

But the valour of Charles Martel was now to be displayed. On the memorable field of Tours a fierce battle was fought—a glorious victory was won. Europe was rescued from the Mohammedan yoke, and Christendom was saved! The Moslem left Europe, but he left traces of his presence behind. An impetus was given to the cultivation of art and literature. Europe became the heir of some of the intellectual wealth which the Arab amassed. Some improvements and inventions due to his ingenuity passed into the hands of the European to be by him utilized and improved upon. The use of numerals was introduced; the study of algebra, botany, chemistry and medicine was begun; a spirit of investigation was rekindled, and the way was thus prepared for the dawn of a brighter morn. Thus, good arose out of evil. Mohammedanism itself might be an evil, but the encouragement which it was a means of giving to the study of art and literature was a priceless good. The fierce wars and atrocious cruelties, which stained its pathway to victory, was an evil, but the improvements and inventions, the spirit of active inquiry, which it bequeathed to Europe, was a good—a precious legacy for which Europe and we should be deeply thankful.

Another influence operating in the same direction, which tended to bring about the glorious harvest soon to be garnered in, was the study of what is known as the *Scholastic Philosophy*, introduced also by the Arabs. This philosophy consisted mainly of the logic and metaphysics of Aristotle. Its study was sedulously prosecuted by the ablest scholars of the time. The study of Nature was condemned by the Church, and all investigation of her laws sternly discontinued. Forbidden to be observers, men became speculators; forbidden to tread the inviting fields

of Nature, and gather the rich fruit she offered, men were compelled to tread the airy heights of speculation; to indulge in elaborate processes of reasoning; to frame imposing theories and build castles in the air. The most airy theories were formed; the most trifling disquisitions engaged in. What, for instance, could be more trifling than disquisitions regarding the nature of angels, their means of conversing with each other, how many could sit comfortably on the top of a needle, the morning and evening states of their understandings? Yet, such were the childish speculations indulged in, such the trifling disquisitions pursued by the ablest minds of the age. How, it may be asked, did such a course of study as this prepare the way for the bright future which awaited the world? It did so in two ways, in a positive and a negative way. First, by sharpening the mental faculties. Speculation, study of any kind, sharpens the intellectual activities and gives depth of insight and concentration of thought, and thus makes the mind more capable of investigation and research. The mind resembles an instrument; it needs sharpening ere it can do its work well. Speculation is a sharpener of the mind. As the knife and the axe need to be sharpened and the rust removed ere they can do their work well, so does the mind require to be exercised by speculation ere its faculties can do their most effective work.

But, secondly, the scholastic philosophy demonstrated, in course of time, how powerless it was in itself to discover truth and to minister directly to the material comfort and well-being of man. It proved its own ruin; it demonstrated its own powerlessness. Men were beginning to see more and more clearly that it brought forth no practical fruit, that they were only wasting their time when they spent it in indulging in idle specula-