

navigation and surveying, appears not to have been known previous to the middle or close of the twelfth century. The English, French, Italians, Germans and Chinese, all contend for the honour of this invention.

To whom the honour belongs, it is difficult, and probably impossible, to determine; but its effects on the destinies of the world is stereotyped upon every movement of society; by it an intercourse with transmarine regions, either for purposes of commerce, benevolence, the extension of knowledge, or the spread of Christianity is obtained; and by its means the geography of the globe and its subdivisions are ascertained.

The ancient Babylonians and Chinese are said to have carved letters on blocks of wood and stone; but the invention of printing in its present shape is of European origin, and probably due to Laurentius of Haerlem, improved by Faustus of Mentz, Gutemberg, Schoeffer and others, during this period. It is said of this inestimable discovery—one through the means of which the moral elements of the world were to be revolutionized, and the natural elements developed, that it was brought almost at once to perfection, that the first printing done four hundred years ago, is equal to any that has since been done—showing that in the revolution of the wheels of Providence, that all the great sciences and arts, oral language, written language, the mariner's compass, and printing, are all subordinate instruments, to be wielded by man, under the direction of a wise Providence, and for wise ends. By the first, *oral language*, man has held converse with his God, and with his fellow man; by the second, *written language*, he has been enabled to write the commands of God “in a book,” and by means of which the transactions of the world are received; by means of the third, *the Compass*, the commands of Heaven are being promulgated to the most distant and benighted corners of

the earth; and by the fourth, *printing*, copies of the Scriptures, and other good works are so multiplied, that “he who runs may read, and he who reads may understand.”

In concluding this article, which brings us down through sixteen centuries of our era, the reader will observe that we have not particularized the discoveries made in abstract science, the solution of particular problems in mathematics, astronomy, and other branches of knowledge; we have avoided this course as uninteresting to the general reader, and have confined our remarks to the more leading points of notoriety of the periods.

One thing, however, we have not failed to observe, in tracing mankind through all the mutations to which our race have been subjected, during upwards of five thousand years—that the mass of society, the peasantry of the world, have remained uneducated in reading, or alphabetical writing,—in a word, the peasantry of the world, with few exceptions, have remained in gross ignorance.

The inhabitants of Great Britain, now so famous for their high state of social, moral, and intellectual culture, were, two thousand years ago, and for centuries after, in a state of barbaric heathenism. North America, now the land of civilization, education and freedom, was, in all probability, two thousand years ago without an inhabitant.

The nations of antiquity, as such, have passed away; accounts of their sayings and doings, their sciences and arts, their great cities, and their literature, are left in vague history's keeping; but Great Britain and North America, the former only mentioned in early history, the latter unknown, are now the two great centres of civilization, moral and intellectual refinement; they are the centres, to which the descendants of those once renowned nations of antiquity are now looking, for relief from bondage, oppression and ignorance.