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English Students and their Studies in the Middle Ages.

FIRST PAPER.

The subject of mediæval scholarship is one which has engaged the attention of some of the ablest historians of the present century. Nor is the subject by any means an easy one. The libraries of the Middle Ages have come down to us laden with choice flowers culled from the boundless garden of literature; flowers whose fragrance has for centuries allured the gentle wooer of the muses, and may be traced down to the present day in the poets of our Mother Country. But with all this we everywhere find rank weeds whose noisome growth well-nigh chokes the patches of verdure that we seek for. This chaos of erudition the historians of literature have succeeded, in a measure, in reducing to harmony and order.

It is well known that the only learned class at the beginning of the Middle Ages was the clergy. The quiet and associations of the monastery were peculiarly adapted to the kind of study which engaged them. Here had been the lamps whose faint glimmer had shone through the darkness which was now only partially dispelled; here had resided the beacon lights of learning when error and superstition reigned rampant without; here among congenial friends, teachers and pupils, was the arena for the display of learning and wit; and here the pious ecclesiastic hoped to end his days.

The abhorrence of profane writers on the part of the clergy had passed away and a reaction had set in. Aristotle was, to them, almost the whole sum and substance of human knowledge, and accordingly the whole object of study in the monasteries. He had presented, they thought, the methods of reasoning in an inevitable form; his propositions were indisputably demonstrated; his questions answered in a manner almost super-human; from Aristotle's opinion and decision there was no appeal. Any fact that he had omitted was unworthy of their consideration. With rare versatility he had written on almost every subject of human knowledge then cultivated. His *History of Animals* is one of the most important of his productions. In it he had developed a system of classification which admitted of no correction or improvement; and the only possible way of knowing more of those animals or others, was to go out into the fields and highway, and observe facts, which was entirely alien to the dignity of philosophy and to the ruling principle of asceticism. Accordingly they turned all their energies to the other part of the great philosopher's wisdom, viz: the Ethical and Metaphysical. Isolated from the world, the monk spent his time reasoning *ad infinitum* on principles, regardless of practice; drawing hair-breadth distinctions; whetting his brains over barren disquisitions; creating out of his own mind a system of human thoughts and feelings mechanically regulated by the same principles which he found operating in his own sluggish existence. This, together with fasting, penance, alms-giving, and copying out some ancient author

as recreation after devotions, formed the every day life in the monasteries.

But from Aristotle, Aquinas and Boethius, the monk turned to the court and parliament. He had learned all the tricks of illicit processes and undistributed middles, and now he would turn his acuteness to practical use. In the Royal Councils high-born nobles and bronzed warriors stood abashed before the smooth-faced ecclesiastic; and common lawyers were alarmed to see lands carried off by sheer logic "in the very teeth of acts of parliament." Indeed ever since William the Conqueror had converted the benefices of the bishops into temporal baronies, in consequence of which they were (and are, in fact, to the present day) admitted to seats in the House of Lords, the churchmen had exerted a powerful influence alike on the Sovereign and on the representatives of the people.

But before we advance far in the history of the Middle Ages, a change comes over the aspect of education. We have said that the learning of England was cloistered with the monks. But the next great step in the emancipation of the people from the barbarism of the Dark Ages was the opening of the convent gates and the establishment of institutions where young men could study Aristotle without the hair shirt and the cord. This great event, dear to every lover of Alma Mater, even in this distant land, was the foundation of the English Universities.

The stream of learning which moved on almost unnoticed in its sluggish channel was now divided into innumerable rivulets flowing through the land, inviting all to drink of their pure and ennobling waters; the battlements of chivalry and feudalism, already showing signs of decay, soon crumbled into ruins before the piercing rays of the sun of learning.

Military News.

We are glad to be able to announce that the officers of our University Companies have been duly gazetted, and that Nos. 4 and 5 Companies are now an undoubted fact.

Capt and Adjutant Barnjum, with his usual energy, is endeavoring to get everything ready to commence drill as early as possible, and has selected a suitable room in the College building for an armory, and has superintended the fitting it with arm-racks, etc., to receive the arms, accoutrements, and uniforms, which will arrive in a day or two. We congratulate the students of the different Faculties on the successful completion of this very valuable addition to our College routine; whereby they will, at the expense of an insignificant portion of their time, be enabled to acquire such a knowledge of military duties as may be of the greatest service to them in after life. And we trust they will show their appreciation of the opportunity thus afforded them by punctual attendance at drill, and by using their utmost endeavours to render Nos. 4 and 5 Companies in every way worthy of the regimental motto, "nulli secundus," and an honor to their University. We have the *intelligence* and the *physique*; let us show what we can do.