, and other religions, shall not arise, once more to renew the human race, and to study the past as we have studied it; nations who hearing of our existence, that our knowledge was as extensive as their own, and that we, like themselves, placed our trust in the stability of fame, shall pity our impotent efforts, and recall the names of Newton, of Racine, and of Tasso, as examples of the vain struggles of man to snatch that immortality of glory which fate has refused to bestow?—*Sismondi*.

#### SAM SLICK ON SLAVERY.

"I have heard tell, said he, that you British have 'mancipated your niggers. Yes, said I, thank God! slavery exists not in the British empire. Well, I take some credit to myself for that, said the Clockmaker; it was me that sot that agoin' any way. You! said I, with the most unfeigned astonishment;—you! how could you, by any possibility be instrumental in that great national act? Well, I'll tell you, said he, tho' it's a considerable of a long story too. When I returned from Poland, via London, in the hair speckelation of Jabish Green, I went down to Sheffield to execute a commission. \* \* \*

"When I was down there a gentleman called on me one afternoon, one John Canter by name, and says he, Mr. Slick I've called to see you, to make some enquiries about America; me and my friends think of emigratin' there. \* \* I was born a quaker, Mr. Slick. Plenty of 'em with us, says I, and well to do in the world too.—considerable stiff folks in their way them quakers.—Well, lately I've dissented from 'em, says he.—Curious that too, says I. I was a thinkin' the beaver didn't shade the inner man quite so much as I have seed it; but, says I, I like oissent; it shows a man has both a mind and a conscience too; if he hadn't a mind he couldn't dissent, and if he hadn't a conscience he wouldn't; a man, therefore, who quits his church, always stand's a notch higher with me than a stupid obstinate critter that sticks to it 'cause he was born and brought up in it, and his father belonged to it—there's no sense in that. A quaker is a very set man in his way; a dissenter therefore from a quaker must be what I call a considerable of a—obstinate man, says he, larfin'. No, says I, not gist exactly that, but he must carry a pretty tolerable stiff upper lip, tho'—that's a fact. Well, says he, Mr. Slick, this country is an aristocratic country, a very aristocratic country indeed, and it tants easy for a man to push himself when he has no great friend or family interest; and besides, if a man has some little talent—says he, (and he squeezed his chin between his fore-finger and thumb, as much as to say, tho' I say it that shouldn't say it, I have a very tolerable share of it at any rate,) he has no opportunity of risin' by bringin' himself afore the public. Every avenue is filled. A man has no chance to come forward,—money won't do it, for that I have,—talent won't do it, for the opportunity is wantin'. I believe I'll go to the States where all men are equal, and one has neither the trouble of risin' nor the vexation of fallin'. Then you'd like to come forward in public life here, would you, said I, if you had a chance? I would, says he; that's the truth. Give me your hand then, says I, my friend, I've got an idea that will make your fortune. I'll put you in a track that will make a man of you first, and a nobleman afterwards, as sure as thou says thee. Walk into the niggers, says I, and they'll help you to walk into the whites, and they'll make you walk into parliament. Walk into the niggers, said he, —I don't understand you.—Take up 'mancipation, says I, and work it up till it works you up; call meetin's and make speeches to 'em;—get up societies and make reports to 'em;—get up petitions to parliament, and get signers to 'em. Enlist the women on your side, of all ages, sects, and denominations. Excite 'em first tho', for women folks are poor tools till you get 'em up; but excite them, and they'll go the whole figur',—wake up the whole country. It's a grand subject for it,—broken-hearted slaves killin' themselves in despair, or dyin' a lingerin' death,—task-master's whip acuttin into their flesh,—barnin' suns,—days o' toil—nights o' grief—pestilential rice-grounds—chains—starvation—inisery and death,—grand figur's them for oratory, and make splendid speeches, if well put together. Says you, such is the spirit of

