

of Anjou, and Margaret of Richmond, from whose foundations the head of a Catholic family was turned away. If Acton had gone to Cambridge, he would have known more about Herodotus and Thucydides, Cæsar and Tacitus. Of history in its more modern sense, and its more specially ecclesiastical aspects, he would probably have learnt less. Instead of keeping his terms under the walls of the Fitzwilliam, he went to Munich, and studied with the illustrious Döllinger. Döllinger was distinguished for learning even among German professors, and though, unlike his pupil, eminent in classical scholarship as well as in theology, was before all things an historian. He it was who taught Acton to look at everything from the historical point of view, and to remember that, in the immortal words of Coleridge, "The man who puts even Christianity before truth will go on to put the Church before Christianity, and will end by putting himself before the Church." The time came both to Döllinger and to Acton, when the voice of the Church said one thing, and the voice of truth another. They did not hesitate. But the results to the priest were different from the results to the layman.

At Munich, meanwhile, Sir John Acton laboured prodigiously. Latin and Greek he never mastered as he would have mastered them under Munro and Kennedy. But he learned them well enough for the purposes of an historian, with more help than Gibbon had, though not with the same innate genius. Of French, German, Italian, and Spanish, he became a master. At any subsequent period he would just as soon have written or spoken in French or German as in English. About this time he began to collect the splendid library which he formed in his country house at Aldenham in Shropshire. It consisted, when complete, of sixty thousand volumes, many of them covered with his marginal notes. Unlike most libraries, this one had a definite object, and reason for existence. Lord Acton was from the schoolroom to the grave an ardent, convinced, and enthusiastic Liberal. It was his aim to write a History of Liberty. The book was never written. Not indolence, but a procrastination which