

a century reaction came under Montanus who pled for the emancipation of the Holy Spirit from the yoke of the bishop. Half a century later, when the Roman bishops had denounced Montanism and the Church system was crystallizing, the persecution of Decius started the same conflict over again between the order of the Church and the purity of Christian life, and Novatianus made a stand for holiness, though here the Catholic principle asserted itself and he organized the great Puritan Church of the Novatians. With the triumph of Constantine came the triumph of the Church, the Nicene and the following Councils, and the age of Court bishops and metropolitans, when the Church was deluged by a secular society, when bishops fought for creeds and richer sees, when spiritual arms were abandoned for bludgeons and the victories of faith were changed for those of George and Damasus, whose followers made him Pope at the cost of one hundred and thirty-seven lives. Reaction might have been expected and it duly came. It was at this time, we are told, that the monastic communities of the Egyptian god Serapis were converted to Christianity, and simultaneously there appeared in the same regions and among men of the same race, the Coptic race, the earliest Christian monachism. Anthony and Paul are nowadays dismissed very properly from history to the realm of fiction. But at all events now was the day when Christians began to take to the desert to seek there that perfection and holy living they found impossible in the Church life of the cities. If the movement began with the Copts, it did not end with them. It spread the world over. And then reaction, for the monks, the individualists of the Church of the day, and wild and extreme ones too, began very soon to organize, and we read that in the Egyptian deserts the first of virtues was obedience to the Abbot under any and every circumstance—a virtue, experience would shew, of somewhat doubtful worth. Later on St. Benedict organized the monks of the West. With each fresh outburst of spiritual life there followed a new order. Friars were the sign of a revolt against the monasteries, as they had been and were against the bishops, for the religious orders were subject to the Pope and independent of the local episcopate. The Reformation was a great revolt of the individual against bishop and monk and friar, and when it imposed English prelate and Scotch presbyter