British freedom, that the moment a slave touches our sea-girt shores, his spirit bursts its bonds; he stands 'mancipated, disenthrall'd, and liberated; his chains fall right off, and he walks in all the naked majesty of a great big black he nigger!—When you get 'em up to the right pitch, then, says you, we have no power in parliament; we must have abolition members. Certainly, says they, and who so fit as the good, and pious, the christian-like John Canter; up you are put then, and bundled free gratis, head over heels, into parliament. When you are in the House o' Commons, at it ag'in, blue-jacket for life. Some good men, some weak men, and a'most a plaguy sight of hypocritical men will join you. Cant carries sway always now. A large party in the House, and a wappin' large party out 'o the house, must be kept quiet, conciliated, or whatever the right word is, and John Canter is made Lord Lavender. I see, I see, said he; a glorious prospect of doin' good, of aidin' my fellow mortals, of bein' useful in my generation. I hope for a more imperishable reward than a coronet,—the approbation of my own conscience. Well, well, says I to myself, if you ain't the most impudent as well as the most pharisaical villain that ever went unhung, then I never seen a finished rascal,—that's all. He took my advice, and went right at it, tooth and nail; worked day and night, and made a'most a duce of a stir. His name was in every paper;—a meetin' held here to-day,—that great and good man John Canter in the chair;—a meetin' held there to-morrow,—addressed most eloquently by that philanthropist, philosopher, and Christian, John Canter;—a society formed in one place, John Canter secretary;—a society formed in another place, John Canter president;—John Canter every where;—if you went to London, he handed you a subscription list,—if you went to Brighton, he met you with a petition,—if you went to Sheffield, he filled your pockets with tracts;—he was a complete jack-o'-lantern, here and there, and every where. The last I heard tell of him he was in parliament, and agoin' out governor-general of some of the colonies. I've seen a good many superfino saints in my time, squire, but this critter was the most uppercrust one I ever seed,—he did beat all. Yes, the English desearve some credit, no doubt; but when you substract electioneerin' party spirit, hippocrasy, ambition, ministerial flourishes, and all the other ondertow causes that operated in this work, which at best was but clumsily contrived, and bunglin'ly executed, it don't leave so much to brag on arter all, does it now."

After all, remember, Mr. Slick, that the slave trade is abolished; that the people of England were content to pay twenty millions of money to accomplish their purpose;—and that "alone we have done it." Here, however, to avoid controversy, we shake hands and part for the present.

#### SCRIPTURE EXPLANATION.

"The stone which the builders refused, is become the headstone of the corner."—PSALM CXVIII. 22.

The idea of the corner-stone repeatedly alluded to in the scriptures, is not to be taken from the science of modern or of classical architecture, but from the practice of building in remote and ruder ages. Imagine a massive stone, like one of those at Stonehenge or Abury, cut to a right angle, and laid in the building so that its two sides should lie along the two walls, which met at the corner, and thus binding them together in such a way, that neither force nor weather could disserve them. The term does not necessarily signify that it would be put at the top of the building; it only necessitates the idea of a very important position, which it would have, if it lay a few courses above the lowest, so as to act by its weight on those below, and to serve as a renewed basis to those above.

"The stone which the builders have thrown away, is made to be the corner-stone." I understand this literally. It appears that, probably at the building of Solomon's temple, one of those stones which David had taken care to get provided and made ready for use, was found fault with by the builders, and declared to be useless; and that God, for altogether different reasons, commanded, by a prophet, that this stone should be made the corner-stone. The orientals regard the corner-stone as the one peculiarly holy stone in a temple, and that it confers sanctity on the whole edifice. It is, therefore, the more probable that, either by Urim or Thummim, the sacred lot of the Jews, or by a prophet, God was consulted, which stone he would direct to be taken for the corner-stone. The answer was—That which they have so perseveringly rejected and declared to be quite unserviceable. Certainly it must have been for a very important reason, that God positively appointed this stone to be the corner-stone. But the New Testament discloses it to us, in Matt. xxi. 42, and 1 Pet. ii. 7, showing us that it referred to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Jewish nation would conduct themselves towards the Messiah, precisely as the builders did towards this stone, and would reject him; but God would select him to be the corner-stone, which should support and sanctify the whole church.—*Dr. Smith, and Michaelis*.

FALSEHOOD.—Falsemen's words and deeds remind us of thunder and lightning on the stage, which, united in heaven, in the theatre are generated in opposite corners of the house, and, by different operators.