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LITERATURE AND ART.

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(Continued from last issue.)

IF, finally, we are asked concerning the literature of the modern languages, we have to remark, in the first place, that they were now only struggling into existence; and further that, towards the end of this century, there was born one who was to tower aloft like a beacon light among the sons of men, holding in his hand all the thought—theological and philosophical—of his age, and embodying this thought in poetry of such splendor and magnificence that he must stand forever in the front rank of writers, beside Shakespeare and Homer. The 13th Century could have had only an honourable place in the history of literature if it had done no more than to give to the world the great personality of Dante.

Have we satisfied ourselves that the 13th century was one of the greatest in thought, in speech, and in action? What, then, shall we say of it in regard to art? The answer is difficult since there is so much to say. But one thing at least may be said without hesitation. In architecture this century was supreme—no forms of building can even be imagined more lovely, more moving, than those which prevailed from the middle

of the 13th century to the beginning of the 14th (when those styles were in vogue which we call the early pointed or early English), and the transition from this to the decorated.

Whether the pointed arch came from the Saracens, as some have thought, or whether it came from the intersection of the circular Norman arches, it possesses a charm, uniting beauty with strength, which neither the round arch nor the lintel can claim. Magnificent as the Norman often is, it is heavy and unwieldy in comparison with the light and soaring arches of the pointed architecture, which seem to direct the soul upwards, and teach us to soar heavenwards. Nor is it merely the form of the arch, but the decoration of the capitals, the exquisite carvings of doorways and windows; and on the continent of Europe, and to some extent in England, as in Westminster Abbey, and in the Seven Sisters' window at York, the rose windows over the portals and in the gables, seem to beckon us away from the turmoil of the world to the abode of peace.

To describe these buildings is impossible—to recall them is to awaken the thrill of delight which they aroused