

And the Dark Ages, as the period of Catholic ascendancy is justly called, do undoubtedly display many features of great and genuine excellence. In active benevolence, in the spirit of reverence, in loyalty, in co-operative habits, they far transcend the noblest ages of pagan antiquity, while in that humanity which shrinks from the infliction of suffering, they were superior to Roman, and in their respect for chastity, to Greek civilization. On the other hand, they rank immeasurably below the best pagan civilizations in civic and patriotic virtues, in the love of liberty in the number and splendor of the great characters they produced, in the dignity and beauty of the type of character they formed. They had their full share of tumult, anarchy, injustice, and war; and they should probably be placed, in all intellectual virtues, lower than any other period in the history of mankind. A boundless intolerance of all divergence of opinion was united with an equally boundless toleration of all falsehood and deliberate fraud that could favor received opinions. Credulity being taught as a virtue, and all conclusions dictated by authority, a deadly torpor sank upon the human mind, which for many centuries almost suspended its action, and was only effectually broken by the scrutinizing, innovating, and free-thinking habits that accompanied the rise of the industrial republics in Italy. Few men who are not either priests or monks would not have preferred to live in the best days of the Athenian or of the Roman republics, in the age of Augustus or in the age of the Antonines, rather than in any period that elapsed between the triumph of Christianity and the fourteenth century" ("Lecky's Hist. Morals," ii, 13-15).

"When we remember that in the Byzantine Empire the renovating power of theology was tried in a new capital free from pagan traditions, and for more than one thousand years unsubdued by barbarians, and that in the west the Church, for at least seven hundred years after the shocks of the invasion had subsided, exercised a control more absolute than any other moral or intellectual agency has ever attained, it will appear, I think, that the experiment was very sufficiently tried. It is easy to make a catalogue of the glaring vices of antiquity, and to contrast them with the pure morality of Christian writings; but if we desire to form a just estimate of the realized improvement, we must compare the classical and ecclesiastical civilizations as wholes, and must observe in each case not only the vices that were repressed, but also the degree and variety of positive excellence attained" (Ibid. 16).

### X.

It is evident, I think, from the facts and reasonings presented, that during the centuries that Christianity existed unmodified by scepticism and unimproved by science, art, and literature, it failed, on the whole, to improve the condition of mankind. I think we may go farther and say that it very materially retarded the civilization of the world.

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