

and is prolonged even to our times with a violence which renders it extremely difficult to be brought to a conclusion" ("Ecc. Hist.," i. 59).

For pagan learning, the Christians generally had the strongest aversion. Among the monks, when they were under the vow of silence, it was customary with them in asking for any pagan work, to make a particular sign, which consisted in scratching the ears like a dog, to which it was thought the pagans should be compared. In this manner they expressed an itching for those dogs, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. (See Disraeli's "Curiosities of Literature.")

The fourth Council of Carthage forbade the reading of secular books by bishops. Jerome condemned the perusal of them except for pious purposes. The physical sciences were unqualifiedly condemned, as their cultivation was considered incompatible with the practice of religious duties. The Greek schools of medicine were closed. The Alexandrian Serapion, with its libraries and its museum, the accumulation of centuries, was destroyed under the archiepiscopate of Theophilus, A.D. 389, "and twenty years afterwards the empty shelves excited the regret and indignation of every intelligent spectator" (Ency. Brit., art. Alexandria). Many of the bishops in the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, it is said, could not write their names. Ignorance was not considered a disqualification for ordination. No importance was attached to anything of an intellectual character except the childish and unintelligible controversies which were carried on for centuries. "These disputes," says Hallam, "diverted studious minds from profane literature and narrowed down more and more the circle of that knowledge which they were desirous to obtain" ("Middle Ages," p. 453).

The monastic movement contributed to the decline of letters and decay of intellect. "I cannot conceive," says Hallam, "any state of society more adverse to the intellectual improvement of mankind, than one which admitted no middle line between dissoluteness and fanatical mortifications. . . . After the introduction of monkery with its unsocial theory of duties, the serious and reflecting part of mankind, on whom science most relies, were turned to habits which, in the most favorable view, could not quicken the intellectual energies; and it might be a difficult question whether the cultivators and admirers of useful literature were less likely to be found among the profligate citizens of Rome and their barbarous conquerors, or the melancholy recluses of the wilderness" ("Middle Ages," p. 453).

(To be continued.)