

every obstacle, and yielded to no fatigue ; and we may thus account for that copiousness of verbal learning which sometimes astonishes us in the scholars of the 16th century, and in which they seem to surpass the more exact philologers of later ages.* Unquestionably learning without books had its advantages, but without the cheapening of the art of printing neither learning nor education could ever have been wide spread.

In seeking for an expression of Life and Art, the more advanced spirits were naturally drawn to what was ready-made, but had been forgotten. Latin Literature and the study of Greek accordingly were the two great occupations of the Humanists. Although these pursuits received an immense impulse after the dispersion of Greek scholars in 1453, on the taking of Constantinople (just as Greek studies received a powerful impulse at Rome after the fall of Corinth), the rise and progress of the Humanistic movement were not determined by that event. And yet we may fairly date a second revival from the fall of the eastern capital, a revival which, for 100 years, occupied itself with Hellenic and Roman literature, before the slowly-growing vernacular and original literatures of Europe began to take form, and gradually to oust the ancients from exclusive possession. Art in painting and architecture all along shared in the general activity, and in many other ways the mediæval fabric had the hand of the critic and reformer laid on it.

The other great stream of the rebirth anticipated by Wykliffe and Huss, whom I have named above, was the religious. Here, too, man longed to see through form and dogma and ritual into realities. The

Humanistic movement was thus closely allied with the theological. We find this longing for "reality" in divine things, as opposed to mere dogmatic form, in the Mystics, and in such men as Wessel of whom both Erasmus and Luther speak in laudatory terms. But prior to him, Florentius Radewin, with the consent of his master, Gerard Goote, had founded the "Brothers of the Common Life" (Hieronymians), whose governing idea was life rather than doctrine, and who allied their religious aims with humanistic study. Florentius died in 1400, Wessel in 1489, and Thomas à Kempis in 1471. Up to the year 1500, though there was a strong Pagan and unbelieving spirit among the Humanists of Italy, we find little or none of this among the Northern men. With them, Humanism and a reformed Theology based on the original Gospels went hand in hand. There was no separation of the Humanistic and the reformed religious movements ; nor was it ever recognized that there was any necessary antagonism. The houses and schools of the "brethren of the common life" spread throughout the Netherlands, Germany and France. The central motive-force was a religious one—an attempt to return to a simple New Testament life, and to rest faith on a vernacular Bible accessible to all. They had, as I have said, a tendency to Mysticism. They were in fact Mystics, in so far as subjective feeling and an intense personal life arising out of this, governed their Christianity. It was natural that such men should think more of the education of the mass of the people than dogmatists, schoolmen, or the literary humanists could be expected to do. They welcomed Humanistic learning, but always as subordinate to the religious life, and for a time, only in the restricted form of classical Latin and the literature of Romans.

* In connection with this see a very interesting passage in *Plato's Phædras*. *Fowett's Plato*, I., 613.