

merated,—the fall of the eastern empire, and the conquest of Turkey and Greece by the Saracens; resulting in the dispersion of men of learning, through the continent of Europe; giving rise to a better system of jurisprudence, by which civilization was promoted; oppression subdued—and finally the consolidation of the civil governments of Europe, under the administration of more enlightened Monarchs, who became the zealous patrons of education.

The literary causes of this important change in the state of society, arose to a great extent from the invention of printing, and the division of the the commonwealth of letters into different departments. This art, says Stewart, “rendered the taught less dependent on their teachers, and by opening more widely the sources of knowledge, served quickly to break down the ancient barriers, and emancipate the human mind from its bondage.” By means of this art, those stores of ancient learning, which had been immersed in monastic institutions for ages, and were scarcely known to exist, were brought to light. At this time upwards of twenty men, eminent in scholastic attainments arose, who created a taste for the study of Grecian and Roman literature.

Among the moral causes for the restoration of letters, may be named, the Reformation; it exerted a mighty influence on the state of the world, and the intellectual attainments of the mass of society.

During the 17th century alone, there arose nearly one hundred men who figured in the restoration of literature, among whom may be named—Copernicus, Repler, Galileo, Napier the inventor of logarithms, Des Cartes, Pascal, the two Bernoullis, Leibnitz, and the immortal Newton, as he is called. These may be called the morning stars of genius and scientific research, who rose during the period under consideration, and by their labours dispelled the darkness

that overspread the earth, and presaged the rising of the sun of science, and the spread of general knowledge.

Still, the leading minds of the world of letters were principally directed to the restoration and improvement of Astronomy, Mathematics generally, Euclids elements of Geometry, Optics, and the various branches of Natural Philosophy; subjects generally speaking, too intricate to be comprehended by the unintellectual mind. Yet a spirit of inquiry manifested itself in the public mind, that gave rise to a more extended knowledge;—a knowledge of the various affairs of life, and an inquiry into the works of the ancients,—but more especially, a knowledge of the scriptures. Monastic libraries were explored for MSS of the Old and New Testaments, which were collected, if not with the critical acumen of modern philologists, yet with a degree of diligence and research that was highly commendable.

It was Newton, says a distinguished writer, “that predicted the dilate spheroidal figure of the earth * * and scanned the cycles of the firmament, and elicited from the scroll of enigmatical characters which himself had framed, the secrets of a sublime astronomy, that high field so replete with wonders, yet surpassed by this grandest wonder of all, the intellectual mastery which man has over it. That such a feeble creature should have made this conquest—that a light struck out in the little cell of his own cogitations should have led to a disclosure so magnificent—that by a calculus of his own formation, as with the power of a talisman, the heavens, with their stupendous masses and untrod distances, should have thus been opened to his gaze—can only be explained by the intervention of a Being having supremacy over all, and who has adjusted the laws of matter and the properties of mind to each other. It is only thus we can be made to understand, how man by the mere workings of his own spirit,