

In the two succeeding centuries, largely through Irish and English influence, female education received its first decided impulse. Convents were increased in England and on the continent. Even where the convent and the monastery in true educational lines made little progress, it was as a light in a dark place. Studious, orderly, industrious life, in the midst of a people semi-barbarous, was an education in itself.

As we near the eighth century, culture quickens in the revival of learning in Spain. The Moslem influence springs into prominence and spreads itself into Africa, creeps along the whole northern coast, and finds its way across the Mediterranean to Spain, taking a permanent hold upon (V)Andalusia. Here it flourished until Ferdinand and Isabella, among their other colossal movements, drove it from its stronghold.

Moslem Spain established for itself so great a reputation that ambitious youth flocked to its schools from all the known world. The elements of education reached every household, as an elementary school was attached to every mosque; and a native of Andalusia was known from a Castilian by his greater learning. While a Spaniard of Castile could not read, write, or sign his name, schools founded by Moslem Caliphs were producing poets, artists, and sculptors.

Cordova, under the Moors, became the nurse of the sciences, the cradle of the arts, the Athens of the west. Libraries were established, one of which contained 400,000 volumes.

In contrast to the low value put upon Greek learning by Christian schools, the Moslem early learned its value, and began translating Greek classics into Arabic. The followers of Mohammed were not creative, but knew the value of Greek learning;

and by borrowing mathematics, medicine, and philosophy, established a line of flourishing schools from Bagdad to Cordova, where was the most flourishing of their seventeen universities.

And now we turn reluctantly from the dark night of the past into the dawn of the coming day. The colossal form of Charles the Great rises in outline against the horizon of the dim future, and we stand at the beginning of the first renaissance. As Emperor of the West and of Rome, he early saw that without a more thorough education of the priesthood, reform could never become permanent. At his court in Aix, he held what might be called an educational convention of the ninth century. Alcuin of York was his chief counsellor, and became the first Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Under Charlemagne and by Alcuin was established the Palace Schools for members of the court and their children, but open to all who desired instruction. It was openly understood that all who distinguished themselves as scholars would receive promotion in the state, however humble their origin. Charlemagne held that right doing should be accompanied by right speaking; that the unlettered tongue of the pious church father should not offer prayer in uncouth language. He wished the soldiers of the Church to be not only religious in heart but learned in discourse; pure in heart and eloquent in speech; of such life as to edify others while beholding; of such speech as to instruct others while listening.

In 794, Charles, through his superintendent, issued his most important order—the institution of schools in burghs and villages for *gratuitous elementary instruction*. Music in schools was promoted, and the Gregorian chants introduced.